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Rethinking "Educació Lliure"

An ethnographic and anthropological study of three alternative schools and educational
projects in contemporary Catalonia

Maria Menegaki

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An ethnographic and anthropological study of three alternative schools and educational projects in contemporary Catalonia

Author of the PhD thesis: Maria Menegaki

Thesis advisors: Beatriz Ballestín González, Pepi Soto Marata

Thesis tutor: Dan Rodríguez García

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To those who carry a new world in their hearts

Abstract

This PhD thesis is an ethnographic and anthropological study of alternative schools and educational projects in contemporary Catalonia based on three cases, a private school, a public school, and a self-managed educational project. Through participant observation and interviews, it aims to describe their pedagogical proposals and actual practices and explore parental world-views and involvement. It also attempts a contextualized, critical, and comparative analysis based on the pedagogical proposals, power relations, belongingness, and the cultural transmission and learning processes, both intentional and incidental. The study shows how alternative schools and educational projects may be both places of control and obedience and freedom, spaces of social reproduction and social transformation. On the one hand, hegemonic, individualistic values are transmitted, social injustice is ignored, while social and cultural segregation is produced. On the other hand, alternative, communitarian values are also transmitted, horizontal relations are built, and direct democracy is promoted. The thesis ultimately argues that through intentional collective unlearning, breaking the limits of the *school tribes*, and expanding mutual aid towards all, more elements with transformative potential could unwrap.

Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral es un estudio etnográfico y antropológico sobre las escuelas y los proyectos educativos alternativos en la Cataluña contemporánea a partir de tres casos, una escuela privada, una escuela pública y un proyecto educativo autogestionado. A través de la observación participante y entrevistas, su objetivo es describir las propuestas pedagógicas y las prácticas reales, y explorar las cosmovisiones y la participación de las madres y los padres. Además, se trata de un análisis contextualizado, crítico y comparativo a partir de las propuestas pedagógicas, las relaciones de poder, la pertenencia y los procesos de transmisión y aprendizaje cultural, tanto intencional como incidental. El estudio muestra cómo las escuelas y los proyectos educativos alternativos pueden ser tanto lugares de control y obediencia como de libertad, espacios de reproducción social y transformación social. Por un lado, se transmiten valores hegemónicos e individualistas, se ignora la injusticia social y se produce segregación social y cultural. Por otro lado, también se transmiten valores alternativos, comunitarios, se construyen relaciones horizontales y se promueve la democracia directa. En última instancia, la tesis sostiene que a través del desaprendizaje colectivo intencional, rompiendo los límites de las *tribus escolares* y expandiendo el apoyo mutuo hacia todas y todos, podrían desarrollarse más elementos con potencial transformador.

Acknowledgments

During my PhD journey, there were many times I wished I had a team. When I felt exhausted after a day of work or when something disappointing or exciting happened in the field that I wanted to share, and even later, when I passed hours in front of the screen unable to choose information from the data collected or when, instead of sleeping, I kept imagining possible ways of interpretation. There were also many times I was close to abandoning, thinking that it was an obstacle to my life or that it made no sense. I guess that the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to a degree, as the changing conditions and restrictions in the ways we relate to one another imposed generated a state of insecurity and worry. Because of this, the specific section is particularly important to me. It gives me the chance to express my gratitude to all those people that helped me cope with every single obstacle and apparently complete the thesis, a moment I thought would never come!

First of all, I would like to thank all the families, kids, and teachers that offered me some space in their lives and helped both me and this thesis grow. Special thanks to Mireia, Eleuteri, and Lea for sharing everything and embracing me as another member of their family. To Lidia for her friendship, her spontaneity, and for taking care of me. To Antón and Paula, Ferrer and Abellera, Vinyet and Cèlia, Rosa and Llora, Arcadi, Sol, Lis and Nausica, to Vicente, Agata, Regina, Halma, Nit, Nona, Blanca, Nicolas, Leire, Aura, and so many more that helped me feel part of their communities. I wish I could write their real names, but unfortunately I cannot due to the anonymity. Unlearning with them has been an unexpected, fascinating experience.

I would also like to thank my thesis advisors, Pepi Soto and Beatriz Ballestín, for their patience and for accompanying me in every way they could during these years. Pepi has inspired me since the day I met her. Her profound commitment to the discipline, her honesty and coherency, and her ability to listen to even what is not being said gave me strength when I needed it most. Beatriz always brought me down to earth. Her experience helped me reflect upon my thoughts, avoid dangerous idealizations, and reminded me that we don't live in a classless world – yet! I cannot express my gratitude enough for all their work and moments of collective reflection that gave me the energy I needed to continue.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my mother and my father for their trust and encouragement through all these years, even when they did not agree with my decisions.

Without the love and support I received from all these people, this thesis would have been impossible.

Thank you.

Contents

Introduction

This research study is about alternative schools and educational projects[1] in contemporary Catalonia. It is based on three cases, a private school, a public school, and a self-managed educational project, all of which focus on students' protagonism, freedom of choice and movement, play, parental involvement, and horizontal relations. The thesis aims to describe their pedagogical proposals and actual practices, transcending the school's walls, considering the social context that the specific social realities are inscribed, and focusing on families. After realizing participant observation and semi-structured interviews in each school, a critical and comparative analysis attempted to reveal contradictions, challenges, and hopes for social transformation.

The topic's choice is mainly connected to my political identity and conviction that education is necessary for social transformation. This conviction started developing when I realized that both I and others were reproducing capitalist values in our assemblies, relations, and ways of life. For many years I wondered, how is it possible to create another society, based on horizontality, autonomy, and direct democracy, if we are educated to reproduce the current capitalist one? It was more and more clear to me that, apart from a direct confrontation with the state and its mechanisms of oppression, a change of mentality was essential to imagine and create a new society. Therefore, when I came in contact with experiences from the past and involved agents who focus on unlearning, I started thinking that it is necessary to unlearn and learn how to live in another possible society constructed upon the pillars of the community and mutual aid. I also started to think of schools as spaces of social transformation due to the intensity of cultural transmission and to reflect upon adultism as another normalized obstacle that needs to be surpassed for a truly horizontal society.

But this reflective process had started long ago. The Spanish anarchist Lucio Urtubia said, "I was lucky to be born poor because I did not have to make an effort to lose respect for everything established". Born in a small city and a working-class family with no clear political orientation,

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[1] I use the term 'school' for the private and public school and the term 'educational project' for the self-managed educational project because it does not identify with the school label. However, I will sometimes use the term 'school' for all cases to facilitate the reading.

my experience at home and at school was somewhat challenging. Although I was considered a good student, I could not perform my role as expected and succeed. Growing up, I experienced a series of injustices. I have memories of my parents complaining about their bosses and working conditions at lunchtime, as they often felt exploited and exhausted while complaining about the government a lot as well. They invested money in my studies to get a better job than them and did their best to ensure that I wouldn't have the same negative experiences as an adult. But they would never imagine a reality without the government or any oppression, where nobody would have such experiences.

As a teenager, I started expressing my thoughts about this possible reality, to show disobedience and to question how society functions in general. I did not want to study religious texts at school taught by a priest, nor did I feel comfortable with the nationalist character of history classes. I started to read about spirituality and explore the arts, especially poetry, music, and photography, involving myself in a process of self-education that opened my mind and made life more meaningful. At all those moments described in the previous paragraph, my parents wanted to teach me how important it is to succeed at school to ultimately not experience any oppression as they did. What they were incidentally transmitting was the importance of fighting for a juster society.

I entered the field of social studies almost by luck. As I failed the final exams at school, I could access very few departments, one of which was Geography. My BA studies which took place at the University of the Agean, Lesvos, from 2009 to 2014, taught me a lot; in university rooms and, mostly, out of them. Due to my interest in human geography, I decided to continue my MA studies in Social and Historical Anthropology at the same university. From 2014 to 2016, the following two years found me immersed in the new world I entered. Anthropology managed to help me navigate through my curiosities in numerous fascinating ways and gave shape to my thoughts, satisfactory tools to think upon my questions. During my studies, I developed a particular interest in topics like death, culture, religion, and ritualization. I, therefore, opted to ethnographically approach cremation in contemporary Greece, a practice impossible at the moment of my fieldwork due to the lack of a crematorium. My goal was twofold: to investigate the political and religious public discourses and to explore how Greek citizens imaginarily

choose the specific practice as an alternative to burial. Analyzing the data, I highlighted social change and power relations as revealed by the study of cremation, discussed how the body transforms into an active subject claiming its autonomy and interpreted its burning as a symbolic liberation.

The following year, moving to Burgos, Spain, was a short break from academia, as my research interests multiplied rather than stopping. Among them, one prevailed; anarchist education. The reasons are numerous, some conscious and others not, related to many periods and aspects of my life. But the deeper interests did not change. As before, power relations, autonomy, and freedom kept guiding my attention; this time explored through a different lens. Following my intuition, I decided to study the topic in a city with historical significance. This way, my four-year PhD adventure at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona started. I arrived in Barcelona in September 2017 after my 10-month stay in Burgos. Having read much about the links between education and social transformation through specific experiences like the Modern School, my initial aim was to study anarchist education in contemporary Catalonia. However, I soon realized that no educational project was identified with this term and opted for a study that would generally embrace alternative schools and educational projects.

I developed an initial plan based on three primary criteria for selecting the cases. First of all, their institutional diversity. I thought that choosing a public, a private, and a self-organized school would offer me insights, regarding authority and hierarchy mostly, hidden otherwise. The second condition was to include the primary educational stage so that more contradictions and challenges would be revealed. The third criterion was that they were committed to educational change and did not view alternative pedagogies as mere methodological tools ignoring social relations.

The final ethnographic research was divided into three major stages. Stage A started in January 2018 and lasted until March 2018 when I did participant observation and interviews at Petxina, a private active and Montessori-inspired primary and secondary homologated school of approximately 160 students. Stage B lasted from April 2018 until June 2018 at Pardal, a Reggio Emilia-based early childhood and primary public school of approximately 475 students. The last

stage C, occurred from October 2018 until March 2019 in Trèvol, a libertarian self-managed educational project of roughly 35 students. During this time, the main methods for data collection I applied were participant observation in school contexts working as a volunteer and out-of-school contexts living and working with families. I participated in school events, conducted interviews with parents, and studied documents produced in the educational centers to triangulate the data. I also used quantitative data such as graphics and statistics to a lesser degree that offered me some important contextualizing information about the schools' neighborhoods. From April 2019, I started analyzing the data collected and writing the ethnographies and their comparative analysis, a process that lasted until August 2021.

In the beginning, I opted for a critical and analysis that would unfold contradictions between theory and practice, stress challenges, and propose solutions to change things. I, therefore, used authors like Bourdieu and Passeron or Lerena to focus on social reproduction to satisfactorily explain and highlight the function of alternative education since access to such educational centers seemed to be limited to families with economic and cultural resources.

With these ideas, I developed two main hypotheses after the first months of observations that I later improved and reformulated to stress some important aspects of the comparative analysis. The first was that "*Pedagogical practices in alternative schools or educational projects do not always reflect the ideals that generate them due to the various agents' resistance to cultural transmission*". The second focused more on families' profiles. It was the following, "*The choice of an alternative school or educational project is a strategy of cultural continuity between the education given at home and school*". Based on the initial hypotheses, I concluded in the thesis' general objective that is "*to make a descriptive, critical, empirical and comparative analysis of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia through an ethnographic approach to school and non-school settings*".

Because of the faults I detected in my initial approach and the complex reality I was discovering as time went by through my daily interactions with parents, I later decided to change my focus. I, therefore, attempted to combine social reproduction theories with anthropological theories over cultural transmission and learning, as expressed in the work of Soto based on Spindler and

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Wolcott and authors who focus on social change like Willis or Giroux and Penna. This way, I was able to describe and understand the social realities I met in a more holistic yet critical way and provide the analysis with both challenges and hopes.

I should mention that the research was conducted in Catalan and Spanish, my mother tongue is Greek, and the thesis is written in English, a fact that produced various challenges but also significant semantic and comparative insights. Moreover, nicknames were used to ensure the anonymity of all educational centers, neighborhoods, municipalities, and participants / interviewees[2] mentioned. Although I chose participants' names randomly, this was not the case for the rest. Neighborhoods and municipalities were named after Catalan words related to the regions, or their anagramming, while I chose Catalan names for the schools based on fieldwork. Petxina means 'shell' in Catalan, and I picked it because one of my favorite activities in the private school was to gather shells with kids during the weekly excursions at the beach. Pardal, meaning 'sparrow', was chosen for the public school because of a theater play I watched with kids called 'la nena dels pardals' (the sparrow girl). Last, Trèvol, which means 'clover', was used for the self-managed educational project because kids would often eat and use clovers in their symbolic play, a tendency that used to bring me memories of my childhood.

Exploring the contradictions observed in school contexts was interesting. Despite the alternative character of the schools, I found 'conventional' elements like learning results that limit 'freedom' or authority and individualistic values transmitted, partly explained by the hegemonic social expectations and transmission that are in conflict with the pedagogical proposals and take place simultaneously. Also, diversity is somewhat ignored than valued, while the inclusive character of the schools studied is limited, along with the attempts to shed light on social injustices and work towards their resolution in the school contexts. However, there are essential transformative potentials. Apart from standing against adultism and the hierarchical relations it produces, they all attribute a particular value to nature and promote kids' active role and direct involvement in what affects them.

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[2] Although I did not conduct action research, I will use the term 'participant' instead of 'informant' to stress the active role of the people who took part in the study and avoid the latter's spying connotations. Rather than passive agents offering data, the participants of this study played a significant role in the whole research process, from its design to its completion. I will also use the term 'interlocutor' to refer to people I did not develop a closer relationship with and the terms 'interviewee' or 'respondent' for those who took part in the interviews.

Focusing on the profiles and parental involvement of families who choose alternative schools and educational projects, I saw how cultural segregation is produced because of school choice and parental involvement, and stressed the combination of individualistic and communitarian factors that determine their school choice. I also saw how parental involvement might lead to processes of (self) exclusion, and explored parental worldviews, the close links between education and upbringing, and the importance of cultural similarity to create affinity groups.

Therefore, while learnings incidentally transmitted and acquired out of the school walls are reproduced, values like mutual aid and ways of living that focus on the community are also produced. As a result, I argue that alternative educational centers function as both places of control, obedience and social reproduction and prefigurative spaces of emancipation and social transformation. The consciousness of each project's aims, perception of education as politics, and intentional attempts to transgress the limits of the school tribes would strengthen their transformative potentials.

The thesis covers an important research gap on anthropological literature about alternative education from a critical and comparative perspective. As I expected, as soon as I realized the complex reality I had to deal with, I could not explore all the aspects I would have liked, since it was not possible to examine each school in detail. I would have wanted to focus more on students' perspectives and conduct more interviews to help the analysis, or to compare in time and contact families who used to attend the educational centers in the past. I would have also wanted to experiment more on an applied level, applying the tools of ethnography and anthropology with the pedagogical teams and students and collaborating with researchers from other disciplines. Last, it would be beneficial if I had the possibility to focus more on families who have not chosen the educational centers due to their pedagogical proposals. All this and much more is left for future work.

The thesis is organized into three parts. The first part refers to the *research approach* and consists of four chapters. The first one is the State of the Art, where I present some significant literature about the topic. In the beginning, I provide some basic information about the educational system

in Catalonia that may help contextualize our schools. Then, I attempt a historical contextualization, first through a reference to the history of the pedagogical renewal movement worldwide and then through discussing alternative schools and policies in Catalonia through time. Afterward, I mention relevant studies with a particular focus on terminology and families who opt for alternative education. The second chapter is the theoretical framework that is divided into three parts. The first focuses on childhood, education, upbringing, and learning, the second stresses issues regarding education, schooling, and politics, while the third turns to the links between education and social transformation. Then, the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses follow in the third chapter, before I explain some of the essential methodological tools I applied in the fourth and final chapter of the first part.

The second part of the study is the description of the *ethnographic cases*, one chapter for each. Starting from the self-managed educational project Trèvol, I move to the public school Pardal and conclude with the private school Petxina. This order was based on the degree of coherence observed between theory and practice, from the highest to the lowest. The presentations of the three schools are all structured in the same way. At first, I mention some general aspects regarding the context where they are placed and a few basic features such as their history, relation to local authorities, and cost. Then, I describe the spaces where the educational practices occur, present the number, ages, and groups of children and the pedagogical team, and mention some aspects of internal organization. A typical day in each educational center is then presented, describing the primary learning practices. At the end of each ethnography, a short discussion attempts to summarize some important aspects.

The third and last part of the study presents the *comparative results* and *conclusions*. Comparative results focus on similarities and differences among the schools based on the pedagogical proposals, power relations, belongingness, as well as intentional and incidental cultural transmission and learning processes. These comparative axes were chosen after analyzing the data collected with the help of the theoretical framework and considering the interests of the thesis. Conclusions attempt to sum up some selected results organized according to the research objectives and hypotheses, discuss the new knowledge that the thesis contributes, present the reformulated hypotheses and make recommendations for future work. In the end, the

bibliography that helped develop the thesis is mentioned, followed by a list of all tables and figures that appear in the thesis and a list of appendices related to the fieldwork.

As I was writing the thesis, emotions were overwhelming, hard to manage sometimes. During the year 2020-2021, when the final stage of the writing occurred, I lived in Athens, working at a cultural center. For the last twelve months, and with the excuse of the Covid-19 pandemic, I experienced social isolation and unreasonable confinement. The governmental management of the pandemia, as expected, only gave neoliberal responses, completely ignoring the citizens and limiting every freedom. Whenever the people raised their voices, police repression was an autoreply. At the same time, femicides were increasing, wind turbines destroyed the mountains, and massive fires were burning entire villages and forests under the government's facilitation. Trying to balance between the demands of this social reality, salaried work, and the thesis was challenging, and the following lines would have been different under other conditions. I might have been more or less satisfied with the result; it doesn't matter. What matters is that the study still makes sense to me, in many ways, some of which cannot be translated into words. I hope it does for others as well.

FIRST PART: RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to contextualize our observations and decide upon the theoretical framework within which they could be analyzed satisfactorily, texts were gathered from various fields such as pedagogy, education studies, sociology, philosophy, and, of course, anthropology. This literature research held in four different languages -English, Spanish, Catalan, and Greek- started before my entrance into the field, continued until the beginning of intense writing with small breaks in between, and helped me understand significant research gaps. Additionally, documentary sources were used, such as newspaper articles. There follows the state of the art and theoretical framework that may bring light into our research topic, approach, and analysis.

1. State of the Art

Before we look at the theoretical framework that will help us analyse the data collected, let's first contextualize the research and add some important historical and terminological information to understand the research topic and where it takes place. For this reason, first I will briefly refer to the educational system in Catalonia and how it is structured and then I will mention a few historical facts of the movement for pedagogical renewal worldwide before I focus on it locally, in the Catalan territory. Last, a few relevant studies will be briefly discussed along with terminological dimensions that will help us get aware of what we mean by 'alternative education'.

1.1 The educational system in Catalonia[3]

The educational system in Catalonia is free of charge, compulsory for everyone between 6 and 16 years old and regulated by both the Spanish government and the local governments of each autonomous community. Some communities strictly follow the legal framework set by the Spanish government, and others significantly differ from it, like the case of Catalonia. The main

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[3] Generalitat de Catalunya - Departament d'Ensenyament 2017, http://educacio.gencat.cat/ (last access: 2021/07/17), http://www.diariodenavarra.es/noticias/actualidad/nacional/2020/11/20/leyes-educativas-espana-logse-lomloe-ley-celaa-708754-1031.html (last access: 2021/07/17), European Commission (2021a) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-and-governance-79_en (last access: 2021/07/18), European Commission (2021b) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure-79_en (last access: 2021/07/18).

legal context that establishes the educational system's management in Catalonia at the time of my fieldwork was LEC (Catalan Education Law), following the framework set by LOMCE (Organic Law for the improvement of educational policy) of 2013 that expands upon the Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. LOMLOE later replaced this in 2020.

Although LEC does not contradict the laws set by the Spanish government, it focuses on aspects less stressed by LOMCE. One of them is the priority given to inclusion and equity. Besides, although the state's curriculum considers the Catalan language as a regional language, LEC attributes the same status to Catalan literature and language as Spanish. Last, the educational system in Catalonia is -and historically has been- strongly competency-based.

The school year runs from September to June and is divided by three calendar quarters. The first quarter runs from September to Christmas holidays. The second quarter runs from January to Easter holidays, and the third quarter runs from Easter holidays to the end of June. Summer holidays include the months of July, August and the first week of September.

Let's now take a closer at the three main stages of the Catalan educational system, focusing on the first ones.

1. Early Childhood Education ('Preescolar') for children under the age of six. It consists of two cycles. The first includes ages 0–3 years old, is often held in daycare centers or preschools ('Escola Bressol'), and is not free of charge for families, although some city councils offer few scholarships. The second cycle includes ages 3–6 years old. It is free of charge in public schools and often held in early childhood and primary education centers ('Escola').

2. Primary education ('Educació Primària') for children 6-12 years old. It consists of six years divided into three cycles: a) first cycle: first and second grade, b) second cycle: third and fourth grade and c) third cycle: fifth and sixth grade. As mentioned before, following the framework set by the Spanish government's law (LOMCE at the time of fieldwork), the official curriculum in Catalonia is defined by the Catalan government (Generalitat).

According to the Article 7 of the official document published by the Catalan government, students must obtain knowledge from the following fields in every class of primary school: a) Linguistics [Catalan language and literature, Spanish language and literature, Aranese (in Aran), First foreign language], b) Mathematics, c) Environment (Natural environment, Social and cultural environment), d) Arts (Visual and plastic arts, music and dance), e) Physical education f) Education in values (Social and civic values or religion).

According to the same document, Catalan education must provide mastery of Catalan and Spanish languages and knowledge of a foreign language. Besides, the Catalan government clearly states the pedagogical and organizational autonomy of the educational centers, which can develop their educational projects under the current regulations. Schools are also supposed to establish relationships with the broader community and students' families who are co-responsible for their educational process. To facilitate their participation, schools inform parents about students' progress through written reports (at least one at the end of each term is compulsory along with the evaluation report at the end of the course), individual interviews (at least one at the beginning of their schooling and another during each course), group meetings (at least one at the beginning of each course) and other means considered beneficial. Schools are also allowed to adopt innovative projects, curricula, and unique teaching methodologies, as long as they do not contradict LEC.

Regarding evaluation methods, the basic competencies expected to be acquired at the end of compulsory education are 1. Communicative linguistic and audiovisual 2. Mathematical 3. Knowledge of and interaction with the physical world 4. Artistic and cultural 5. Digital 6. Social and civic 7. Learning to learn 8. Autonomy, personal initiative, and entrepreneurship. Children must pass their 'competencies' upon completing the second and third cycle, which are exams established by both the Spanish and the Catalan governments.

3. Secondary Education (Secundaria/ESO) consists of four years divided into two cycles lasting two years each.

Afterward, if a student wishes to attend University, two additional years are required in terms of 'Bachillerato' followed by the University Entrance Exam. In most cases, primary education is studied at an 'Escola' while ESO and bachillerato are studied at an 'Institut'.

Figure 1: Organization of the Catalan educational system[4]
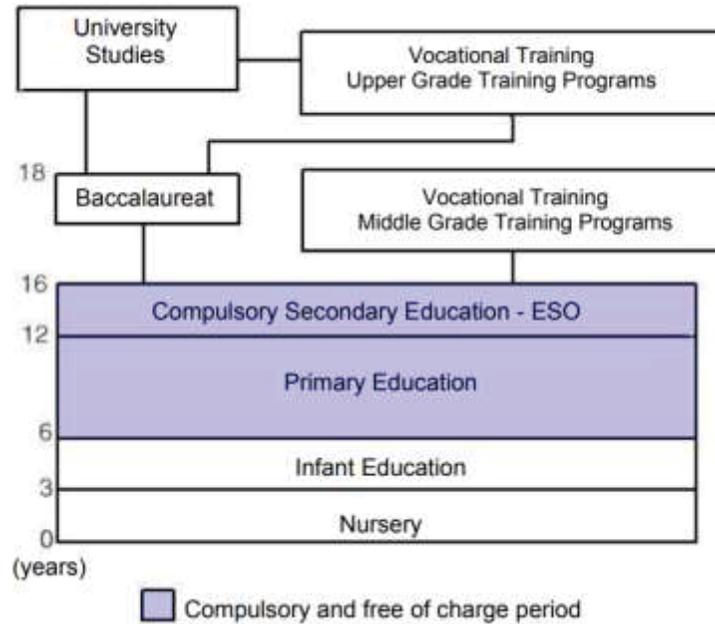
Source: Generalitat de Catalunya - Departament d'Ensenyament

Schools in Spain and Catalonia might be a) public schools, b) publicly-funded private or, in other words, private schools subsidised with public funds[5] c) private schools. Regarding the second and contrary to other European countries, rather than a result of neoliberal policies, these schools originate from the educational expansion after the fall of the dictatorship (Verger, Fontdevila and Zancao, 2016).

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[4] According to legislation, those who complete the middle grade can access upper grade and university studies although the graph does not mention it.
[5] Original in Catalan: 'escoles concertades'.

As the official website of the Catalan government[6] informs us, even though public schools provide education free of charge, parents have to pay an amount for books and learning material, while subsidies are provided in some cases, depending on the family's financial status. Regarding the registration process, this is normally carried out each spring. Parents may choose the school in general, but they are distributed according to specific criteria if the places are insufficient.

The school hours of primary education in all schools must take place between 8.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. The compulsory teaching hours are 5 (3 or 3.5 in the morning and 1.5 or 2 in the afternoon). At noon, there is a two-hour margin of rest, and the time zones are generally from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. In some public schools, extra hours might be added if necessary, depending on the students' progress towards the achievement of basic skills[7].

According to the same website, the School Board is the school community's collegiate body, oriented to participate in the organization and operation of the schools and is elected for a four-year term. All groups of the community are represented there; principals, teachers, students, administration, etc. They participate in decision-making processes regarding the educational project, financial management, general programming, etc. In private schools, the school board makes decisions on issues proposed by the school's owner. Last, all educational centers of Catalonia must own and follow standard documents regarding: a) the center's management, b) its educational project, c) the curriculum, and d) its organization.

All in all, we should keep in mind that the educational system in Catalonia promotes the autonomy of the educational centers, innovation, and families' participation. At the same time, it is strongly competency-based, following the European example and stressing skills ignored by conventional curricula. This is important since, on the one hand, LEC facilitates the continuation or creation of alternative educational projects with schools of new creation, and on the other hand, the whys behind such orientation that comes from above run the risk of losing their political dimension. We could say that such schools may be easily transformed into a via towards adaptation to the capitalist system's current needs; a system that rejects the mere conventional

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[6] http://educacio.gencat.cat/ (last access 2021/07/17).
[7] https://educacio.gencat.cat/ca/arees-actuacio/centres-serveis-educatius/centres/horari-centres/ (last access: 2021/07/17).

transmission of knowledge, giving value to diversity only because it needs a new type of workers; with initiative, autonomy, teamwork, and all the so-called "competencies for life". Of course, this does not mean that all innovative educational proposals have the same orientation; the ways such institutional facilitation towards innovation is used depend upon each project and, more specifically, the agents behind it.

1.2 An approach to the Movement for Pedagogical Renewal worldwide

Is it possible to change society by changing education? This is the central question, according to Garrido (1984)[8], which generated different tendencies among the critics of education. Globally speaking, some chose to renovate and transform schools while others insisted on destroying the institution through deschooling. We will focus on the first tendency.

During the 20th century, various progressive educational movements were born and are still alive through contemporary experiences such as the New School movement inspired by Rousseau, Anti-authoritative Education, and Deschooling (Donadeu, 2012). Schooling initiatives have been based on three pillars: a) an active methodology, b) democratic structures, and c) openness to the broader environment.

Ferri (2020) explains how students' central and active role in their education respecting the individual rhythms is not a new concept, but a topic that arose in 1762 after Rousseau's 'Emile, or On Education'. The New School Movement inspired a series of progressive pedagogies that have survived and inspire contemporary schools and educational projects.

I will briefly refer to a few that influence many schools in Catalonia, including the educational centers selected for this thesis, due to their strong syncretism. Therefore, although they might

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[8] "Is education, and therefore school, cause or consequence of society? Is society a function of education or vice versa? Is education a factor for stability or social change? Is it possible to change society by changing education, or, on the contrary, only by changing society is education modified? A dialectical problem that, in my opinion, originates two well-differentiated currents among renovators: that of those who dedicate their study and work to the renewal of the school itself, believing that by changing it they will also change society; and that of those who dedicate their effort to directly change society and consider school as one of the subsequent beneficiaries of that change. We will call the first option the "psycho-pedagogical" current and the second the "psychosociological" current" (Garrido, 1984: 143).

follow and choose one pedagogical line that best describes them to identify with, ideas and practices are brought from a wide range of alternative pedagogies. For example, the public school is a Regio-Emilia school, but Waldorf activities are included in daily life, such as the Waldorf fairies. At the same time, the active pedagogy proposed by Rebeca and Mauricio Wild has strongly influenced the pedagogical team who attended their seminars. This syncretism will later be described in more detail in terms of the ethnographies for each school.

Montessori: María Montessori (1870-1952) worked with children with disabilities in Italy and, combining her studies in medicine with pedagogy, created the Casa de Bambini (1907). The school was based on the importance ambiance has on children's development as the main factor that encourages experimentation and facilitates learning.

Waldorf[9]: Based on Steiner's philosophy and Anthroposophy, this pedagogy has its roots in 1919 with the creation of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart. It focuses on students' development in a holistic, integrated way with a special interest in artistic skills, imagination, creativity, and emotional life.

Summerhill School: A democratic, self-governing private school founded by Alexander Neill in 1921 where adults and children have equal status. Decisions upon the school's daily life and laws that govern it are agreed upon in the school Meetings, which emphasize the distinction between freedom and license and teach students how to live life in a community. Summerhill "provides an environment where children can grow up happily, free from many of the anxieties and neuroses of the outside world"[10], where children manage their curriculum and are free to attend formal lessons or not.

Freinet[11]: Pedagogy developed by the French pedagogue Célestin Freinet (1896-1966). It is famous for introducing the press and its use for the composition of texts and newspapers by students, which replaced conventional schoolbooks. His pedagogy is based on a few fundamental principles such as a) cooperation and citizenship, b) organization of the school life by the whole

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[9] https://www.waldorfeducation.org/waldorf-education
[10] http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/
[11] https://skasiarxeio.wordpress.com/

community through cooperation, c) free expression and communication, d) 'natural' experiential methods of learning, research, and experimentation and e) connection of the school with the community-society.

Reggio Emilia: The educational movement of Reggio Emilia started at the end of the Second World War (1945) in Italy when a few women created the first nursery schools so that they could go to work. Led by Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), it focuses on creativity, observation, and documentation of the learning process, the active participation of families, and the quality of the space-environment, which is considered the third teacher after teachers and families.

Critical pedagogy: It was mainly developed after the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's (1921-1997) Pedagogy of the Oppressed published in English in 1970. Critical pedagogy focuses on how education and politics are inseparable and how education can be used as a vehicle for emancipation and liberation.

Forest Schools[12]: Forest schools appeared in Europe in the early 20th century offering open-air and child-centered education in direct contact with nature. One of them was 'Escola de Bosc' in Barcelona, a public, secular school created in 1914 for pedagogical and therapeutic purposes. Most students were children of factory workers, and many had respiratory problems. Under the direction of Rosa Sensat, New School's pedagogy was applied, placing them at the center of the project and offering them a healthy place to study while encouraging the active participation of both students and parents through school assemblies.

Free/Active: Schools based on free and active pedagogies appear at the end of the 20th century and offer a different educational model from the traditional. Rebeca and Mauricio Wild are among their most popular representatives at an international level. The movement promotes respect for the child's development and spontaneous play through unstructured and relaxed environments that respond to their needs and favor contact with nature and culture.

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[12] https://www.ccma.cat/324/cent-anys-de-lescola-del-bosc-la-primera-escola-municipal-de-barcelona/noticia/2386793/ (last access: 2021/07/18).

1.3 Pedagogical Renewal today and how we got here: Alternative schools and policies in Catalonia through time

In general terms, approaches to the Spanish and Catalan context regarding alternative education have focused on description, characteristics, and terminology, while some have adopted a historical perspective regarding how such schools and policies have developed through time. I will first refer to the latter.

Pericacho (2014) explains how the history of pedagogical renewal in Spain is both heterogeneous and parallel to each social and political context in time. Similarly, Carbonell (2016) argues that pedagogical renewal has developed in Catalonia in a non-linear and non-continuous way since the beginning of the 20th century and distinguishes three periods that he calls "the three pedagogical springs". The first one starts at the beginning of the 20th century and more significantly during the Second Republic (1931-1936), while its influence can be traced back to 1867 when The Free Institution of Education ILE[13] was founded. It is what Carbonell calls the "republican spring", when there is much experimentation by both the public and the private sector and support by state institutions.

Various school networks and other educational initiatives were formed then, among which the Montessori schools' network, summer schools, and school retreats called 'colonies escolars', as well as some open-air public schools. Also, the Modern School (Escola Moderna) was founded by the anarchist educator Ferrer i Guardia in 1901 in Barcelona, giving birth to a network of 32 similar self-managed schools all over Catalonia and Spain, which attempted to fight both the state and religious dogmatism and replace it with a scientific, integral and experiential education.

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[13] La Institución Libre de Enseñanza.

According to Cuevas (2010), the principles of the Modern School were the following:

- Make children well-educated, truthful, just people, free from prejudice. For them, dogmatism will be substituted by natural sciences' rationality.
- Secularism, against all religious teaching and fighting superstition.
- Coeducation of the sexes (mixed education of boys and girls) and classes. Ferrer supported not creating a school exclusively for poor children, but rather an education in "the innocent equality of childhood", without promoting class hatred.
- The non-existence of exams; teaching that stimulated the child's natural curiosity, without coercing through rewards and punishments (p. 103).

Ferrer was condemned to death in 1909, accused as an instigator of the events that occurred in the Tragic Week's insurrection[14].

After the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931), more value was given to public education, which was viewed as the vehicle to the construction of a free, democratic society. Therefore, a significant investment in schools' creation and teachers' training occurred since they are recognized as the key actors of educational change. 'Institut-escola' was born combining primary and secondary education, and alternative pedagogical theories and methodologies from all over

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[14] Tragic Week started on July 26, 1909, in Barcelona as a general strike, soon to be transformed into a popular wider political and social rebellion that expanded to other Catalan towns. From riots and protests to the burning of churches, Francesc Ferrer i Guárdia was shot in Montjuic on October 13, 1909, accused of promoting the Tragic Week revolutionary movement and the attempt of the king's assassination by Mateu Morral (Solà, 2010).

Europe were introduced to the centers, from Montessori, Claparede, and Decroly to Dewey and Rousseau.

The commitment to the increase of schooling and the improvement of education was maintained even during the Civil War when the autonomous government of Catalonia created the New Unified School Council (CENU) with the collaboration of teachers' syndicates and collectives. It was a project based on anarchism's educational proposal -continuation of the rationalist schools- implemented in the public school system and interrupted by Franco's dictatorship. More specifically, created in 1936, with the involvement of the anarcho-syndicalist confederation CNT, it aimed to plan and manage education in Catalonia during the Civil War and the social revolution. Its initiator was the anarchist pedagogue Joan Puig i Elias.

The second period is what Carbonell calls the "spring of resistance" under Franco's dictatorship. Francoist consequences were disastrous for schools as many of them closed, thousands of teachers got exiled, and there was a reorientation to a traditional school model promoting national Catholicism, gender segregation, and authoritarian relations. Catalan language and culture were banned, along with any activity that included diversity in one way or another. Due to the restrictions of that period, activity related to alternative education was limited and clandestine, developed through the exile and mainly concentrated on private initiatives and the creation of cooperatively run active schools.

It is important to mention at this point the Pedagogical Renewal Movements (MRP), which, as Esteban (2016) argues, have managed to survive through time, providing a line of continuity in terms of pedagogical renewal. Born between the 60s and 70s, they were self-organized teachers who collectively exchanged reflections upon their practices. They did not belong to any party or union, and most of them were teachers of early childhood and primary schools. 'Asociació de Mestres Rosa Sensat[15]' was the first and most well-known, essential pedagogical institution created in 1965 in Catalonia and took its name from the director of Escola Municipal del Bosc.

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[15] https://www.rosasensat.org/

Rosa Sensat was devoted to teachers' training for a new school, recovering progressive methodologies, and introducing new ones. It organized Summer Schools (Escoles d'Estiu), attended by teachers from all over Spain, bringing experiences from other countries, especially Italy and France, and encouraging teachers to experiment, debate, and exchange ideas. From the Summer School held in Barcelona in July 1975 arises the document "Per una Nova Escola Pública" [For a New Public School] (X Escola d' Estiu de Barcelona, 1975), an important reference for the subsequent MRPs and the various agents that discussed the public school model for the incipient democracy. The result was numerous initiatives, which unfortunately did not last long due to economic obstacles or political reasons.

Figure 3: X Escola d' Estiu de Barcelona - Per una Nova Escola Pública

Initiatives of that period that managed to survive would later form the Collective of Schools for the Catalan Public School (CEPEPC)[16] that was created during the Spanish transition in 1987

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[16]   https://diarieducacio.cat/crida-per-retrobar-mestres-i-pares-de-les-antigues-escoles-del-cepepc/   (last   access 2021/07/18).

and consisted of about eighty schools, most of which were cooperatives run by groups of parents and teachers linked to Rosa Sensat. Their focus was to recover the use of Catalan culture and language in schools and the Catalan tradition of active pedagogies, while they were gradually integrated into the public system at the end of the 80s.

Finally, according to Carbonell, the third, ongoing pedagogical "spring of the civil society" started at the beginning of the millennium, mostly with schools emerged on the margins, and increased during 2005-2006, especially during 2008-2010. It is marked by a tendency to form networks among innovative schools and the belief that educational projects matter more than legal frameworks. Therefore, schools empower themselves and learn from each other through networks rather than the state's help. Ferri (2020) also agrees that this is achieved thanks to the Law of Education of Catalonia (LEC) that gives them autonomy to create educational projects with a certain degree of freedom regarding the curriculum. More and more centers join each year, either schools of new creation or others who wish to transform. What defines their degree of pedagogical rupture, sometimes facilitating, others permitting, and others putting obstacles in educational change, is the combination of the school's administration, teaching staff, and regional inspector.

Vaira (2001 as cited in Fischer, 2006) contributes to the discussion when he writes about the consequences of social transformations in schools. According to the sociologist, neoliberal ideology has resulted in the loss of the state's institutions' central role and the development of an 'individualistic social ethic' and the business model as a basis for the organization of social activities. These changes had a massive impact on educational systems since schools started to be seen as an extension of the welfare state, sharing its limitations and defects. The idea of a more efficient and flexible school that corresponds to the demands of the job market, the wider society, and the students' families is now commonplace. This has given the school an entrepreneurial nature that focuses on responding to a variety of competing issues and ensuring the quality of the educational services and products offered.

The central idea to all these new requirements is that the 'autonomy of educational institutions' must govern schools. This refers to the more significant margins for organizational or

pedagogical decisions and choices over the curricula within some general directive and evaluative rules set by the ministry. Instead of a citizen's formation, schools are now supposed to supply individuals with applied knowledge for their future careers so that they can be flexible in an increasingly demanding and complex job market. As a result, instead of transmitting formal and standard knowledge, the school's new task is to adapt human capital to the new economic and social conditions. In this context of the new faces of 'autonomy' and competition, the school's direction must defend the school from external social pressures that threaten its institutional identity and from internal conflicts that arise. This is a crucial point that partly helps us explain the mysticism and suspiciousness encountered in our schools.

This is the context that gives birth to the New School 21 (Escola Nova 21)[17], an alliance of schools and civil society institutions for an advanced education system carried out between 2016 and 2019. It is a platform of 30 innovative schools -23 public and seven private schools subsidized with public funds- and others that wish to transform their pedagogical practices following the UNESCO and OECD relevant calls.

It was created by UNESCOCAT - Center for the UNESCO of Catalonia, the Jaume Bofill Foundation, and the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and was then joined by the "la Caixa" banking foundation and the Provincial Government of Barcelona [Diputació de Barcelona]. At the same time, it also signed an agreement of collaboration with the Government of Catalonia's Department of Education that supports it as a secondary actor. New School 21's approach was articulated in Barcelona through Networks for Change [Xarxes per al Canvi], an initiative led by the Barcelona Education Consortium.

The purpose and goals are driven by the general local progressive, competency-based educational policies focused on diversity. According to its official website:

> Escola Nova 21 has proposed a transformation of the Catalan educational system to bring it fully up-to-date, embracing a purpose aimed at developing competencies for life, in our historical context, and adopting learning practices based on existing knowledge of how people learn.

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[17] https://www.escolanova21.cat/ (last access 2021/07/18).

The ultimate goal has been that all children, regardless of their context or conditions, in all schools, be able to enjoy empowering and relevant learning experiences that allow them to develop their life projects with dignity, meaning, and well-being.

The common horizon of change for all schools was grounded in a framework that supports many possible educational models and projects that have in common these four interconnected and interdependent axes:

Educational purpose for the whole development of the child, aimed at developing competencies for life
Learning practices based on the existing knowledge of how people learn
Competency-based and holistic evaluation, designed to support learning, and
Autonomous and open organization, capable of self-reflection, innovation, and change.

Last, the alliance's program has four principal actions:

Support existing projects for transformation in schools and the system
Engage in collaborative work for educational change
Build alliances with education administrations and local governments
Generate protocols for system-wide change.

What Carbonell (2016) also mentions is the high visibility and popularity of these innovative schools which tend to have waiting lists, crowded open days, and pressure from middle-classed parents to enter. According to the author, school choice is no longer just between public and private, but also between different pedagogical models and projects in each sector, while the result of the word of mouth and increased information and propaganda set risks in terms of equity.

Apart from New School 21, I should mention another important network in Catalonia, the Network of Libertarian Education XELL (xarxa d'educació lliure [18]). Founded in 2009, it connects more than twenty libertarian schools and educational projects whose main objective is creating spaces that respect the needs of kids and adults. Among the educational projects that belong to XELL, there is a predominance of live pedagogy and kids' free development.

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[18] https://educaciolliure.org/ (last access 2021/07/18).

Similarly, although from a rather more critical point of view, the research group GRES of the university of Girona has recently studied what they call 'third impulse of pedagogical renewal in Catalonia' (Feu and Torrent, 2020a, 2020b) which is marked by an increasing intensity of unconventional educational practices. However, due to its ongoing character, the research group chose to define it as an impulse rather than a period, since the results cannot be seen yet, as in the case of the two previous periods of educational renewal in Spain.

After visiting 115 centers in Catalonia, Feu and Torrent (2020a) draw attention to the complexity of educational change today which, far from the pedagogical renewal of the past, embraces reproductive practices and produces neoliberal subjects. The authors suggest that, to understand it better, we could conceptualize an axis. In one of its extremes we find the concept of innovation that introduces novelty and alters conventional school grammar and in the other renewal that, focusing on a social and political dimension, transforms traditional school culture radically. Therefore, innovation and renewal, often used as synonyms, should not be confused. Contrary to previous periods of pedagogical renewal, there is now a shift towards the concept of innovation, explained by the invasion of the neoliberal hegemonic discourse in education.

Figure 4: Axis of educational change

Innovation ———————————————— Renewal

Source: Own elaboration, based on Feu and Torrent

Having focused on renewal, the researchers point out that the movement of pedagogical renewal is broad, expanding across the Catalan territory, and heterogeneous. Nevertheless, there is a generalized tendency to methodological eclecticism, constant change, and denial to identify with a concrete pedagogical line. The reference to classical pedagogues that marked the renewal movements of the 20th century is limited, except for Montessori, and there is no integral theoretical corpus. Besides, although the practices differ, there is a focus on students' high level of participation in decision-making and evaluation that does not aim to any form of classification. Apart from students' centrality, Feu and Torrent underline the role of teachers and parents and the relation with the broader community such projects have. In addition, teachers' commitment and overexertion are expected, which also justifies the staff's high mobility. At the same time, parents' involvement is welcome and expected since the school is viewed as an extension of

family and a space where adults and kids learn and build a society together. Last, most renewal projects understand themselves as part of the neighborhood and collaborate with various local collectives. What seems to differentiate them is the attitude towards the incorporation of technology.

Regarding the similarities with the previous periods of educational change, these include the methodological about-turn and the different, non-hegemonic perspective on the educator and the educated. However, the first and second periods took place in a modern social context, while the current is in the post-modern era and, therefore, get influenced by it. A significant difference that emerged by such contextual differences is that while the notion of pedagogical renewal was expressed openly in the past, there is now a tendency to discard the concept and use the term of innovation instead. This reveals the different educational objectives and socio-political pretensions of the projects that seem to aim to be attractive without reflecting on the 'whys' of the numerous changes, such as the introduction of project-based methods, self-assessment, and emotional education. In other words, what educational projects in the third period of educational change seem to lack in their pedagogical debate is the explicit reference to the political dimension of education and its conceptualization as a vehicle for social transformation.

According to Feu & Torrent (2020b), to understand such differences, it is essential to remember that society was conceived in political terms during the first two periods, and power was visible. This is not the case in the 'liquid', depoliticized, and individualistic post-modern reality where the contemporary individual transforms from an active citizen to a mere consumer. Especially during the second period of educational change, the movements fought for a state school of freedom, social justice, and democracy as opposed to something concrete: Franco's dictatorship.

On the other hand, the phenomenon under research is now placed within the Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM) and its neoliberal agenda. Authors who studied it place its beginning in the 1980s when, after the governments' suggestions, the World Bank and the OECD started reforming schools based on the new theories of how human beings learn and shifted the focus from the teacher to the student. This way, schools would be able to adapt to the changing

world of global mobilization, efficiency and productivity would be boosted, and the quality of education would be increased in general.

At this point, we could remember Bauman's work (2007), according to whom what sells now in terms of the liquid modernity is difference instead of similarity, advisors that teach how to advance instead of teachers who show an only way. At the same time, neo-romanticism has another significant impact in the Catalan context acknowledging and opposing characteristics of our civilization and way of life such as profit, commodification, technocracy, and environmental destruction. Neo-romantics perceive home, family, and the woman as symbols of the lost values that belong to a past that needs to be brought back to life. This is relevant in our schools where neo-romantic views are often met, especially regarding upbringing practices and pedagogical ideas that stress children's intrinsically good nature and interpret as manipulation or violence any attempt to modify their behavior (del Olmo, 2013).

Although most authors like Donadeu (2012) and Fernández (2018) offer some main characteristics of free schools that can be found in terms of this third period of educational change, I will argue that their high diversity makes it an impossible task and will instead focus on the common social aspects that mark their discourses which are a) teacher's presence as a companion to learning b) student's protagonist role in their learning and c) parents' high involvement. Last, I would like to mention that due to the non-official / alegal character of some private, cooperatively-run, and self-organized projects, precise data is hard to be found, except the case of public innovative, private subsidized with public funds, and some private schools. To get an idea, Ludus, an important website for alternative education, mentions 127 alternative educational projects in Catalonia, out of 574 it mentions for Spain[19].

Therefore, two things should be kept in mind. Firstly, alternative schools and policies in Catalonia are not new; either clandestine or integrated into the public school system, they have always had a significant role. This legacy is evident in Barcelona in many ways, from exhibitions organized by the town hall or frequent syndicates' related courses and informal conversations

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[19] https://ludus.org.es/es, last access: 2021/08/10.

taking place in squats and ateneus to many families or teachers whose imaginary is marked by CEPEPCs or other progressive schools they have attended as students or teachers.

Figure 5: Exhibition 2018, The pedagogical revolution of Ferrer i Guàrdia, Castell de Montjuïc

Source: Personal photographic collection

Figure 6: Posters of related events at ateneus during my stay
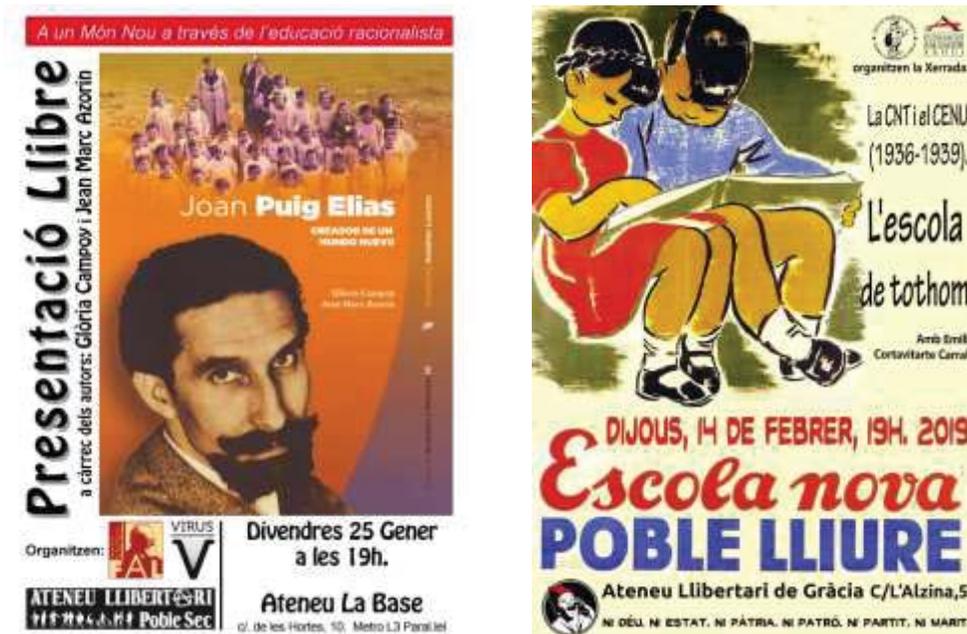
Source: Personal collection

Secondly, despite this legacy, whereas the purpose of educational change in Catalonia through history was to fight the church and the state or bring Franco's regime to an end, its current political agenda is somewhat blurred and unclear, ignoring the relationship between innovation/renewal and social change and individualizing the learning process while prioritizing methodological aspects. It is what Solé and Moyano (2017) have called the "psi colonization of the educational discourse" that has replaced the cultural transmission with individual emotional and behavioral aspects ignoring the socio-political reality.

Today, educational change is often conceived as an adaptation to the neoliberal, liquid society and market requirements instead of resistance or social critique. In other words, critical renewal or anarchist pedagogical proposals are limited, whereas innovative, alternative education is expanding, a fact that makes many radical leftists talk about Ferrer's Modern school and other similar experiences with a certain nostalgia. This specific character the current period has taken is, of course, promoted by global influences such as GERM's neoliberal agenda and the value given to difference in our liquid changing societies. At the same time, neo-romanticism has an impact on families and projects promoting non-directive pedagogies.

All in all, school institution is questioned and changing in the context of capitalist societies' general transformation, marked by the crisis of the welfare state and the rise of neoliberal policies. These social changes are crucial due to the inevitable influence they have on the construction of alternatives in education, putting limits on the wishes and practices for improvement (Merchán, 2005).

At this point, we could remember Castoriadis' (1984) work, according to which crisis leads to a struggle, motivated by and directed to autonomy. Commenting on the global crisis, the author refers to the 'collapse of the family, sexual rules and traditional relations among generations' (Castoriadis, 1984: 61), which constitute the foundations of the current social structure. At the same time, it seems that new, imaginary meanings are created to replace the ones inherited, which no longer make any sense. It is interesting to think upon his proposal considering that these 'new, imaginary meanings' might as well be built upon old ideas and ways of living,

revived by the neo-romantic tendencies. Although I will keep in mind the restrictions, limits, and contradictions set by the socio-historical context, disguised in many cases, I will also try to explore and indicate the critical dimensions such period of crisis holds together with educational projects constructed in it, which should not be overlooked either.

1.4 Relevant studies, terminology about alternative education, and families who opt for it

Language is important; not only do words shed light on social realities, but they also have the power to shape them. Therefore, it is essential to look at a few basic terms used in various contexts in order to understand a bit better any confusions and misunderstandings surrounding our topic, to contextualize more our schools and to make a contribution towards definitions that will hopefully shape the future in different directions than the previously described tendencies.

"Is the child to be considered as an individuality, or as an object to be moulded according to the whims and fancies of those about it?" asks Emma Goldman at the beginning of the 20th century (Goldman, 1906: 1). Although anarchist theory is complex, the passion for freedom is a common ground among its theorists, and education is indeed situated at the core of their thought as an instrument for revolution (Trasatti, 2005; Boyd, 1976). Focusing on the institutional power, anarchists vision a replacement of social control by values of mutual aid. They consider it necessary to destroy the educational system and the state itself, just like all kinds of authority and privileges (Boyd, 1976). But what is freedom for anarchists? Far from a natural gift and similarly to contemporary anthropological theory, they seem to perceive it as a social construction and a collective cultural product, an idea demonstrated in several writings, from Proudhon to Bakunin (Morris, 1993; Gallo, 2012).

Suissa (2010) highlights the failure of many theorists to distinguish between libertarian education or free/progressive schools and anarchist education. According to her, 'libertarian' is a broad term used to refer to all progressive, alternative, radical, or non-conventional educational approaches. On the other hand, anarchist education differs from the mainstream libertarian regarding its motivations, a commitment to undermining the state by creating alternative forms of social

organization and relationships. In other words, it understands education as a political, prefigurative, and transformative encounter (Mueller, 2012).

> The term 'libertarian' is used to refer, broadly, to all educational approaches which reject traditional models of teacher authority and hierarchical school structure, and which advocate maximum freedom for the individual child within the educational process – including, in its extreme version, the option to opt-out of this process altogether. I shall use the term 'anarchist education' to refer specifically to a tradition of educational practice and theory which, I argue, although it appears to overlap with libertarian ideas in certain respects, is significantly different from the mainstream libertarian tradition (Suissa, 2010: 75).

> It would appear that the anarchist educational experiments are unique in the world of 'progressive', 'libertarian' or 'free' education, not in terms of their pedagogical practice but the substantive ideas and motivations behind them. These ideas can only be grasped in the context of the anarchist commitment to undermining the state by creating alternative forms of social organization and relationships (Suissa, 2010: 97).

In a similar line, Gribble (2004) adds that the source of the confusion is that progressists and anarchists spoke with one voice about most educational aspects. Undoubtedly, the Modern School and other anarchist schools in Catalonia and Spain followed New School's methodological practices, but a somewhat different ideology guided them. According to Esteruelas (2009), although anarchism may be denied or criticized as an idea that cannot be realized, this is not the case for its pedagogical proposal[20] that was not only real but also historically influential in the Catalan and peninsular context. Therefore, ignoring or invalidating anarchism's proposals in the field of education should be viewed as a personal, political choice that has no connection to reality. Anarchists in Catalonia have always considered necessary social action and education for the just, new society they fight for since a change of mentality is vital to achieving it. In other words, according to them, citizens must be transformed so that society as a whole may also be transformed.

Pérez (2018) also highlights the difference between anarchist and alternative pedagogies. Although there are many methodological similarities, the differences in political and ideological terms between anarchist (libertarias) and free/libertarian (libres) schools are important in their understanding of both freedom and the goals of education. According to libertarian schools,

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[20] Best mirrored in the Modern School and rationalist education.

freedom is natural and individual, whereas for anarchist schools it is socially constructed and conquest only possible to reach through the collective. Also, while libertarian schools mainly aim to the child's personal development and sometimes adaptation to the current labor market, anarchist schools add and prioritize social transformation -for which the agents fight both inside and out of the school walls- over personal development.

Anarchist pedagogical ideas themselves could be divided, according to Cuevas (2003, 2010), into two larger groups; the non-directive theories (Tolstoi, Mella, Stirner) and the sociopolitical (Bakunin, Ferrer i Guardia). Nonetheless, there are a few common principles among all which Pérez (2018) defined based on other scholars: a) antiauthoritarianism, b) integral education, c) self-organization, d) solidarity and mutual support, and e) co-education. Moreover, Cuevas (2010) argues that, although there has been much interest and debate over anarchist education, we could talk about only few experiences that define themselves as anarchist schools during the last 30 years, except for Paideia in Merida. According to the author, social contexts have significantly changed since the 19th century's rural Spain, where illiteracy rates were high and educating the working class was vital. "Today, social classes still exist, but their cultural and educational differences have been reduced, and their needs are different" (Cuevas, 2010: 108).

Suissa (2010) adds that now that contemporary classrooms have become far less oppressive than in Ferrer i Guardia's Spain, it may be harder to see what it is in public schooling that calls for resistance. Nevertheless, as Sigüenza (2009) mentions and Cuevas (2010) reaffirms, thousands of educational experiences bear anarchist elements, although most of them are either unconscious or do not identify with the anarchist label.

Other sources of information in terms of terminology for the Catalan context are Contreras' work (2004) and Donadeu's PhD thesis (2012). According to them, libertarian education (educació lliure) is the type of education that follows the participants' convictions instead of the state's guidelines. Libertarian education is found in such schools (escoles lliures) that are usually small, where learning is not bounded with curricular knowledge, there is an environment of responsibility and freedom, and families' involvement is high. 'Alternative' is often used as a synonym, referring to schools that propose a different education. Nevertheless, alternative

schools should be differentiated from alternative pedagogies, which may occur in alternative or conventional institutions like project-based schools and cooperative learning (Carneros and Murillo, 2017). Last, anarchist schools (escoles llibertàries) practice an education based on freedom and aim at social transformation in line with their anarchist moral system.

In the USA context now, Fillion (2015, 2017) agrees with our perception that alternative education has been overlooked in anthropology, and draws attention to why this should change. Based on her ethnography in a Sudbury school in California, she argues that power relations are also found in seemingly democratic and egalitarian spaces. According to her, a study of such spaces would shed light on neoliberal ideology's ruling and adaptable nature, which increases segregation by race and class but is compatible with the concepts of autonomy, choice, and freedom that underly their philosophy. Therefore, democratic education both resists and supports the neoliberal agenda. Nevertheless, the author does not ignore radical potentials which, according to her, could be unwrapped in public educational contexts. From a similar point of view, agreeing with Apple (2011) that far from being a neutral arena, education is a site for both reproducing and challenging oppression, Hantzopoulos (2016) shows that although democratic education is not liberating, it is not disciplining either.

Therefore, we could say that most researchers divide alternative educational projects into two groups: the free/libertarian (libres) and the anarchist (libertarias). Besides, and according to Contreras and Arnaus (2020), the term 'alternative education' is the wider existing, which may refer to any way of conceiving education and schools that differ from the conventional conceptions in the dominant schooling. It also includes other non-school experiences and is, by definition, education on the margins. The authors argue that, through history, the particular term has had certain connotations such as freedom, well-being, respect, and experiential learning. Moreover, in many cases, alternative education is linked to a general search for other ways of life, focusing on motherhood and respectful upbringing.

However, it is important to highlight that not only are different terms used for similar experiences, but the same terms are also used for completely different ones. Thus, the terms to refer to non-conventional education are endless and change in space and time. In the current

Spanish context, some of the most frequently used are: escuelas libres, escuelas nuevas, escuelas democráticas, escuelas holísticas, escuelas radicales, escuelas no convencionales, escuelas diferentes, comunidades de aprendizaje, educación lenta, educación viva, educación respetuosa, escuelas activas, escuelas bosques, escuelas Montessori, Waldorf and the list goes on.

In front of this terminological chaos, Feu and Torrent (2020a) differentiate certain key concepts (reform, innovation, pedagogical renewal, and critical renewal) and propose an analytical scheme that may help us. They determine four models of educational change regarding the changes they introduce. The first one, 'reform' comes from above, is essentially legislative impacting the whole territory and focuses on changing the didactics only, from teaching and learning methods to educational material. On the contrary, the second one changes the school's internal structure, from spaces and times to mixing ages; this is 'innovation', a change driven by educational centers. There are two types of educational innovation: it may be either standardized or hegemonic, focusing on technological aspects and the individual, or structural, radical innovation that alters the hegemonic school grammar and the traditional school culture, which is also called 'pedagogical renewal'.

Renewal is the third model of educational change that alters the external structure, inviting families or students to participate in decision-making, for example, constantly revising the meaning of education and the school's function. The last model, the authors propose, is a type of pedagogical renewal that is less frequent nowadays but still important to mention; a class-sensitive 'critical pedagogical renewal'. This has a specific social and political position incorporated in daily life, opposite the hegemonic neoliberal model and defensive of a just, equitable, and inclusive world. The authors also draw attention to the main areas of renewal which are: a) educational aims, b) methodology/methodologies, c) structure / organization / functioning, d) curriculum, and e) educational roles.

Figure 7: The four models of educational change

Reform   Innovation   Renewal   Critical Renewal

Source: Own elaboration based on Feu and Torrent

Due to the ambiguous connotations the word 'libertarian' has, especially in the US context, I will avoid using it in this thesis. Also, the word 'free' is not satisfactory either because of its reference to the gratis character that might cause misunderstandings. Instead, I will use the word 'alternative' to refer to all schools that use pedagogies as the ones described before. This choice of words would have probably been different if the thesis referred to another context than Catalan or written in another language than English.

What is certain is that despite the heterogeneity encountered in the field and agreeing with Cuevas and other researchers, anarchism's influence regarding alternative pedagogies has been central through history in Catalonia -either consciously or not- and must be acknowledged as opposed to the pedagogical amnesia. Besides, as Fillion (2015) noticed in a Sudbury school, our schools are also spaces of contradictions. On the one hand, they are important places of resistance that bear a radical potential to create another world built on values that resist neoliberal capitalism as they invite us to rethink the ways we educate children and, therefore, the ways society proceeds as a whole. On the other hand, there are dangerous interconnections between anarchism and neoliberalism as they both value autonomy, freedom, and responsibility, although in entirely different ways, theoretically and practically. Anarchist pedagogies are those which do not reduce freedom to individual choice and consider autonomy and responsibility both on an individual and a social, collective level. Although they are topics upon which numerous philosophical and political debates were built through time, impossible and unwanted to develop in this thesis, I propose looking into such interconnections a bit more.

In terms of his essays on liberty or freedom[21], Berlin (2002 [1958]) examines two of the many senses it has, which he calls 'positive freedom' and 'negative freedom', already recognized by Bakunin (1971 [1871]) years before. Briefly, positive freedom is when people have control over what they can do or be and are responsible for their actions which can be justified based on their ideas and goals, whereas negative freedom is when they are left to do or be with no interference by others. This negative freedom would probably coincide with the emic concept 'license' used by the participants of this research and Neill (1966), that is, doing whatever one wants without restrictions.

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[21] Used as synonyms by the author.

I understand that such different notions of freedom have indeed existed throughout the history of humanity. However, I still find them to be problematic in the same degree as I consider problematic the tendency to conceptualize human nature as a set of individual characteristics, the individual as something different from the societal, or anarchy as a synonym of chaos when it is the ultimate expression of organization (from below). To understand freedom in another way, out of a predetermined human nature and false dualisms, the work of Castoriadis can help us.

For Castoriadis, free people think and act consciously, participating in the construction of laws established for the society's function. In terms of this condition, one limits oneself freely, without being oppressed, to live in harmony with others. Acknowledging the difficulties and obstacles related to our coexistence and freedom that present culture sets, the author says:

> I wish to be able to meet the other person as a being like myself and yet absolutely different, not like a number or a frog perched on another level of a hierarchy of revenues and power. I wish to see the other and for the other to see me as another human being. I want our relationship to be something other than a field for the expression of aggressivity, our competition to remain within the limits of play, our conflicts to concern real problems and stakes .. I want the other to be free, for my freedom begins where the other's freedom begins, and, all alone, I can at best be merely 'virtuous in misfortune' (Castoriadis, 1987: 92).

Explaining the 'revolutionary project' of individual and collective autonomy, concepts inseparable, the author defines it as "the project of transforming present society into a society organized and oriented towards fostering the autonomy of all, this transformation being accomplished by the autonomous action of human beings" (Ibid, p. 78).

At this point, we shall go back to Berlin (2002 [1958]), who refers to the ideal social condition aimed by the anarchists, where rules would no longer be necessary. I would add that schools would be neither! In this society:

> Liberty coincides with law: autonomy with authority. A law which forbids me to do what I could not, as a sane being, conceivably wish to do is not a restraint of my freedom. In the ideal society, composed of wholly responsible beings, rules, because I should scarcely be conscious of them, would gradually wither away (p. 195).

Freedom for Bakunin is tied to limits and laws. At the same time, it is not a feature of exclusion and isolation but connection and interaction. Freedom of others is not restrictive to one's freedom but a necessary condition for it to exist (Morris, 1993). Bakunin expresses clearly the conception of freedom that we defend as well when he asks if it consists in revolting against all laws and answers:

> No, in so far as laws are natural, economic, and social laws, not authoritatively imposed, but inherent in things, in relations, in situations, in natural development of which is expressed by those laws. Yes, if there are political and juridical laws, imposed by men upon men; whether violently by the right of force; whether by deceit or hypocrisy-in the name of religion or any doctrine whatever; or finally, by the dint of the diction, the democratic falsehood called universal suffrage (Bakunin as cited in Maximoff, 1953: 263).

If I choose to move between freedom and autonomy, it is not by chance; it is due to my conviction that the two concepts are inseparable. There can be no free society or community where the people live in heteronomy, and there might not exist an autonomous society or community where the people feel oppressed, as they set the rules and limits that govern them. The illusion that there are no rules or limits in human nature is, in my opinion, extremely dangerous, it ignores the fact that human nature is bound to sociality, and it has nothing to do with the anarchist proposal.

Due to families' central role in our schools -and alternative schools in general- it is also important at this point to consider school choice and parental involvement and their consequences. Reflecting on the principle of co-education, Pérez (2018) explains why it is problematic, making many progressive projects elitist and attractive to families who share a similar profile, most middle or high class, with university studies, etc. Donadeu (2012) also talks about the high involvement of families in her cases and their profiles. In Paideia, for example, we could speak of a middle class coming from different parts of Spain. Some of them follow an anarchist ideology, while others are driven by pedagogical motivations only. The author argues that alternative schools attract families that believe in the role of education and have the

economic resources to access such projects. Thus, school's inclusive role for all social classes and cultures cannot be contemplated.

Also, it is important to keep in mind that most families choosing alternative forms of education have chosen natural birth and respectful parenthood. Keller's research (2017) about co-parenting groups in Barcelona can reaffirm such arguments. Without ignoring the potentials for social change towards a social organization of care based on social and gender justice, the anthropologist sheds light on the limits found in terms of her research, which coincide with limits and contradictions found in our research as well: a) The profiles of the participant families who all seem to be middle-classed holding a high cultural capital due to the economic resources and time needed for their participation, b) Although there is an attempt for responsibilities related to care to move beyond the home, they keep falling on it, especially on women, c) The demanding working conditions of the educators (usually women as well) ask for much unpaid work.

> The social mix they present is low: they are middle classed, with access barriers in relation to fees and time needed to participate. Likewise, .. they take part of care out of homes, but the responsibility keeps falling on families and on women. .. The third limit that they present in their contribution to a fairer model is found in the working conditions in which care is given. .. In this sense, it is necessary to review the working conditions of the pedagogical groups, widely feminized, that represent another barrier for men to take on care work as a professional option; as well as the overload of volunteer work that falls on the women of the groups. .. Communitarian initiatives have transformative potential, precisely because they are a model that emerges from people's needs and organizes a common response to the capitalist logic that attacks life, helping to create support networks based on reciprocity, interdependence, and universal vulnerability (Keller, 2017: 179-180).

Similarly, Contreras and Arnaus (2020) refer to the model of a home-inspired school using the expression 'educate like at home'. It is a welcoming school that focuses on emotions, fosters affection, coexisting, and belonging, where living and learning are the same. It also suggests a way to rethink family life since families who choose such schools are aware of the importance of caring relations and support in the upbringing processes aiming to a better quality of life not only for children but adults as well. This way, schools become educational spaces for parents too, compromising and involving them, at the same time, in their children's education. The authors bring the example of parenting groups (grupos de crianza) that are common in early childhood.

These are shared spaces between children and their mothers without professional educators, sometimes leading to school projects as children grow. Besides, 'mothers of the day' (madres de día) are also expanding, according to Contreras and Arnaus. They are professional educators who take care of a small group of young children in domestic spaces, typically their home. Families who opt for such alternatives to offer respectful care to their children out of home tend to continue seeking alternative forms of education later.

The academic debate around school choice is rich and much work has been done on its consequences. However, according to Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles, and Wilson (2014), this is not the case for schooling preferences which have not been investigated to the same degree. The authors inform us about the British reality, where parents may express their preference for their child's school through an application they send to the local authority, where they nominate three schools at least. Based on these applications, admission criteria, and the availability of places, parents are then informed of the school that corresponds to them. This is similar to the Catalan system, where siblings who attend school and live closer are prioritized.

In Spain, school choice has mainly been studied through quantitative approaches, as Olmedo (2007) informs us in his thesis that seeks how social class influences school choice and educational trajectories. After observing segregation tendencies, the author focuses the analysis on the motivation, reasons, strategies, and discourses of middle-class families regarding school choice and argues that the objective of these families is the reproduction of their social position.

In another context, back to the study of a Sudbury school in California, Fillion (2015) shows how progressivism leads to segregation by race and class. She explains that it serves as a differential factor among private schools to attract privileged middle-class parents-customers who are pulled away from public schools and view education as a private good. Similarly, in the sphere of cooperatively-run schools, it is what Subirats and Renduales (2016) have called 'elitization of cooperativism'. In terms of their book regarding the commons, the authors briefly refer to cooperatively-run schools often created by teachers or parents as an alternative to the public school that fosters a participative, less bureaucratic educational community, where dynamics are more inclusive and relations less authoritarian. However, as they argue, social segregation is also

part of this reality as the biggest part of the families is middle-classed, Spanish, with university studies. Therefore, such well-intentioned initiatives end up becoming elite schools where there are almost no immigrants or working-class families.

Two research projects with parents in Berlin may also offer some interesting insights regarding school choice and the 'group enrolment' strategy. Roch, Dean, and Breidenstein (2018) show how school choice in Germany cannot be explained by institutional differentiation or parents' unshakable beliefs and dispositions only. By gathering into one class through group enrolment, "a milieu of like-minded, perceived leftist and cosmopolitan parents emerges" (p. 150), who are comfortable with the cultural diversity that characterizes their neighborhood's schools due to awareness of their fellow parents. Therefore, group enrolment as a practice forges a sense of belonging into a group of parents that have the interest in their children's education in common.

Nevertheless, belongingness and segregation are two neighboring realities. In fact, "an unregulated school choice system could lead to a progressive breakdown in shared cultural resources, as groups of parents form educational environments conducive to promoting their beliefs, practices, and conceptions of the good" (Gintis, 1995: 506). Therefore, according to Gintis (1995), school choice could lead to 'an explosion of alternative school cultures' that could be interpreted in varied, contrasting ways.

Such aspects may be approached by studies related to school choice, yet they remain incomplete if we ignore parental involvement (PI). Doucat (2011) interprets PI as a highly ritualized practice that socializes parents to cultural expectations regarding their roles in their children's education. Based on her research with Haitian parents in the USA, she shows how PI creates a group identity among some parents. At the same time, it marginalizes LSCD families -linguistically, culturally, and socio-economically diverse-, who become less likely to participate in schools and are often viewed as apathetic.

Based on Turner, Doucat defines three root paradigms in the ritual system of PI that, although not necessarily explicitly stated, guide behavior and home-school relations: a) a cult of domesticity, b) a cult (ure) of capital, and c) a cult of pedantocracy. More specifically, a) PI is

gendered, reflecting mainstream conceptions of a woman's work (caring for children) and classed as it assumes parents' availability to attend school during school hours, b) 'Good' parents are expected to use all their resources so that their children attend the best schools. Also, they form social networks between them, which are based on similarities in values, backgrounds, etc. and operate in a completely different way compared to working-class or ethnic minority networks. Last, c) pedantocracy welcomes parents to participate in the education of their children as supporters and not decision-makers. The particularities of the PI's ritual system "function to create solidarity and divisiveness" (Doucat, 2011: 406).

Forsberg (2007) reaffirms the intensification of the home-school relation since the 1960s and especially the 90s in most Western school systems. Drawing from the Swedish context, the author shows how teachers construct parental subjects through school letters they send that involve them in educational matters at home. This parental involvement is a way of empowering parents and exercising control at a distance. In addition, schools' accountability of parents and the more significant role they play in their children's education is also fostered by policy documents. They state that the collaboration between schools and parents may create the best conditions for children's development and learning, connecting partnership, PI, and good parenthood. Forsberg interprets the intensified home-school relations as the result of changing ways of governing in the post-industrialized liberal democracies. In Foucaultian terms, apart from the state, people also govern each other and ultimately internalize the norms to become the expected subjects.

As observed in the field, segregation is an essential factor in any anthropological study of alternative schools. Like the Swedish context, parental involvement in our schools is fostered by policy documents such as the Catalan LEC and the teaching staff. However, unlike Fillion's prediction that radical possibilities would unfold in the public school system, the realities we encountered at the field were far more complicated since segregation finds ways to be reproduced there too. Our observations regarding school choice and parental involvement, which will be later discussed in detail, call us to think of other ways to oppose this tendency that do not limit themselves to the mere private-public sphere.

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In any case, and agreeing with Subirats and Renduales (2016), the danger of segregation should not make us renounce such initiatives but make sure egalitarian values guide them. In this direction, as Doucat (2011) proposes, it is essential to broaden understandings of parental involvement acknowledging the differences among family experiences, confront the inequities, and foster a more democratic, open educational system. To make such contributions, I tried to investigate perceptions over education and reveal aspects related to them, such as parental efforts to access the school of their choice.

At the same time, I tried to discover, on the one hand, classist factors that lead families to choose our cases for their children's schooling -already stressed by many social scientists-. On the other hand, I specifically considered cultural or moral aspects, sometimes fostered by the expansion of neo-romantic perceptions. In other words, the possibility of both school choice and parental involvement is indeed limited in the case of low-income profiles that prioritize concerns regarding their survival over such matters. However, parents' value systems proved to be another critical aspect marked by surprises and contradictions. During this navigation, it was many times that we came upon the African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' and negotiations of predominant Western views regarding motherhood, upbringing, and family. Therefore, Kropotkin's (1970) work on mutual aid was almost inevitably used to think upon the networks of solidarity and divisiveness that we also observed arising. According to him:

> ..Society has not been created upon love or sympathy. It was created on the consciousness - although instinctive - of human solidarity and the mutual dependence of men, the unconscious or semi-conscious recognition of the power of mutual aid (p. 17).

> Two ants, belonging to two different species or two enemy anthills will avoid each other if they meet by chance. But two ants belonging to the same anthill, or the same colony of anthills, always approach each other (p.33) … Neither the ants nor the bees, nor even the termites, have risen to the conception of a higher solidarity, embracing their whole species. Their social instincts hardly go beyond the limits of the anthill or the beehive (p. 38).

2. Theoretical Framework

The ultimate theoretical framework was formed during the third year of the study and differed from the original, which had a stronger focus on social reproduction. More specifically, because of the diversity faced during fieldwork -undoubtedly related to the schools chosen and their institutional diversity, as we will later see- the focus got oriented towards the anthropological discussions over the ways culture is transmitted and resistance to such cultural transmission.

Considering the above, my theoretical framework is divided into two broad categories: a) childhood, culture, education, upbringing, and learning and b) schooling, politics, and social transformation. For this purpose, the work of Spindler, Wolcott, and Soto was mainly used to explore cultural transmission, both in conscious and unconscious ways -a process that starts with upbringing-, cultural acquisition, as well as resistance to such.

Regarding the second category, the principal authors I worked with were Bernstein, Willis and Giroux, and Penna. Using their contributions, I thought upon the interrelation of the pupil's role involvement at school and the family's culture and examined the analogies between such role and the peer group pattern. I also explored the ways control is exercised and focused on the hidden curriculum, which includes all the unstated norms and beliefs transmitted to students daily. Besides, I linked the educational projects to the larger social and cultural contexts and viewed them as agents of both social reproduction and transformation.

2.1 Childhood, Culture, Education, Upbringing and Learning

Hardman was one of the first scholars who focused on children as a worthy subject of study. According to her, new insights and dimensions of society and world-views would be revealed through a discourse between anthropology and childhood studies (Hardman, 1973). Therefore, she gave birth to a new interest in children both methodologically and ethnographically.

In an attempt to understand childhood, anthropologists have done fieldwork under challenging circumstances, from street children to refugees or child soldiers. Not only did this fact question

the category of childhood and rejected established models, but it also linked ethnographic research on children to applied anthropology (Montgomery, 2000). Libertarian education, in theory, instead of producing future citizens, aims to view children as adults, altering the meanings of childhood (Trasatti, 2005). This brings us back to the anthropological discussions over the social and cultural construction of childhood and adulthood.

Nevertheless, just like childhood, the study of formal education keeps maintaining its marginal position within anthropology. That may as well reflect the discipline's past, when in communities studied, institutionalized education was either non-existent or not significant (Stafford, 2010). However, as Margaret Mead mentioned, it is fruitful to reflect on Western education through different cultural eyes. After studying adolescent girls' lives in Samoa, the anthropologist noticed that there is a single lifestyle taught to the kids and asks if we, aware of the various existing, would ever give our children the freedom of choice (Mead, 1995). This question is central in the research since, to reach its objectives, there is a need to explore the participants' perspectives on childhood and education.

Both the concept of education and culture often lead to misunderstandings and confusion in daily life. Education tends to be identified with schooling, and culture appears stable and homogeneous. Therefore, it is essential to start clarifying and shedding light on them.

As Velasco and Díaz de Rada (2006), among others, point out, school is a specific modern institution, and making sense of what occurs in it can only happen considering other aspects of life. Education, on the other hand, is universal, a much broader process, incredibly intense during childhood, which according to Molina, "consists of the combination of the means with which every social group is endowed -consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly- to contribute to the development of its members who thus appropriate culture and build competencies" (Molina, 2002 as cited in Soto, 2011: 99). According to Soto:

> Education is not synonymous with schooling or enculturation and therefore is not exclusive to the school or the communities or origin groups. It refers, of course, to both sets of experiences, but it aspires to be more fluid, more transversal, and closer to the apprentice, no matter how old and what the sociocultural context. It is based on the

human capacity for sociability, the will to exist, the need for recognition, interaction and interpellation, trust and creativity, and the elaboration of shared meanings and actions. It is a concept of education that proposes to embrace life experience from the beginning and advance with it through upbringing, relationships, and maturation so that both the times and the contexts in which that growth is developed increase the knowledge and the possibility of surviving and remaining human (Soto, 2021: 52).

A key term in this attempt to dissociate schooling from the educational process may be found in the concept of culture, much discussed in anthropology. Therefore, it is interesting to reflect on its transmission or 'enculturation', a large part of which is made unconsciously in daily life, and the final 'cultural learning or acquisition' that transforms humans into members of cultural systems. In other words, a basis for our analysis is that social groups develop ways of doing things that have to be transmitted through the process of enculturation; this is what we seek to perceive through fieldwork (Wolcott, 2011). This process starts with the beginning of our upbringing and varies through time and space. Based on specific examples, Spindler (1987 [1967]) shows how culture may be transmitted through a self-displayed way. Besides the fact that culture is often incidentally transmitted with no educational intentionality, another element must be added: discontinuity as a transmission technique. According to Spindler (1987 [1967]), there are two major types of discontinuity:

a) The first happens when a sudden transition from one way of being and behaving to another occurs, like rites of passage. Those discontinuities have a significant function in maintaining the cultural system and are highly likely to be found in communities with no external interventions.

b) Nevertheless, different cultural systems than the established can also be introduced, as happens in some schools going through modernization processes—this is the second type of discontinuity. In these cases, the aim is neither to strengthen traditional values nor recruit new members and maintain the current cultural system. On the contrary, culture is attempted to be changed by recruiting students into a system that does not yet exist, a process that produces inevitable conflicts among generations. In other words, and as Spindler reveals through the example of the Sisala in Ghana, traditional culture is disorganized, and schools serve as entrance gates to change. Therefore, it is not uncommon that they receive little or no support from

families or communities since the content of the curriculum taught at school is not related to what is learned at home and in the community[22].

Another term introduced by Spindler that interests us is cultural compression, this kind of vigilance regarding the set of behaviors that cultural apprentices must learn as expected from their social environment. Although present throughout life, cultural compression is especially evident in life-changing moments such as the first motherhood and is fundamental in maintaining social order and reproduction. The role of those considered to hold the educational responsibility is crucial in these terms (Spindler 1987 [1967] as cited in Soto, 2021).

Wolcott (1967 as cited in Velasco and Díaz de Rada, 2006) offers another example through his study in a Kwakiutl village where he observed a lack of integration of Indian students. The school was the only place where the white culture of their colonizers was transmitted, and a proof that formal education offered by modern schools is not interpreted in the same way by everyone. For instance, fishing was gradually offering fewer job opportunities, and thus school was viewed as a vehicle to access other positions. However, Indian parents were not placing their hopes for their kids' future upon the school, and students were resisting the cultural transmission processes at school.

Therefore, as the example implies, cultural transmission should not be equated to cultural acquisition or learning. In other words, and according to Wolcott (1982), what cultural transmitters aim to transmit is not what cultural acquirers ultimately acquire. For this reason, the writer invites us to think upon an anthropology of learning, focusing on the individual processes of the ways culture is acquired and always keeping in mind that learners do not just receive culture from their elders; they also rediscover it.

> I view rather critically the tendency to equate what cultural transmitters are attempting to transmit with what cultural acquirers are necessarily acquiring. The call proposed here for an anthropology of learning is a call for increased attention to the processes through

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[22] This perspective is also elaborated by García (2016) in her study of a secondary school in Mozambique. Following the proposals of Rockwell and Ogbu, the author offers a deep comprehension of the social reality by focusing on the relations between what happens in school contexts and what occurs within the family nucleus and social life, considering the history, economy, and politics of the area.

which individuals continue throughout their lives to "gropingly discover" what they need to know. An anthropology of learning can also serve as a reminder that learning remains an individual matter; culture is, at best, only imperfectly "shared" (Wolcott, 1982: 104).

As Soto (2021) proposes, based on Wolcott's and Spindler's ideas, one can both acquire and transmit culture without being aware of it -even without wanting it- or intentionally. Our goals and interests, therefore, should focus both on the intentional cultural transmission, as it usually happens in studies that subscribe in the anthropology of education, and the non-intentional that is often ignored. They should also attempt an understanding of learners as active subjects in the process of cultural transmission and be focused on what they learn and why. After all, a big part of our education is self-education, the learner is the protagonist of the process (Chomsky, 2005 [2003] as cited in Soto 2021, p. 80). According to the anthropologist, "the denomination educational does not make a program or an intention necessarily educational and vice versa, the fact that an intention or a proposal is not formulated as educational does not mean that its development does not have educational consequences" (Soto, 2021: 41).

Therefore, it is essential to try to view kids as active subjects who process the ideas they receive, a practice that sometimes leads to conflicts and contradictions. At the same time, and in terms of every educational ethnography -both in school settings and out of them-, it is crucial to keep in mind that education does not have an intentional character only, as it might also be produced incidentally. This applies both to cultural transmission and cultural learning or acquisition (Soto, 2021).

Education embraces all life stages, partly in and mostly out of school contexts, and is linked to culture. For that reason, upbringing itself is educational, and the anthropology of kinship is linked to the anthropology of education. Any social relationship thought in terms of parentality involves interactions that can potentially become educational since the cultural context transmits culture incidentally. Observing how children are raised is vital to understand educational perspectives and practices and relate the way of life, expectations, and behaviors to how kids are educated (Soto, 2011). In other words, according to Soto (2021), education goes in hand with culture, which would not exist without its transmission and learning, and which has, therefore, educational dimensions. Thus she proposes to perceive culture as "a set of practices and

representations, which to keep reproducing itself socio-culturally needs to be learned and, transmitted" (p. 74) and stresses that educational intentionality does not prevail in this process.

These cultural studies are of great help since I will use them to explore both the ways culture is transmitted and the coexistence of continuity and discontinuity as techniques of cultural transmission in our schools. Also, although more difficult to perceive, I will stress the incidental dimension of cultural transmission and acquisition -the incidental dimension of learning- seeing how learners negotiate cultural transmission, sometimes in terms of acquisition and others through resistance. Last, I will use the emic concept of unlearning -central in our cases- to rethink all the above.

Before we look at how education is linked to politics, I would like to briefly refer to the historical evolution of another key concept in terms of this research; childhood. I choose to do so since, to understand the current educational change in Spain, it is essential to look at the different images and theoretical views towards childhood through time that determine every educational process.

According to Ferri (2020), starting from Rousseau's 'Emile, or On Education' in the 18th century, a completely new image of childhood progressively spread throughout Europe, characterized by attention and respect to children's psychology and evolution. In the nineteenth century, such image became even stronger in the industrial society in which children were considered exploitable labor. The terrible living conditions and the development and spread of advanced ideas led to the recognition of the child as a subject of rights. This idea would be fully implemented in the 20th century, also known as 'the century of the child'. A new image of childhood was born, recognizing the child's central role in the educational process and inspiring pedagogies and movements of the 21st century which keep transforming schools, such as non-directive, slow, systemic, pedagogies of multiple intelligences or the movement of live education.

Such image of childhood has influence upon educational projects in Catalonia that, although characterized by a strong syncretism, keep the idea of learners' centrality in the learning process

alive and view them as active cultural producers. We will see how this centrality, often leading to non-directivity, is a major source of contradictions.

2.2 Education, Schooling and Politics

It is not only that education is a much broader concept happening out of school. It's that to understand the practices used by parents and kids in dealing with schools, we need to look at the linkages between schooling and the larger social and cultural contexts and integrate both micro and macro ethnographies. Ogbu's (1981) proposal for a cultural, ecological approach can be of help in this attempt. The four assumptions he starts with are a) that formal education is linked with the economic sphere in ways that affect behaviors in school, b) the history of this linkage influences present processes, c) how the participants behave is influenced by their models of social reality and d) apart from events in school, classrooms, the home, and the playground, societal and historical forces are essential to be studied in terms of an ethnography of schooling. Although Ogbu designed his framework to interpret and improve the realities of minority students, it reminds us that the politics of everyday life in school contexts is affected by other settings.

> Cultural transmission studies of formal education almost entirely ignore other societal institutions and focus primarily on school, classroom, home and playground events. Conspicuously missing in the cultural transmission research framework is an adequate conceptualization of social structure and other macroecological forces influencing schooling. ... the ecological framework suggests that these classroom events are built up by forces originating in other settings (Ogbu, 1981: 8, 23).

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), we keep considering the school system as a social mobility factor while it reinforces social stability legalizing and perpetuating social inequalities. More specifically, each family transmits a specific educational capital and a particular ethos, a value system that influences kids' attitudes at school, determining their behavior and level of inclusion. Focusing on inequality in education, the sociologists conclude that the dominion of equality over the traditional pedagogical practice, in fact, legitimizes inequality in favor of students whose educational capital fits formal educational requirements privileging the elite. Therefore, success seems to be bound with the position in the social hierarchy and -

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paradoxically- in line with democratic ideals making education a field of symbolic domination. We will see how the certain phenomenon is met in our cases as well. Despite the absence of formal educational requirements, expectations regarding certain perceptions over education or parental involvement do exist along with the exclusion of families who fail to meet them -both parents and kids-, sometimes in direct and others indirect ways.

At this point, I should mention that 'social class' is complex and has been controversial in social sciences. As a construct to understand social realities that change, the concept changes as well. Therefore, social class may expand from the economic sphere to be understood broadly, used to categorize identities, lifestyles, world-views, and relations, along with resources used when faced with problems in both conscious and unconscious ways (Ball, 2003).

Brint (1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006) reaffirms a set of commonly accepted norms and identities. He also defines the four dimensions of a school's 'moral order' as he calls it, which reveal much about the school culture and elements of which are consciously constructed while others result during everyday activities and interactions. This moral order, different in each of my cases, will be used to analyze the ethnographic material collected. Briefly, its dimensions refer to:

a) The organization of time and space that structures and differentiates moments and places in schools depending on the school culture. Brint brings the example of authoritarian or traditional schools that structure their spaces so that the teacher is seated higher and in front of rows of students' desks. In contrast, democratic and progressive schools use circular structures. The first reveals a culture based on teachers' power and control upon the students who are regarded as inferior. The second is proof of the teacher's different role as a stimulator of thoughts and discussions among students.

b) The presence of rituals through which school forms students according to certain values and ideals that it bears, most probably on a conscious level. Rituals can be differentiating, aiming at rewarding students who best adapt to the values promoted (award ceremonies) or incorporating, aiming at balancing differentiating rituals and promoting identification with school (school celebrations, assemblies); what Bernstein (2003 [1975]) calls consensual rituals.

c) Multiple hierarchies of status, aiming at the students' integration. The multitude of these hierarchies is intended to help students who do not excel in specific activities do it in others.

d) School's collective life. During interactions, a communal life emerges bearing conversations, conflicts, social grouping, and other daily processes.

Regarding the politics of everyday life in schools, Bernstein (1991 [1975], 2003 [1975]) can also offer us some important insights to analyze the pedagogical practices and compare the schools. First, three systems construct the formal educational knowledge:

- The curriculum that defines the valid knowledge.
- The pedagogy that defines the valid way of knowledge transmission.
- The evaluation that defines what is considered to be the valid realization of this knowledge by the student.

Second, there are two key notions introduced by Bernstein (2003 [1975]) that interest us: classification and framing. Shortly, classification refers to the limits among educational contents, the degree to which they are separated, in other words. Framing has to do with the level of control that the teacher and student have upon the choice and organization of the transmitted knowledge. Strong framings increase the educator's power and reduce the learner's control on what, when, and how the knowledge is acquired. Strong classifications reduce the educator's power on what they teach. The stronger framings and classifications are, the more hierarchical the educational relation is since the learner is considered ignorant with few rights.

Third, due to our interest in the authoritarian character of the pedagogical relations, I will also look at Bernstein´s types of pedagogic practice, the visible and the invisible. When classification and framing are strong, rules and control over the child are explicit, emphasis is placed upon the student's performance and the extent to which external product of the child meets the criteria, the pedagogy is visible and stratifying differences among children are produced. When classification and framing are weak, rules and control over the child are implicit, known only to the transmitter, the focus is upon internal procedures, and the differences among kids reveal uniqueness instead

of being used for comparison, the pedagogy is invisible[23]. There follow six basic characteristics of infant school invisible pedagogies, which perfectly fit our primary school cases as well:

> a) The control of the teacher over the child is implicit rather than explicit.
> b) Ideally, the teacher arranges the context which the child is expected to re-arrange and explore.
> c) Within this arranged context, the child apparently has wide powers over what he selects, over how he structures, and over the time-scale of his activities.
> d) The child apparently regulates his own movements and social relationships.
> e) There is a reduced emphasis upon the transmission and acquisition of specific skills.
> f) The criteria for evaluating the pedagogy are multiple and diffuse and so not easily measured (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 107).

The sociologist regards invisible pedagogies as interrupter systems concerning the home and other educational levels. Therefore, in such a context, power relations between home and school change radically: mothers need to be re-socialized and viewed as other pupils.

> If the mother wishes to understand the theory of the invisible pedagogy, then she may well find herself at the mercy of complex theories of child development. Indeed, whichever way the working-class mother turns, the teacher has the power: although the mother may well be deeply suspicious of the whole ambience. From the point of view of the middle class, there is at least an intellectual understanding of the invisible pedagogy, if not always an acceptance of its values and practice. Further, if the middle-class child is not obtaining the basic competencies at the rate the mother expects, an educational support system can be organized through private coaching or through the mother's own efforts. The power relationships between the middle-class mother and the teacher are less tipped in favour of the teacher (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 119).

Regarding the sociologist's social class assumptions of an invisible pedagogy, there is one that interests us more: Invisible pedagogies imply a smaller class of pupils and a higher material cost of space[24]. When there is freedom of movement and a desk with a chair does not correspond to the space a child needs, open-plan architecture and fewer kids are necessary. The spatial demands that are generated lead to economic demands as well. After all, "it is an expensive

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[23] Nevertheless, I should note that, according to Bernstein, an empirical study of invisible pedagogies would reveal a stress on the transmission of specific competencies. "Thus the 'hidden curriculum' of invisible pedagogies may well be, embryonically, strong classification, albeit with relatively weak frames" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 122).
[24] The other three are: a) a middle-class conception of educational time and space, b) an elaborated code of communication and c) a middle-class mother who is an agent of cultural reproduction.

pedagogy because it is derived from an expensive class: the middle class[25]" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 119).

But how is control exercised in the case of invisible pedagogies? According to Bernstein, it is in interpersonal linguistic communication that it can be found, through which the invisible becomes visible. Parents encourage the child to exteriorize and make public a larger part of their inner world, including emotions. As a result, it is difficult to hide for both parents and kids, and vigilance is total. Contrary to visible pedagogies, where exclusion is used as a control strategy, kids involved in invisible pedagogies use exclusion as a self-defense strategy to avoid the communication process and weaken control. Without being there, either symbolically or physically, self-excluded kids regain control over their parents, who must develop retreat strategies to bring them back to the communication system.

Last, Bernstein (2003 [1975]) makes a distinction between two complexes transmitted to the pupil, the expressive order which controls the transmission of the beliefs and moral system and uses ritualization as an effective means of such transmission and internalization and the instrumental order that has to do with the acquisition of specific skills and is bound to formal learning. He also recognizes five types of the pupil's role involvement -which might also be applied to the teaching staff- and represent possible ways they will relate to the school: a) commitment when there is involvement in both orders, b) detachment when the pupil is involved in the instrumental order but is cool or negative towards the expressive, c) deferment when there is a rather passive observation and deferment of involvement in both orders, d) estrangement when the pupil is involved in both orders but cannot manage the demands of the instrumental and e) alienation when there is a rejection of both orders, a state of conflict and opposition. This framework is helpful in our comparative analysis as it makes us think upon the interrelation between the pupil's role and the family's culture and examine the analogies between such role involvements and the peer group or friendship patterns in school.

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[25] Bernstein regards the new middle class "as being represented by those who are the new agents of symbolic control, e.g. those who are filling the everexpanding major and minor professional class, concerned with the servicing of persons" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 126).

Lerena (1976, 1983) also adopts a critical perspective, questioning education's ideological representation as a simple dualism of oppression vs. liberation and showing how 'school-jails' are not contrary to 'school-gardens' but complimentary. Drawing from educational experiences and Marxist scholars, he argues that natural, liberating, or non-directive education cannot exist by definition. "Pedagogical relationships are not relationships of communication but of imposition, dominion, and power, which may be exercised in a thousand different ways that might seem hateful or reasonable and human" (Lerena, 1976: 105).

What is certain is that education is always political and never neutral, both in schools and out of them. Therefore, as Snyders (1971) argues, if schools do not deal with certain problems, they leave the child subject to the environment's opinion and not free; schools are not separated from the world.

> To teach Latin to Juan, .. one must know Latin and Juan. But something else is also needed: to know why one wants Juan to learn Latin, how Latin will help him position himself in today's world .. what the objectives of education are. And there is at least a political component to any answer given (Snyders, 1971: 205).

2.3 Education and Social Transformation

We saw how education is something profoundly political and has therefore been a privileged field to examine power relations and sociocultural reproduction among theorists. According to Velasco and Díaz de Rada (2006), ethnography has proven to be almost incompatible with the idea that school is a privileged agent for social transformation due to its double role as both an agent of change and social reproduction as well as the holistic intentions of ethnography that contextualize change in schools in broader contexts.

But dominant cultural production and reproduction and consequently social reproduction is not the whole picture. As Willis (1981) reminds us, "social Reproduction .. proceeds through Cultural Reproduction, proceeds through Cultural Production" (p. 59). Although much has been written about the dominant cultural production and reproduction, such as and often based on Bourdieu's (1977) arguments, fewer authors have been concerned with the cultural production

and reproduction of the dominated or the oppressed which is often fragmented. In other words, while reproduction theory offers important arguments concerning dominant cultural production, reproduction, and its role in social reproduction, it does not do this regarding the culture of the dominated. Subordinate action and cultural production tend to be more private and informal, hardly surviving in history.

> It has become conventional now to separate analyses of education into those that deal with Reproduction (theory) and those that deal with radical possibilities in the classroom (practice). The former are held to be pessimistic and to close the possibility of praxis; the latter are held to deal with change and the possibility of liberation (Willis, 1981: 63).

Therefore, the author proposes distinguishing between dominant and subordinate Cultural Production and Reproduction and working toward a theory for a politics of change. Although it is important for every critical analysis to look at the first, Willis writes that we should consider both reproduction and radical transformative possibilities. I will argue that not only should we stand between those two concerns, but we should rather start shedding more light on the second one, recognizing the spaces of and for emancipation that are created daily and escape academia's and society's pessimistic safe zone, comfortable with 'critical analyses' that tend to reveal contradictions without proposing how they might be surpassed.

At this point I would like to recall a graffiti that Galeano noticed in a street in Bogotá, "Let's save pessimism for better times" (Galeano, 2003 [1998]: 328 as cited in Soto, 2021: 31). Stressing transformative potentials and informing social imaginaries through their transmission is, according to my opinion, part of a social scientist's responsibility. In Graeber's words "We have tools at our fingertips that could be of enormous importance to human freedom. Let's start taking our share of responsibility in the process" (Graeber, 2011: 116).

To talk about social transformation through educational and schooling spaces, is to first talk about educational transformation and the transmission of values. This happens, most times, through a hidden curriculum in the case of formal schooling which includes "all the unstated norms and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of school and classroom life" (Giroux and

Penna, 1979). In our case, precisely because the educational spaces we examine aim to create communities, values and their transmission have a special interest.

Daily practices which belong to the hidden curriculum hold transformative power. Giroux and Penna (1979) point out specific features which may offer students the opportunity to experience the dynamics of participatory democracy. These include a) the use of peers and b) modified self-pacing. Let's examine each shortly. By the use of peers, the authors refer to the group interaction that permits students to learn collectively in a context of "diffusing authority along horizontal lines" (p. 36). The key element of such a process is group dialogue which replaces the traditional hidden curriculum's emphasis on individualism and competition with social relations marked by reciprocity and communality. Under these conditions, students can also act as peer-leaders, evaluating each other among else, and break the myth of the teacher who, as an expert, is the only one able to share knowledge.

Modified self-pacing has to do with an alternative vision of the concept of time as the traditional, which Giroux and Penna characterize as "reminiscent of life in factories with its production schedules and hierarchical work relationships" (p. 37). Therefore, according to them, non-hierarchical relationships among students and teachers demand another concept of time. A modified self-pacing would enable the actors to mutually agree upon the pace, facilitating participation and democratic processes in the classroom´s daily routine.

> With the use of peers and modified self-pacing, democratic classroom relationships are developed and the one-dimensionality of traditional classroom social relationships gives way to the possibility of infinitely richer classroom social encounters. These classroom social encounters are reciprocally humanizing and are mediated through an emancipatory conceptual framework (Giroux and Penna, 1979: 38).

Soto (1999) draws attention to the hidden curriculum as well. Relationship models, verbal and behavioural languages are the mechanisms through which school culture is transmitted to the whole educational community. This is where the transformative action begins; by explaining its assumptions we can ultimately change both the prevailing relationship models and consequently educational interaction and communication. The anthropologist then defines a series of "basic transformative premises" for the educational transformation. Here is one that interests us more in

terms of the study: "Reflect on the role of school and educational intervention in a context of social inequality" (p. 140).

> Transformation must operate in teachers first, who must consider themselves as cultural subjects and view this as the way to establish likeness with families' and students' cultural contexts. But there is also a transformation in the relationships of the teachers themselves. Unequal groups .. have different access to information and decision-making. Thus, they hold positions of power that may paralyze transformative communication processes, such as the expression of discrepancies and contradictions. .. viewing themselves in a different way than they did, there has been a training process with teachers, .. that has allowed a complete turnaround on their perspective on themselves .. Their perspective on students and their families has also changed. .. Giving students and families the possibility of feeling competent in an academic universe from which they often feel excluded, goes through their consideration as cultural subjects with expectations of social and school success for their sons and daughters, and goes through an increase in confidence in the criteria with which they operate. This change in preconceptions reaches families in the form of an adequate demand that is respectful, that wants to learn, that is not illuminating (Soto, 1999: 154).

Similarly, Freire's (1978 [1970]) ideas about social emancipation are based on horizontal educational relations as educators and educated have both roles. "Nobody educates anyone, just as nobody educates oneself, humans are educated in communion, mediated by the world" (p. 90). Freire thus proposes to replace the actual banking model of education, which perceives education as the act of knowledge deposition and reinforces oppression with a liberating education that encourages people to feel active subjects, to express their thoughts and worldviews, manage their education, and so constantly pursue their freedom.

But it is tricky to talk about social transformation in a world constantly transforming itself. I should then clarify, at this point, that by 'social transformation', I mean a revolutionary process that leads to different social relations, values, and organization. In other words, minor reforms are not what I think of when I refer to social transformation; the best we can get of them is an illusion of change accompanied by the triumph of capitalism due to its great adaptive and appropriative power. Instead, I rather speak of the understanding and destruction of the roots of the problem.

This implies work on two levels: a) on a macro-level; the destruction of the state and its institutions and their replacement by anarchic -non-authoritative, non-hierarchical, self-governing- types of social organization derived by a "revolutionary project" of individual and collective autonomy; or, in other words, "society's self-institution" (Castoriadis, 1984, 2010) and b) on a micro-level through a radical restructuring of our social relations and daily practices on collective values, mutual aid and horizontality. In other words, using Foucaultian terms, I will try to see how schools may transform themselves from disciplinary institutions to heterotopias that seek radical social changes.

Diaz (1978) rejects the new child-centered methods that seem to gradually replace the old centrality of the teacher since the structure remains the same; from the teacher as the dominant subject, now it is the pupil. According to him, it is impossible to reach this social transformation without educational transformation, and the opposite; it is a double fighting process that must happen simultaneously. Escaping the supposed educational neutrality, the writer argues that manipulation is necessary for this attempt, aiming to develop the students' critical spirit. "To educate is to manipulate, guide, shape. Yet, it is not a dictatorial manipulation; it aims to generate a critical capacity to the child and does not reject the freedom to choose after the analysis of society models" (Diaz, 1978: 14).

From an even more radical point of view, Garcia Olivo (2009), a former reformist teacher and current school hater states that the authoritarian character, whether explicit or undercover, is always present in schools, even in libertarian ones which teach how to obey disobeying. According to the author, libertarian education starts only where school ends and reformist progressive pedagogies, rather than destroying the system seem to reinforce the state making it less hateful. In Foucaultian terms, through self-evaluation, students transform themselves into self-vigilant subjects, and schools' role remains the same, only legitimized this time with students on its part.

Such dangers are also stressed by Garcés (2020), who argues that neoliberalism uses concepts belonging to critical social transformation experiences. In the pedagogical field, cognitive capitalism has appropriated part of pedagogical renewal's language and practices selling them

and reducing the educational -and therefore cultural- crisis we are going through into a mere methodological debate. According to Garcés, authority and authoritarianism in education are an inevitable result of the system's evaluating bureaucracy, making it hard to achieve horizontal relations among all learners without reducing relations to teachers and students. On the contrary, the philosopher proposes expanding the ideas of emancipatory pedagogy underlying the relational character of thought that may transform knowledge into consciousness and a vehicle for emancipation, allowing us to collectively answer how we want to live and educate ourselves.

I will conclude with another interesting and recent approach offered by Pechtelidis and Kioupkiolis (2020), who link the concept of 'the commons' to the educational field. Using the related theory and taking a self-managed pedagogical community in Greece as an 'instance of commoning education', the authors show how education is viewed as a common good collectively managed by its community and potentially forging new forms of subjectivity, while at the same time "the predominant discourses on childhood, children and their political capacity are questioned" (p. 9). According to them, such educational processes lead to a 'common' heteropolitical habitus against the hegemonic neoliberal capitalist agenda consisting of certain dispositions: (a) direct involvement in public and collective life, (b) autonomy, and (c) self-reliance. Moreover, pedagogical commons reject the conventional hierarchies between students and teachers, decisions are taken after democratic participation processes, and the commoners collectively organize the space and the time. Both adults and children within such micro-communities get involved in a counter-hegemonic social movement that prioritizes the political empowerment of the commoners and encourages them to participate in public life as active citizens.

To sum up, my analysis will be empirical, descriptive, and comparative, taking into account both macro aspects and historical forces that shape present experiences. I will approach the schools keeping in mind, on the one hand, the legal framework that defines them and past, local experiences of pedagogical renewal, and on the other hand, the social and political context they are constructed in, which no longer needs nor values a banking model of education and which is far from equal.

The meeting of our theoretical, semiotic, and ethnographic lenses will help us see how learning, learners, childhood, upbringing, and education are conceptualized in our cases, with a particular focus on ritualization, peer relations, school choice, and parental involvement as sources of information. Mainly with the help of anthropological studies that describe how culture is transmitted and learned, and combining social reproduction theories with the ones that focus on resistance, we will travel through contradictions and dangers, but also possibilities for a more just world that may be found today in terms of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia.

3. Questions, Hypotheses, and Objectives

Ethnography is and should be unpredictable. What one has in mind, in the beginning, is usually different from what one perceives once in the field. Hypotheses may be proven to be wrong, objectives might slightly change, and new questions are often generated. This was the case for my study as well since, driven by the data, it let them speak and partly guide it.

After six months of fieldwork, I formed my initial hypotheses when I had obtained a better understanding of the context I had immersed myself in. As time went by, and despite the many exciting aspects I encountered, I focused on a few of them and made my research questions clearer. These questions transformed into hypotheses and led to my final objectives.

3.1 Research Questions

As mentioned before, the research work and ethnographic data collected during fieldwork, developed the initial ideas and led to significant changes regarding the research questions. I will refer to both, in order to make this progress visible. The initial research questions were the following:

How are freedom and autonomy conceptualized and practiced? Does everybody have access to alternative education or specific social classes with a determined cultural capital? Can the inclusive role of education be contemplated in those schools and projects? All in all, is it a call for freedom, mutual support, and autonomy or another neoliberal product reproducing the capitalist system?

After the ethnographic work, these questions were specified and amplified as the data collected generated even more. The final key questions which I will try to answer are the following:

General: 1. How is alternative education situated in the contemporary Catalan educational system? 2. How has it changed over time, and how can its recent revival in Catalonia

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be interpreted? 3. Do these schools and projects implement an inclusive educational role concerning different social classes and cultures?

Pedagogical ideas and practices: 4. Do actual practices reflect pedagogical ideals? 5. What is the symbolic and performative content of ritual practices (Wulf, 2013) in alternative education (eating fruits together, music in arrival, etc.)? 6. How do the central concepts of 'nature' and 'care' make sense in the social imaginary shared by the educational communities? 7. Since individual freedom and social justice are not always compatible (Harvey, 2005), how are the principles of libertarian and anarchist pedagogy applied in this context? 8. Do the agents implicated in the educational projects aim to a social transformation or school adaptation to contemporary demands? 9. Inspired by the work of Castoriadis (1984, 1987), how are the meanings of freedom and autonomy embodied by the agents who take part in alternative forms of education? 10. How can we re-interpret these and other related philosophical theories through ethnographic work using anthropological lenses?

Families: 11. What kind of families choose the various types of alternative education? 12. Why do they choose it instead of conventional schooling? 13. What strategies do they develop to access the educational projects of their choice? 14. How do they receive information and seek orientation? (Roch, Dean and Breidenstein, 2018) 15. Can their choices be interpreted as ways of resistance to social norms, or are they aspects of ever-changing identities? (Bauman, 2007) 16. In which ways do parents get involved in school settings (Forsberg, 2007) 17. How does their economic and cultural capital influence their participation (Vigo and Soriano, 2015), leading to divisiveness and solidarity networks? (Doucat, 2011) 18. How do they make sense of upbringing and education?

3.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of this research project is "to make a descriptive, critical, empirical and comparative analysis of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia through an ethnographic approach to school and non-school settings".

From this general objective, two more specific ones derive and from these latest, four more in the following way:

O1: To understand perspectives on education in the educational centers, document the formulation of their pedagogical proposals, and know the daily reality and educational practices where they occur.

O1a: To document possible contradictions, in case they exist, between the pedagogical proposals and the actual practices that put them into practice.

O1b: To take a close look at the inclusive role of the three educational centers concerning different social classes and cultural backgrounds.

O2: To understand the profiles and symbolic worlds of families who choose an alternative educational center and know how they get involved in school settings.

O2a. To shed light upon the profiles of the families who choose alternative schools or educational projects.

O2b. To know why families consciously choose the schools for their kids' schooling.

O2c. To go in-depth in how families who have consciously chosen one of the schools for their kids' schooling make sense of upbringing and education.

O2d. To look upon how families are expected to and get involved in school settings and the consequences of such parental involvement.

3.3 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses, formulated after the first six months of fieldwork and enriched afterward, are the following:

H1. Pedagogical practices in alternative schools or educational projects do not always reflect the ideals that generate them due to the various agents' resistance to cultural transmission.

H2. The choice of an alternative school or educational project is a strategy of cultural continuity between the education given at home and school.

After an extended period of fieldwork and data analysis, these initial hypotheses evolved and led to three final hypotheses that may serve for future work, as I will show in the chapter of conclusions.

4. Methodology

The thesis is empirical, exploratory, and descriptive, applying a qualitative approach of investigation (Ballestín and Fàbregues, 2018). It was developed during the main period of permanence in the field between January 2018 and March 2019. Although I aim to adopt a multidisciplinary approach, the project is primarily conducted within the framework of anthropology and inspired by critical approaches, examining contradictions and tensions rather than aspects of social harmony (Kim and Taylor, 2008) and keeping an open, creative attitude towards theory (Woods, 1987).

Through a micro-ethnographic and multi-sited perspective (Marcus, 1995), the study focuses on three schools and attempts a contextualized analysis that considers broader societal and historical factors, although not deepening in such. The primary strategy of research was ethnographic fieldwork. This decision permitted a regular displacement to the research spaces and participation in the daily life of participants for an extended period.

4.1 Previous familiarization with the field and ethnographic immersion

My 'first contact' with the field occurred unexpectedly and at a distance while I was in Burgos during my 10-month stay in terms of EVS (European Voluntary Service). First, the story of a young refugee from San Salvador, with whom I developed a close relationship, impacted me. Having lived the biggest part of his childhood on the streets, he was 'adopted' by a couple running a permaculture[26] educational project. Although he had never been to school, the amount of knowledge he had was impressive. In one of our meetings, he proposed the film 'Forbidden education'[27] that I consider my official entrance to the broader field.

A few months later, I got in contact and created close relationships with local activists, mainly anarcho-syndicalists, members of the CNT and CGT. What I noticed, probably due to my concerns at that time, was a similar interest in education. They repeatedly referred to the

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[26] An alternative system of design and agriculture aiming at the regeneration and sustainability of natural ecosystems.
[27] Germán (2012), La Educación Prohibida, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFzYFuP4fL8 (last access: 2021/09/03).

necessity of 'desaprender' [unlearning] and creating different schools that would generate a different world, inspired mainly by the historical Ferrer's Modern School and contemporary Paideia. Three books I borrowed from them and the library of the local squat had a huge impact on me: a) La escuela de la anarquia (Martín, 2010) b) La A en la pizarra (2011) and c) La Escuela Moderna (Ferrer, 1976). Upon finishing the last one, and led by my intuition, I only knew one thing; I had to move to Barcelona and find out what has been left from the Modern School of Ferrer i Guardia.

What I should mention at this point is that not only did I leave data to guide the research, but my survival needs as well. Not holding a scholarship, I had to find ways to research with no budget. Thinking upon possible ways after my return to Greece in the summer of 2017, I googled 'how to live in Barcelona with no money', and came across the idea of 'au-pairing'. This was a term I had never heard of before and apparently popular there. Au-pairs are young persons, most usually girls, who help with child care, house care, or both, in exchange for a bedroom in the family's house, meals, and some pocket money. I started looking for a position, and soon I found my first family in a neighborhood located in the province of the city.

I arrived in Barcelona filled with enthusiasm. The family who would host me was waiting for me at the airport with a giant poster made by the girls welcoming me. Soon I would learn that the family was independentist. Living with them helped me understand a bit of the complex socio-political reality around me regarding what is going on with the Catalan independence movement and the referendum. At the same time, it gave me some important information about the local educational system due to the girls' attendance at a public primary school. Since the beginning, 'I was lucky to meet the right people at the right time', I was thinking back then. Thinking about it now, I consider this 'ethnographic luck' as I used to call it, a mere matter of letting my intuition guide my attention.

During these three months living as an au-pair, I started reading related material and looking for schools that could become my cases. Despite the limited time left, my activist life did not pause, of course. Almost immediately, I started visiting and connecting to local self-managed spaces, getting more involved in some. Through these experiences that lasted until the day I left the city,

I could further compare the Catalan anarchist and antifascist movement to the Greek one, a process that had already started during my permanence in Burgos and continues until today.

More specifically, regarding the differences between them, I observed how strong prefigurative politics and sense of organization in self-managed spaces in Barcelona were, both now and historically, and how the personal is perceived as something deeply political. Moreover, I noticed a focus on emotions, a lack of direct confrontation and a tendency towards institutionalization of part of the movement's agenda, such as feminism, facilitated if not promoted by local authorities. It is not insignificant that the city's mayor was an activist, founding member of the 'Platform for People Affected by Mortgages' at the time of my research, or that she gave a speech at the 'I Simposi Internacional Ferrer i Guàrdia' that took place on the 8th of September 2021. Last, I noticed a particular interest in gender, sexuality, animal liberation, veganism and antispecism, gestalt psychology, polyamory, upbringing and education, and other aspects that were almost completely missing from the agendas such spaces and collectives had in Greece. These comparisons were made spontaneously, without any intention to help the research objectives. However, they did contribute to my understanding of the local social reality which influences alternative projects, from anarchist squats to libertarian schools and educational spaces.

After finding a few interesting schools online, my survival needs pushed me to think of ways to combine fieldwork with living. This led me to Workaway[28], a platform of volunteer opportunities worldwide that provide accommodation and food in exchange for some work. This way, I applied to Petxina, an active private school I visited soon afterward. There, the person I had been in contact with, a mother of the school who voluntarily coordinated Workaway, introduced me to the director. When I told him I am about to research anarchist education in Catalonia, he laughed and told me that what I want to study does not exist. He explained that today, schools there have nothing in common with Ferrer's Modern school and how these alternative pedagogies are sold to middle-classed alternative families in Spain, who wish their kids' happiness and nothing else. It was my first big disappointment, which would be followed by more later, during fieldwork. But I decided not to give up and learn about alternative educational projects in Catalonia in any case.

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[28] https://www.workaway.info/

One of the first decisions I made was to choose three schools that would include primary education (ages 6-12) and differentiate between them regarding their institutional nature. Therefore, one would be private, another public, and the last a cooperatively-run or -even better-self-managed school. As power relations are already different in diverse types of schools due to the a priori hierarchies, I thought this would help me get a bigger picture of the current situation, its challenges, and its potentials. Another criteria that I decided to apply, after realizing the complexity of my topic, was their overall changing intentions, from pedagogy to relations and participation. I tried to choose innovative schools that did not view such innovation as a mere adaptation to current demands but were truly committed to their role as change agents. In other words, I was not interested in project-based schools that applied alternative pedagogies while ignoring social relations.

I spent three months at Petxina, living with the director, his wife, their two daughters, and their house staff (cleaner and cooker) in their big country house located in the middle of the schoolyard. During this time, I also worked as an English nanny with two school families who lived nearby. Surrounded by my field the whole time was hard to deal with, yet it offered me important insights I would have never obtained without being there. First of all, the school's director proved to be a key participant, as my intuition had also guessed during our first meeting. He liked speaking, and I liked listening – something that ended up in endless conversations over the dinner table that had to do with literally anything – from history and psychoanalysis to more specific topics regarding alternative schools and Petxina. He also made me understand how 'small' the world I had just entered is since active agents in such schools often know each other. At the same time, his vast library filled with books about sociology and education was of great help for my literature research.

After his essential contribution combined with personal research that was practically internet-based and my reference to the topic in every social instance, I finally ended up in the other cases: the public school Pardal and the self-managed educational project Trèvol. What I had not found yet was how to cover my survival needs afterward. I had already started work as an English teacher at a language school, but that could not cover the city's cost of living. Taking advantage

of the 'small' world I referred to before, I talked about this with a mother who knew families from the second school, and my next host family was found.

During my fieldwork at Pardal, I lived with a mother, who happened to work as a teacher at a private free nursery school in Barcelona, and her two kids. She was sleeping with her son, and I was staying in his bedroom. As I could not find another host family from Trèvol, I lived one year and a half with them. They welcomed and trusted me from the very first day, and the mother even managed a few English picnics and babysitting with some families of the schools that helped me earn a living. In a way, I became part of the solidarity networks I also noticed in the field. I exchanged my accommodation with a few hours of playing in English in the park with her son and his friends during lunch break, and I later started contributing economically to the house when I found another part-time job at a language school in the neighborhood.

As the research evolved, I started noticing a complex reality, and the theoretical framework I had chosen in the beginning suddenly seemed too small to fit it. Therefore, I asked for the help of another professor of the department, who made a significant contribution in guiding me to restructure my framework and analyze the material collected satisfactorily.

During these years, I attended festivals and courses related to my topic, participated in squatted social centers, a popular school, and occasionally contributed to other projects. I met lots of people and listened to their stories. Personally and academically, I learned and grew so much that this small section could have been an entire book.

The challenges and difficulties I faced were numerous. I arrived in Barcelona expecting to research anarchist education at an autonomous public university and found a whole different reality; alternative schools where inequalities are reproduced and anarchist values are missing, and a university that I would personally not describe neither autonomous nor public. However, one of the important learnings I gained was to manage to deal with my disappointment and frustration, have patience, and find hope and cracks despite the social discomfort and desperation that comes with the capitalist system. Like the participants, I learned to unlearn, and despite the obstacles and contradictions, I tried to live coherently, guided my values, rejecting any authority

imposed, and practicing autonomy and mutual aid on every occasion. I may not have found what was born at Bailén Street a century ago, but I met wonderful people who welcomed me as another member of their families, gave me strength, and helped me trust that another world is possible; more equal, just, and dignified for all beings or, in Zapatistas' words, "a world where many worlds fit".

I will now refer to a few learnings I applied to the cases intending to number the various strategies I followed in the field. At the same time, some information will be given about aspects of the environments where the fieldwork was taking place.

Body: Not being used to often hugs, kisses, and other bodily expressions of contact with people I do not know well, I quickly realized this was something to change if I wanted to approach the participants culturally. More specifically, families, kids, and teachers in my cases usually hug, kiss, give massages, and, in general, touch each other. Consciously, therefore, I tried to imitate them and reproduce some of their habits in my encounters in the field. At the same time, I kept a balance that permitted me to feel comfortable. According to my perception, this decision contributed to breaking the barriers and gaining their confidence more quickly. Additionally, a 'study of the senses', made unconsciously at first, helped me explore the experiences, ways of life, and futures the participants imagine more in-depth and understand research as participation rather than observation (Pink, 2015).

Clothing: Another aspect I consciously and gradually changed during my stay at the field was my physical appearance. Further to my early observation that many of the participants follow alternative lifestyles -or at least seemed to- I started dressing in colorful skirts and wearing necklaces with well-known symbols such as the tree of life. At the same time, I kept -unconsciously- making my political views obvious, by wearing badges, for example, of 'no fracking', 'no es no' or 'antifa'. The results were double; on the one hand, I used clothing as a tool for data collection since I received information about the kids' and their families' lifestyles and, on the other hand, I transmitted feminist, ecological, or antifascist ideas which were often discussed with kids after their related questions.

Objects of interest: Apart from clothing that transformed into a data collection tool, there were two more objects I was constantly carrying with me at the field, which also served for that purpose; my diary and my voice recorder. Both proved appealing to kids who would often use them as toys, draw and write in the diary, or record voice messages. Rather than systematically using the content of their writings/recordings, I used this strategy to explore the limits set by the pedagogical teams. For example, in the private school, kids would freely use the objects, usually without my permission and with no intervention by the pedagogical team. This was not the case in the following ones where kids did not take the initiative so often, would typically ask to use them in case they did, or would receive an educator's intervention if not, such as "this is Maria's notebook, have you asked her if you can use it?" or "this is not the time to do this, it's lunchtime".

Communication: Communicating in a language that differs from one's mother tongue is problematic for research. Although I could communicate in Spanish when I arrived at the field, neither did I speak nor understand a word in Catalan. This was not a problem regarding my communication with participants who would often switch to Spanish when talking with me. However, it made me feel like I was losing important information during fieldwork - especially from spontaneous conversations among kids or teachers that I was present and teachers' meetings I attended. I accepted that information is endless and tried to use it as another source of data collection by asking the participants clarifications on topics of my research interest, sometimes even pretending that I had not understood.

Hierarchies and Mysticism: In spaces where even the relationship between teachers and students is considered horizontal, hierarchic relations are not expected. However, I found power to be constantly negotiated between all agents -parents, kids, and the pedagogical team- setting limits for their co-existence and not facilitating my presence in the field.

Living or working with and focusing on families while volunteering as a teacher myself, my ambiguous role, slightly changing in each school, did not help me quickly gain some participants' trust. At the same time, my difficulties in burying my political positioning in front of injustices worsened the situation in some cases. What is more, as an outsider who had "invaded" school communities whose presence is not necessarily viewed positively by local authorities, I

often felt that information was not shared with me, especially by the pedagogical team. A specific example may shed more light on the above.

After a few weeks of fieldwork at the public school and upon preparing myself for the upcoming interviews with families, I decided to alter my strategy a bit, and instead of the snowball technique, I first sent a message to the school's families' association (AFI) through a platform found at its official website. A few days later, the responsible teacher for my volunteering called me to talk in private. AFI had complained about my presence at school as a researcher since there was an agreement that outsiders could not research the school. Over our following conversations, and after the pedagogical team checked the e-mails we had exchanged, they admit that my presence there was a mistake of theirs and accepted my proposal to sign a consent document so that they make sure that neither would I use any personal information of the involved actors nor the school's real name and neighborhood.

Despite the strong negative feelings derived, I used this instance as a double lesson. First, it offered me essential data, as it helped me perceive both the prevailing mysticism and the power of the families over decisions usually held by the pedagogical team, if not the director only; in this case, how to deal with external researchers. Secondly, it helped me realize a big mistake I had made, underestimating the importance of the consent documents, which are more than necessary for both sides, especially in institutions like schools[29].

The blurred limits between field-home: When I first met with anthropology as an MA student, I got fascinated from the very beginning, when I was taught about Malinowski's ethnography of the Trobriand Islands. Since then, I was dreaming of doing the same, and under any circumstances. My informants were not indigenous people of New Guinea, and I did not sleep in a tent, but I did my best to live with them, both by necessity and by a strong personal will.

Living and interacting with participants daily, even out of the schools, I felt like a member of certain families, created friendships and trust relationships that last up to date. My fieldwork had

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[29] See Appendix III.

ended when I came upon the teacher of the previous example who told me to visit them whenever I want. "You are part of the family now" were the words she used.

However, managing the amount of information I was constantly obtaining, even when relaxing alone in my room, was challenging. Therefore, after a few weeks of writing down everything and in a single diary, I changed my strategy. I used my main field diary only for observations derived from my main field -the schools-, including everything else in a secondary diary, in brief, and only when I felt like they were adding something to my research objectives.

The second and most complicated challenge I faced regarding the blurred limits between field and home was managing the confidential information I was often receiving. Such an instance offered me an essential insight into a hypothesis I had made. However, it was not clear if I could use it as valid data due to its confidential character and the legal dimensions. The doubts were troubling me until I shared them with my supervisor, whose proposal to use my intuition was simple and effective.

Applying these elements, I started creating the trust relationships I opted for while maintaining my role as a researcher, reminding it when the participants-friends revealed too much information about my field.

Due to my interest in learning and understanding the various perceptions about education, tied to the agents' perceptions, worldviews, and ways of life, my research methods and questions were not stable but rather dynamic and ever-changing. During my permanence in the field, I tried to listen and be honest. In other words, I perceived myself both as a learner and an unlearner, who had to consciously set apart a series of embodied learnings to listen and understand "the other". This focus on my role as a researcher - (un) learner became more evident as time went by.

4.2 Units of analysis

The core of my research study consists of one unit of analysis which is alternative education in Catalonia. Its population includes all the persons related to it in one way or another; families,

students, and staff who participate in such educational communities. My sample is the specific population with whom I established a relationship during fieldwork in the three units of observation: Petxina, Pardal, and Trèvol.

The main criteria to select the certain schools were a) their age groups, all including primary education (6-12 years old), b) their commitment to educational change, and c) their institutional diversity. Since I aim to compare three different types of projects -a public, a private, and a self-managed school- I chose those that would offer me this option. Besides, the analysis will draw from the Catalan education system and members of the local communities or any other events and agents that might have contributed to the better understanding of the social reality under study, either as predicted or by accident.

4.3 Data collection techniques

Regarding the data collection techniques in the field, they varied according to the experience gained and needs. During the main period of my stay in the field, from January 2018 to March 2019, I developed various techniques for data collection. The main ones were: a) participant observation, b) semi-structured interviews, and c) school documents. All these techniques took place simultaneously during my fieldwork, which is briefly described below.

At a starting point and during the first year, I spent three months (January 2018-March 2018) doing fieldwork at Petxina, a private active primary and secondary homologated school of approximately 160 students in terms of 'Workaway', living with the director's family. The next three months (April 2018-June 2018) were spent at Pardal, an early childhood and primary public school of approximately 475 students, which follows the Reggio Emilia approach, during which I was living with a family of the school. During the second year, I did six-month fieldwork (October 2018-March 2019) of fewer hours in Trèvol, a libertarian self-managed educational project of approximately 35 students, while I kept living with the same family of the public school. Apart from participant observation and interviews that will be later explained in detail, I used reports given to the families, the schools' educational projects, magazines, books, videos, or any other additional related material I could obtain. Primary texts about the pedagogical and

upbringing theories the participants follow also helped me understand the perspectives of the families and educational centers.

4.3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was my primary technique for data collection. During the period of the fieldwork, I fully participated in ongoing activities at the schools, spending three to seven hours every day as a teaching assistant and depending on each project's needs. I was an English-speaking companion at the first school, a general teaching assistant at the second one, where I also conducted yoga tale sessions and a general companion at the third case where I also conducted English sessions based on a kids' market role-playing. At the same time, I attended teachers' and parents' meetings and established out-of-school relationships that contributed a lot to the data collection and triangulation.

The specific method –participant observation- was used to discover the aspects I wanted to focus on and gain insight by directly observing them. This way, I could compare the pedagogical proposals that underline each project and the participants' discourses with the actual practices. The information I gathered was written daily in ethnographic fieldnotes kept in diaries, which are mentioned at the end of the section. Notes were as descriptive as possible and divided into pure observations or dialogues and emotions, feelings, or thoughts they evoked me.

Fieldwork at Petxina, the private school, officially started on the 8th of January 2018 and lasted until the 23rd of March 2018. There, I was working as an English-speaking companion at the school from the beginning, in exchange for a room in the director's house, located in the middle of the school. During this period, I was working four hours daily, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., mostly in exterior and sometimes in interior spaces.

The ways I worked depended on me with the only condition to speak exclusively in English. While accompanying little kids (6-8 years old), we mostly played role games, making crafts, and reading English tales. With older kids and teenagers (8-15 years old), we either played board games, starting informal group conversations or presenting a specific topic and talking upon that.

The topics I chose during my stay were 'feminism', 'animal liberation', 'the Zapatista movement', and 'squatting'. In case groups did not show up, I wandered around at the playground, socializing and observing. This would also happen from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. until the school was out, and I usually returned to my room. Nevertheless, my schedule was constantly changing, as did the schedule of the school itself. In general, this would happen every day apart from Thursdays when I joined the weekly excursion accompanying where needed.

During this first stage, I attended, observed, and worked 43 school days plus eight excursions, usually at the park, mountains, or beach, once in a museum, and once at a local squatted social center organized by me. Besides, I attended Montessori training sessions and teachers' meetings once or twice per week and worked as a nanny with two school families from the 29th of January every Monday for two hours until my departure. Last, I sometimes had lunch breaks with the pedagogical team at the balcony of one of them, several informal yet essential conversations with the director –usually at dinner time-. I assisted events and observed dialogues taking place at home.

The second fieldwork stage at Pardal, the public school, started on the 4th of April 2018 and lasted until the 22nd of June 2018. During that period, I attended the school from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. daily. In total, I observed and participated in 40 school days and three excursions, two of them at the nearest field and one at the theater. The ways I got involved in school settings had been set and explained to me in advance in terms of my official volunteer role at the school as an assistant teacher at the community of grans[30]. More specifically, having a specific class of 10-year-old kids as a reference point and one of their two reference teachers responsible for my volunteer work, I first observed for a week without interacting and then participated in various ways.

My day would typically start at 9 a.m. when I attended the morning group meeting in the reference room. Then, I would move to another space or stay there to accompany a group of kids, depending on the needs, from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., when I would return to the room of

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[30] Kids aged from 9 to 11 years old.

reference for breakfast. Afterward, I would accompany another group from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. when I would stay with one kid to help with reading.

Besides, I assisted school events and kids' shows and helped an intern with the rehearsals for a theatrical play the kids of my reference group had decided to give. In addition, from the 14th of May, I started giving some yoga sessions with different kids' groups each week. The sessions I gave were based on a yoga tale I prepared, an adaptation of the book 'The Adventures of Nono' to yoga postures. For the rest of the time, when I was not asked to accompany a specific group of kids, I would wander around, mostly in interior and sometimes exterior spaces, and stay where something caught my attention.

Fieldnotes from that period included observations and dialogues held in the house and neighborhood if related to the school or the participants. In addition, many of them derived from observations during my work as a nanny with some families. Starting from the 23rd of April 2018, I worked with three groups of kids weekly doing some English picnics at the nearby park during their lunch break, from 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. Every Monday and Thursday, I would do it with five 11-year-old kids, every Tuesday with four 11 and 8-year old kids, and every Friday with three kids of eleven and seven years old. The activities included English conversations while eating, board games, tales, and a role-playing game I developed, based on DnD but with anthropology-related content.

Figure 8: Exploring the Trobriand Islands - Drawings used for the anthropology based role-playing game

Source: Pancho (Francisco Godoy)

Starting from the 8th of May 2018, I also took care of two four and 6-year old kids and the group of the Tuesday picnics during the summer months and gave a few English classes to a 13-year-old ex-student of Pardal from the 7th of June 2018. Moreover, I attended teachers' and parents' meetings (riquezas compartidas) and some important events like the pedagogical sessions on the 5th of May, a wedding on the 6th of July, and a school's celebration on the 15th of June.

The third and last fieldwork stage started on the 6th of November 2018 when I started attending my Trèvol. The first part of my fieldwork lasted until the 12th of March 2019 and included 16 days of participant observation. During that period, I would go every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to the squat hosting the educational project. First, I only observed for a few weeks, after the pedagogical team's recommendations and guidance, and without participating at all, while later, I started interacting with kids. On the 8th of January 2019, together with a companion, I started accompanying more actively through English workshops that lasted until the 12th of March.

When I was about to leave the field, and just before the last English workshop, something unexpected happened; the squat hosting Trèvol was burned down. Therefore, I decided to keep going to the squat that hosted the project afterward, to help the Trèvol community clean the material and get settled. As I felt that data was missing due to my attendance on Tuesdays only, I also decided to conduct nine extra days of participant observation, three of which were in terms of salaried work as I substituted a companion.

Before and during my fieldwork at Trèvol, I attended two presentations of the educational community at a local squat, in terms of one I had first got in contact with them as well. I also attended companions' morning meetings at the terrace, the school's celebrations, as well as activist events that I participated in and coincided with companions or parents such as 'Trobada d' Infraestructuras llibertarias' on the 25th of May 2019, the nocturnal feminist protest on the 8th of March 2019 and the protest that followed the squat's arson. Later, during the summer months, I also worked as a nanny for a Trèvol family that moved to my neighborhood to register at Pardal.

Before I refer to the second method of data collection I used throughout my research, I would like to point out again that my fieldwork methods were not stable. They were constantly changing as I was experimenting and as I was learning to listen to the participants. As time passed, I was becoming more conscious of how important it is to listen to words and bodies with all my senses. Through participant sensing (Garcia Grados, 2017), I was alert to sensorial experiences, which might include sounds (e.g., music before the school break), touch (e.g., hugs), or smells (e.g., the baking of cinnamon cookies in the school's kitchen). Last, I learned to accept the no's, consider them as another valid data and be satisfied with the information I could obtain.

I should also mention that, although the described data collection technique was chosen as the most suitable from the beginning of the research planning, the ways it was carried out during the fieldwork slightly changed. As time passed by, I was taking advantage of my presence in the field to listen truly and therefore learn aspects of my topic of interest and how to carry out ethnographic research at varied instances and with varied participants. Luckily, the field itself facilitated my experimentation due to the different preferences of the participants. Therefore, I could put in action and compare strategies such as limited and prolonged permanence in the field, various levels of observation/participation, etc.

Based on my own political identity, I aimed to connect with the informants and create relations of mutual support (Fernandez, 2009) rather than detachment and objectivity. What I hoped for was not a research marked by undisturbance but a transformative engagement; to perceive activism from another source of information to the very essence of the scholarship (Suzuki and Mayorka, 2014). Therefore, I used the concept of 'care', transforming it from an emic category to a methodological tool (Korth, 2008; Esteban, 2011). Inspired by educational activists and my previous experiences, I tried to develop a 'caring ethnography' which, instead of limiting itself to the mutual support I developed with the participants -lasting to this day- expanded to my relations with university colleagues, family, friends and neighbors. In other words, I realized that creating relationships based on care and doing research are compatible and that it makes no sense to differ my personal from my research identity. All in all, the ethnography I tried to conduct can be expressed in the reciprocal principle of 'care for' and 'being cared', thus becoming a core value that sums up the social responsibility that I think should be tied with the discipline.

Last, I learned to apply the learnings obtained in various circumstances and contexts. I accepted that I could not know everything or be everywhere, and I managed to apply my knowledge directly, giving feedback whenever I was asked to. But I also learned how to be comfortable with the fact that I will not always receive the answers I am looking for and that feedback will not always be welcome. Therefore, instead of trying to change things in my cases, I applied what I had learned in other contexts and indirect ways, such as in the popular school I later participated in, at my workplace, and in terms of related networks and collectives in which I later participated.

Field Diaries: My fieldnotes were usually written upon my return to the room in a mix of languages, while observations, dialogues, and literal expressions I did not want to forget were immediately written at the field and kept in a colorful notebook. Besides, sometimes I carried my recorder with me for immediate registration of the happenings. However, when I observed specific classes or instances in interior spaces, I frequently used A4 pages that did not draw attention. All these notes would later be transferred from the notebooks and recordings to my computer in English in the form of diaries, apart from literal expressions written in the original language, primarily Spanish and Catalan.

One main diary was created for each school and educational project with two parts; part A included the main fieldwork period, and part B served for later observations. There, I organized the data obtained during the day and explained the aspects extensively. The most personal non-descriptive information was added in the same diary and Italics. Each day´s fieldnotes were written under the date accompanied by a title and a subtitle with the exact place, time, and participants if a scene was especially interesting for the thesis. At the same time, a second diary was created for each school where observations related to participants but not during school hours were written.

Nevertheless, sometimes the field was calling me even without my decision. All these unexpected events and the thoughts they provoked me, not directly connected to the purposes of the thesis, were written down in my Personal Diary along with my experiences and feelings from my workspace (at a public secondary school as a robotics teacher, two language schools as an

English teacher and a Greek restaurant), university, activist and personal life. This diary started since my arrival in October 2017, it was informal, and it initially included my first impressions of the city, the province in which I lived and the family that firstly hosted me, and all the places and people that I progressively got to know, both in the neighborhood and elsewhere. It accompanied me during the whole period of my stay in Catalonia and was later divided into four parts, according to the period when notes were written. Apart from the above, there were many times I used my personal diary to refer to theory I thought would be of help for the analysis, spontaneous ideas, and self-reflection regarding my identity, among else, insecurities and difficulties I encountered derived mainly from language barriers and my ambivalent feelings towards academia.

I also kept some notes in different files from my initial aupairing experience and participation at education-related courses and events such as a) 'La Innovacio necesaria en educacio' organized by the Pla estrategic metropolita de Barcelona b) Quishare Fest c) II Debat extraordinat sobre l'educación publica catalana d) 'Gira que se termina, encuentro que se fortaleze' organized by Reevo: Red de Educación Alternativa, d) The course 'Els inicis de la pedagogia llibertària a Catalunya' organized by the CGT and e) The talk-debate 'Actualitat de la Pedagogia Libertaria' with Ani Pérez. Last, another diary was written for my observations of the fieldwork I did with an unschooling community in a village close to Barcelona in July 2018, which will not be included in the current thesis. I should mention that the choice of dividing my fieldnotes in various diaries was made later, towards the end of the second stage, upon the gathering of too many fieldnotes and my realization that a single diary would be problematic for the analysis of the data collected.

An additional document was created as well with notes from a few conferences and festivals I attended, such as the International Conference on Critical Education in London, the 'IV Congreso Internacional de Antropología AIBR', the 'EUDEC (European Democratic Education Community)' conference, 'FACE – Festival Alternativo de Creatividad y Educación', the winter school 'Ethnography Unbound', 'Historical Materialism BCN: Thinking emancipation. Radicalities and Social Movements in a Polarised World', 'V Congreso Internacional de Antropología AIBR' and the online course 'Social Pedagogy'.

Below are two tables created to summarize the main stages and field diaries described above that were used for the data collection. Then, another with the related events attended is presented.

Table 1: Stages of ethnographic research

STAGE	SCHOOL
A	Petxina
B	Pardal
C	Trèvol

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2: Field Diaries

Stage	Diary	Part	Dates	Pages	Observations
A	Petxina DA	A	8 January 2018 – 23 March 2018	53	43 school days, 8 excursions
		B	28 September 2018 – 24 April 2019		4 school days
	Petxina DA'	A	7 January 2017 – 20 March 2018	101	Training & meetings, lunch breaks, Neighbourhood, House, Nanny work
		B	6 April 2018 – 24 February 2019		
B	Pardal DB	A	4 April 2018 – 22 June 2018	116	40 school days, 3 excursions
		B	5 November 2018 – 17 December 2018		7 school days
	Pardal DB'	A	2 April 2018 – 12 July 2018	182	Teachers' and parents' meetings, House, Neighbourhood, Nanny work, School events
		B	24 September 2018 – 22 January 2020		
C	Trèvol DC	A	6 November 2018 – 12 March 2019	128	16 school days
		B	8 April 2019 – 6 June 2019		8 school days, 1excursion
	Trèvol DC'	A	10 June 2018 – 22 March 2019	59	Teachers' meetings, Neighbourhood, Protests, School events, Nanny work
		B	6 April 2019 – 27 June 2019		

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3: Related Events

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C
La Innovacio necesaria en educacio, organized by the Pla estrategic metropolita de Barcelona	VIII International Conference on Critical Education, London	Winter school: Ethnography Unbound
Quishare Fest	IV Congreso Internacional de Antropología AIBR	Historical Materialism BCN: Thinking emancipation. Radicalities and Social Movements in a Polarised World
Debat extraordinat sobre l' educación publica catalana	EUDEC (European Democratic Education Community) conference	V Congreso Internacional de Antropología AIBR
Gira que se termina, encuentro que se fortaleze, organized by Reevo: Red de Educación Alternativa	FACE, Festival Alternativo de Creatividad y Educación	
Els inicis de la pedagogia llibertària a Catalunya, organized by the CGT		
Actualitat de la Pedagogia Libertaria, with Ani Perez		

Source: Own elaboration

4.3.2 Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions helped me strengthen the interpretation of information collected by participant observation. They were conducted individually to reassure the total anonymity of the interlocutors and had a semi-structured character that allowed me to collect comparable data for my analysis. Therefore, although I gave them the freedom to share whatever they want, I used pre-made interview guides with a core list of open-ended questions to ensure the later comparison. Questions focused on the family's presentation (ages, place of origin, professions, studies, political and religious ideas, parental educational experiences, monthly income, housing, networks), kids' out-of-school activities, upbringing, kids' previous educational experiences, the process and motivation behind their school choice, perceptions over the educational centers, kids' trajectories on a learning and a relational level, difficulties, and hopes. The length of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to 5 hours, yet all of them were recorded and transcribed.

During the first year, twenty interviews with parents were conducted -ten from each school-, one group interview with three teachers from the private school, one with an inspector of Pardal's geographical zone, one with a Senegalese mother, which was not recorded after her will and another one with a mother of a homeschooler which will not be used for the current thesis. An inspector was also tried to be reached in Petxina's neighborhood yet without success. Later on, during the second year, five more interviews with mothers and fathers were conducted, and all 25 interviews with parents were transcribed.

Table 4: Interviews

STAGE	SCHOOL	FAMILIES	OTHER
A	Petxina	8 mothers 2 fathers	One group interview with the pedagogical team (3 tutors)
B	Pardal	7 mothers 1 father 2 mofathers[31]	One inspector & One mother
C	Trèvol	4 mothers 1 father	

Source: Own elaboration

The methods to reach the interviewed persons varied, but they all started after half of the fieldwork was conducted in each school. At Petxina, I followed the snowball technique that started from a mother I had closer relations with, who wrote a related message at a WhatsApp group she shared with a few other parents. I also asked the pedagogical team for an interview with three of them who accepted, proposing a group interview.

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[31] Mother and father of a family interviewed together.

At Pardal, I tried to reach families through the parents' association, but, as I previously mentioned, the method was not successful, and I, therefore, used the same technique as in Petxina. Due to the existence of both families who already lived in the neighborhood and others who had moved for the school, I tried to include a representative sample. However, I realized that the ones who contacted me from the first category were all satisfied with Pardal. Therefore, I tried also to reach parents whose experience was not necessarily positive and conducted an interview with a Senegalese mother. I also e-mailed the area's educational inspection secretary, who managed an interview with the local inspector, conducted on the 10th of July 2018.

Last, at Pardal, the interviewees contacted me after an e-mail I prepared that was sent to the whole educational community by the companions.

In all cases, contacts were made through WhatsApp, and I tried to find respondents who varied regarding their motivations behind the school choice and perceptions over the school. Also, I let them choose the place of the interview, which, in some cases, revealed important information about their domestic culture and ways of life, in case they invited me to their homes.

There follow some tables with the interviews conducted. The aim is to give some basic information about the interview and interviewees' profiles. I will therefore mention their nicknames, genders, ages, studies, professions, housing, montly income, kids that attend or have attended the educational center, whether they live in the school's municipality, where the interview took place and how much it lasted. In the case of interviews with the teaching staff or the inspector, less information is mentioned.

Private school Petxina

Table 5: Families interviewed at Petxina

	Name	*Gender*	*Student(s) at Petxina*	*Lives at Aigua?*	*Place*	*Duration (h:m)*	*Age*	*Studies*	*Profession*	*House*	*Monthly Income (€)*
IA1	Paula	F	Rocio (12) & Aura (8) // Haron (17) – ex student	Moved for Petxina	Her Home	2:35	51	Third World studies in the UK	English teacher (temporary)	Owned, 70m²	2000 - 2500
IA2	Valentina	F	Leire (8)	NO	Petxina	1:30	48	Primary education	Nanny (temporary)	Rented, 60m²	1000 - 1500
IA3	Alma	F	Nicolas (15)	NO	Petxina	1:00	44	MA in Oxford (Tourism)	Coacher	Owned, 230m²	>3000
IA4	Amira	F	Alvaro (6)	NO	Park	0:55	38	University studies	Special education secondary school teacher	Owned, 150m²	> 3000
IA5	Teo	M	Gina (9) & Antonio (11)	Moved for Petxina	Park	0:40	39	University studies	Cinema teacher at Petxina	Owned, 60m²	2000 - 2500
IA6	Zoe	F	Malak (10) & Julen (12)	Moved for Petxina	Her home	1:55	42	University studies	Pediatric speech therapist	Rented, 100m²	1000 - 1500
IA7	Naiha	F	Roger (6)	Moved for Petxina	Cafe	0:50	41	MA in translation	Marketing	Rented, 70m²	2500 - 3000
IA8	Marwa	F	Aitana (14)	NO	Telephone	1:10	53	University studies	Secondary school teacher	Owned, 240m²	> 3000
IA9	Asier	M	Bernat (15)	Moved for Petxina	Cafe	3:55	56	PhD	Neuroscientist	Rented, 170m²	> 3000
IA10	Carlota	F	Blanca (6) & Rim (5)	Moved for Petxina	Telephone	0:50	42	MA in human resources & MA in Gestalt therapy	Gestalt psychotherapist	Rented, 180m²	> 3000

Source: Own elaboration

Table 6: Teachers interviewed at Petxina

	Names	*Genders*	*Place*	*Duration*
Tutors	Mia, Sofia, Jan	F, F, M	A tutor's house during lunch break	00:30

Source: Own elaboration

Public School Pardal

Table 7: Families interviewed at Pardal

	Name	Gender	Student(s) at Petxina	Lives at Ústria?	Place	Duration (h:m)	Age	Studies	Profession	House	Monthly Income (€)
IB1	Begonya	F	Agusti (11) & Carles (11) // Carmen (17) - ex-student	YES	Her home	2:40	50	FP	Administrative	Owned, 90m²	1500 – 2000
IB2	Carolina	F	Pietat (11) & Thais (6)	NO	Cafe	0:40	44	PhD in Chemistry	Currently unemployed	Rented, 130m²	2500 – 3000
IB3	Ferrer	M	Ignasi (11) & Felic (7)	NO	My home	4:40	37	University studies	Secondary school teacher	Owned, 80m²	1500 - 2000
IB4	Mireia	F	Eleuteri (11) // Lea (13) - ex-student	Moved for Pardal	My&Her home	2:00	44	Theatre studies & Pre-school education (currently studying)	Companion at a private libertarian nursery school & waitress	Rented, 80m²	1000 – 1500
IB5	Lorda & Dionis	F&M	Isidre (11) & Nara (5)	Moved for Pardal	Park	0:45	42 & 42	History of Art, Fashion and Design, Pre-school education (currently studying) // Primary Education	Companion at a children's space at a civic center // Freelance journalist & writer	Rented, 160m²	2000 – 2500
IB6	Dolors	F	Jaume (14) - ex-student	Moved for Pardal	Her Home	1:50	55	University studies in Labor relations	Currently unemployed	Rented, 80m²	1000 – 1500
IB7	Petra	F	Gemma (9) & Roderic (14) - ex-student	NO	Cafe	1:10	44	Diplomatura in physiotherapy	Currently unemployed	Owned, 70m²	> 3000
IB8	Lidia	F	Nit (11) &	Moved	Her Home	1:35	33	Primary	Bakery shop	Rented,	1000 – 1500

			Sebastia (17) - ex-student	for Pardal				education & Psychology (currently studying)	clerk	120m²	
IB9	Ada	F	Ximo (12) & Cel (5) // Naxo (13) - ex-student	NO	Park	0:45	43	Studies in child care & Social work	Town Hall employee	Owned, 180m²	> 3000
IB10	Abellera & Francesc	F&M	Arlet (13) - ex-student	Moved for Pardal	Their home	2:05	51 & 53	University studies	Psychologist & Social worker	Rented, 120m²	1000 – 1500

Source: Own elaboration

Table 8: Extra Family interviewed at Pardal

	Name	*Gender*	*Age*	*Student (s) at Pardal*	*Place*	*Duration*
Mother	Marieme	F	44	Awa (7) // Khady (13) - ex-student	Her Home	Not recorded

Source: Own elaboration

Table 9: Inspector interviewed at Pardal

	Gender	*Place*	*Duration (h:m)*
Inspector	M	His office	01:05

Source: Own elaboration

Self-managed educational project Trèvol

Table 10: Families interviewed at Trèvol

	Name	Gender	Student(s) at Trèvol	Lives at Bosc?	Place	Duration (h:m)	Age	Studies	Profession	House	Monthly Income (€)
IC1	Lis	F	Regina (10)	NO	Cafe	1:20	49	MA in pharmaceutics	University teacher at Pharmaceutics & Freelancer at dairy controls	Owned, 90m^2	1500 - 2000
IC2	Pandora	F	Dami (8) & Etna (5)	NO	Cafe	1:10	35	Degree in philosophy & MA in communication and public relations	Tourist guide (temporary)	Owned, 170m^2	2500 - 3000
IC3	Arcadi	M	Demetri (5)	NO	Trèvol	1:05	39	Primary education	Bionconstruction (at own orchard)	Owned, 25m^2 (used to squat)	500 - 1000
IC4	Sol	F	Blau (7)	NO (Later moved for Pardal)	Cafe	1:15	40	Studies in social work	Social worker	Rented, 60m^2	2500 - 3000
IC5	Nausica	F	Aurelia (5)	NO	Cafe	2:30	40	Degree in Arts & MA in Records management & PhD in political history (currently)	PhD student – Scholarship holder	Rented, 55m^2	2500 - 3000

Source: Own elaboration

4.4 Data analysis

    4.4.1 Qualitative

My analysis is mainly descriptive and qualitative. Although referring to the past due to its influence on the actual imaginary, my aim is a contextualized description and interpretation of the data. At the same time, taking into account the considerable variety among the participants' identities, I tried to adopt a phenomenological approach in my attempt to interpret their experiences and understandings of reality and keep a reflective attitude, thinking on the ways I interact with them.

After the second year, I prepared a first draft of the categories derived from fieldwork upon revising my diaries and, with the help of my theoretical framework, applied to the data collected. Although they changed during the writing process, I tried to identify some basic categories and subcategories that my fieldnotes could be divided into, which helped me analyze. The participant observation and interviews combined with the reports given to families or other school documents, such as school magazines, books, articles, webpages, blogspots, and videos, helped triangulate the data[32]. After Hammersley and Atkinson's (2001 [1995]) proposal, I treated such data as social products that reveal self-representations rather than mere sources of valid information and used it to explore in-depth the school cultures and self-images of my cases.

The two tables that follow show the categories of descriptive analysis I first identified, and the final analytical categories I later developed.

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[32] For the documents used, see Appendix V. Due to the anonymity I will not refer to this data using their real reference.

Table 11: Categories of descriptive analysis

General Aspects	1. The Context	Neighborhood	General Information/Neighborhood Description: Location (mountains/sea), population (age, immigration, socioeconomic profiles), Public infrastructure (transportation, health, education, parks), Stores
		Relation with neighborhood	If they relate with the neighbors and in which ways
	2. Basic Features	History	How were they created, when and by whom? How have they changed through the years?
		Normative problems	Legal issues (related to local educational legislation) and the ways they were handled.
		Number, Ages, Groups of children	Number and ages of kids. Student-Teacher ratio. Groups they are divided.
		Cost	Monthly/Annual fees
	3.Spatial/Material Aspects	Spaces & Rooms	Number, Types, Characteristics, Furniture, Materials
		Outside &Actants (Non-human)	Description of the schoolyard, time spent by kids, animals
	4. Time Structure	Arrival and exit	Fixed or not. Hours
		Week Schedule	Daily/Weekly timetable, Weekly Excursions
		Rituals, Food, Cleaning	Types of structured practices: Daily (food, cleaning etc.) and Special-occasion (birthday, goodbyes, change of age communities, Christmas etc.)
	5. Internal Organization	Meetings	Frequency and participants (teachers, parents, kids)
		Decision making	The way decisions are made and the agents.
	6. Links	Connections and images	Relations between the three projects (kids, staff, families), perspectives on other projects
		Networking	Networks they belong to (Escola Nova 21, XILL etc.)
Kids	1. Peer Interactions	Children groups	Fixed or Not. Gendered or Not. Formed by them and by adults during structured activities and free time
		Interrelations in Same Age Groups	How kids of the same age group interact under and without the presence of adults
		Interrelations with	How kids of different age groups interact under the adults'

		younger/older peers	instructions and spontaneously
	2. Students' Internal Organization	Assemblies (with kids)	Existence, frequency, description
		Brigades (of kids)	Existence, history, purpose, description
	3. Perspectives	Diversity	Immigrant kids, Functional diversity, Kids with learning difficulties
		Students' perspectives on school	Students' feelings of belonging/alterity in general and in the case of diverse kids outlined before, mainly when coming from vulnerable groups
Adult staff	1. Principal	Director's profile	Profile, personal background and role
	2. Main Teaching staff	Acompas (Teachers)	Profiles, Level of commitment, Relations among them
		Acompas' meetings	Frequency, degrees of participation, topics of discussion
		Acompas' Perspectives & Problems	Main topics related to their job, the kids and the families
		Acompas' role	Daily Practices: Observations, accompanying, proposals, conflict resolutions
		Conflict resolution	Importance given, Description
	3. Collaborators	Other Staff	Cleaning, gardening, psychological support, cooking, internship students, volunteers
Learning	1. Ideals	Pedagogical ideals	Description of the pedagogies the projects are based on
		Emotions	Perspectives on emotions
	2. Practices	Activities, Lessons, Workshops	Description of main teaching/learning areas and practices and how they are chosen, Frequency
		Learning material	Montessori equipment, books, notebooks etc.
	3. Learning in non-school institutions	Out of school activities	Languages, sports and arts, etc.
	4. Learning Results	Evaluation/ Documentation	Description of ways to evaluate and frequency
Extra Aspects of	1. Tangible	Books & Magazines	Types of literature (tales, novels, political and academic literature, etc.), Topics (Phantasy, History, Geography,

Material Culture			Feminism, Animals, Sexuality, Nudism, Science etc.), Languages
		Technology	Types of technological devices (computers, cameras, etc.), Ways and frequency of use (Educational purposes, Evaluation etc.)
		Mobile phones	Rules and their fullfilment, Ways and frequency of use (by different agents, for recording/communication purposes)
		Clothes, Shoes & Accessories	Clothing styles, Printed messages, Sewing and clothes making for educational purposes, Shoes rules and their fullfilment
	2. Intangible	Smells	Food, Snacks, Cookies etc.
		Music	Songs, artists and musical instruments used in the projects
Parents	1. Families	Parents' profiles	Political and ideological orientations (progressists, anarchists, leftists, feminists etc.), countries of origin, lifestyle aspects (yoga, homeopathy, gestalt etc.), previous educational projects they were involved in, Interest in educational project
	2. Parents go to school	Separation from kids	Process of adaptation, ages, teachers' role, rules and limits
		Parents' presence	Time spent at school, places, collaborations, profiles who participate more (origin, sex etc.)
	3. Organization	Parents Associations	Existence or not, visibility, structure, commissions, problems, power on project's issues
	4. Parents´ discourses	Parents perspectives & Problems	Perspectives on the educational projects and their requirements, Complaints (about kids and staff)
		Parents-Teachers	Complaints from and about parents and teachers (responsibilities, roles, learning difficulties etc.)
Moral politics	1. Sexing the school	Gender	Gender Identification, Gendered kids' groups?
		Sexuality	Sex education, Sex-related conversations
	2. Values	Rules & Discipline	Interiorization of rules, Obedience and Disobedience, Consequences
		Autonomy & Individualism	Uses of the autonomy concept, Practices aiming at the development of autonomy, or is it individualism?
		Freedom & Limits	Conversations on freedom and related concepts (libertad, libertinaje), the importance of limits and its relation to the construction of the freedom concepts

		Social Criticism	Presence or Absence of critical discourses and practices on social issues, Topics (democracy, animal rights, sexism, power relations, etc.)

Source: Own elaboration

Of all these ethnographic data I gathered and analysed with the help of the descriptive categories, I decided to focus on four aspects for the subsequent comparative analysis, as they are more related to the interests of this thesis. These categories of comparative analysis may be seen in the following table.

Table 12: Categories of comparative analysis

Pedagogical Proposal
Power Relations
Belongingness
Transmission and Learning

Source: Own elaboration

4.4.2 Quantitative

Although to a lesser degree, I also used quantitative data such as graphics and statistical data that offered me some important contextualizing information about the schools' neighborhoods. At the same time, based on censures, polls, and surveys, I managed to gain some insight into the expansion of alternative education in Spain and Catalonia. My main statistical data was derived from the Spanish Statistical Office INE[33], Foro-ciudad website[34], Ludus[35] and official documents published by the local town halls of the municipalities where the three ethnographic cases are located.

I used information given by quantitative data to contextualize better the schools studied. This information was mainly related to the population and the evolution of residents in each

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[33] https://www.ine.es/en/
[34] https://www.foro-ciudad.com/
[35] https://ludus.org.es/es

municipality. Moreover, in the case of Petxina and Pardal – the two homologated, official schools - I also used data regarding the number of residents born abroad and school offer in the municipalities, as I considered it helpful toward an understanding of the social reality met in the centers. In Trèvol, on the other hand, the self-managed project, this data was not helpful as most families lived in other municipalities. However, I used data about the number of companies in the municipality that hosts Trèvol, due to Destru Plan, the urbanization project that affects the educational project and will be later explained in the correspondent ethnography.

Last, I also considered data found in Ludus, a website that hosts a list of educational projects that follow alternative pedagogical proposals in Spain. Although the non-official, alegal character of private, cooperatively-run, and self-organized educational projects make it a challenging task, I tried to give a picture of what number we are talking about when we say alternative educational projects in Catalonia.

4.5 Difficulties, limitations, and possibilities

The first considerable difficulty encountered was related to the lack of existing bibliographical sources. I could not find any contemporary anthropological studies on my topic, which made it challenging to approach. There was also a huge problem related to the terms used both in the field and in literature, which got even more puzzling when it comes to literature in different languages. This is why I realized that I could not use a single label to describe the three projects and chose the word 'alternative' as an umbrella term instead.

Second, my socio-political identity and action demanded constant self-reflection to make sure that I was aware of the ways they influence my interpretation. As a matter of fact, the choice of the specific topic was taken partly due to the lack of activist engagement I had with it. Upon the preparation of the research proposal, it was clear to me that I would never choose something that has been a central part of my activist life or would make me experience feelings of superiority and cause me moral problems as it may have happened if I had chosen a topic related to marginalized people. At the same time, it had to be important to me and related to my interests.

As the research progressed, I realized that education started to form part of my activist life. I, therefore, decided it made no sense to break my identity into pieces and perform different roles as an activist, scholar, and participant. As a person with values best described by the anarchist proposal, I tried to put them into practice and engage with the participants honestly, reminding my multiple identities when needed. Of course, being a student, I also found myself in contradictory and frustrating situations quite often due to the rules -written or not- I had to follow and my inevitable questioning attitude regarding contemporary academia.

Third, the lack of funding was another obstacle. Even though I used it as a motivation to get more insight into my field, by living with families or working as a nanny/English teacher with the kids, it limited my ability to organize the fieldwork as I wished, attend related events and concentrate my time and energy to the research.

Fourth, what I had not predicted and made me change the initial plan in a few aspects, was my awareness, mainly due to the comments of my supervisors and colleagues, of the amount of information I hold. This led me to limit the planned number of interviews, abandon the initial plan of digital ethnography and opt for using the information I acquired from digital sources like a WhatsApp group called 'desaprendiendo juntxs' [unlearning together][36] as additional material when useful for my analysis only. The same decision was made for the interview with a mother of a homeschooler and the short ethnography I did with an unschooling community so that the information collected would not be too overwhelming to analyze.

Moreover, my level of Spanish and Catalan sometimes limited my awareness of everything taking place in the field and, due to the high degree of movement in space, it was hard to take accurate notes. Challenges also derived from the diversity I faced in the fieldwork, in every possible aspect, along with the short duration of some cases and their fast-changing nature.

Another significant difficulty was the ethical issues that arose after two realizations and in the case of the public school only. The first one was that I was accepted due to an accident, as

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[36] It is a WhatsApp group where everyone interested in alternative education in Spain participates, makes questions, informs and participates in messaging debates. Almost 200 members join the certain group.

explained before. Although this was resolved after reassuring the complete anonymity, it made me feel uncomfortable in the field. Secondly, gaining the complete trust of some participants turned out to be a problem too. Not satisfied with the information that can be seen by being there, I tried to reach more profound matters, which sometimes led me to conclude that it would be better not to know. Letting myself guided by my intuition, there were times I felt trapped in a constant ethnography, even when I stopped the actual fieldwork. Mainly because of the friendships and caring relationships I created with some participants of the research project, I also got interested in aspects like maternity or upbringing and started to lose my focus on the educational ethnography. Being highly implicated in my field offered me insights into aspects I would not be able to discover elsehow and allowed me to develop feelings of empathy and care. Nevertheless, the blurred barriers between research and ordinary life also turned into an obstacle regarding the limits of confidentiality and the game of proximity and distance, making it necessary to maintain a constant attitude of reflection.

4.6 General Workplan

Table 13: General Workplan

Stage	Dates	Data collection	Objectives	Analysis
A	January 2018 – March 2018	Participant Observation	Study the pedagogical practices at **Petxina**	Literature reading
		Interviews	Explore the worldviews and compare to practices	Interview Transcriptions
		School Documentation study	Triangulation	Participation at related events
B	April 2018 – June 2018	Participant Observation	Study the pedagogical practices at **Pardal**	Literature reading
		Interviews	Explore the worldviews and compare to practices	Interview Transcriptions
		School Documentation study	Triangulation	Participation at related events
C	November 2018 – March 2019	Participant Observation	Study the pedagogical practices at **Trèvol** & extra observations at Petxina and Pardal	Literature reading
		Interviews	Explore the worldviews and compare to practices	Interview Transcriptions

		School Documentation study	Triangulation	Participation at related events
D	April 2019 – September 2019			Participation at an interdisciplinary research group & related events
				First analysis of ethnographic diaries and analytical categories
				Draft of the first monograph
E	September 2019 – December 2019			Erasmus Placement at the University of the Aegean
				Participation at related events
				Literature reading
				Draft of the second monograph
F	January 2020 – March 2020			Draft of the state of the art and Theoretical Framework
				Draft of the third monograph
G	September 2020 – May 2021			Advanced draft of the state of the art and theoretical framework
H	June 2021 – August 2021			Final Analysis and writing

Source: Own elaboration

SECOND PART. ETHNOGRAPHIC CASES

The following lines describe the three ethnographic cases devoting one chapter to each. I will start with the self-managed educational project Trèvol, move to the public school Pardal and conclude with the private school Petxina. This order was based on the coherence observed between theory and practice, from the highest to the lowest.

The presentation of the three schools is all structured in the same way. At first, I mention some general aspects regarding the context of their placement and a few basic features such as their history, relation to local authorities, and cost. Important elements of the municipalities, residents, and school offer are mentioned for Pardal and Petxina, as families are living in the neighborhood. Such aspects are irrelevant for Trèvol, where no family lives in the municipality. However, I will mention a few details about the municipality's economy due to its influence, as we will later see. Then, I describe the schools' spaces and pedagogical proposals before I present the number, ages, and groups of children, the pedagogical team, and some aspects of internal organization.

A typical day in each educational center is then presented based on specific examples that interest us both due to their mere informational value of what happens in the daily life of alternative schools and aspects they reveal that interest the thesis' objectives. First, I mention the daily schedule in each case, and then the ritualized practices -daily and occasional- that take place. The following section refers to the morning meetings of the pedagogical team in Trèvol, absent in the other two schools. Arrival is then mentioned for all, accompanied by the morning meetings between the pedagogical team and kids in each class in Pardal, absent in the rest. Then, I describe the primary learning activities and free play, structured and practiced in different ways in each school. The following section is about excursions, followed by tale, fruit, and lunchtime in Trèvol, late breakfast and book reading in Pardal, and lunchtime in Pextina. Then, I describe cleaning and closing in Trèvol, and I look upon the meetings of the pedagogical team in Pardal and documentation processes that are significant there.

After presenting the schools' daily life, I turn to the parents' profiles who have chosen the schools because of their pedagogical proposals. Due to the thesis' interests and significance for school

choice and parental involvement, I specifically focus on birth, upbringing, and support networks. Next, a section shows the process of their decision-making, separation from kids, and parental presence and involvement. The section continues with parental perspectives regarding the school and kids' learning and social trajectories, further explored through the example of a specific family unit that includes a mother committed to alternative education in Pardal. It closes with an insight into changing schools or finishing the offered cycle there.

At the end of each ethnography, a short discussion attempts to summarize some key observations regarding power and limits, space and school culture, and, finally, community and belongingness in our cases. At the same time, aspects regarding the pedagogical proposals and processes of transmission and learning will be discussed. The specific part is based on the theoretical perspective in the light of the ethnographic data and will be used as a basis to build the comparative analysis in the third part.

5. Self-managed educational project "Trèvol"

5. 1 General aspects

5.1.1 The context

Foc[37] is the squatted social center that hosts Trèvol, and it is situated at Bosc[38], a municipality in the province of Barcelona. Reaching the place in the early morning might be pretty demanding due to its elevated location. Luckily, there are bus stops all around, and the metro is twenty minutes away on foot.

Due to its double proximity to both the city and a mountain range, Trèvol is like a portal in space that permits an immersion in nature despite the large hospital and various construction sites right next to it. The air is fresh, and there are green zones and small parks all around.

Bosc is a dynamic municipality with much increase in population and economic activity during the last years. According to official data drawn from INE[39] and as the following graphics show, there is an increasing population with 46.355 residents in 2018 (22.144 men and 24.211 women), 465 more than in 2017:

Figure 9: Bosc - Evolution of the number of residents 1900-2018
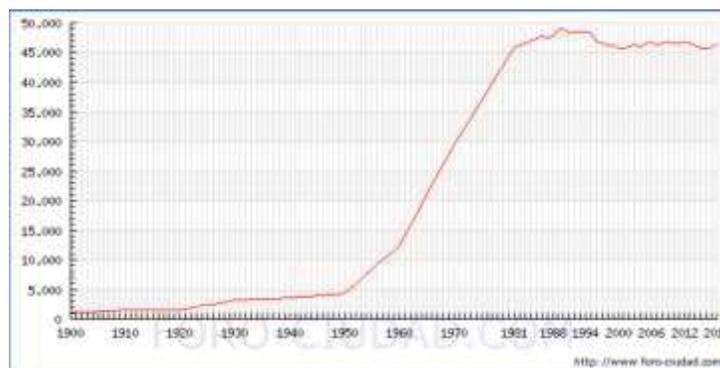
Source: Foro-ciudad.com, Last access: 2019/05/21

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[37] Catalan word meaning fire, used as the nickname for the squat.
[38] Catalan word meaning forest, used as the nickname for the municipality.
[39] National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 10: Bosc - Evolution of the number of residents 1999-2018
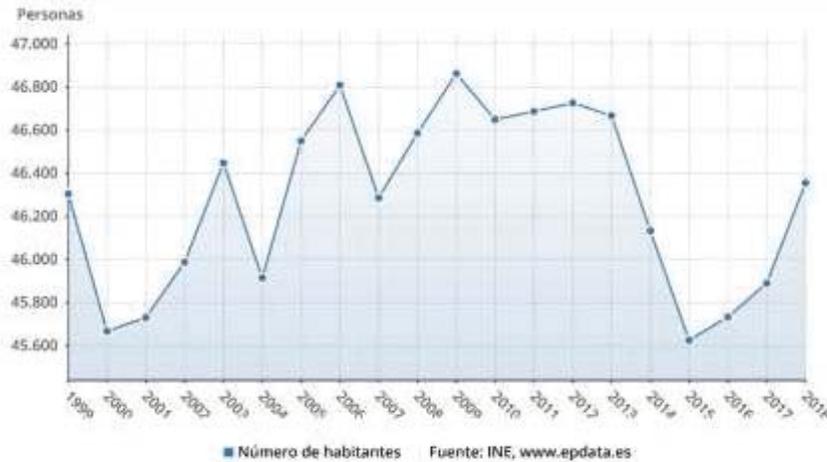
From the current population, 18.93% were born in Bosc, 35.90% were born in other parts of Barcelona and its provinces, 27.75% in the rest of Catalonia and Spain and 17.41% abroad.

Regarding its economy, which interests us more in this case and the study, the larger area is an industrial center although lately, the third sector seems to be increasing. Bosc was hosting 3,504 active companies in 2018, which implies a variation of 2.28 comparing to the previous year, according to the latest update of the Central Companies Directory (DIRCE) collected by INE.

Figure 11: What is the number of companies in Bosc?

What interests us in terms of this economical 'development' for the educational community, is the so-called Destru Plan. Destru plan is an urbanization project, first presented by the area's city council in 1991. The goal was to profit from the -until then- unexploited spaces transforming green areas into commercial centers and companies. The plan included the transition zone between the neighboring mountain range and the city, including Foc. Because of administrative problems, the Government of Catalonia gave the plan the green light in 2004 with a few modifications, which was the beginning of a series of protests, demonstrations, and informative events. Despite the police repression, thousands of people participated under the coordination of a platform created and destined to stop the plan.

Although economic obstacles derived from the crisis stopped the plan, it did not last forever. In 2016 the urbanization plan came back to build hundreds of houses and a commercial center in Trèvol's neighborhood. The discourse was abstract and very similar to all institutional attempts for 'development'; the focus on new job positions that would be created and complete indifference about the consequent substantial environmental impact. Thus, a new wave of protests and neighborhood organization is currently taking place.

Since the meeting point of the organizational assemblies is Foc, where other activist events take place, not everybody likes the place in the area. This was probably the reason behind the arson in March 2018, causing severe damage at the squat and making the educational project look for another place to be temporarily hosted. Although there is no answer of who did it, the intentional nature of the fire-raising is sure, and the scenarios are mainly two: either a fascist group or a group in favor of the urbanization plan described above.

Therefore, many members of the collective take part in social struggles in the neighborhood and are in contact with other collectives who use Foc, the main one being the platform against urbanization processes in Bosc. Trèvol's members, both acompas[40] and families, participate in

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[40] Emic Catalan concept (acompañante) that means companion and is often used to refer to the pedagogical team of alternative schools. I will use the terms acompa, acompañante, acompanyant and companion for members of the pedagogical teams and the verbs or nouns derived as synonyms, when relevant.

the periodical assemblies, the collective working days, and the festivals or events organized there, either supporting them or having an active role[41].

Just like in Foc, they have been highly implicated in the movement against Destru Plan since the beginning, although most do not live in the area. This is the case of a mother who not only participates in it, but she also found out about the educational project this way: "I was already involved in Destru Plan, which is all the urbanization they want to build that affects Fosc… this was years before Regina was born, but I had already seen that there was a little school" (IC1).

Apart from adults, what relation do kids have with the broader community in Bosc? Except for a few punctual excursions, kids also participate in the local social struggles that affect the educational community. That was made evident in terms of a protest after the arson of Foc:

> Regina says she feels rage … Vicente thinks that what they did is wrong and that they should build the new Trèvol out of metal so that people cannot destroy it and let them have fun. … There are banners on the floor in front of the town hall. Half of them were made by the kids gathered with the acompas at the park since noon to prepare them. Bonaventura, Iolanda, Aniol, Cristina, and Aurelia are also there with their parents. Most banners have the phrase 'we reconstruct Foc', while one made by the kids writes 'get the bad people out of Foc'. After a while, Cristina, Regina, and Eliseu get the megaphone and start shouting the written slogans (DC: 2019/03/20).

All in all, Trèvol is related to the broader local context -mostly participating in the social struggles- and this can be better understood if we consider the history of the project itself. However, probably because most members are not residents of the area, the social movements in which the educational community gets involved seem to be connected to Trèvol only, and there is not much interaction with the local community.

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[41] DC': 2018/09/26 & DC: 2018/11/27.

5.1.2 Basic features[42]

Created more than a decade ago, Trèvol is marked by the people who inspired it, all implicated in local social movements such as the anarchist, autonomist, and okupa movement.

It all started when a few families created a respectful socialization space for their two and 3-year-old kids. The families' collective was completed by some collaborators who managed the logistic and pedagogical aspects in an assemblearian way and divided into committees. Two years later, though, the space was considered inadequate, and the collective decided to join a group of educators interested in alternative and anarchist pedagogies and move with them to a squatted social center incorporating new families. It was then when Trèvol was officially born, counting 13 kids, three educators, and formalized as an association. Three months later, disagreements led to the search for new acompas, incorporating whom the educational project started to form, drawing its primary references from critical and anarchist pedagogies such as Ferrer i Guardia and Freire. The name proposed by the kids for the educational project initially had to do with princesses and was rejected by the families who agreed that this would be an adults' decision.

Trèvol is not only focused on pedagogical aspects; it is also a political project aiming at social transformation, autonomy, and justice. Consciously choosing to give their fight out of the official state institutions, its members believe in the collective responsibility shared among kids and adults and vision a society where the community is what matters. Nevertheless, the collective does not label itself as an anarchist educational project since the members are not committed to one single ideology, a heterogeneity they believe to be enriching, provided that it is aligned with Trèvol's central values.

Many challenges have been faced since those days, partly caused by its anti-institutional nature. One of the most recent ones was the arson of Foc, the social center hosting the project until March 2019, and its inevitable transfer to another squatted building. However, despite the fatigue

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[42] DC': 2018/09/26, DC: 2019/01/15, DC: 2019/03/12, DC: 2019/03/19, DC': 2018/09/27, DC': 2019/05/25, DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/20/13, DC: 2018/12/03, DC: 2019/02/05, DC: 2019/05/05, Projecte Pedagògic 2018, DC': 2018/09/26, DC': 2018/06/10 & IC3.

and frustration, Trèvol survived and managed to come back to its normal function after a couple of weeks.

As the project has grown through the years, much has changed. This was made clear when *Josefina[43]* once told kids how much Trèvol changes constantly. The previous generation of educators, for example, had all left apart from her; they had to move for different reasons. Still, and although the collective's members are not the same, the principle of educational self-management and the focus on respectfully accompanying the kids' necessities remain present, informing every single action and decision, always collectively, taken.

Regarding its cost, fees are monthly and stable at 205 euros per month for every kid or 165 euros if the trèvoli[44] goes four days per week only. Apart from these fees, Trèvol also gets funded from events hosted in Foc or other social centers, selling calendars, or realizing other self-managed initiatives. The goal of the educational community behind this economic self-management is to cover the needs regarding educational material and food and provide acompas with a satisfying salary so that they can live with dignity[45].

At the same time, there is an inclusive factor taken into account in terms of the educational project: "We believe in a non-elitist education, and that is why we work to ensure that the fees are affordable for any family, without losing sight of the fact that Trèvol also works to provide a dignified salary to the acompas" (Projecte Pedagògic, 2018: 135). Working conditions also differentiate Trèvol from other similar projects born by families' initiatives, which do not necessarily keep this aspect in mind, and where some families have participated in the past before entering Trèvol.

It should be mentioned that there are similar educational projects in Spain with flexible fees to adapt to everybody's economic situation and this way become more inclusive. This is not the case for Trèvol, although the collective seems to have discussed the possibility, as it would imply

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[43] One of the acompas. Every time a member of the pedagogical team appears, I will write their name in this form '*Name*' to facilitate the reading.
[44] Emic concept used by the adult members of the collective when they refer to kids, that we will also use. It is an invented word based upon the name of the project.
[45] DC': 2018/09/26 & Projecte Pedagògic 2018.

an examination of each family's economic situation, therefore intruding into people's privacy, according to Pandora[46], who adds that they have never come upon a family that wants to participate in the project but cannot afford it. "I think that if you are in such a precarious situation economically, you do not even consider it as an option.. although the cost is very low.. the project costs the same as the dining room in the public school" (IC2).

Its self-organizing character (no professionals paid apart from the few acompas) and hosting in a squatted center (no rent needed) makes Trèvol a viable choice. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that, although the educational project stands against "elitist libertarian education"[47] and the cost is considered to be low comparing to other alternative educational projects, families 'pay' in work and time too through their high parental involvement on which we will later refer in more detail. According to the same mother: "in the end, either we want to or not, unfortunately, we live in a capitalist society.. and if you do not have the income to invest you will have to invest your time" (IC2).

Before we look at Trèvol's space, I should highlight that it is not an official school. Families who choose it practice deschooling, an illegal choice in Catalonia, something that the collective makes clear to families wanting to join the educational project since the beginning. This usually is not a problem for families who have never been to an official school before as they are not registered and may access the official educational system whenever they decide. However, it is problematic when neighbors or relatives report kids' deschooling to local authorities or when kids had been to an official school in the past. In these cases, inspectors may investigate the case to impose official schooling. Nevertheless, although Trèvol is not recognized as a school, the educational community is officially formed into an association due to legal problems after a denouncement they got by the town hall and an unexpected visit by an inspector, a case now closed.

What the collective seems to be sure of is that the project will never become homologated. According to *Rosa* "It is not a project that might become homologated one day", a fact that

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[46] Mother of Etna and Damia.
[47] DC': 2019/06/10.

explains fears that exist due to this 'alegality[48]' as she calls it. The members of Trèvol are aware that institutions and social services can react and cause problems anytime, although they usually are too busy with other topics. In addition, as mentioned before, what makes things more complicated is when older kids want to enter the project in case they had been in a public school before. These cases need to be examined in detail before making a decision.

The specific situation affects the collective in various ways. To begin with, the 'alegality' and use of the squatted social center may eventually become problematic, causing the members feelings of insecurity or powerlessness. Of course, the problems are less at young ages (3-6) when schooling is not compulsory. The insecurities increase later, making it harder for the older kids to stay in the project. According to the same acompa, they want the group to continue, but many factors come into play: the issue of schooling or fears families have regarding the kids' adaptation to the system.

This complicated normative situation makes finding information about Trèvol on the internet a hard -if not impossible- task. Such invisibility is essential to them, protecting the project from people who might be against it. Therefore, even in emergency cases like the arson of Foc, it is reminded not to refer to Trèvol describing it as a school. The normative issues which lead to such precautions are restricting the public presence of Trèvol or feelings of insecurity and a factor that strengthens bonding and sense of belonging among the members of the collective.

I should also mention that members of Trèvol are aware of the existence of other similar educational projects and interact with them in various ways. First of all, many kids have been to other similar schools before or go afterward. One of the most popular is Pardal, where everybody wants to go, according to a mother[49] whose daughter got registered there during the course 2019-2020, while others had been to Pextina before[50]. Secondly, acompas have met staff/parents of other similar schools or have heard about them. Such meetings mostly happen in terms of events about libertarian pedagogies or coincidence in projects[51]. Also, parents have met families and

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[48] Original Catalan word used: 'alegalidad'.
[49] DC: 2019/05/06.
[50] DC: 2019/04/08.
[51] DC: 2019/01/08 & DC: 2019/04/16.

acompas who attend other similar schools due to their coincidence in parenting groups of other libertarian educational projects.

Last, although not identifying itself with the term 'libertario' (anarchist) due to the heterogeneity of the collective, Trèvol is connected to the okupa movement in Barcelona and forms part of the XILL (Network of Anarchist Infrastructures) and actively participates at the annual TILL (Meeting of Anarchist Infrastructures), some acompas even being part of the organizing committee[52].

According to the pedagogical project (2018):

> Both the reclamation of spaces for social and collective use and libertarian and critical education are tools that allow us to advance on the path of social autonomy. That is why Trèvol also participates in the Network of Anarchist Infrastructures (XILL) and holds its assemblies and self-management events in local squats. We try, therefore, to assume the transversality of the struggle for social emancipation by linking ourselves to all those proposals, mobilizations, and strikes that fight to achieve a fairer world, understanding themselves as tools of the organized working class (pp. 8-9).

Now that we have a general idea of Trèvol's basic features, we will focus on the material environment where the majority of Trèvol's activities occur.

5.1.3 Material aspects: learning spaces[53]

As explained before, Trèvol is hosted at Foc, a squatted social center. The center's assembly has offered the collective the outdoor space, ground and upper floor, and part of the basement. The groundfloor is the space that hosts educational activities for younger kids, and the upper floor is destined for the older ones. The upper floor was added later, while in the beginning, it was used by members of Foc, and activities like serigraphy were taking place there.

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[52] DC': 2018/09/27 & DC': 2019/05/25.
[53] DC': 2018/09/27, DC': 2019/05/25, DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/20/13, DC: 2018/12/03 & DC: 2019/02/05 & DC: 2019/05/05.

Exterior: Outside, a space of immense importance for the pedagogical project, there are four big benches in a way that forms a square. Blue mattresses are stacked on a corner, and a big net is hung from two trees. There is a big garden with plants and trees and huts made out of wood and fabrics. Also, there are bicycles, toys, two swings, a big wooden ship, a small playground with a slide, and wheels buried on the ground, of which only the upper part can be seen. One part behind Fosc is denser in flora, and there are not any installations or specific materials.

This is the only space one can meet Anabel, *Llora*'s 11-year-old dog who has been part of her life during all these years. She was her sheepdog when she was living a rural life. Although usually pets are not allowed, Anabel is big, and she comes when acompas need to stay the whole day at Trèvol due to assemblies. However, Anabel is not just a pet. There are many times she is attributed human-like characteristics like her ability to understand everything taking place. She usually lies outside while kids are playing around and sometimes interacting with them, licking their hands when they hug her.

Apart from Anabel, there are many times trèvolis are in contact with bugs and insects outside, which is highly valued and encouraged by acompas, only if kids respect them and return them to their natural environment in case they remove them from it for observations. Last, there are many caterpillars, especially in autumn, to whom some kids and acompas are allergic.

At times, kids get gathered to observe animals after acompas' proposal: "Downstairs, a bird called puput, is eating the caterpillars. All kids get to gather in front of the main door to watch it.. acompas, whispering, suggest them to be quiet; "he is our friend, we do not want him to go away" (DC: 2019/02/27). Sometimes, kids not only co-live with the 'natural world' in Trèvol, but they also interact with it, often in 'dangerous' ways that lead to unexpected experienced learnings, like the time some kids tried cactus and their tongues got swollen.

What also adds to the intense feeling of 'nature' in Trèvol are the numerous butterflies and colorful insects. And of course, trees and plants are always there, living beings fully participating in Trèvol's world in many different ways, both practical (kids climbing, using for shadow or

symbolic play, eating, etc.) and imaginative. This 'return to the past' and rural feeling that predominates Trèvol's exterior is important to be highlighted as its role is vital for the adult members of the collective who all seem to value nature, be nostalgic of a 'lost childhood' and tend to idealize a past rural life. All this informs the neo-romantic imaginary they share, which functions as a ground for their shared culture, union, and cohesion.

Interior: Upon entering, there are two wooden structures where kids' shoes and slippers are placed, and jackets are hung on the wall. A huge announcement board and a poster with kids' and acompas' photos and names divided into groups on the right. The art room is on the left, with a big wooden table in the middle, art material around, and a bathroom with toothbrushes and a curtain dividing the sink from the toilet. Next to the announcement board, there is the library, a small room with two wooden structures with lots of books, and two small desks with wooden chairs around. The next room is dedicated to symbolic play and is full of toys. Opposite there is the kitchen. At the floor's far end, the biggest room is found. Inside there is a big table, educational material placed on short shelves all around, a mirror, and a corner with mattresses and curtains. Downstairs, the basement is a space used mainly by other collectives. On the left, there is a small psychomotor room with soft mattresses.

On the upper floor, spaces are separated according to the educational field and with the use of signs:

Room One: a) espai de l' escritor i l' escritora (space of the writer) and b) espai de la creadora i del creador (space of the creator).

Room Two: c) espai del viatjer i viatjera (space of the traveler) and a d) espai de la filosofa i filosof (space of the philosopher).

Most tables were desks taken from a conventional secondary school and had their legs cut to adapt to the kids' height. Finally, a toilet is also used as storage for the printer, and there is a smaller science room called espai de la bruixa i el bruixot (space of the witch and wizard). Outside, there is a terrace where acompas hold their morning meetings, which is also used as the 'espai de la calma' (calm space).

Kids' presence in spaces, both interior and outside, exists only when an adult is present. Although doors are rarely shut, this is always reminded to kids in case it is needed: "*Miquel* asks "How come you are here?". Mònica explains what they were playing, and he says, "You have to go outside. We will close the room". A few minutes later, the door was still open, but there was no one inside" (DC: 2018/11/13).

Figure 12: Trèvol Plan A

Source: Danai Stavrianou

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Figure 13: Trèvol Plan B
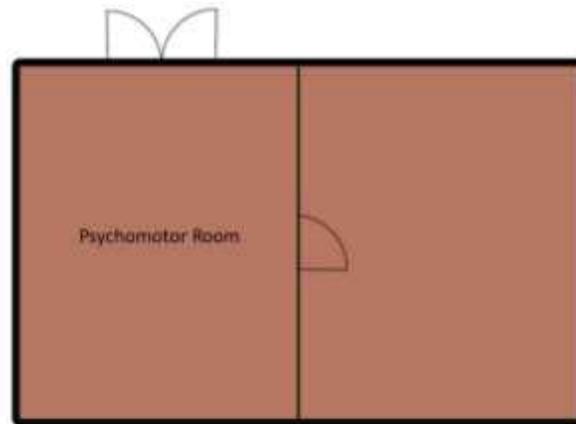
Basement
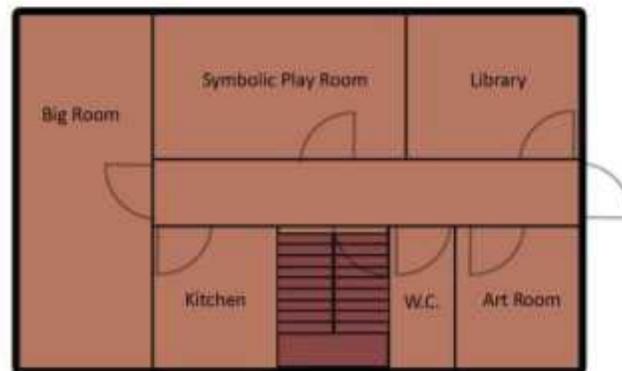
Groundfloor
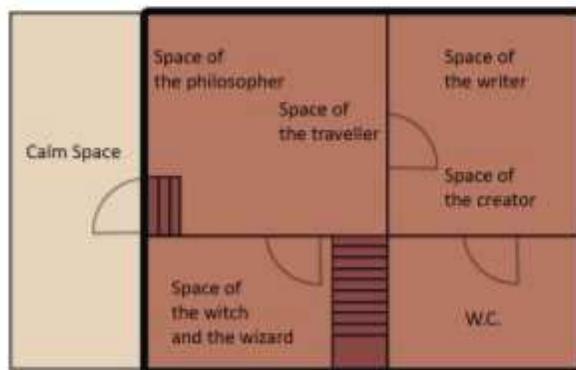
First floor

Source: Danai Stavrianou

5.1.4 Pedagogical Proposal

Trèvol defines itself as a "collective of educational self-management". Its sources of pedagogical inspiration are many, and above all, it recognizes the significant trajectory and influence of previous educational experiences:

> Examples would be the movement of Schools at War in Barcelona, Pegaso, Sóller, and Ferrer i Guàrdia or the educational initiatives of Fèlix Carrasquer, and others that, unfortunately, we can no longer recover but which have always opted for an emancipatory education. Following this line, we would like to mention the Paideia school in Mérida for its long history and significance as a reference that collects the testimony of the educational part of the anarchist movement. And it is when a deliberate forgetfulness is imposed on a prolific and transformative pedagogical past that it becomes necessary to insist on the value of history to understand our present. Today, it seems that all these references have disappeared, and pedagogical theories appear that are presented as new but without the social, political, and philosophical content that any transformative educational model must incorporate in order to dream of a just, egalitarian and free society (Projecte Pedagògic, 2018: 13).

Therefore, historical memory is recognized and valued by the collective to escape this pedagogical amnesia that marks many libertarian schools.

Apart from these historical, local, and strongly social-oriented cases, Trèvol also draws from various alternative theorists and pedagogies like Montessori, Waldorf, and critical pedagogies, elements of which are currently applied in many libertarian schools both in Catalonia and elsewhere:

> And we add others that, despite not having a historical and social depth of the same proportion in our country, they have also helped to develop Trèvol, such as the materials of Montessori pedagogy, the philosophical approaches regarding the school as a community by John Dewey, the commitment to a liberating education by Paulo Freire or the active methodologies of Freinet or Decroly. We also echo the importance of Aucouturier's psychomotor practice for us, Mauricio and Rebeca Wild's approaches to child development stages and group dynamics, Arno Stern's creative education, and the active methodologies in mathematics by Antònia Canals (Ibid, p. 14).

However, Trèvol does not only stick in the past; it rather draws inspiration from contemporary theories, experiences, and approaches:

Finally and more recently, Lara Giménez's activities around logic or geometry, the approaches to reading and writing of Rosa Gil and Montserrat Fund, the sensibility regarding emotional education of Anna Carpena and Arantxa Coca, Cristina Garaizábal's approaches to sexuality and gender, and the importance of play of Maite Garaigordobil (Ibid).

Now, what values does Trèvol promote? According to its pedagogical project:

Based on the premise that in a respectful educational relationship, we all grow and learn (adults from children, children from adults, children from children, and adults from adults), the values with which we relate and under which we coexist consist the purposes of the educational relationship as well: Autonomy, Responsible Freedom, Community, Mutual Support, Self-Management, Critical Sense (pp.14-16).

I should highlight two aspects at this point: a) Kids are not the only learners in Trèvol. Adult members of the collective learn too. b) The values that Trèvol is based upon and promotes coincide with the anarchist values.

The tools the collective works with to transmit these values are the following:

- Communication at all levels: oral, symbolic, motor, musical, plastic…
- Expression as a form of non-directive communication.
- Experimentation as a way of doing things where the result and the process do not differ and where there is a total openness to what may arise, this being the main objective of the action, instead of something previously planned.
- Free play as a primary activity on which all other tools are based, which does not follow any predetermined pattern, scheme, or goal and can be individual or collective.
- The observation of others, the environment, and oneself.
- Reflection on attitudes, feelings, and consequences (of oneself, others, and the environment).
- Imagination, creativity, the ability to invent.
- Confidence in both oneself and other people.
- Empathy as the ability to perceive the feelings, needs, and desires of the other without losing own (Ibid, pp. 14-17).

Therefore, what is important is not official curricular learning but the expression of emotions and creating a respectful environment. Nevertheless, that does not mean that Trèvol ignores the official curriculum. Since most kids enter public schools after Trèvol, there are many mapares[54]

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[54] This is an emic concept used by the collective to refer to parents that consists of 'mare' (mother in Catalan) and

who ask for its -at least partial- incorporation in Trèvol's daily routine, a fact that led acompas study both early and elementary education's curricula[55].

In general terms, the basic idea behind the pedagogical project is to observe the pace of kids' development and accompany their needs combining self-directed with guided activities and generating safe spaces both physically and emotionally. Apart from being educated in the term's conventional meaning, kids also receive emotional education and are encouraged to explore their sexuality. They are accompanied on a daily level by the acompas who, using tools of non-violent communication as well, focus on how they felt instead of what they did.

Limits are essential in these terms since they are viewed as providing kids with the security they need. As many members of the collective mention, this is what makes the projects unique as well, providing responsible freedom (libertad) instead of a license (libertinaje). According to a mother[56], such logical limits, absent from the public school, raise awareness of life in community through guiding our focus to the rest.

Although most are still imposed by adults and derived from their authority, the collective members do not experience the process as authoritarianism but as care and protection. When limits are transgressed by kids, acompas intervene to remind them and to propose to think upon and talk about alternatives. Therefore limits are specific and set by the collective after experiencing certain situations, both in the interior space and outdoors:

> Over the years, we have found that not having clear limits to start with and a single way to apply them harms children's growth, the relationships between all, and, in general, the daily dynamics and environment in which the child develops. We do not find the number of rules as crucial as the coherence of the limits they set. We understand intervention as a tool for dialogue and never as an exercise of authoritarianism. Setting limits is necessary for growth and learning.
>
> When it comes to having to set a limit, we consider it essential to maintain a firm attitude, to make it clear what we do not want to happen in that space, to convey the security and

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'pare' (father in Catalan). They choose to do so for inclusion due to the coincidence of 'parent' and 'father' in Catalan (and Spanish). The word 'pamare' is used as a synonym, and we will also use them both in the thesis.
[55] DC: 2019/01/08.
[56] IC1.

certainty of what we are proposing, and at the same time it is important to do so without losing the calm and accompanying tone, avoiding making a judgment of values. It is, therefore, a matter of influencing the action itself so that the child understands what can and cannot be done. The limit is not something to agree upon or discuss with the trèvolis; it is there to ensure a safe and appropriate environment. When a limit is transgressed, it is first tried to stop with words and, if this is insufficient, with action. For example, someone throws stones where classmates pass by; after verbally setting the limit, they are prevented from having stones within reach if they fail to stop the action. Experience shows that a solution is found in many cases by looking for an alternative to what was being done. For example: in the previous case, we will look for a space to throw stones safely.

<u>Exterior</u>

- The outdoor space should be picked up by the end of the day. The last people there must make sure that it is tidy before leaving.
- Hose water is used to fill buckets and containers (not to spend it).
- The sticks and stones are for outdoor use. They cannot get inside.
- If kids are playing with sticks, they cannot be larger than their height (to avoid accidents)
- Agreements for the fighting game:
  1. It is played outside only.
  2. Before starting the game, the mate must be asked if he/she wants to play.
  3. You cannot all go against one.
  4. You cannot hit the head.
  5. If someone gets hurt or feels annoyed / angry, the game stops.
- Animals are free beings, so if we want to observe them, it must be done with much respect, and after the observation, we must return them to their environment (in case we have removed them from it).
- Flowers are part of the natural environment, and as such, we do not uproot or damage them.
- If children want to go to the forest, they must inform an adult.
- If children want tools, they have to ask for them (they are inside), and to use them, they must be accompanied. Using tools such as the ax or the pickax may be dangerous, so they cannot rise above the head. When used, they must return to the bucket (not left on the ground), and work with them is done with enough space among kids to prevent accidents.
- It is not permitted to climb the outdoor front door (the one facing the street).
- If they want to go to the orchard, they must be accompanied.
- They cannot go outside, not even through holes that the outer fence might have. To go out, we talk to the acompas.
- They cannot climb the bushes behind the pirate ship (they border the street).

<u>Interior</u>

- We make sure the space is quiet. If anyone wants intense movement, we propose they go out. When it is not possible (for organizational reasons), we ask kids to observe the energy of the other people in the space and regulate theirs.

- We do not take things from others' hands.
- We do not let them climb alone in the windows of the large room.
- The window inside the large room is used to make puppet theatre and not pass from one corner to the other.
- When a material has been used, it must be picked up.
- The material in each room is for use on-site.
- We do not mix the materials of the different rooms.
- We do not move materials from the inside out or vice versa, except in specific cases such as constructing huts where fabrics or rope are needed.
- If it rains outside, we eat in slippers (this way, we avoid the space getting very dirty).
- One must eat at the right time. We do not eat whenever we want.
- When construction has been made, it is activated by the ones who made it, and at this time, some noise is accepted (Projecte Pedagògic, 2018: 18-22).

Regarding learning results[57], to keep track of their progress, kids' weekly work is self-documented in maths and letters. For this reason, hung on the door, there is a list of 'challenges' working sheets. Kids who complete one 'challenge' put a star next to their name, either below L for letters or M for maths. During the school year 2018-2019, these working sheets were later replaced by educational board games upon will. Those who get both stars are not reminded by acompas the following weeks.

Besides, acompas spend a whole day of observations, once every quarter during which they talk about kids, both on an individual and a collective, relational level. Although they used to prepare written reports as well in the past, it is a practice they decided to stop due to its demands in terms of time. However, acompas and mapares are in frequent communication. Apart from the daily interaction, two acompas have tutoria[58] with one mapare, once every quarter, and all members spend a day of collective observations' sharing in the end of the course, when they make a total evaluation regarding kids' learnings and social life and the collective's general functioning.

Last, as mentioned before, Trèvol is both a pedagogical project and a project of social transformation. According to an acompa[59], the type of people and organization is already a commitment to social transformation. They autonomously organize themselves, to institutions at least, using a space occupied by neighbors and being in contact with various struggles in the city.

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[57] DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2018/12/18 & DC': 2018/06/10.
[58] Meetings between the pedagogical team and parents to talk about the kid.
[59] DC': 2018/06/10.

At the same time, they exercise a participatory process and acompañamiento so that kids can generate their tools and criteria and develop their critical sense, finding ways to resolve problems. For example, on March 8th of 2018, the collective went on a care strike, and only fathers took care of the children. While they are sensitive to all these social issues, they are transporting them to the school.

All in all, critical thinking is Trèvol's core, but it's not something taught in the form of indoctrination; it is instead practiced by adult members.

5.1.5 Number, ages, groups of children

The number of kids is not stable; it changes every year. However, the ratio remains low, 4-6 kids per acompa. While seven years ago, there were about 15 kids and four acompas (all different from the ones working now), during the school year 2018-2019, there were 35 kids and six acompas.

It should be mentioned that families can go five days per week, Monday-Friday or four days of their choice. Nevertheless, there are many days kids do not go even if they are supposed to. Every morning, a different group of trèvolis aged 3-6 years old usually, counts everyone in Trèvol, writes it down both on the announcement board of the upper floor and on a piece of paper which they give to the families who are in the kitchen that day. Although there are some days that acompas skip it, they usually remind the trèvolis whose names are written on the corresponding list and who thus have the responsibility of counting the particular day.

Apart from the practical reasons, the practice has learning connotations too. Kids count the people on the ground floor and then those on the upper floor, which must be added, practicing the operation of addition this way. Last, acompas encourage them to write the number and pay attention while writing the number in letters[60].

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[60] DC: 2018/11/06.

Ages change as well, although there is an age minimum limit: three years old. During the course 2018-2019, the youngest kids were three and the oldest ten years old. Nevertheless, the collective tries to attract older ages to achieve continuity and avoid older kids leaving due to the lack of peers.

Trèvolis are divided into two large groups, from 3 to 6 and from 7 to 10. These age groups are divided in space as well, as it will be later explained in more detail, which are called 'ground floor' and 'upper floor'[61] based on their location. Nevertheless, there is a smaller subgroup on the ground floor; the ones in transition, about to move to the upper floor with the older group. A few months after the beginning of the course, they usually start participating in both groups, and their level of participation depends on the case.

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[61] Original in Catalan: 'pis de baix' and 'pis de dalt'.

KIDS

PEDAGOGICAL TEAM

Ground Floor
Pis de Baix

22 kids
3-6 years old

Llora

Flor

Upper Floor
Pis de Dalt

13 kids
7-10 years old

Josefina

Rosa

Margarida

Miquel

35 kids 3-10 years old
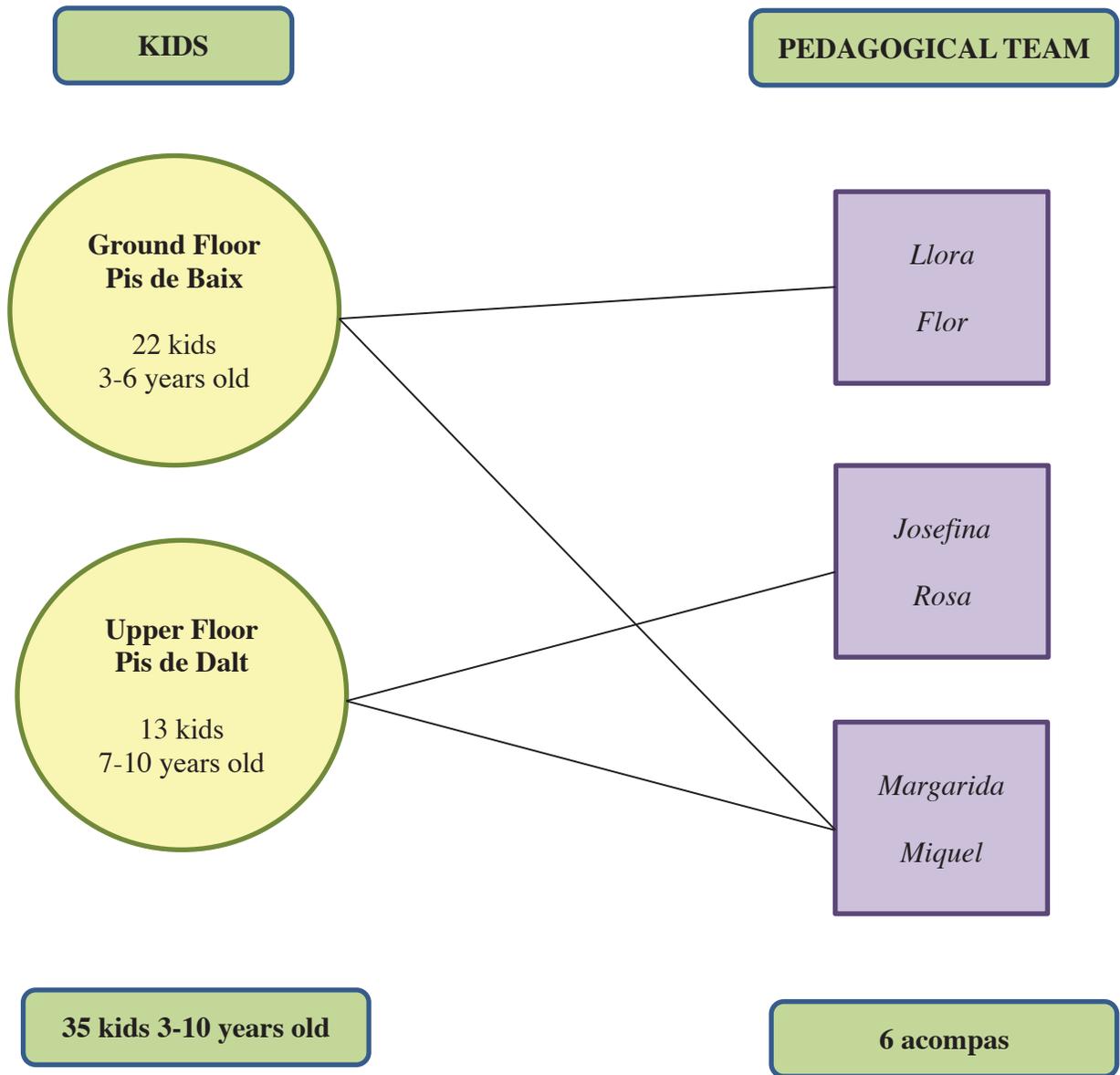
6 acompas

Source: Own elaboration based on DC

5.1.6 Pedagogical team

The six acompas are the only salaried adults working in Trèvol. Apart from *Margarida*, who is part-time contracted, the rest have a full-time contract. Although flexible according to the project's needs, *Josefina* and *Rosa* accompany trèvolis on the upper floor, *Llora* and *Flor* on the ground floor, and *Miquel* and *Margarida* normally rotate. *Josefina* is the acompa who has worked most years in the educational project (seven in total) and the only one left from the previous acompas' generation. *Miquel* is the newest one since he was incorporated in Trèvol the year 2018-2019. There follow some observations regarding their commitment and profiles[62]:

- All of them are women apart from *Miquel*, whose gender has been a key for the collective's decision, and both he and the rest of the collective's members are aware of the importance of his role.

- All of them are committed to the educational project. If they were not, it would not function; it is based on their complete devotion to time and energy, during both working hours and their free time. As a result, they often take a one-year break after some time to restore their energies. That said, and despite such commitment, the group of acompas frequently changes either due to the extreme amount of work and tiredness provoked or the need for change and wish to live new experiences.

- They are all in their twenties or early thirties and do not have kids.

- They are all active anarchists or at least supporters of the anarchist ideals. For many of them, their work in Trèvol is connected with if not an expression of their political activism. What is more, many of them have been to Paideia's annual formation, the oldest and most popular anarchist school in Spain (Merida), and consider self-management and social transformation as two of Trèvol's most vital pillars.

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[62] DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/18, DC: 2019/01/08, DC: 2019/01/29, DC: 2019/02/05, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/03/12, DC: 2019/03/15, DC': 2019/05/26 & IC1.

-        Most of them have university studies, but that is not necessary as *Miquel*, for example, never got his diploma. Their studies also vary, and they are not all related to the early childhood or primary education field; in fact, only *Rosa's* studies are on primary education and psychopedagogy and *Flor's* on primary education. The rest are on psychology, psychopedagogy, psychomotricity, social education, and fine arts. Nevertheless, they all share an interest in free and anarchist pedagogies and have related experience or formation -such as courses of emotional accompanying- to which they attribute a great value. The same importance has personal psychological therapy to them since adults' mental health is vital for a good accompanying. Having explained their focus on emotions, they express their emotions too. An acompa, for instance, was once crying because of her grandma's upcoming death, and kids with co-acompas were around hugging her. Besides, acompas believe in the importance of unlearning, and the role of therapy is to eradicate embodied dispositions. Last, they all follow the same educational line, and to achieve that, they communicate a lot on a daily level.

-        Most of them entered the project after doing observations and working voluntarily, usually introduced to Trèvol by friends. In addition, for the majority, it is not the first work experience; *Miquel* was previously working at the dining room of another alternative public school in Barcelona, *Rosa* was working at another cooperatively-run free school in the suburbs of Barcelona and *Llora* at a free educational project in Madrid.

-        The majority was born in villages or small rural cities before moving to Barcelona, and they all have a particular attraction to rural life to a bigger or lesser degree. For example, Llora lived a rural life as a pastor in a community for eight years in the Sierra of Salamanca and wishes to find a way of returning to the village life and combining it with her passion for early childhood. Flor is also living in a village 15 kilometers away from Barcelona in a communitarian squatted house. Other acompas like Rosa and Josefina frequently visit their villages and practice open-air activities like mushroom hunting or mountain climbing.

Apart from the workshops and the guided educational proposals, acompas' role is 'just being', mainly observing, ensuring everyone is comfortable, and there are no injustices. If they are asked

to, they also intervene and play with kids, while sometimes they make optional proposals, something that kids are aware of.

Nevertheless, due to their life experience and in order to achieve the above, acompas are the ones who set up limits in terms of which kids can move and decide freely. Therefore, their anti-authoritative role is sometimes questioned by trèvolis as revealed through the following dialogue between a kid and an acompa:

> Aurelia tells *Llora* 'Can you imagine a teacher here? Like Vicente's father? He would tell you what to do and command. It would be funny. *Llora* says 'teachers do that for you.. And what about acompas?'. 'They do the same' replies Aurelia after thinking for a while (DC: 2019/02/20).

Despite the horizontality much valued in the project, their role as adults is entirely different and superior to kids' eyes due to the limits they set and their decision-making power in general, as revealed through the following example as well:

> Ignaci is looking at the poster of cleaning tasks with Blau and Aleix saying how cool it would be if they could have candies, football, and meat. Blau adds, 'whatever we want, even a television'. Ignaci then starts changing the pictures putting himself up where acompas are and saying, 'I am an acompa' (DC: 2019/03/05).

Apart from acompas, some collaborators are working as well who change depending on the workshops decided. Collaborators do not get paid like acompas and do not have the same responsibilities and role. They do not attend the collective's assemblies. They usually go to Trèvol once per week for three months or the whole year and either get invited by the collective or contact themselves instead. In the last case, it mostly happens due to their interest, either for academic or professional reasons, by people who work or plan to work in libertarian education. Two of the collaborators are stable with long trajectories in the project. One of them is an elderly who has been doing chess workshops once per week since the beginning of Trèvol. Due to his hearing and walking problems, communication is mainly through writing in the notebook he carries. The other is an ex-acompa who took his year off for his break and ended up doing his PhD, abandoning the project as an acompa but keeping in contact through the research workshops he conducts with older kids once per week.

In any case, the acceptance of a collaborator only happens after a collective assemblearian decision and only if their presence benefits trèvolis' interests. Besides, there are some extra acompas, substituting the primary staff if somebody is missing, for health problems mostly, some of them related to educational studies and others mapares or ex-mapares.

5.1.7 Internal Organization

<u>Assemblies</u>

Since the project defines itself as a 'self-managed educational project', Trèvol is based on assemblies for its internal communication and organization. One of its core values is horizontality. The same space is given for all voices: acompas', pamares' and kids'; a fact that differentiates it from many other educational projects based on the same pedagogies. According to an acompa, mentioned during the project's presentation, participation and horizontal assemblearian organization is the most important part of Trèvol, differentiating it from other projects based on 'active' or 'free' pedagogies.

> At Trèvol, we work to be a space as inclusive as possible. Our structure and organization are horizontal and assemblearian and, although we know that this fact does not fully guarantee that there are no roles and hierarchies within the collective, we aim to a broad view of the different ways of living and being in a diverse group like ours. This fact requires internal work and reflection regarding personal attitudes and power relations. We understand, therefore, that within our group, different factors influence the establishment of hierarchies: on the one hand, social factors that have to do with characteristics of the group and, on the other hand, societal structures. These structures take privileges off people who do not respond to the "hegemonic normality" pattern defined by belonging to a particular social class, a race, a specific origin, gender, physical and intellectual capacity, of a certain age, or with a specific academic background. In Trèvol, we try to counter and subvert this hegemonic normality (Projecte Pedagògic, 2018: 37).

Adults in Trèvol seem to be aware of the power relations found in society and the collective and try to fight against them. This is also manifested in the 'workshops of power relations' conducted for the adult members of the collective.

The assemblies that take place at Trèvol for its organization are based on the consensus. This differentiates the educational project from other free schools like the democratic ones where the majority decides through voting. Although consensus requires more time and effort, it is believed to be the most horizontal process possible, and it could be translated into a micro-experience of direct democracy.

Nevertheless, the pamares' level of participation in the assemblies varies and is mainly tied to the free time they can devote rather than their ideology. According to an ex-acompa, some families are anarchist, others are not, yet it is not uncommon that the first ones participate less than others who had never been at an assembly before and get super implicated in the project[63].

The mentioned lack of involvement by anarchist mapares or adults more actively participating in social movements can be understood if we consider the time that needs to be devoted to Trèvol. There are many squatters, for example, who opt for public schools due to the vast amount of time that Trèvol requires[64].

Although changing according to the needs of the collective and self-reflection, there follows a short description of the current assemblies the adult members take part in.

Foc assembly[65]: Participating in Foc, the social center that hosts Trèvol, is vital to the collective who attend its assemblies, as well as the working days that serve for the maintenance of the space or the festive days and events organized there. What is more, the educational community continues such participation during winter months or when educational activities are not hosted there for different reasons -such as the arson of Foc. These assemblies typically take place in the basement, in a space that holds a kitchen and is filled with photographs from activities and people participating in the squat, as well as political messages, from banners against the Destru Plan to posters against patriarchy, capitalism, or schooling and in favor of direct democracy.

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[63] DC': 2018/09/09.
[64] DC': 2019/05/12.
[65] DC: 2018/12/11, IC3 & Projecte Pedagògic 2018.

Technical assembly[66]: Once or twice per quarter, normally, Trèvol's adult members (mapares and acompas) have a general 'technical assembly' focused on the collective's evaluation and organization.

Pedagogical assembly[67]: Acompas and parents also have a monthly 'pedagogical assembly' during the month's last week. The objective of the certain assembly is to focus on pedagogical aspects and share reflections among all. This is an essential assembly since it is the main gate through which mapares influence Trèvol's pedagogical practices. Although acompas usually have the last word in pedagogical aspects, Trèvol's members are against society's professionalization. Therefore, both pamares and kids are free to make proposals that affect the project.

Due to the number of families during 2018-2019, it was decided to divide the members and have two assemblies: families of little kids and families of older. It should be mentioned that women are the ones who participate most in these assemblies where fathers' presence is minimum, if existent at all.

This over involvement of mapares in pedagogical aspects is not always perceived as positive; something manifested in the words of a mother as well, who had decided to abandon Trèvol and opt for the public school Pardal instead:

> Families get involved in lots of pedagogical decisions.. I think that the acompas should do part of the professional work and a large part of the decisions should be delegated to them because they are the ones who know how to value the consequences of their actions.. this happens at Pardal… teachers are in charge there, and parents have to trust in their work because it only works that way.. and I like that, I like to see people who are very much into their role (IC4).

Therefore, although mapares' role in pedagogical decisions adds to the horizontality that the collective wants to achieve and the non-professionalization of the project, it may also become the source of problems. Even though, in theory, everyone's voice needs to be heard at the same level,

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[66] IC2 & IC3.
[67] DC: 2018/10/04, DC: 2018/12/04, DC': 2019/06/10 & IC4.

and for everything, not everybody is comfortable and happy with it. According to the same mother, there are significant organizational challenges due to the "traditional assemblearian culture" the collective has, which expects all members to express their opinion regarding all matters through a particular process. Therefore, it sometimes proves to be demanding in terms of energy and ineffective in terms of problem-solving.

Acompas' assemblies: Acompas, apart from their daily morning meetings that we will later see, have lots of internal assemblies; one longer assembly once per week and one or two whole days of sharing observations every quarter. "Acompas' assemblies are the fundamental basis of the project. They must allow the concretion and the implementation of the decisions taken by the pedagogical assembly and committee. They are weekly, and all acompas attend" (Projecte Pedagògic, 2018: 124). These are demanding assemblies that require lots of hours (about 4-5 hours normally) and yet, not enough to talk about everything needed[68].

Committees[69]

Apart from the assemblies, there are various committees through which the collective's members take on responsibilities and change through time as new needs arise in the collective. In general, committees are divided into two broad groups: the stable ones and those whose members rotate every three months. There follows a list of the current committees:

- Upper floor pedagogical committee (acompas of the upper floor and all families of the upper floor)
- Ground floor pedagogical committee (acompas of the ground floor and the families who want, at least three)
- Maintenance committee (5 people)
- Secretary committee (2 people)
- Legal committee (1-2 people)
- Supplies/Shopping committee (2 people)
- Excursions committee (2 people)
- Health/Well-being/Care committee (4 people)
- Welcoming new families committee (1-2 people)
- Towel washing committee (2-3 people)
- Orchard/Garden committee (2 people)
- Economy committee (2 people)

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[68] DC: 2018/12/03.
[69] DC': 2019/06/10, IC2, IC3 & Projecte Pedagògic 2018.

-        Graphic communication (1-2 people)
-        Quarterly technical committee (the whole collective)

Besides, a calendar committee organizes the days each family has to cook and clean the space. Regarding the technical committee, its members change every quarter and are responsible for organizing the events for the project's self-management. All parents must participate once per year in the specific committee and the maintenance days. Apart from the pedagogical committees, all the rest consist of mapares only.

This hyper organization sounds complicated and might cause frustration for families who do not dispose of the necessary time to devote. However, they all recognize its high importance for the functioning of the project. In case of emergencies, like the arson of Foc, committees are formed through the technical assembly to resolve emerging problems: "A committee of spaces was formed that went to all assemblies of the proposed places, took photos and transferred the information to our assembly" (TIF3).

5.2 One day at Trèvol

5.2.1 Daily schedule[70]

Just like space is structured and limits are constantly reminded when needed, time is strictly organized. Most kids arrive at 9.30 a.m. if they are older than six and after 9.45 a.m. if they are younger. At 9.30 a.m., after having prepared the rooms and done a brief meeting on the terrace, acompas go down to welcome families with hugs and kisses. Most times, one or two acompas welcome them while the rest prepare the spaces. Kids then move to the corresponding space according to their schedule, and sometimes parents stay for a while.

The closing is called 'tancament' and takes place at 3.15 p.m., normally outside at the benches. It includes a song, game, dance, etc., and it lasts fifteen minutes. Afterward, the main door is open, and kids may leave. This moment is accompanied by an outcry that all kids and acompas shout a three-word phrase invented a few years ago by the collective, with no specific meaning.

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[70] DC': 2019/06/10, DC: 2018/11/27 & DC: 2018/11/20.

If some parents have not arrived yet at 3.30 p.m., one of the rest stays at Trèvol until they do; it is no longer an acompas' responsibility. Exits consist of another meeting point for parents and acompas who talk about the day and exchange feedback upon kids. It should be mentioned that the time of exit and -especially- arrival is flexible. Some trèvolis, mostly the younger ones, may often come at 11 a.m. or later. This is a problem for the upper floor only when everybody has to wait to start the educational proposals. The specific time structure is thought to be providing a vital sharing space among all adult members of the collective, either upon arrival or exit.

The weekly schedule is fixed and changes every three months. It is modified according to the kids' interests and the people available to offer corresponding workshops. There is a different one for younger and older trèvolis. Nevertheless, there is a fixed structure for all:

Table 14: Time structure at Trèvol

Arrival-11:30	Guided activities / Free play
11:30-12:15/12:30	Late breakfast
12:15/12:30-13:30	Guided activities / Free play
13:30-13:45	Tale reading and preparation for lunch
13:45-14:45	Lunch in two turns
14:45-15:15	Cleaning
15:15-15:30	Closing
15:30	Exit

Source: Own elaboration, based on DC

For example, during the first quarter (Oct-Dec 2018), the schedule for the older kids was structured in the following way[71]:

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[71] Tale, lunch, cleaning, and closing are not noted.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Free Play	Numbers	Free play	Chess	Planning
Organizational Assembly	Letters	Emotional Assembly	Letters/Numbers	Individual work
Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit
Stop-Motion	Electro-devices	Art 6-7	Insect hotel	Body and Movement
		Research 8		
		Research 9		

Source: Own elaboration, based on DC: 2018/11/20

This is something every kid needs to be able to understand. Even at young ages (3-6), acompas help kids learn how to read the schedule:

> In the big room, Teresa, Etna and Aurelia are with *Llora* and a new boy to whom *Llora* is explaining the schedule. A few minutes later, the boy understands what his team is supposed to do today. He leaves the room, returns after a while and tells the girls "Do you know that today we are going to the Color Room?" (DC: 2018/11/20).

The schedule is prepared based on the kids' interests. Apart from some fixed activities, which will be explained later like the adults' proposals (letters and numbers) for the older kids, fruit, lunch, cleaning, and closing, everything else is changing. This is decided at the beginning of each quarter in an assembly where kids express their interests. Afterward, acompas try to manage related workshops, either held by them, pamares or collaborators. Nevertheless, as described later in more detail, despite the acompas' encouragement, some kids have many proposals, and others do not care or participate at all, even after being reminded that they may find themselves involved in activities they might not be interested in.

5.2.2 Rituals

There are many ritualized practices taking place at Trèvol. In this section, we will take a closer look at two broad categories: the daily rituals (food, tidy up, color room, and closing) and the occasional rituals (goodbyes, birthdays, festive seasons).

<u>Daily Rituals</u>

Food[72]: Food, both late breakfast and lunch, is ritualized. The musical instrument used is a triangle made of metal which has significant power. It is used either by acompas or -most frequently- by trèvolis. The ritualized nature of the practice makes it a sound that kids of all ages have internalized and connected to food, as seen in the following examples: "*Margarida* gives Vicente the triangle, and he starts playing approaching every kid to remind it is time for breakfast. Etna says: "we know" (DC: 2018/12/11). "A few minutes later, Agnès plays the triangle. "We know", says Xavi and a few more kids, but she continues wandering around playing the instrument" (DC: 2019/02/13).

However, sometimes kids do not want to interrupt their activities and protest at the triangle's sound, like the time, for example, that an acompa announced the food moment and a kid said "the triangle has not sounded yet". When the acompa played the instrument, kids protested verbally "we do not want to", and the acompa insisted: "it is neither debatable nor negotiable". In another case, a girl was angry in the art room shouting, almost crying: "they are gonna play the triangle, see? It is nonsense". These are times of resistance, when the ritualized practices, instead of giving a feeling of order and organization, result problematic and cause frustration.

Tidy up[73]: Cleaning is ritualized similarly to the food time, the only difference being the instrument used; a tambourine instead. It is used twice during the day, when kids and acompas need to tidy up before the tale and when they need to tidy up after lunch and before the general cleaning time.

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[72] DC: 2018/12/04 & DC: 2019/29/01.
[73] DC: 2018/11/13 & DC: 2018/12/03.

It is difficult for newcomers to tell the differences among instrument uses, contrary to kids who have been longer in Trèvol. For example, one day, an acompa was playing the tambourine, and a new kid at Trèvol thought it was time to eat. In these cases, acompas explain "no, it is time to tidy up and go for the tale".

In any case, the importance of respecting the process is frequently reminded until it gets internalized by all. For instance, when kids once said that they knew already due to the sound of tambourine after a trèvoli said it is time to tidy up, an acompa thanked the kid, adding that it would be necessary in case we had not heard the tambourine.

If kids do not respect the process or the time structure, they are asked to do so, sometimes by acompas and others by fellow trèvolis, as happened a day when a boy was playing the tambourine and another said "one minute". A girl who was there intervened, "one minute no, now!".

Color room: Color room[74] is the room on the ground floor, destined for psychomotor activities, and one of the favorite spaces of many little kids who get excited when it is time to go:

> *Llora* asks Fran if she could go pee because they are going to the color room. Vicente says he loves it and starts running up and down the corridor shouting "sala colorins". More kids join him after a while. *Llora* is clapping in the rhythm of their improvised song. "What a thrill", she says, adding that we must wait for Fran, who is in the bathroom (DC: 2018/11/27).

However, going to the color room is not just about walking down the stairs. Once again, a musical instrument is used to ritualize the activity; a wind instrument that looks like a small wooden flute and sounds like a train's horn. After forming a line, acompas play the instrument and sing a specific song along with the kids, while upon reaching the place, they remind the structure of the activity and insist on the importance of facing it with responsibility and following the steps on time:

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[74] Original in Catalan: sala colorins.

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"We have come to play; we do not hurt each other. We take care of the body of our mates, and we take care of our bodies as well. You have to warn when you jump and be careful". Then she says that when she tells them 'the game is over,' they must stop playing and go for the tale (DC: 2018/11/27).

Closing: The closing gathering around the benches is something happening every day. Either hosting special celebrations like birthdays or not, it is the meeting point for all trèvolis and acompas. If something significant has happened during the day, it is the time to be communicated. Otherwise, acompas propose a song, a dance, or a game. Even if there is no time for any activity, the gathering still happens to say goodbye.

Occasional Rituals

Goodbyes[75]: When kids are about to leave Trèvol, a goodbye ritual takes place with the use of a candle.

Birthdays: A ritual also takes place for birthdays and.. half birthdays, the day that is half a year away from their actual birthdays, both acompas' and kids'. It happens outside during closing time, and a unique handmade cloak is used along with a Montessori year chain, a candle, and a few pines. There follows a brief description of the certain ritual that took place for a 10-year-old kid:

A candle and three pines are placed on the ground in the middle. *Josefina* shows a huge necklace with 365 wooden beads of different colors, one color for each month, and with the help of the rest, she finds the one corresponding to Ignaci's birthday. Then Agustí and Mateu dress him in the purple and pink cloak, and he passes from the people who have raised their fingers which means they want to whisper something to him; either a wish or a memory. Last, he blows a candle off, and *Josefina* asks him what song he wants us to sing for him. As he does not mind, we sing the birthday song "happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, your friends from Trèvol wish you" (DC: 2019/02/26).

Festive seasons: Local festive seasons are celebrated at Trèvol. One of them is Carnestoltes, the Catalan carnival which is highly ritualized as well, described below:

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[75] DC: 2018/11/27.

Everyone gets gathered outside on the benches. In the middle, there is a box with some cards. Acompas ask the kids who were already there to explain to the rest what had happened. Some of the older want to talk, but acompas insist that those who witnessed should speak first. They say that they had been walking around Trèvol when they found the Queen of the carnival. Then, acompas read the cards from the box:

"Hello Hello hello! I am the Queen of Carnival, neither man nor woman; I prefer being a person! I like to play without knowing who is who! And with the masks on, the carnival is a day to be whoever you want to be! Should we change our roles? Am I an acompa, a trèvoli or from Girona? If we put on a hat, a mask, and some colorful clothes, no one will know who we are, and it is a day to be equal; no one commands more or less. A day of rashness and exaggeration, we will all reclaim. No one is better. Neither power nor rulers, it is a day for peasants. This year is crucial to me. I need memory from time to time. The proposal is to celebrate the carnival as years ago. Take a good look at the photographs and get some imaginative ideas. Let the music and colors make next week a field of flowers"[76].

Figure 15: Letter of the Carnival Queen read at Trèvol
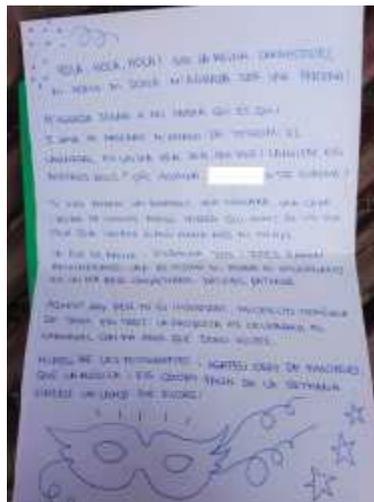
Source: Margarida

The other cards are about the days of the week and what they should do for each one. The first day they will go with something on their head, the second day wearing pyjamas, the third winter and summer clothes mixed, the fourth a handmade costume and the last day whatever they want; it is the day they will have a party with families. Cristòfor asks what would happen if they do not want to and *Josefina* replies that if somebody does not want to get dressed up, they do not have to.

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[76] Photographed after *Margarida*'s permission, translated from Catalan.

Acompas then highlight the importance of not buying a costume but creating it themselves. *Josefina* talks about a costume she had made up herself from things she already had at home. Mateu comments that *Josefina* had bought all the things she found at home and did not make the materials herself. Cristina asks what if mothers do not have time to make it, and *Rosa* insists that they make up a costume themselves with materials they already have. Agustí starts causing dust with his shoes, and a few seconds later, Joana and Demetri join. They stop after *Josefina* asks them to. In the end, *Rosa* shows the photographs that are in the box. They are random photos of carnival, some medieval, others contemporary (DC: 2019/02/20).

What should be highlighted in the first place is the celebration of local festivities like the Carnestoltes and the customs in them in Trèvol. This would either lead to problems or make no sense if there were more non-Western, religious families, but there are not. The only exception is the family of Damia and Etna, whose parents are Jewish but not practitioners[77].

Another interesting point is the mixture and co-living of rational and irrational aspects; acompas encourage kids to believe in the existence of the Queen of Carnival, but they communicate with a mother who dresses up, and kids come to see her. The rationality promoted is mainly expressed in the acompas' positivist comments: when discussing the experience, acompas prioritize the kids witnessed who can speak before the absent ones; if you do not see it, it does not exist.

Besides, festive seasons and celebrations are a unique chance to transmit political messages and values, as seen through the card that the Queen of Carnival wrote in terms of which the topics of gender and class equality come up and during the discussion when acompas promote anti-consumerist values by insisting in the handmade character of the costumes.

Last, the ritual's structure is connected to nature and a return to the past, seen through the initial walk around Trèvol, the Queen's words, and the medieval photographs.

All the above show how ritualization plays a vital part in producing a shared culture among the collective's members, empowering community ties, and facilitating the sense of belonging.

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[77] DC: 2019/11/26.

The following parts describe the basic practices at Trèvol, narrated following a typical day there, focusing on the upper floor and highlighting some key aspects. Starting from acompas' morning meetings, we will see the moment of arrival before we take a closer look at the guided activities, lessons, and workshops like the adults' proposals, the tale, the art workshop, electro-devices, stop-motion and English, the color room, as well as other activities that occasionally happen such as the preparation of a show, the magazine, and the assemblies. Then the most usual self-directed activities will be described, both the exterior and the interior ones. The sections that follow afterward are devoted to the excursions, fruit time, lunch, cleaning, conflicts, and closing.

5.2.3 Acompas' morning meetings

Acompas typically have an almost thirty-minute meeting in the mornings -although it usually lasts less due to their delay-, on the terrace to organize themselves for the day and discuss specific topics. For this reason, in the beginning, one of them gets the ordinary notebook and reads the topics under the current date. All acompas take notes the previous day as reminders for the next one, and the notebook is kept at a place accessible by all. Here goes a list of what is mainly discussed during the morning meetings[78]:

Organization for the day: They organize themselves for the day, according to the schedule and punctual current shows and expositions. They then share tasks and spaces for the whole day and comment on books they have brought for the tale time or for kids to read during the day if they wish.

Adaptations: They comment on the adaptation process of new kids.

Reminders: This is related to the limits; to remind kids not to touch material that is not supposed to be touched and tidy up the material they use, to ask kids if they compromise with the material they have asked for, to remind them of certain 'agreements' they have reached or to remind them that before modifying Trèvol's space they need to consult acompas.

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[78] DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/11, DC: 2018/12/18, DC: 2019/01/15, DC: 2019/01/29, DC: 2019/02/05, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/02/20, DC: 2019/02/26, DC: 2019/03/04 & DC: 2019/03/12.

Integrations: This is more like a reminder and related to kids' lack of active integration, such as the case of Vicente, an English-speaking three-year-old kid. Problems regarding their communication and interaction are expressed.

Birthdays: The birthdays that need to be celebrated on this day.

Workshops: Sometimes acompas talk about workshops the collective prepares, such as the workshop related to stages of development and sexuality. Acompas do not organize collective workshops themselves, but they propose material like the books of Wild in the mentioned example. This is the pedagogical committee's responsibility and is usually carried out by a trainer.

Conflicts: They talk about specific ongoing conflicts among kids and have not been resolved yet and decide when and who should accompany them. They focus a lot on the feeling of injustice trèvolis may experience and the safe, secure environment that acompas must create to ensure that kids know they are always there for them.

Kids' behavior: They talk about kids' behavior that may seem weird or problematic, refer to specific examples, and suggest investigating what has possibly happened to them. The topics have mostly to do with learning and social trajectories; cases of trèvolis avoiding getting surrounded by some kids, hitting, having pee problems, not touching learning material, laughing at some kids, depending too much on acompas, going to dangerous, forbidden places, etc. Acompas refer both to their observations and what pamares have commented. In the latest case, it is not uncommon that an acompa even reads a WhatsApp message they received from a pamare.

Pamares' news: They talk about conflicts among acompas and pamares, mainly derived from the families' high involvement and the friendly relations among the collective members.

Josefina talks about a mother who complained that acompas do not understand or empathize with her. The mother argued that her maternity has been challenging, but the acompas cannot understand it because they do not have kids. *Josefina* says she can

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understand her point of view, but the idea is to look for solutions, while she also refers to a father who wanted to do something more structured in the colonias[79]. *Rosa* says she wouldn't mind but they need to know what he is planning, so that acompas prepare themselves accordingly (DC: 2019/02/26).

Organization for Trèvol activities: It may be excursions, retreats, calendar preparations for the project's self-management, welcoming new families, tutorias with pamares, or parties that include kids' performances.

Organization for out of Trèvol activities: Sometimes, acompas communicate themselves for social and political activities that are not Trèvol-related, but the collective participates. For example, the feminist strike:

> The technical committee proposed a two-day strike, one extra day to prepare themselves (huelga extraordinaria). *Rosa* says that she finds it politically interesting that "people defining themselves as such a project to do a double strike". *Llora* prefers it like this because, in the past, they had to prepare for the retreat, and they could not participate much. *Josefina* mentions that the acompas may miss Trèvol and go on strike, but many 'pamares' cannot and that Esteve (a father from the technical committee) tends to find complex solutions (DC: 2019/02/05).

Last, some aspects of the acompas' relations as revealed during the morning meetings. First, acompas are not just co-workers, they are friends. When they arrive in the morning, they kiss and hug each other, talk about personal things that happen in their lives, and feel comfortable enough to change clothes in front of everyone. Moreover, although all participate during the morning meetings, two acompas mostly talk, start the conversations, and read the notebook. This might be because they have the most experience and are responsible for the upper floor, which is more demanding and more things come up every day.

5.2.4 Arrival

Arrival is a welcoming moment and usually involves informal conversations among acompas, kids, and pamares aiming to share important information from daily life, more practical

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[79] School retreats, introduced by ILE and still organized in Spanish and Catalan schools.

organizational aspects, and daily stories happening out of Trèvol. There follow some arrival scenes that may give a better picture:

Hortènsia enters with her mom, who hugs *Josefina* and starts talking to her while holding Hortènsia's hand and a bag writing 'child nutrition'. *Josefina* tells her that during the stop-motion workshop about bees the other day, Hortènsia had to write something. She got frustrated because it was difficult for her; she cried and asked *Josefina* to write it instead. Anaís comments that this is what she always does and that she finds it difficult to accompany her at times. *Josefina* reassures her she will accompany her to traverse this frustration. Anaís thanks her, and *Josefina* answers "my pleasure". Then, Damia tells *Josefina* to take her shoes off before going upstairs since she always forgets, contrary to *Rosa* (DC: 2018/11/27).

Hèctor arrives with his mom, who explains to *Josefina* that he was sick with fever and temperature. *Josefina* says, "it has been a long time since I last saw you", but he hides behind his mom's leg. *Josefina* says that many kids are ill, so they will make infusions during the day. Regina's mother comes in holding two bottles of wine and starts joking with *Llora*, who is in the big room. Guifré, who is there and listened to the discussion, tells Hèctor that he also has a sore throat (DC: 2018/12/04).

Two kids with their dad are eating breakfast in the kitchen. … Regina's mom comes in and asks *Josefina* if she could change her tutoring with another mom. Then Iolanda comes in with her eyebrows frowned, looking angry. She explains how she fell off the stairs in the metro, and since she had already fallen, she continued rolling. Many kids start arriving with their parents. Cristòfor enters the bathroom and leaves it messy. *Josefina* intervenes "Cristòfor not like that", so he returns to tidy up. Bonaventura's grandfather leaves saying, 'see you, family'. … Aurelia does something, and the pine from one side of a poster falls on the ground. She asks *Llora* to put it back, and *Llora* asks her where she would place it, helping her to put it herself instead. *Llora* then brings a trash bag with free clothes for adults and leaves it in the corner (DC: 2018/12/11).

Other times, arrival is when pamares or grandparents bring materials needed, such as colored paper and pencils. Finally, when kids arrive earlier, they usually help acompas prepare the rooms[80].

All in all, morning welcoming is relaxed and brings all Trèvol members together, yet respecting the general pedagogical line and limits. Apart from the functional, practical aspects, the members' verbal and bodily interactions remind of a big family. This way, kids are provided with a liminal space between home and school that facilitates their adaptation to Trèvol's environment.

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[80] DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2019/01/29 & DC: 2019/02/13.

5.2.5 Learning activities

PDA - Proposta d' Adults[81]: Numbers and Letters[82]

The two main compulsory activities for older kids are called 'Adult Proposals' divided into two categories: a) numbers and b) letters. *Rosa* guides the first and *Josefina* the second ones. Contrary to everything else in Trèvol, their compulsory character is usually reminded to kids who often protest when they get tired or bored during certain activities. Normally, half of the kids attend each PDA (5-7). PDAs are a combination of games that kids choose, explanations from the acompa, and individual work with worksheets. Kids must complete two worksheets of their choice per week, one of numbers and one of the letters, called 'reptes', meaning challenges. All the worksheets are kept in a red folder. In December 2018, the possibility of replacing worksheets with games was introduced, causing worries to acompas regarding whether kids play for fun or to get rid of their responsibility. Number PDAs take place at the philosopher's space and letter PDAs at the writer's space.

Before the proper PDA starts or if the rooms are open and kids want to enter, they normally get busy with educational material that can be found all around in the room, such as origami, spiral art, drawing, reading or writing, sometimes asking for the help of fellow trèvolis or adults when they were around.

Numbers' PDA[83]: Normally, the Numbers' PDA starts at around 10 a.m., lasts 45 minutes and is guided by *Rosa*. In the beginning, there is an initial explanation by the acompa who sits with kids at a round table and uses manipulative material, as seen in the following example of an addition:

> *Rosa* says: let's get ten and four units. Bonaventura intervenes: "that is too easy", and *Rosa* asks him to be patient, "maybe you do, but others might not know it". Mònica also says she knows. *Rosa* then asks her something. A boy is about to answer, and she tells

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[81] Adult Proposal.
[82] DC: 2018/11/27.
[83] DC: 2018/11/06.

him that she prefers Mònica to answer; since she says that she knows the answer (DC: 2018/11/06).

Kids' levels, even when they are of exact age, differ. This variance partly results from the notion that everybody's learning paces should be respected, kids' usual absence from Trèvol, and different home learning practices. Therefore, at the time of explanation, some kids might already know while others have no idea. The acompas' role is to provide those who do not know with a safe environment reminding that each one knows different things and that they should all respect the collective explanation. That does not mean that competitive attitudes do not arise from kids with higher levels, as seen in the previous example.

> A boy from the other room enters after a while. *Rosa* says, "I ask you to leave us please". She gives kids a few additions and a wooden box to practice and explains that the calculator can be used to check, but it needs to be used after they have tried the manipulative material first. The kids in the middle would start playing bingo because there is not enough material, then they would change. *Rosa* explains again that when we have ten units, we get a little stick, a 'ten', and sits with a boy to explain him more (DC: 2018/11/06).

Although kids are encouraged to move around in general, it is essential that they sit somewhere they feel comfortable during PDAs and are concentrated. A bottle of water and vases are also placed in each room to cover kids' basic needs. Calculators are allowed, but to confirm only. Math is taught using wooden manipulative material. Nevertheless, it is usually proven not to be enough, which is why acompas develop other strategies to adapt to the circumstances like bingo in this example or create pedagogical material from recycled objects such as lego bricks.

> Mònica is calculating with the fingers without using the material. Regina, waiting for the Letters PDA to start, enters the room and tells Mònica a result. *Rosa* asks Mònica if she has checked; she says no, and *Rosa* gives her the calculator. It is wrong. She tells her, "let's do it with the material to see what happened". After a while, two girls and a boy arrive with *Josefina*. *Rosa* is with Mònica, and boy B raises his hand. *Rosa* says, "I am coming, thank you for raising your hand". A boy from the letters' room is there. Then another boy comes in. Kids come and go. "I ask you to leave", says *Rosa* (DC: 2018/11/06).

Although acompas encourage kids to use the manipulative material, they accept other forms as well, like finger counting in this case. Acts like the raising of the hand are appreciated since they

add to the ambiance of concentration acompas aim to and therefore they value them positively and in public.

Also, acompas frequently use 'I ask you', 'I demand you'[84], and similar expressions during their interactions with kids. Due to their frequency, they have a specific semantic power adding importance to the words that follow. In the example described above, 'leave please' is much less powerful than 'I am asking you to leave'. The action is, therefore, more probable to happen in the second case. In other words, although such repeated use of specific expressions is not perceived as authoritarianism, it is more effective in terms of obedience.

> Mònica keeps counting with fingers. A boy asks her if she wants the calculator, and she says "yes please". Bonaventura goes to the boy's desk, and *Rosa* 'demands' him to stay separated from him. He returns to his seat but keeps talking to the boy. *Rosa* then asks him if he remembers when they said that he would have to go downstairs if he could not concentrate. He starts explaining, "I just wanted.." but *Rosa* interrupts him to say that now is not the moment; he should do it after the PDA (DC: 2018/11/06).

When kids cannot stay concentrated, acompas try ways to facilitate it by separating them from peers. If every strategy fails, they are considered not to be prepared for the learning activity, so they must go outside and come back only when able to redirect their energy there.

> A boy tells *Rosa* he will not have time to finish, and she answers, "never mind, next time we will continue". Simona says they are bored. *Rosa* asks them if they finished with the game and told them to come to practice additions now. Simona said no. Last, she told kids to exchange; those who were doing sums could play bingo now.
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> Mònica says she cannot do it, and Regina, who was sitting at the stairs at that moment, comes and tells her a result. *Rosa* asks a boy to practice with some additions, who says no. *Rosa* answers that there is no option. Regina asks *Rosa* to correct something, and she tells her to wait. Bonaventura asks Mònica for the calculator. She tells him, "go to your desk; I will give it to you in a while". He stays there waiting, and she tells him with an angrier voice this time, "go to your desk. I said I will give it to you now" (DC: 2018/11/06).

Kids' interactions during learning activities depend on their general relations, as happens in conventional classrooms too. For example, in this case, Mònica and Regina cooperate and help

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[84] Original words in Catalan: Te pido / Te demando.

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each other due to their friendship. The contrary happens with Bonaventura and Mònica, whose interactions are either neutral or hostile.

> *Rosa* brings a table from the other room when Mateu comes to ask her where Granada is. They go to the world map. She asks him if it forms part of the Spanish state, and he says yes. Then she asks which community. He does not know, so she tells him it is Andalucia and shows him where it is. Then he starts looking for China (DC: 2018/11/06).

This is the change of turns when the group with younger trèvolis of the upper floor finishes the PDA and the older enter. This period of transition is when spontaneous learning may also happen, like Mateu's short geography intervention.

Especially in the case of older kids, their motivation to work depends much on their peers and the competition created among them. In any case, acompas make sure that kids stick to the initial agreement of how much they should work today, even if that means they must stay longer. There are some exceptions to that rule, in case kids strive to do something and acompas feel like they need a break.

> *Rosa* asks the older kids what colors they should use for one unit (green) and ten (blue). After talking about it, it is decided that Mateu will practice additions because there are only two tablets for multiplications. He starts counting using his fingers. … Guifré is looking at Regina's paper, who looks annoyed. *Rosa* tells him that she does not like it when he looks at what she is doing. Guifré says she gives her the easy ones, and *Rosa* asks him, "can you concentrate on yours? It is bothering me". Then *Rosa* sits on the table in the middle and starts writing observations about every kid in a notebook (DC: 2018/11/06).

Although both Regina and Guifré have a similar cultural capital with one of their parents teaching at the university, Regina has some learning difficulties like dyslexia that differentiates their learning trajectories much. Therefore, an inevitable inequality is produced, which acompas handle by expressing their feelings when comments of superiority come up, even when the kid affected does not react. This way, acompas stand against competitive attitudes and inequality, defending difference instead.

Every time a kid does a multiplication, *Rosa* gives a new one. Simona comes from the other room and gives Regina a folded paper telling her to open it at home. *Rosa* says, "okay, concentrate now". Regina tells Simona to put it in her box, and Regina she may go. Guifré asks why Regina may go, and they cannot. *Rosa* answers that Regina has made a great effort and tells the boys that they would go late for breakfast as a 'consequence' of their lack of concentration (DC: 2018/11/06).

During the last part of the PDA, although no one could finish what needed to be done, Regina gets permission to leave while the boys had to stay longer. The semantics here is essential to be highlighted; boys did not stay because of a punishment imposed by the acompa but as a consequence of their own acts. In other words, punishments are presented like consequences decided by acompas and which kids must accept, tied to the value of responsible freedom according to the pedagogical project.

Letters' PDA: Letters' PDA is guided by *Josefina* and last the same as numbers' PDA, 45 minutes. Four desks are used for the activity, merged to form some kind of circle, and the participants may have eye contact. Also, letters' PDA is mainly in Catalan, although most trèvolis do not speak due to the language spoken at home. Nevertheless, acompas stick to the language and help them translating whenever it is needed.

We will see three examples of the specific activity that is especially significant in terms of cultural transmission through verbal communication.

Example 1[85]

Kids start looking at the worksheets. One of the options is to write a card to their adult self—another is to imagine what if specific scenarios happened. Blai wants to do the first one, but since the rest choose the second, he changes his mind.

Júlia is sitting at another desk reading a book. She gets bored. *Josefina* asks her if she knows one game that is there and includes some photos, and she has to think of the word they represent and put them in the correct box depending on the first letter of the word. She starts doing it, but she soon gets bored, and she tells *Josefina* she would go downstairs. *Josefina* asks her if she can tell her why she changed her mind. She says that

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[85] DC: 2018/11/20.

the games here do not interest her much. *Josefina* then asks if she wants her help to find one in which she would be interested. "Later", she says.

Júlia is a kid in transition, about to move from the ground to the upper floor. Therefore, although she does not participate in the PDA, she is supposed to be there and explore the educational material. However, despite the encouragement and accompañamiento, she does not need to stay yet, as the older kids do during PDA.

> Júlia leaves, and *Josefina* goes to make some photocopies. She gives them to Blai and Mateu, who have already decided what they would write. Then she starts explaining Ignaci something, but he is not paying attention. *Josefina* tells him, "I have the feeling that you do not pay attention, you know why? Because I have to repeat". She adds that if at a moment of communication both parts pay attention, repeating is not necessary. Ignaci is looking around, avoiding eye contact with her. After a while, Cristina stands up and approaches *Josefina*. She points at *Josefina's* shoes. *Josefina* says that she will go downstairs later and asks her not to interrupt her for this.

Listening is vital in Trèvol, and every time kids ignore what they are being told, regardless of the speaker being an adult or a peer, acompas insist on its importance for communication. Besides, taking shoes off before entering the rooms is an unwritten rule for everyone yet often forgotten by adults and kids. Kids, normally among those who have spent most years in Trèvol, have embodied it to the degree that they remind whenever it is not respected, either by fellow trèvolis or acompas.

> Blai's exercise is to write and draw what would happen if one day everyone lost their sight. *Josefina* tells them they have to explain their answer and then asks if they know what it means to argue. It means "explaining why", Mateu says. *Josefina* then insists that there is no correct or incorrect answer in this case; if they can state their opinion, everything is valid. Mateu chooses to write what would happen if everybody lost their memory and Regina if nobody recognized her after returning from vacation. *Josefina* tells them to think about the information they want to include first, and when it is clear in their head, they can start writing. After all kids have chosen, there is complete silence; everybody is writing. Cristina is making a paper plane on the next table, and Ignaci is playing a board game.

The material used for the letters' PDA is chosen according to what acompas think can draw kids' attention and may interest them enough to motivate the reading and writing process, which is

often self-directed like the example described above. One of the essential learnings kids receive is expressing and defending their opinion, even if it is different from everybody else's.

Example 2[86]

> *Josefina* starts explaining to the boys what the verb is and asking about present and past, using the sentence 'the monster is playful'. She then talks about the subject, used if the question is who it is, and tells kids that understanding the structure of a sentence would let them create a whole text. Simona is also in the room, sitting at the desk and probably doing math since she is counting using her fingers.

Contrary to the previous example, this letters' PDA is less self-directed and focused on writing rules. Acompas give examples and always explain the utility; why specific rules are important to know.

> Then they start choosing some small cards from the box to make sentences. Blue is for subjects, pink for adjectives and green for verbs. *Josefina* proposes to think on which question something answers: 'who is it', 'how' or 'what is done'.

The material to work on rules is manipulative and inspired by Montessori teaching methods where every part of speech has a specific shape and color.

> *Rosa* enters, and Blai asks her something at a flyer he is holding, which he gives her. She tells him she would look for it at home and tell him tomorrow, but he complains that she never has time, and *Rosa* says that is true "we are swamped". Blai then tells her that tomorrow, perhaps he will have changed his mind on whether he is interested or not, and *Rosa* gives the flyer back to him to keep it and let her know when he wants to.

Blai's interaction with *Rosa* depicts some kids' expectations regarding their acompañamiento, which are relatively high. Acompas devote themselves to trèvolis and are almost always at their disposal due to the low ratio. This high disposal and child-centrism may prove problematic since some kids take it so much for granted that they become too demanding and have little understanding. Therefore, the values and relations acompas try to develop among them, like

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[86] DC: 2018/12/04.

empathy and horizontality, are hard to be applied in certain ways. Kids receive so much attention that they sometimes tend to become authoritative towards acompas positioning themselves higher than them.

Example 3[87]

> *Josefina* is writing with Agustí the date on the blackboard. He writes 'tuesdy 5 fabreury 2019'. Instead of telling him if he had written it wrong, she only helps him find the information he needs. Guifré arrives, and Josefina said they can now start the PDA; they have already waited for him for 40 minutes. The PDA is about a witch. Mateu, Regina and Guifré participate. Josefina explains to them that when they see a big space and a full point, the topic changes. After a while, kids are reading the text in Catalan, which is a description of a person. Josefina brings the kids' attention to the word 'submission' and asked what it is. "Underground mission?", "Mass?", kids start guessing and laughing. Josefina says that "people who rule like to have submissive people". "Slaves?", asks Mateu and Josefina replies that slaves may be submissive or not.

Kids make many mistakes while writing, but acompas are not there to correct them. They focus on the information and only intervene in orthography matters when kids ask for their help. Also, acompas' political identity influences the ways they accompany which transmit strong political messages. For example, in this case, from all the unknown words in the text, the acompa chooses to focus on the word 'submission'.

> Then she asks about the aims of the text, which is a descriptive legend, and brings their attention to the adjectives. Kids do not know the word, but Mateu guesses it after she gives a few clues. *Josefina* tells them to highlight with a colored marker the adjectives in the text. Mateu is standing up behind the chair, Regina sitting and moving and Guifré sitting still.

When participating at a PDA, kids generally stay seated and concentrated. However, as depicted in the example, movement is not forbidden; it only becomes a problem when combined with kids' lack of concentration.

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[87] DC: 2019/02/05.

<u>Art</u>[88]

Margarida is the main acompa responsible for art-related workshops and activities which generally take place in the art room. When she is away for some reason, other acompas replace her. Materials like canvas, hard paper, and watercolors are available in this space and accessible to everyone. Kids typically put on an apron (red with white stripes) before starting painting, sculpting, or creating art in general. In the case of small kids, if they need help dressing up, acompas give them directions to do it themselves. Sometimes it is about a specific topic and more guided, while others, it is free creation. Since there is not much talking involved, the specific activities are usually accompanied by music; sometimes revolutionary music like bella ciao or kids' songs and most often jazz, African, classical, etc. which makes the place cozy and relaxing.

Once again, acompas remind of all the limits that exist regarding the specific space, focus on consensus, and do their best to maintain order and respect for the time structure, as can be seen through the following examples: "*Llora* reminds six-year-old kids that in one minute they have to move to the library for the maths' proposal with *Miquel*.. She then asks if kids are prepared for when *Miquel* comes to say that the minute has passed" (DC: 2018/12/04). "Vicente removes one glass from its place and places it on the floor, and *Margarida* explains to him he should put it back and get color from there" (DC: 2018/12/11). "Mafalda wants to join, but *Llora* tells her to ask Josep first; if he does not want to share the material, she must wait for her turn. After a while, Vicente starts playing with Josep's toy without asking. Josep gets annoyed" (DC: 2018/12/29).

Sometimes, especially when collaboration is asked for a collective artistic project, prolonged conflicts may arise, usually among older kids, like the one described below.

Art is Hard[89]

Protagonists: Cristina, Simona, Regina, Mònica (8-10 years old). Acompa: *Rosa*

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[88] DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/11, DC: 2019/01/15 & 2019/01/29.
[89] DC: 2018/11/13 & DC: 2018/11/20.

This conflict is related to a drawing Mònica and Cristina were preparing for the annual calendar and upon which they could not agree.

Scene 1: Upper floor, Letters' room

Scene 1, Act 1

> Mònica: I'm not thinking of talking.
> *Rosa*: And how will you resolve it if you don't talk?
> Regina: It's the only day that we are all here, and you don't want to talk (angry)
>
> Right after the short dialogue, *Rosa* tries to talk to Cristina, but she doesn't want to, so she leaves her and moves to talk to Mònica. Cristina then enters, saying loud, "I will talk about it now, and I want to talk about it NOW", but *Rosa* explains to her that now she cannot because she is talking with Mònica. So, Cristina goes away saying that then it is never.
>
> After finishing with Mònica, *Rosa* goes to Cristina. She hugs her and tells her not to talk to her like that. Cristina tries to escape, shouting, "leave me in peace". *Rosa* tells her to go outside and when she is ready to enter again. Cristina leaves angry to return five minutes later and sit on her chair to draw.

This is the first scene of the conflict resolution when acompas prepare the involved kids to enter a group conversation. They make sure that they are calm enough to discuss, explain its importance, and try to give space to all voices. When a kid is not prepared, like the case of Cristina, they first try touch as a calming method, and if it does not work, they tell her to go to the terrace, to the space of calm for a few minutes. The aim in all stages of conflict resolution is that kids learn to regulate their emotions, express them, and reach agreements. The highly performative character of the resolution should be highlighted, especially from Cristina's part; the body movement, gestures, and tone of her voice are all intense. Kids know that the acompa's attention is all theirs at that moment.

Scene 1, Act 2

> *Rosa* asks them where they want to talk and if they want to sit on the sofa like always, they agree. Cristina sits down, but Mònica keeps drawing sited on her chair. *Rosa* asks her to go, but she does not. "I ask you to come; if you don't, I will get you". After all, she goes.
>
> *Rosa* had brought the drawing, upon which the girls could not agree. She gives them three options a) leave it like this, b) modify it, c) make a new one, and asks "how would you resolve it? ". Mònica proposes to cut it in the middle, but Cristina disagrees; both sound angry. *Rosa* insists that if they keep getting mad all the time, they will not resolve it.
>
> Mònica then gets a folder and starts reading. Cristina tells her, "do you see that we are talking? You are not supposed to be reading". Mònica repeats that she wants to cut it in the middle. *Rosa* asks Cristina if she can accept it, and Cristina starts saying that Mònica interrupts her all the time and does not let her finish. When they are talking louder and angrily, *Rosa* comments, "this is not respectful". Then she asks what agreement they reach; otherwise, she announces, she would decide. Cristina agrees that she does, but Mònica says she wants it split in half and a new one. After they both agree on that, *Rosa* tells them to go downstairs to *Margarida*.

During the second act, the performance goes on. The girls would either break the rules to delay the resolution process, like the case of Mònica not paying attention and both shouting at each other or remind the rules like Cristina demanding for respecting the turns and not interrupting.

Scene 1, Act 3

> Mònica, who is holding the drawing, sits on the stairs. She looks angry and pretends to be crying, throwing the drawing up in the air. While she pretends to be crying, she looks from the stair railing down to see the rest. *Rosa* and Cristina are already on the first floor, but they are not looking at her. She holds the railing and starts moving front and back; then, she walks down the stairs slowly.

This last act of the first scene is the final proof that the girls are not affected so much by the conflict; they rather play with the unwritten rules and perform dramatically, claiming the acompas' and peers' full attention. Acompas are also aware of the fact, and some of them, like *Margarida*, express their thoughts regarding the need to accompany, waste energies, and concentrate on what is essential only instead of every little thing.

Scene 2: Ground floor, Arts' Room

Scene 2, Act 1

"The painting is split in the middle, and the girls are making new drawings. A few minutes later, they say that they like each others' drawings. *Margarida* underlines that they found a way to work together, and they agree". This feels like the end of the conflict, but it proved to last longer, as we will see.

Scene 3: Outside

Scene 3, Act 1 (Benches)

> "You are not prepared, Mònica. Can you come down, please?", *Rosa* tells Mònica, who climbs on the net. Mònica says they have too many conflicts, so she proposes writing down what they want the others not to do. Regina disagrees, and *Rosa* says that they need to reach an agreement. Simona then comes next to Mònica and says she annoys, doing things that divide Regina and Cristina. She keeps talking, and Mònica says, "do not talk to me like this, okay? ", before she leaves the scene, running.

Scene 3, Act 2 (Swings)

> "You are crying", Cristina says, referring to Regina, who is holding her head in her hands. Cristina then stops her from swinging and starts caressing her back. Mònica starts verbally attacking everyone, telling Regina "nobody loves you", Simona that her hair sucks, and Cristina that her drawings suck. Regina tells Mònica that this is a lack of respect, and Mònica tells *Rosa* that they are childish. Cristina asks what it means, and Regina replies it means they are very little. The insults go on. *Rosa* is talking to Mònica, but she will not listen, so she grabs her in her arms, and Mònica tells her to let her go. They leave for a while. Simona pretends to get hurt, and the girls run towards her asking if she is okay. Regina tells Cristina that the English acompa is writing down what they are doing, so they should not have many conflicts.

Scene 3, Act 3 (Swings)

> When *Rosa* and Mònica come back, *Rosa* tells the rest that for some personal reasons, Mònica is sensible these days. Regina says the same happens to her, and *Rosa* tells her

that at least it is okay at home with her dad and her mom (using their names), whereas Mònica is going through some challenging moments there. *Rosa* proposes that they talk in the library, but first, she makes them compromise that they will not get angry, shout or leave; if they cannot stand it anymore, at some point, they should say it. They agree and go to the library.

During the third scene, the performance goes on with two acts of vulnerability (Regina crying and Simona hurting herself) and numerous insults. Rather than a simple way of calling *Rosa's* attention, this was a whole strategy of creating otherness (Mònica as the other) and bonding through both otherness and the calling to be taken or the act of taking care.

Conflicts do not just happen, especially at older ages; kids often create them, and their resolution reminds of symbolic play, only directed by adults this time. In the end, the girls agree on writing a collective paperboard with the agreements they reached. Although more verbal conflicts are created during the writing process, *Rosa* intervenes retelling the sentence using the words "it is your impression that..".

> Cristina tries to leave, *Rosa* hugs her, and she tries to escape. They sit on the chair, and *Rosa* asks her if she wants to cry. Cristina falls to her hug and starts crying while the rest continue doing what they did before.
>
> After she calms down, Cristina starts saying, "I believe that .. it does not matter". Regina says she is listening to her, even if it looks like she is not; she is just writing simultaneously. Then Cristina says that for a moment, it seemed to her that "they did not care about her" because she was crying, and they would continue writing without doing anything. Regina says she was worried about her; she just did not do anything because she was angry.

As we can see, the highly performative actions are so normalized that peers do not even bother when a friend expresses a strong emotion if they do not already participate in the specific performance; if -in other words- they are not already part of a specific symbolic play.

In the end -for the record- this is what was written on the paperboard, later hung on the wall:

> CLARIFY THE RULES OF THE GAME
> ASK TO PLAY
> TRY TO PLAY TOGETHER MORE

ASK HELP FROM THE ACOMPAS IN CASE OF CONFLICTS
GIVE SOME TIME

Workshops

Workshops change every three months and depend on kids' interests. A description follows of three realized during 2018-2019: a) electro-devices, b) stop-motion, and c) English.

Electro-devices[90]: The workshop on electro-devices is accompanied by *Miquel*. It takes place every Tuesday from 12.30 p.m. to 13.30 p.m. in the science room and is a male matter. Acompas sometimes refer to the workshop as "macho-devices", joking. Nevertheless, what the boys who participate really want to do is create robots.

There follows an example of the specific workshop. As usual, acompas – *Miquel* in this case – focus on transmitting the project's norms and values like collaboration and maintaining order by tidying up. When kids show resistance, obedience is achieved through reminding the consequences.

> Bonaventura is eating a clover from outside. The goal is to make the circuit, and *Miquel* encourages them to try things when they ask something. A boy asks something, and he answers, "from whom does somebody learn? From the people next to him", encouraging him to ask somebody who has already done it. Ignaci asks if he leaves the material at Trèvol or he takes it home. *Miquel* says that he leaves it for now, but when the workshop finishes, they can decide altogether.
>
> A boy who has already done the circuit says that this could be used when lights go out at home. Mateu adds that it could also be used as an alarm. Mateu asks *Miquel* something, and similarly, he tells him to ask his mates who have already done it. A boy stands up and goes to help him. *Josefina* enters to take a photo with her mobile phone.
>
> After a while, Mateu stands up and goes to turn off the lights, but *Miquel* tells him that not everybody has finished yet, and once they do, they will turn them off. Many boys are asking for *Miquel*. He helps Blai with something, and he thanks him. The ultimate goal of today's workshop is to make the light work and then the sound.

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[90] DC: 2018/11/27 & DC: 2018/11/06.

A boy starts explaining how it could be used as timber for the huts and asks who wants to listen to the best music in the world. He starts playing the music from the battery by connecting the cables, and Blai stands up and starts dancing.

When they all finish, *Miquel* says that now they will turn off the lights, but first, they would tidy up everything apart from their circuit. He brings a cube, but they are late to gather everything. *Miquel* says, "I am worried we will not have time to do the light thing because we are not tidying up". Finally, they do so.

Miquel closes the door and turns the lights off. He starts taking a video with his mobile phone. Kids turn on their circuits one by one in a row. A boy makes a sound as well using his mouth, which they all repeat. It goes like "pu pu tsi pupu tsi puputsi" (DC: 2018/11/06).

Stop-Motion[91]: Stop-Motion is accompanied by *Josefina*, and the topic is bees. At the end of their research, kids make their movie using the stop-motion technique. The following example is taken from the exposition of the movie created.

Blai and Bonaventura are working on a poster: NEXT FILM PROJECTION IN CINEMA TREVOL THE LIFE OF THE BEES ON THE 18TH AT 12.30. Blai is drawing some bees around.

.. Desks have been removed, and there is a carpet made out of colorful plastic puzzle pieces on the floor. The projection starts, and the kids are silent. Nadia talks, and after *Llora* touches her on the back, she stops immediately.

Kids who made the movie are in front, some sitting on the floor, others standing.

Before the projection, Guifré starts talking; he seems more implicated in general. "Welcome to our explication of today of what we learned the last two months and eight days", he says. Then, Bonaventura starts reading from the poster about the work of the worker bees and the organization among them. He is not reading very fluently, and Guifré is correcting him. Guifré continues with the reproduction and the parts of the bee without reading.

Aleix asks *Josefina* if he can get a chair, who says no. He says "okay" and returns to his seat. After the explanation, *Josefina* says that they have made a movie with the stop motion technique. Guifré explains what stop-motion is, and its history and Bonaventura explains how they did it. The movie starts "Trèvol productions present, "The life of the bees". It is made out of photos accompanied by kids' words. Guifré and Bonaventura are hiding when their voices are heard, Ignaci is closing his ears. In the end, "a tale created by the kids of Trèvol" appears and the boys' names who participated.

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[91] DC: 2018/12/18.

Josefina asks if there are any questions to start the conversation. *Llora* asks about the queen and how the new one is chosen, and Aleix asks if there is a king. Guifré answers both questions. Bonaventura asks, "may we leave now?". *Llora* answers, "one moment". Ricardo asks something, and Ignaci says he explained it already, "maybe you have not listened". *Llora* says he can explain it again. After that, they start discussing how bees remove the pollen from their legs. Bonaventura then brings raw honey and offers kids and adults who get it from a small plastic box using their fingers (DC: 2018/12/18).

As it may be seen, through the specific workshop, kids do not only learn how to create a film with the stop-motion technique, but they also practice their writing skills in terms of the poster's creation and their presentation skills during the projection of the film. Besides, they learn how to self-organize and realize a project from the very first step to its last. Last, through honey and their invitation to the audience to taste it, they bring a natural product of their presentation and reinforce sensory learning.

English[92]: English workshops are accompanied by *Miquel* and a collaborator, and there are seventeen kids of all ages, but mainly from the upper floor. The workshop is about the interest kids had shown in creating a shop.

Miquel explains the idea of the workshop. Guifré is intervening a lot, so *Miquel* gets mad; he yells at him, saying he is not the one organizing this workshop. *Miquel* finally asks kids to close their eyes and those who want to join to raise their hands. Most of them do apart from one girl and two boys. *Miquel* tells the boys that they did not join any workshop yesterday and maybe the acompas will make them join something. Then, a presentation game is played, and the song 'head shoulders knees and toes' is sung (DC: 2019/01/05).

As we can see in this first meeting, acompas do not always maintain the calm they are supposed to. Also, kids are free to choose workshops, but they are not free not to attend any; if they are interested in none of them, acompas make them participate in something. This is why they insist so much on the assembly during which kids' interests are expressed as well.

After *Miquel* explains the idea, kids form groups; boys only, girls only. Regina says that she wants to enter a boy group because she is always with Cristina and Simona, but she changes her mind in the end. *Miquel* shouts a few times because it is too chaotic. In the end, the groups decide to sell a) science, b) paper, c) toys and books x2, and d) sweets.

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[92] DC: 2019/01/05, DC: 2019/01/29, DC: 2019/02/05, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/02/20 & DC: 2019/03/13.

There is a conflict because the toys groups who want to sell the same objects, and Regina starts crying after the workshop in *Miquel's* and *Josefina's* hug (DC: 2019/01/29).

Although some kids are aware of the gender question, most are unwilling to form mixed groups, and acompas do not insist either. However, they insist on all kids being part of a group so that no one gets excluded. In our example, Regina knows precisely what she is expected to learn, that is, to contribute to creating mixed-gendered groups in terms of peer socialization, expressing such intention frequently, but she resists by choosing her girl-only affinity group. It should also be mentioned that many times, like in the example, kids exaggeratedly express their feelings, often aiming to attract acompas' attention and care.

Many kids are missing today. *Miquel* comments, "I have no idea where they are; it is an anarchist school", joking.. During the workshop, 'gelatis' are shared among kids, the money they have created. Upon sharing, kids start expressing their jealousy, saying, "you got the best" (DC: 2019/02/05).

Despite the acompas' proposal for object exchange instead of gelatis (kids' money), kids keep not only using gelatis but also being obsessed with them. That might be explained if we think of the forbidden nature of money in kids' world; having access to it in terms of their symbolic play gives them power as it offers access to the adults' world.

The Trèvol's market time is complete chaos, because of the considerable number of the participants, according to *Miquel*. At first, Mateu, Guifré, and Blai enter walking on fours. *Miquel* starts saying that if they are unwilling to do what he says, he will tell them to go downstairs to avoid shouting. "As *Josefina* did this morning", Mateu says. *Miquel* says yes, adding that he is the one deciding who stays and who leaves. Ignaci asks irrelevant things while the acompa explains today's workshop's structure, and *Miquel* tells him, "I am about to propose you go downstairs". After a while, Ignaci starts fighting with Damia. *Miquel* tells Ignaci to go downstairs. He complains that Damia did the same, and *Miquel* says he had not warned him many times (DC: 2019/02/13).

Once again, although there is no official punishment, consequences exist and give the acompas certain power since kids must obey their decisions; otherwise, they get ignored, excluded from collective processes, or go out to work on self-regulation and co-living in community.

Due to the chaotic situation described above, *Miquel* asked for another acompa to join the workshop, which revealed a bit more the power relations that exist among them as well when he expressed the feelings of stress and judgment he experienced[93].

> Mateu aggressively speaks to Simona. *Rosa* asks her if she is sad; she could see from her face. She says yes, not because of what he said but because of the way he said it. *Rosa* hugs her and kisses her on the forehead. Cristina says she is sad too and hugs Simona saying she is here for her too (DC: 2019/02/20).

Touch has more power than words in Trèvol. Body language is dominant in everyday communication as a tool applied in various cases, from touch as an invitation to calm down to hugs and kisses as empathetic acts of understanding and support.

Last, during workshops, conflicts usually happen among kids requiring acompas' interventions, like in the following example[94].

> Regina sits angrily on the stairs, mad at Cristina and Simona. Cristina proposes that they talk, but she says they need *Rosa* because they have a conflict, so they wait for her to finish and be available to talk.
>
> They then sit outside. Regina says she is angry, and *Rosa* asks why. She explains they grabbed something which annoyed her, and then they played while she was tidying up. *Rosa* asks them if they understood what bothered her. "Yes, but", Regina interrupts, and Cristina says "Regina please" and continues talking. *Rosa* is saying what Regina says, in other words. For example, when she says, "they did not do anything", *Rosa* answers, "You felt like they did not collaborate" and asks them what they think.
>
> Then she asks what they would have liked to be different. Cristina says that she felt like Regina shouted at her, and Regina proposes that they stop shouting. *Rosa* mentions "you agree more, and you listen to each other more than before". Cristina says it is because Mònica is not here now, and *Rosa* replies that we should respect people who are not there to defend themselves.

Kids know when a conflict happens and how they are supposed to react, asking for an acompa's intervention. Body language and high performativity are almost always present, and acompas might use art or newspaper destruction as a therapeutic method during the resolution. However, although conflict resolution sometimes functions as a strategy of kids to avoid acompas' control

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[93] DC: 2019/02/20.
[94] DC: 2019/02/26 & DC: 2019/03/05.

by performing their expected role and reaching an agreement, in this case, conflicts are provoked, and kids ask for their resolution as a strategy of attracting acompas' or peers' attention.

Color room[95]

'Sala Colorins' is where psychomotricity activities occur, aiming at each one's personal development using movement and the body. These activities are more important and pleasant for little kids.

A day announced to spend some time in the color room transforms automatically into kids' favorite day. This activity is ritualized following specific steps. As seen before, kids move to the room in a line, singing a specific song by the sound of a train-like musical instrument played by the acompa, normally *Llora*, due to her specialization in psychomotricity. Then, the acompa explains what they are supposed to do there and highlights the limits.

The first thing kids do in the color room is to destroy a wall of mattresses in different shapes and colors, which the acompa has prepared for them in advance and are already placed in the space:

> Kids form a line and run to destroy the wall of mattresses in different shapes and colors. Mafalda gets annoyed because Vicente starts destroying hers and *Llora* tells him "her wall is important for Mafalda", adding that they have to respect the constructions of their mates.

> Aurelia and Mafalda say they want to make a house using mattresses and tubes. Soon, more kids have constructed houses. Vicente enters Josep's house who gets annoyed. *Llora* intervenes again "this is Josep's house; if you want to enter, you have to knock knock. May I enter?".

At times, like in the example, kids use the mattresses and tubes used by other kids. In these cases, the acompa intervenes to remind the importance of consensus; they can only interact with objects made or used by their peers as long as they let them do so.

> Only one tube is left after playing with the houses for a while, but Mafalda and Aurelia both want it. "I think it has to be shared", *Llora* says. Then she proposes to join two tubes

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[95] DC: 2018/11/27.

so that all can use them. Vicente, who had constructed his house where the jumping place is, tells kids who want to enter: "you cannot get in unless you give me a sandwich". Mafalda wants to enter, but Vicente does not let her. She is sad, saying, "I want to enter Vicente's house". "It is Vicente's house, and he does not", *Llora* replies. "I do want.. I want to jump from the stairs". *Llora* then says that that is different and explains to Vicente that he built his house where the jumping place is, which is for everyone, so he has to let her in. Kids start playing a game soon, moving around and asking if they could enter the houses, pretending to ring the bell.

There are yet instances when kids are made to share their constructions after the acompas' intervention. This usually happens when there is nothing similar left that can be used by others and someone wants it or when they are built at a place that blocks the entrance to another one. In other words, although kids are motivated to share, they must respect the space of the rest or their will to use an object on their own. However, if a certain object is for all, they may only use it for a certain period and then share it. The same happens for shared spaces to which everyone must have access. This way, limits are maintained, and cases of injustice are avoided.

> After a while, *Llora* says, "game time is over; it is the moment to tidy up". It is tale time, and kids sit in a line as usual. Vicente does not want to join the rest; he continues playing. The tale is about a little white rabbit. One goat had entered the rabbit's house, and the rabbit asks the animals for help, but no one would help him because they are scared, apart from an ant. Josep starts playing around too. *Llora* says, "I demand you to come", but he does not. After a while, he goes back to the line. In the end, the rabbit makes a soup and invites all animals to eat.

> The tale is over, and it is time for drawing. *Llora* leaves colored pencils, A3 sheets, and a box with wooden constructions on the floor. Vicente wants to write in her notebook. "No, this is my notebook. You have your sheet to draw". *Llora* starts writing while the kids are drawing. Vicente is imitating her. She says, "are you imitating me Vicente, are you doing the same as I do? Look, I am gonna close the notebook because I want you to concentrate on your drawing".

> Then some kids want *Llora* to look at their drawings. She goes to each one, asking, "do you want to explain your story to me?". Fran says it is about some animals, a bambi, a cockroach and a snake. Mafalda has drawn her brother, who is not born yet, and herself holding him. Josep a plane, Aurelia a girl next to a volcano. *Llora* asks each kid if they want her to write the explanation and, if they do, she writes it. Then she says time is up and whoever finishes has to put the drawing in the folder and put shoes on. The door opens, and Josep leaves. *Llora* asks him to come back because she wants them to leave altogether, but he keeps walking. He goes upstairs and tells his dad he left without *Llora* or the girls, excited.

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After playing with the constructions, Trèvolis listen to a tale and then draw or make a wooden construction. Acompas intervene when needed to maintain the limits and facilitate kids' concentration on certain practices. Before they leave, everybody puts away the material used and waits for the rest to go upstairs. If some kids manage to transgress certain limits without consequences, like in the example, they understand it as a personal achievement.

Shows[96]

At the end of December 2018, a show took place which for which kids started preparing in advance with acompas. Performances are kids' choice; they form groups themselves and decide on what they want to present. It may be anything from music, dance, circus, etc. Kids rehearse with the presence of acompas, one for each group, who intervene when needed only, to share with them their observations and make proposals. These are challenging times, according to the acompas who come to control their directivity and try to ask questions that help kids' organization and decision making instead of guiding them.

Hip-hop circus

> …Regina is in the color room with *Josefina*, dancing to a hip-hop song by an activist American rapper, and her moves include aerial silk. *Josefina* is suggesting a few things for Regina to incorporate in the following rehearsals. Regina says she has a new move and asks *Josefina* to tell her if she could do it or not. *Josefina* proposes another, but she says she would not do it because she has not been taught in her classes. They talk a bit more about the moves.

Kids may give individual shows as well since, according to acompas, they do so many things together at Trèvol that it is good to spend some time working individually as well. What is more, in this case, Regina's decision to do it on her own followed last year's cancellation by a friend of hers with whom she would perform. Therefore, her achievement to perform alone surprised her

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[96] DC: 2018/12/11, DC: 2018/12/18 & DC: 2019/01/08.

so much that she decided to repeat this year. According to *Josefina*, it functions as a way of empowerment.

It should also be mentioned that kids may choose the music they want to accompany their show from various CDs acompas have brought, most of which hold political, antifascist, or feminist messages. However, kids are free to make their proposals as well.

Robot dance

Six boys enter the color room, and they immediately start playing around. *Josefina* tells Blai and Bonaventura, "I see you with much energy", asking them to control their energy towards the show as if it is uncontrolled neither the show nor the time will come out. It is still very chaotic, and *Josefina* intervenes the whole time. "Ignaci, I ask you self-control with the things you want to do and are not for now". It is Aleix's first day, and Bonaventura explains that they are robots dancing while Guifré and Damia play music. When music is quick, they should move quickly; when it is slow, they should move slowly. Guifré is playing the piano and Damia the tambourine, but they would change. They do not know how to play, but that does not stop them from improvising.

After a while, *Josefina* asks everybody to talk, but they want to practice. She says, "there are moments to practice and moments to take decisions". Kids keep playing around. "Either you do not listen, or you do not care. I want to think that it is the first option, but I am not sure". She then asks what proposals there are for the show and asks kids to raise their fingers if they want to speak. Aleix goes to the stairs. "I ask you not to jump", *Josefina* says, adding that this is unpleasant for her. Guifré, lying on the floor, is about to speak while Blai is speaking. *Josefina* tells him it is not his turn, and he asks why she did not say whose turn it is. She answers that he is old enough to be aware of what is happening around him. "Aleix, listen to your mates, please", she tells Aleix, who is not paying attention either.

Boys start brainstorming. "I like Blai's idea to jump", Guifré says. "Nice, one vote", says Blai. *Josefina* repeats the ideas asking, "do you like this idea? ". In the end, she asks if they think they can do both ideas that were heard for the finale, and they do. She says, "this is an agreement". Leo passes by the window, and Aleix flips him off. *Josefina*, still upset, tells them, "how hard it is to organize something with you and how unpleasant for me", high-lightening that boys are not prepared or concentrated, and she is putting more effort than them, which provokes her anxiety. Blai complains that he is concentrated, and she says indeed, "you are, but the group affects you as well". He then asks who is not. Josefina does not answer "those who are not know it". She adds that they should pay attention to the music and their mates; they are not alone, and that it seems like a day of playing in the color room instead of rehearsing for the show.

In the end, *Josefina* announces they would practice tomorrow too, and the acompa would decide if they could do the show or not. Guifré says he is angry "all my quietness is gonna be useless" and adds that everybody does his own thing and no one is concentrated. Then he asks them to stay quiet. The last rehearsal goes much better after the conversation.

As seen in the example above, controlling situations of limits' transgression or resistance to norms, in other words, is the same as usual. The acompa asks kids to direct their energy to the show, and as they do not obey, she expresses the feelings their attitude causes her, without judging the attitude itself or specific kids. Nevertheless, she mentions the consequences of their behavior which is effective in obedience, along with the intervention of a kid who has acquired the expected role. In any case, a solution is attempted through a spontaneous assembly coordinated by the acompa, during which kids reach agreements. Last, it is interesting how, according to *Josefina*, boys have such energy while girls are very calm. "Luckily, Regina is doing something different that breaks the rule a bit", she comments.

Aerial Silk and Trapeze

Cristina and Simona are dancing to a pop song they had chosen, using the aerial silk and the trapeze. *Josefina* asks them not to play because there would be no time to rehearse. They improvise a lot and do not have specific moves. They also talk about the black dresses they would wear. Simona says she is shy when she dances alone. "Don't worry", Cristina says, "you know it's your parents", referring to the audience. "Not all of them", says Simona, so Cristina proposes her to imagine that they are, this is what she does. Simona says she can't, and Cristina proposes to imagine that the audience is all *Josefina* or avocados.

As seen in the example, although the project aims to become a family's extension, kids still feel comfortable with their parents or the acompas but not with all the collective's adults.

Star Wars music

Nadia, Aniol, and Ricardo start rehearsing music fighting using some plastic swords that make sounds. The idea is that they would fight and tell jokes in the end. During the rehearsal, Nadia hurts herself, nobody reacts. "What's up?" *Llora* asks. "Fine", the boys say. "Look at your mate", says *Llora*. Aniol says it was an accident, and the idea was not

to "kill in real life". *Llora* then asks when the show finishes, and he answers, "When we kill Nadia" (with the plastic swords). *Llora* asks if she agrees. Nadia does, "I got used to it". *Llora* then comments, "you may get used to it but only if you want to".

During the improvisation, boys want to eat Nadia, but she doesn't, "no eating, I do not agree". Kids are fighting a lot, and *Llora* intervenes to remind them that their idea was to make music. They start walking on the swords, and *Llora* repeats, "do not step on the instruments". After a while, Guifré, Ignaci, Damia, and Blai enter to invite them to a movie.

Similarly, limits are reminded whenever needed, and acompas ensure consensus is maintained and kids do not experience violence.

Magazine[97]

With the help of acompas, kids also prepare an annual magazine, published at the end of the school year and shared among the collective members. For this reason, a poster with ideas is placed on the wall, which expresses kids' interests and ultimately determines what each kid would prepare. As we can easily observe, kids' interests are highly gendered and influenced by their peer group:

Ideas for the magazine:

Damia -> People in Trèvol really like Harry Potter
There are many conflicts

Aleix -> Football news in Trèvol
Football jokes

Cristina -> Why is it hard for girls and boys to play together
A tale

Ignaci -> Football News
Football jokes

Blai -> Comic strip
How to make a stop motion movie

Simona -> Tale

[97] DC: 2019/03/05.

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Explain how a comic is made
Something from the movie

Book Recommendations (Section)

Assemblies[98]

Among the acompas and kids and incorporated in Trèvol's weekly schedule, there are two compulsory assemblies, twice per week, different for the ground floor and upper floor. One of them focuses on the organization of the week, and the other is emotional. During the latest, kids may propose what they want to talk about regarding situations and feelings they provoke. If nothing arises, acompas propose activities such as role-playing games. Besides, there is one extra organizational assembly every quarter which focuses on this period's planning. At times, some extraordinary assemblies occur if any topic arises or a specific issue should be discussed, like one boy's expression of interest in a strike which motivated the acompas to organize a political assembly to discuss it.

In the assemblies of the upper floor, kids have the role of the facilitators as well, while the acompas cover such role at the ground floor, where kids have two organizational assemblies of interests per week. They are points of meeting and have a compulsory character for all; everybody must be present, even if not willing to participate.

However, not all kids were happy and comfortable with this compulsory, assemblearian way that sometimes takes too long, especially on the upper floor. For instance, Ignaci's difficulties staying for too long at a place without moving are evident, along with his denial to express his emotions and tendency to interrupt without listening or respecting the process and his mates. Therefore, he got excluded three weeks from the assemblies, which was explained to his family not to feel excluded. Acompas commented on his progress as time went by when he started raising his hand to take a turn and more respectful behavior.

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[98] DC: 2019/01/09, DC: 2019/02/20, DC: 2019:03/12, DC: 2019/05/19, DC': 2019/05/24 & DC': 2019/06/10.

All in all, assemblies are a Trèvol´s vital element, and exclusion from them due to resisting the rules acts as a factor towards self-regulation and discipline.

There follows an upper floor's organizational assembly's description[99].

On the blackboard, the topics of the day are already written:

AGENDA
1. HOLIDAYS
2. WEEKLY SCHEDULE
3. INTERESTS

Kids and acompas sit in a circle. *Josefina* asks if anybody wants to add something and Ignaci, who is in the role of the facilitator, adds after Cristina's and Bonaventura's interventions[100]:

4. ASSASSIN
5. BRING TOYS
6. THE GAME OF PI

As the facilitator, Ignaci holds a brown fabric with a pink ribbon around it and gives it to whoever wants to talk, taking turns. *Josefina* intervenes a lot, trying to help him.

It is the time for the first point, 'Holidays', and Ignaci is giving turns. After a kid finishes, everybody can ask questions. Isidoro writes the names and the turns on a piece of paper, erasing those who have already talked. All of them want to talk, apart from Damia and the acompas.

First, Mateu speaks about his holiday in Zaragoza at his grandma's house and how a dog bit him. Agustí went to his grandma's village, where Regina and Bonaventura have also been with him in the past. *Rosa* asks where the village is, and while discussing the location, she brings a map of Spain and, with *Josefina's* help, she explains the communities. Cristina talks about her Christmas at her grandma's house. Damia says Bonaventura has been raising his hand for a long time, and *Josefina* thanks him for noticing.

Cristina wants to add something related to her fever, but Mateu tells her not to, as they are talking about vacation now. She gets angry, and *Josefina* asks her if she needs anything, a hug, for example. Mateu asks her sorry, and Cristina says, "no, let's continue the assembly".

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[99] DC: 2019/01/08.
[100] Written in Spanish with a few spelling mistakes.

Kids also talk a lot about their Christmas presents like dolls and clothing and Ignaci's cruiser to Italy due to his father's work. When they finish, he erases the second topic of the agenda apart from the first one, and *Josefina* asks him to rewrite it. He says they remember what it was, but she insists. He does not do it in the end.

Regina gets thirsty, but the water bottle is not refilled, so she goes downstairs with her glass to get some. Mateu does the same a few minutes later, and *Josefina* asks him to refill the whole bottle in the kitchen.

They are ready to start with the second point, the weekly schedule. *Josefina* and *Rosa* explain who would have PDAs and research and refer to Friday when they would go to a science museum. They tell them about the robots' exhibitions and that they would not visit the animal part since, along with families, they decided that they disagree with animals being enclosed. Apart from Ignaci, who does not seem to agree with the decision, the rest do. *Rosa* asks if somebody can explain why they do not like the idea of enclosed animals. Mateu answers that animals should live in freedom and that this is like being in jail for them, but without having done anything wrong.

The third topic is interests. *Rosa* and *Josefina* ask what they would like to learn to organize workshops for the three upcoming months. Mateu says dance, hip hop, maybe. Cristina asks for somebody with knowledge of trapeze to come and show them some moves. Regina wants something related to movement as well and to eat fruit out of Trèvol once per week. *Josefina* encourages her to write it on the paper with the topics for the weekly organizational assembly.

Ignaci says he does not care. Since a few kids similarly do not propose anything, *Rosa* reminds them that doing so is essential to organize things they are interested in and that if kids would not say something, they might find nothing interesting to participate.

Bonaventura says he wants to make snakes with tubes and that his grandpa could come; they discuss his availability. He later proposes more things his grandpa could come and do, and *Rosa* highlights that what he really wants is his grandpa to come. Agustí says that he is also interested in snakes and that he investigates reptiles at home.

After each kid speaks, they give their turn, passing the brown fabric to the person on their left. Damia does not know what to say, and *Rosa* asks him what he wants to learn that he does not know or what he wants to learn about more. He says more difficult electro-devices, with bigger engines.

Cristina wants to investigate if fairies are real. Many kids propose animals too. For example, Regina adds music and asks if it could be anything they wanted, like a swimming pool. *Rosa* answers that they can propose, but adults may not do everything they ask. Bonaventura says the sea and things made from toilet paper. *Rosa* asks who else would like to investigate the sea and life we find there; many kids raise their hands, Regina and Bonaventura say they already do at home.

Rosa also asks if they are still interested in the shop they want to create, and they are. She reminds them it would have rules imposed by the acompas. *Josefina* proposes a tales' workshop, and a few more kids say music. Hèctor is not participating, shaking his head and having his face covered with the spiderman cap he is wearing.

As we can see from the extract above:

- Kids in Trèvol are interested in topics and activities mainly related to movement, art, and the natural world. This is in line with their raising and education, where certain areas of knowledge and action are promoted. On the other hand, technology-related topics also came up apart from a mention of Ignaci to tablets and Damia's proposal for electro-devices.

- At times, kids' interests are based on relatives' abilities. In the case of Bonaventura, for example, what interests him more is not the activity itself, but the time he would spend with his grandfather.

- Some kids do not participate in the collective decisions despite the acompas' encouragement. In the case above, the kids were Hèctor and Ignaci. Hèctor expressed his refusal to participate by shaking his head when asked to or by having his head covered by his cap. Ignaci, on the other hand, expressed it verbally: 'I don't care'.

- There is a high grade of peer influence; kids are interested in their peers' interests.

- Trèvolis seem to know the limits very well and make proposals inside them. In case their imagination transgresses the limits, they are aware of it, like the case of Regina's proposal of a swimming pool.

All in all, kids' expressed interests during the assembly are acceptable from the 'school culture'. However, what interests kids is not the activities only, but the people behind them; it can be used as a strategy to bring relatives with certain knowledge or abilities in Trèvol and to support and approximate peers by reproducing their ideas. Nevertheless, some kids refuse to participate in the

assembly, even after acompas' efforts, resisting and reinforcing the proposal that transmission should not be equated to acquisition and that learning is an individual process after all.

This 'alienation' may happen for various reasons such as non-integration in the peer group and difficulties in social interactions or lack of integration in Trèvol's structure and difficulties in adapting to the existing rules and is sometimes reinforced by the limited time spent in the educational community or by the differences between home and school culture. Therefore, what seems to mark the grade of participation in assemblies is not necessarily kids' lack of interests but somewhat related to the social dynamics of everyday life. In any case, self-exclusion seems to be a kids' strategy to avoid communication and weaken control, similar to contexts where invisible pedagogies occur.

5.2.6 Free play[101]

There are many occasions kids play in Trèvol without adults' guidance, in a self-directed way. The first is in the morning when they arrive, in case they do not have to enter any workshop or activity. Besides, they also play during fruit time, while waiting for their turn to eat, after eating lunch, and when 'free play' is on their schedule, they may choose to play outside or in a room. Below is a list of the main activities that kids get involved in during free play outside and inside.

Exterior

Most of them are carried out by groups of kids and sometimes by individual kids, like Vicente, who always plays alone. If they are asked to join, acompas accompany kids during their free play joining their games or proposing activities.

Symbolic play: Kids pretend to own shops and restaurants, that the floor is lava or that they are adult family members, pirates, thieves, wizards, travelers, clowns, or members of a tribe. They use the material available outside, like plastic swords and the wooden ship.

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[101] DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/11, DC: 2018/12/18, DC: 2019/01/08, DC: 2019/01/15, DC: 2019/01/29, DC: 2018/02/05, DC: 2019/02/13, DC: 2019/02/20, DC: 2019/02/26 & DC: 2019/03/04.

Huts: Sometimes, in terms of symbolic play and others just for the sake of construction, older kids love working on their huts and playing in them, most of which are owned by affinity groups and have names. It is common for conflicts to arise in these activities, like the one we will focus on.

The Hut Wars[102]

Protagonists: Older trèvolis, Boys VS Girls. Acompa: *Josefina*

A series of long-lasting conflicts about some wood which girls had stolen from the boys' hut called 'Germany'.

> Mònica, Regina, and Simona are wandering around. *Josefina* says that they would wait until they come to discuss, adding that the group has patience, but it might be over at some point.

This is the beginning of the conflict resolution when, like always, acompas try to make sure kids are prepared for the group conversation and redirect their attention and energy to it if that is not the case.

> Bonaventura says he wants to ask for the last thing: stop stealing woods and put them back. A girl interrupts, but he says he has not finished. Cristina is raising her hand, so *Josefina* puts them in order, Regina first, then Cristina. Bonaventura says that he thinks they are preparing a counter-plan to attack their hut. *Josefina* put an order in Bonaventura's thoughts, saying that he needs two things. First, he wants the woods back, and second, he wants to talk about the attack plan. Bonaventura adds, "we are watching over with sticks" and that two other boys are sending spies. *Josefina* says that they will discuss this part of the conflict with the boys.

In this part of the resolution, it should be mentioned both the fact that during conflict resolution, all involved actors must be present as well as another vital aspect of Trèvol: order. Just like objects, turns and thoughts must be ordered for the collective to function and co-live. Thus, this is what acompas try to do during conflict resolutions as well.

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[102] DC: 2018/11/13.

Simona then says, "look at Regina", who is on the top of the small slide holding her head in both hands. *Josefina* says she is stressed, and Regina says it was her turn, but they skipped her. After talking a bit more, Bonaventura says something about the girls' hut, and Mònica answers, "Bonaventura, you do not command". *Josefina* says, "do you realize you are bringing up other topics?". Then she tells Bonaventura that he can make proposals, but he cannot decide how the girls organize themselves; they know better what works for them. Bonaventura defends himself, "I only propose ideas" and gives an example asking if this is commanding. After a while, they all leave, saying goodbye. *Josefina* tells the boys they will look for a moment to talk with the other kids; if not today, it will be another day.

Here we see how interiorized rules and order is for some kids who -in a performative way- show their inconvenience bodily if something or someone interrupts what should be done. In this last part, acompas' role is to make sure everyone proposes, but no one has a leading role. Nevertheless, sometimes limits between a proposal and a command are blurred, and kids are aware of it.

Toys: Kids play with toys outside, like trucks (boys mostly), foam swords, branches, and bicycles.

Movement: Kids run and play games based on movement like thieves and police, tag, hide and seek or other invented ones like the beast, one kid pretending to be a beast chasing after to kill the rest, or mortifying tag, a game during which kids run after the rest holding a fake knife. In group games, kids must follow the rules, which are often reminded by acompas, who also ask questions to ensure that everyone is comfortable and safe. Other self-directed games of movement are played using materials like balancing games on the half wheels.

During such activities, conflicts happen at times as well. For example[103], while playing thieves and police outside, a conflict appeared among older kids, Guifré and Damia being the protagonists. It seems like Damia disagreed with specific rules. *Miquel* was accompanying at that time, so he said 'pause' and gathered kids. During the conversation, Guifré was talking the whole time, shouting, and *Miquel* was shouting back, telling him that he must listen to Damia's

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[103] DC: 2019/02/13.

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proposal as well. Damia then said it is unfair and Guifré, with some other kids, told him that it is not compulsory to play. *Miquel* explained that rules change; we decide what they are to all be comfortable with them.

Acompas are aware of the power relations among kids. According to *Miquel*, those on the bottom do not fight, and they cannot fight for them, referring to Damia, who finds it hard to defend himself and his opinion from certain peers. The changing nature of rules should be highlighted. Rules are not something that always exists, before and after us, but something we create ourselves. This collective and creative character of rules making and the notion that rules should serve us and not the contrary promotes autonomy. Last, what is interesting in this case is *Miquel's* difference in resolving the conflict, when instead of reacting in a calm way like the rest of the acompas, he shouts back. That is probably related to his recent entrance into the project, his gender or personality, and something he tries to improve to perform the expected acompa's role.

Dirt: Kids played a lot with dirt, mostly the little ones. They dig and construct out of it and sometimes create mud sculptures. Sometimes, these activities are in terms of symbolic play, as in the following example.

> Xavi joins Ricardo, who has found a bug. He asks the volunteer to see it, and he tells her that he is afraid of it. Ricardo tells him that if it does not attack so, he should not be scared. Ricardo is digging, saying that he will dig so much that he will find a diamond. Xavi wants to use his digging equipment, but Ricardo says he will give it to him when he finishes making the hole deeper, adding that he should also give it to others afterward (DC: 2018/12/03).

In the example above, we may see how Ricardo has learned what is being transmitted by the pedagogical team; to share the common material while setting the necessary time limits when one wants to use them individually. More than this, he functions as a transmitter of such learning.

Writing, Reading, Drawing: Sometimes, kids play with chalks outside either by incorporating their writing, reading, or drawing in a symbolic play (pretending to be teachers and students) or not.

Football: Trèvolis, primarily male and older ones, love football. This is why the collective decided to let them play twice per week under some conditions to resolve conflicts and get female Trèvolis involved in the game. Even this way, conflicts still happen all the time. We will focus on two examples.

The first conflict happened between Guifré and Agustí. Guifré was a player, and Agustí was the referee, marking the score on the ground using his hand. It all happened when *Flor*, accompanying the football match, went up the stairs for a few seconds to check on a boy who started crying.

> Guifré calls Agustí a liar and shitty referee because he had not counted a goal. He then catches Agustí from the hair, and Agustí starts crying. *Flor* arrives at that moment and holds them both. Guifré says that Agustí is the one who has to be accompanied, insulting him constantly. *Flor* tells him, "you are angry, take your time". Guifré leaves crying, goes to the other side and starts shouting at Agustí, repeating the word 'fucker'.
>
> *Flor* then tells them she does not know how to accompany this, and this is why they had asked them not to play football until they think of an efficient way. *Josefina* comes and starts talking to Agustí while *Flor* keeps talking with Guifré, who is still shouting. Mateu and Ignaci keep playing because, according to them, they did not do anything. *Flor* asks them to stop. *Josefina* says that when there is a conflict, the responsibility is of various people. Then she adds that everybody should think about what they could have done differently, and they would talk about it another time. *Josefina* tells Agustí that when this happened, he should have asked for *Flor*'s acompañamiento (DC: 2018/11/13).

The second example happened when *Rosa* was accompanying a match. Before it started, she encouraged Simona, who was around, to play and made sure all knew the rules and agreed on them; she even asked some controversial ones like the goalkeeper change. During the match, *Rosa* intervened twice to help Simona 'Go to help down', 'pass in front instead of pushing'.

> A few minutes later, Bonaventura goes to sit on the bench. He got angry at Ignaci because he had pushed him. *Rosa* goes there and starts coordinating the discussion. Bonaventura says he prefers talking instead of pushing, and Ignaci answers, "it is a football match". "It is", *Rosa* says, but "we can treat each other with respect". Ignaci wants the match to continue, but *Rosa* says, "patience, there is a person that feels bad".

Regina comes at that moment and sits on the other bench next to Simona. *Josefina*, who is on the terrace of the ground floor watching, asks them to pay attention. "I am not in the conflict", says Regina, and Simona says "me neither". "You are", Regina tells Simona, whispering. "He is bothering us all", says Guifré after a while, and the discussion continues (DC: 2018/12/18).

Both in cases of strong conflicts and cases of unrest as described above, a few things may be concluded about the acompas' role:

- Acompas, in general, do not shout back at kids. They instead refer to their feelings and propose to take their time. Most times, they accompany both sides of the conflict with the help of another acompa, if necessary.

- Acompas recognize their lack of experience if they feel like they cannot handle a situation in front of kids; they do not employ their authority to resolve it.

- Acompas are aware of gender roles and -rather than banning- they try to empower female Trèvolis through their participation in the football matches.

- Acompas do not focus on the kids who are primarily involved in the conflict only. They insist on the collective responsibility and respect, demand from the observers to pause their game, and encourage them to reflect on what they should have done differently, just like they do with the main protagonists when they are in a calmer emotional state.

Due to all this focus and importance given by acompas, and as acompas are aware, kids have developed their strategies. When acompas are around and something happens to their peers, either physical or emotional, they all run asking if they feel good, to prove acompas everything is okay and keep playing. What is more, it is interesting that while 'taking care' of their peers, a whole performative series takes place during which they look at the acompas to make sure they have their approval. Therefore, it seems that in some cases, it is not their empathy or collective responsibility that gets developed during conflict resolution, but rather their capacity to develop strategies of escaping the acompas' vigilance and control and keep playing despite the conflicts or unrest taking place.

Nothing: Not only is it okay to do nothing in Trèvol, but it is also positive. Kids are encouraged to get bored so that they have more time to brainstorm and develop their creativity.

Interior

Although kids more often choose the outdoor free play, some of them also play inside, most times the little ones. The activities taking place there are similar to the outdoor ones, with the only difference being that the spaces are supposed to remain quiet, so kids are not allowed to get involved in activities that require much movement and high energy. If this is not possible, acompas suggest and later demand from kids to play outside instead.

Symbolic play: Little kids are the most frequently observed ones to get involved in symbolic play, usually with the help of wooden toys, colors for face painting, and other material available, sited on the mattresses. One often imitates animals like deers, rabbits, cats, and tigers, crawling on fours and making sounds.

Writing, Reading and Drawing: Kids also draw and do crafts inside, sometimes with the help of acompas when it is asked, like in the example that follows. In these cases, the blurred limits between play and curricular learning get even more blurred:

> Nadia asks for *Josefina's* help to put some tape on a paper that she wanted to transform into a book. When they make it, *Josefina* asks her if she is 'satisfied'. Nadia asks what this means and *Josefina* explains it is the "feeling when you achieve something you wanted". She says yes.
>
> Vicente is also there, talking in English; Josefina is translating. He closes a marker with tape and says, "now nobody can open it". Nadia is about to do a cartwheel, but *Josefina* stops her. This is a "quiet space", she says, adding that there is much space outside to do as many as she wants.
>
> Nadia then asks her what some stones are there for. *Josefina* answers in Catalan, and the girls ask her to translate. She says she would speak in Catalan, translate them, and ask them to remind her if she forgot. In the meanwhile, she is taking some photos with her mobile phone. Then *Josefina* helps Vicente to paint his face using the paint in front of the

mirror. … Later, *Josefina* starts writing on the blackboard, asking the two girls to recognize some letters (DC: 2018/11/13).

It is not uncommon for punctual conflicts to happen during such activities. Such an example[104] happened in the big room of the ground floor when *Llora* proposed some little Trèvolis to read them a book of nature with sounds only. As she showed pictures asking kids animals' names in Spanish and Catalan, kids wanted to press the buttons to make sounds. However, Teresa had understood that when all of them are pressed, it stops.

Since the rest pressed them all together, she got annoyed, and *Llora* asked her if she wants to tell them that when they press the buttons at the same time, the sound stops. This is the first act of the conflict. When acompas spot a source of misunderstanding among kids, they first try to make them express what they think verbally or do it themselves to prevent conflicts.

> After a while, Xavi stands up and leaves; he goes to the mattress to lie down. Teresa immediately says, "he got angry". *Llora* asks why and Teresa says it is because Etna has told him not to touch it. *Llora* asks if nobody else did the same; Teresa says no, Etna's only. Then *Llora* asks, "would anybody want to ask Xavi how he feels? ". Teresa and Aurelia say "me", and they immediately stand up and go where he is. He does not want to talk with them, so they leave and continue reading the tale or doing other stuff in the room.

In general, when a conflict arises, acompas ask the kids involved to explain what happened even though they were present, and if a kid feels worse than the rest, like Xavi, they encourage the rest to check on them. Acompas then accompany the specific kid/group of kids until they recover and can get involved in a group conversation to resolve the conflict.

> *Llora* goes to accompany Xavi. She hugs him, and he hit her. She tells him that she is there to help and accompany him. After a while, he is in her hug. They are hugging for a few minutes, and then she talks to him. First, he answers with gestures, then with words.
>
> Girls are now crawling on the floor. *Llora* returns to the carpet with Xavi and tells them that they would like to talk with them. Teresa says they are playing, but *Llora* replies, "I ask you to stop the game for a moment to talk". She then asks Xavi if he wants to tell them himself; he says no with a gesture. *Llora* then says that he asked her to tell them that he was sad indeed, and he explained that he did not like the fact that they told him

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[104] DC: 2018/11/20.

'you did it bad'. Teresa immediately reacts, "no, he did it well". *Llora* continues that he would have preferred it if they explained to him differently what was happening with the buttons. "Listening to you did it bad, hurt him". *Llora* asks Xavi, "Where? In the belly, in the heart?". He nods his head. *Llora* then asks every girl individually if they like it when told that they have done something bad. They all say no, and she says that they prefer others to tell them differently, adding that "there are many ways to tell things". She asks Xavi if he wants to say something, and he says no.

During the central part of the conflict resolution, the group conversation, acompas insist on the importance of the moment, and they usually talk themselves instead of kids at young ages, when they are asked. They focus on how kids felt during the conflict, describing the feeling as much in detail as they can rather than just naming them; this way, little kids can associate if they have experienced the same feeling without knowing it and recognizing it.

Then Teresa runs, takes the book from the table, and gives it to Xavi. She leaves with Aurelia and Etna to continue playing. Fran stays looking at Xavi, who is browsing the book. Teresa then asks her to join, and she also leaves. While Xavi is reading, *Llora* is holding him, caressing him softly on the back. He stands up after a while, goes to the table, leaves the tale, and smiles at *Llora*, who smiles back.

In the end, as we can see from Teresa's action, sometimes kids make a symbolic act of reconciliation and continue with their activities.

Board games: Including trivial pursuit, games for story-telling, and others with letters or comic creation. When playing collective board games, kids must commit themselves not to abandon the game before it ends.

Material: Rooms inside have rich material kids are encouraged to explore and find what they are interested in. These might be perfumes placed in little glass cases, puzzles, big wooden alphabet letters, and colorful stones. Usually, kids who have been in Trèvol for a longer time and have internalized the norms and uses of each material remind them to the rest.

At this point, I should make a few notes derived from our observations during free play:

-        Not all kids involved enjoy their time in Trèvol. Some, like Vicente, avoid peer interactions and do not get incorporated in any group. He, therefore, spends most of his free time playing alone, often complaining that he is bored and wants to leave and even expressing verbally his 'hate' towards Trèvol. This might be explained due to the limited time spent there or his English mother tongue. In any case, not only does he experience Trèvol as a place he is forced to go, but he also tries to escape from it by opening the front door or following the strategy of self-exclusion we saw before to avoid acompas' control. In other words, he gives Trèvol the negative meaning given by many kids and Trèvol's adults to conventional schools. The same goes for Hèctor, who has not been incorporated in any peer group and is usually found to be alone doing nothing, even crying and asking his mother not to leave when she is there. This also goes for kids who have either not finished the adaptation process yet or face difficulties. It seems like kids experience their presence there positively only if they are incorporated in a peer group and therefore have developed a sense of belonging. Otherwise, despite the certain freedom given to them, Trèvol is a place of oppression.

-        Kids are not forced to play in groups or undergo something they do not want to. Instead, they are encouraged to verbally explain when they do not feel comfortable with another kid.

-        Self-directed activities sometimes transform into guided, especially when kids get interested in reading or writing activities during free play and ask for acompas' intervention.

-        If acompas do not know something, they admit it. Instead of making up an answer, they tell kids that they would search for it and give them an answer later.

-        Acompas do not only focus on kids' emotions but their expression as well. It is essential, in other words, that kids learn to express what they feel in words like in the following example:

> They start calling each other ugly and stupid. *Josefina* sits on the floor next to them and asks if they remember what they had talked about. She says that she hears something, but what sees is that they are having fun, so it's contradictory and asks them to express what they feel. Cristina says "joy" and *Josefina* replies that she would like them to try so that she hears something relevant to what she sees (DC: 2019/02/26)

-       Acompas take advantage of that self-directed time to observe kids and their dynamics, sometimes writing down their observations in a notebook.

-       Limits are reminded whenever needed, stressing the importance of kids respecting them:

> *Llora* is talking with some kids because she had found an instrument and scissors in the hut. A blonde boy who is climbing on the tree tells her, "I do not care", and she says he should, because these are objects that they cannot have in the huts, acompas have demanded it, and it is their responsibility not to have them (DC: 2018/11/06).

Such reminders are expressed verbally, while in case a specific limit gets repeatedly transgressed, acompas might use other strategies to stress them as well: "*Llora* sees some boys passing through a dangerous point they should not and places a rope to block the entrance, as a reminder" (DC: 2018/11/27).

Acompas insist on the responsibility to follow limits and intervene when somebody is seen to transgress them. If a kid or group of kids repeats a disrespectful attitude regarding limits, there is a 'consequence'. However, some kids love to escape the acompas' eye and transgress limits. What is more and despite the consequences, kids' creativity always gets ways of escaping them, pretending, for example, that they are just playing instead of constructing when acompas approach them in our case.

> *Josefina* is in the woods with Bonaventura, Iolanda, and three other boys, discussing the new hut they want to construct. *Josefina* is telling them with a calm voice that they cannot use cement; it is material for adults, used when they want to repair things, and not safe for them, so it is not allowed. Bonaventura says it was another boy's idea, and she asks him what we are supposed to do if a mate does something that does not respect an agreement. Bonaventura answers, we tell him.
>
> *Josefina* then explains to them that there are many times they got material they could not get, such as pocket knives; therefore, she cannot trust them now since they do things they are not supposed to when there is no adult around. She adds that from now on, they can construct only when an adult is there and insists that when a mate has an idea that does not respect an agreement, it is their responsibility to tell her/him. Then, she asks what they propose to do with the cement. Bonaventura proposes to put it in a bag; they knock at the kitchen's back door, and a father gives them one.

Rosa comes after her break, and *Josefina* explains to her what happened. *Rosa* talks to them, mentioning that she wants them to be visible because they find it hard to trust in them. Iolanda says she does not like being visible and asks if they have to be all the time or only when constructing. *Josefina* asks if they find it hard with the huts only or with more things. Iolanda answers with the construction and use of the huts, and *Josefina* proposes that they have to be visible in these cases (DC: 2018/11/20).

5.2.7 Excursions[105]

Going out of school and being in contact with nature is vital to the project, and excursions are an important way of achieving it. Little kids (3-6 years old) go on an excursion once every two weeks, while the older ones go once per week. Besides, they also go out on special days like the carnival or events organized by the acompas from time to time.

In terms of excursions, kids are accompanied by both acompas and mapares, who might also play a significant acompas' role such as an ex-mapare with whom kids went would go for birdwatching and nature observations in the natural park every Monday during the last three months of the school year 2019-2019, a part of which is described below. What is more, kids incorporate objects, animals, and learning material derived from their excursions in their daily schedule, from books and worksheets to snakes' skins.

> Cristina with some other kids are observing, touching, and holding an insect. Agnès is crying because her mom is about to leave with her baby sibling. The ex-father who will do the workshop, Lorenzo, is also there reading a book with Cristòfor. Just before leaving, on the door, *Flor* explains who the three adults accompanying today apart from Lorenzo - two acompas and a volunteer- are and lets the kids know that they can talk to them if they need anything.
>
> Every Monday, they do a different route in the park. Today, they would observe birds and reach a sunny open space where they would play ball games. While walking in the forest, Lorenzo stops to ask if they saw a bird. He explains it's a common swift, a bird that never sleeps. A few minutes later, he stops again. He sits on the ground, and the rest sit around him. He explains what ornithology is and asks what we need to become ornithologists. Kids answer; a notebook, binoculars, pencil, rubber, water, wings.. Lorenzo adds that we need the eyes and the ears because we often won't see the birds but hear them instead. He also refers to a man who saw a thousand different birds in his life.

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[105] DC: 2019/03/12, DC: 2018/11/20 & DC: 2019/03/12.

Lorenzo suggests that when we see a bird, we close our eyes and create a photographic memory. Then he explains how to make a list to write the birds observed. The list includes the name, an eye drawing, and an ear drawing. Whenever kids see a bird, Lorenzo and the kid use the binoculars to see what color it is before searching in a book he has. He says we are in a privileged place, in the middle of the mountains and the city, there is shadow and sun, so there are many birds. After a while, Júlia's mom passes by, carrying Júlia's sister on her back.

The group continues into the forest. Kids find a beetle, and Lorenzo gets another book about insects. They all start observing and trying to find it in the book. They can't, so *Margarida* proposes to draw it and look for it later, which they do. Older kids spread around to run and play, and Flor goes for them, reminding the space limits.

After a while, they reach an open space for breakfast. Kids had brought their sandwiches, and together with acompas, they share the fruit. While eating, Lorenzo shows a book his brother made with birds and sounds and explains birds' scientific names. Some older kids keep playing around. Regina asks the volunteer to sit next to her because she was out of the circle. A boy asks *Margarida* if he can eat a croissant; it doesn't have chocolate in it. She answers, "We are trying to eat healthily", but for once, she lets him eat it. Damia has oat cookies, and *Margarida* asks what they are; he says they are healthy.

Flor is gathering pines for the birthday ritual. They later ask all the kids who come for a small closing, and Lorenzo announces that next week they could create an animal refugee in Trèvol. Before he leaves, he says that we can find nature everywhere; even downstairs of our home, there always is a small space of ground where nature is.

After walking and getting a dead lizard that they would observe later, the group reaches a space to play football, and *Flor* reminds the limits. A conflict and a conversation follow, and the group walk back. When some kids walk slowly or stopp to pick up flowers, the acompas ask them to go faster (DC: 2019/05/19).

5.2.8 Tale

Tale time lasts fifteen minutes and is a bridge between the second round of self-directed (free play) or guided activities and lunch. After everyone has tidied up, they may enter either the library or the small room of symbolic play where two different tales are narrated by one acompa each to mixed-aged groups. Kids who do not want to enter at any of them must help prepare the lunch tables, accompanied by another acompa and the mapares who cook the certain day[106].

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[106] It should be mentioned that in March 2019, when the project moved from Fosc due to the arson, the tale time changed and the 'free tale' option was added, according to which kids could read a book on their own as well, an option usually chosen by the older trèvolis.

The tales are usually chosen in the morning, borrowed by acompas from the public library, and target different age groups. After a discussion, acompas decide if they are to be read by them or are relatively 'autonomous', meaning that they can be left somewhere, and kids may read them on their own. Among this 'autonomous' material, there is much related to sexuality, like a magazine created by a nudist community in Catalonia, a book with various naked bodies of all shapes and sizes, or animals' sexual life. What is more, in the letters' room, there is a small piece of furniture hosting books that older kids are interested in, divided into two categories: those currently reading and novelties.

There is also much material related to pedagogy in the library, like documents about emotional education or even historical ones about anarchist education in Spain. Moreover, there are books in different languages, including Arabic, although none of the kids speak it, as acompas try to have a diverse material in cultural terms.

We will now look closer at two examples of tale time.

Example 1: Tropical Jungle[107]

> *Rosa* tells everyone to make a row like always and sit on the floor in front of her. Bonaventura is holding a weird white object. *Rosa* tells him, "I ask you to leave your doll". "It is not a doll; it's a terrifying doll", he says. While reading, she stops at some points and asks questions. A little girl asks what a word is, and *Rosa* tells her that if she wants to speak, she has to raise her hand, and in the end, she would have time to do so. Some kids want to see the pictures as well, but *Rosa* reads the whole story first. Then she shows the pictures. Mafalda tries to kiss Josep, who is sitting next to her. He avoids her, saying, 'I do not like it'.

There are some limits during tale time:

- Everybody sits in a row.

- It is important being concentrated in the story and not distracting their attention or the attention of the rest.

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[107] DC: 2018/11/06.

\-   Kids may ask questions and see pictures at the end of the narration only. This way, they are all able to look at the book and concentration is maintained.

Limits might slightly change depending on the acompa and the space where the tale takes place. Also, the consensus is something acompas put much focus on. Kids are highly encouraged to say 'no' to things they do not like as an essential protection measure for any potential violence or other abuses both among kids in Trèvol and elsewhere.

> The book *Rosa* reads is 'Tropical Jungle'. The story is about some machines which destroyed the forest and therefore the natural habitat of the animals. She asks kids a series of questions such as: who uses the machines? Animals? Bonaventura says no, humans.

Books are carefully chosen so that they do not transmit messages contrary to Trèvol's values. Most times, they hold strong political messages like the one described above, while other times, the focus might be on emotions, like the example that follows. In any case, acompas discuss the meaning and draw kids' attention to it using questions, avoiding indoctrinating them with their opinion and political view.

Example 2: The Color Monster[108]

> *Rosa* finds some threads and asks the kids to sit on the floor in a line until she returns. Today's tale is 'the color monster'. *Rosa* says some of them already know it, but they will first read it and talk about it. Blai asks why and she answers, "Because I get distracted".
>
> The tale is about a monster that woke up one day with its feelings mixed. While *Rosa* reads each feeling, she passes one colored thread to the kid next to her, passed from kid to kid. Yellow for happiness, blue for sadness. Kids pass it slowly, and she intervenes, "I demand you that it be quick". Red for rage. "Do not pass it by your face because it generated conflicts", says *Rosa* as some kids started commenting on it. Green for calm..
>
> Then *Rosa* says that when you have feelings in order, they work better. In the end, the monster was left with the color pink. *Rosa* asks what they think had happened. Blai thinks that it got everything in order, but pink was still wandering; it was love. *Rosa* asks if it has ever happened to them, having their feelings disordered. Blai once wanted to cry, although nothing bad had happened to him. Bonaventura is playing, and *Rosa* intervenes.

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[108] DC: 2018/11/13.

"Do you think this is a way to respect your mate? He is sharing something super important, and you are playing. I am getting angry".

Rosa asks if somebody wants to share anything else. Mafalda says "that I like being with my dad". Some kids comment that this is happiness, but her face looks sad. *Rosa* asks if what she wants to say is that she misses him, and Mafalda nods yes. Simona tries to talk, but *Rosa* tells her to wait because Mafalda is about to cry, and there are more people here. Simona gets angry, saying it is her turn. Bonaventura comments, "*Rosa*, is this a tale or a conflict?" Blai is crying due to something Regina had told him, and Regina asks sorry.

It is not unusual that kids show disrespectful behaviors or interrupt fellow trèvolis. Similarly, acompas focus on kids' emotions in case of conflicts; they focus on their own emotions when something inappropriate happens, explaining what this provokes to them. At the same time, they try to create spaces of listening and empathy, reminding kids how important they are.

Other books used for tale time were gender-focused, like the mermaid's tale or concerning issues like discrimination due to physical characteristics, the fear of darkness, poop, etc. Sometimes, the activity is more interactive, creative, and participative, like creating an unwritten story or choosing what happens next.

Regardless of the book, there are certain aspects upon which acompas insist and which may reveal us essential dimensions of the pedagogical practice[109]:

- Kids cannot sit anywhere; they must sit in a row. If they resist and transgress this limit, acompas develop strategies of indirect punishment such as ignoring their presence while reading or showing pictures from the book.

- Kids must raise their hands if they have any questions or comments. Acompas announce the order in which kids would speak in advance, depending on the raised hands.

- Tales are read in Catalan, but acompas remind that kids may ask for words they do not know.

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[109] DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2019/15/01 & DC: 2019/02/05.

-        If kids do not concentrate on the tale due to peers, acompas ask them to change place so that they are not close to them, which is an indirect form of 'punishment'.

-        When kids' behavior is disrespectful, acompas say they do not like the way they speak or focus on the emotions it generates them. At the same time, if kids show a behavior valued by the pedagogical project, such as expressing any injustice towards fellow trèvolis, acompas 'praise' them by thanking them.

-        Acompas are so consistent on the process structure that kids ask for explanations whenever it changes a bit, such as the day an acompa was showing pictures from the book while reading it when a girl asked why she does not show them in the end.

5.2.9 Fruit and lunchtime

Although spontaneous, informal conversations take place the whole day, there are a few time zones destined for social interaction: fruit and lunchtime:

Fruit time[110]

Young kids usually eat the fruit in the big room, accompanied by two acompas. It is prepared, cut into pieces, and served in big plates put in the middle by the family cooking for the day. Older kids gather outside at the benches or next to them. They may choose between sandwich and fruit, as it was decided two years ago by the collective. This decision was partly made due to a mapare's proposal; after a period of all kids eating in the same room, there was difficulty preparing much fruit. Also, acompas thought that eating outside and then entering again for the activities would be more effective in concentrating.

Fruit time functions as an important meeting providing a space for social interaction, bonding, and sharing. The role of acompas during this time is to accompany kids and participate in the social interactions taking place, making sure there is a peaceful, quiet, and respectful

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[110] DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/18, DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/11/27 & DC: 2018/12/11.

environment that facilitates such interactions. Therefore, although kids may play after eating, they are encouraged to play something that requires controlled energy during this time.

Lunch[111]

Depending on their appetite and friends, kids choose to eat lunch either at the first or the second turn. Kids who wait to enter must wash their hands and make a queue while the rest go outside. When they forget to do so, either acompas or peers remind them, normally the ones who have embodied Trèvol's norms like Cristina and Júlia. Acompas and mapares are the only individuals permitted to skip the queue.

When a kid serves, another enters after getting their towel, a plate, glass, and spoon from the corridor's furniture. In the room, kids serve themselves, and an acompa sits next to the food if somebody needs help or does not know what the food is. The acompa reminds the limits and makes sure kids respect the turns and go outside to play, and the big room used as the living room remains calm and quiet. Kids may talk but not shout; what is usually asked from them during lunchtime is a 'relaxed' and not a 'hurry' attitude. If kid's attitude continues to be like this, they are asked to go outside until prepared to enter.

Kids then sit on one of the shared tables with a bottle of water and vases. After they eat both dishes, they brush their teeth in the bathroom, where there is one toothbrush for each. There is toothpaste as well but only used by and for acompas. After everyone has eaten, the mapares clean up the living room and the kitchen and wash the dishes.

It should be mentioned that, although usually forgotten, the food of the day is supposed to be written by kids on the small blackboard hung from the kitchen's door, and the family cooking also joins kids and acompas during lunchtime. Food is vegetarian, integral, and organic, it changes every day, and there is always a gluten-free option. Although this is a decision to offer a more inclusive diet, it functions as a characteristic of the school culture.

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[111] DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/18, DC: 2019/03/04 & DC: 2018/11/13.

Besides, there is always a first and second dish. Kids must try everything, at least a bit, and serve themselves the amount of food they can consume. If a kid does not finish it, acompas write it down in the notebook and serve her/him themselves the next day. This way, kids are thought to would be able to self-regulate in the long term.

> A girl has left many chickpeas on her plate, so *Llora* tells her, "I ask you to make an effort to eat a little more". She says no, and *Llora* answers, "do you remember that in Trèvol, we always ask you to serve the amount you think you are gonna eat? I ask you to make an effort so that we will not throw away so much food" (DC: 2018/11/06).

When prepared food is left, it is usually shared among the acompas to take home, and mapares who finish late from work are also invited to have lunch in Trèvol's kitchen. On Tuesdays, it usually is couscous or pasta with vegetables or legumes and salad, while sometimes integral pasta is served with a tomato sauce made of mushrooms trèvolis gather in their excursions.

Conversations during lunchtime are spontaneous and varied according to kids' interests and circumstances. It may be anything, from family matters, birthdays, vacations to Harry Potter, Star Wars, and football. Although older kids are more oriented to small groups, they get more participative at younger ages. When mapares are present, they usually bring up topics or experiences that kids have in common.

Sometimes conversations include kids' and their families' perceptions of Trèvol, like the time Mònica, Simona, Cristina, and Regina talked about two boys who were 'a nightmare' and their sadness because Mònica would leave the school after her parents' decision. When she was asked why, she said it is because her parents believe she doesn't learn much here, a fact with which she agreed, while another girl said that they do not learn because they don't ask acompas to teach them.

If kids bring up a topic related to sexuality, acompas take advantage and talk about it, trying to demystify, normalize and attribute a positive meaning to it in an attempt to 'untabooing' it. The various forms of sexuality and love are also underlined, like homosexuality or polyamory.

Aleix proposes to play the game 'whoever speaks, fucks'. *Josefina* immediately speaks and explains she did so because that is a good thing, "to fuck, to have sex". Simona shows her with the finger and says "you said", "sex" repeats *Josefina* and talks about the many ways of fucking existing. Blai says his parents never had sex or fucked, and Simona asks how he was born, then telling him he will also have a girlfriend or boyfriend. *Rosa* adds "or many" (DC: 2018/12/18).

What is more, topics related to the broader political context sometimes come up by kids during their conversations, such as independentism:

Regina is explaining why she does not like Spain and prefers Catalonia. Ignaci says he doesn't care about Catalonia because he is from Argentina, but he cares about his house; of course, he does not want something bad to happen. Kids then start talking about Rajoy[112], making fun of him (DC: 2019/01/15).

Waiting for lunch is a demanding moment; kids must be patient, quiet, and respect the turns. Acompas at that time are either in the dining room or accompanying outside. Therefore, conflicts may arise when kids do not respect the rules. Sometimes, the problem is resolved if an acompa happens to pass by or the affected kid calls an acompa to intervene. The latest happens less, even though acompas encourage kids to do so. In any case, helping kids resolve conflicts and reach an agreement is one of the main tasks acompas have, who put much focus and energy on it as, according to them, even the most minor things may create more significant conflicts if not resolved.

Other cases are more complicated, and acompas need to do more than remind kids of the rules. First, as with all conflicts, acompas try to see if it can be resolved directly and, if not, they accompany either one or both kids/groups of kids, depending on the case. After talking separately, they reunite the kids involved in the conflict to resolve it. Acompas who function as mediators make sure that kids have understood the others' perception and feelings, they express themselves, they take responsibility for their actions, and that everybody reaches an agreement. Nevertheless, as kids know the importance of conflicts for acompas, there are many times they agree in a performative way. In other words, kids may not be interested in understanding and reaching an agreement but do so to escape acompas' vigilance and control.

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[112] Prime Minister of Spain from 2011 to 2018.

5.2.10 Cleaning[113]

Contrary to most schools, cleaning is not a task of professionals in Trèvol where acompas and kids tidy up and clean the rooms used themselves.

Tidy up: Tidying up every time material is used is an individual and essential in Trèvol, ritualized with the help of a musical instrument as seen before. Therefore, acompas remind it every time it is not done, using expressions like 'tidy up please', 'I demand everyone to tidy up' or 'I feel very uncomfortable that there is so much material around'. Such reminders are used the number of times needed until everything is tidied up, and acompas usually thank kids who do so. Trèvolis are responsible for the material they used themselves and can help their peers tidy up theirs upon will. Although imposed on kids by acompas, tidying up is not thought of as a rule without sense, as acompas often explain why they should do it rationally: "A boy explains he was tidying up, but he got tired. *Llora* insists that it is their responsibility; to be able to use and enjoy the space, they also have to tidy up, they have to make an effort" (DC: 2018/11/27).

While tidying up, due to the rush, there are usually conflicts provoked by accidents taking place among little kids. One of these cases was when Demetri fell due to Xavi. When that happened, *Flor* went after Demetri and *Llora* stayed to accompany Xavi[114].

> Xavi gets rolled in the curtain in the bathroom, saying it was a 'fight'. *Llora* says, "it was a fight for you" and asks him if he feels "embarrassment". Mateu speaks to Xavi at that point, but *Llora* says, "one moment, it is a delicate moment for Xavi, I am accompanying him".
>
> Outside, Demetri is crying on the main door shouting the name of his father. He then moves to the railing next to the door and keeps shouting. *Flor* is sitting behind him, touching him softly on the back. … Twenty minutes later, Demetri gets tired; Flor says, "I have prepared colors to paint your emotion", and they enter. He makes an orange painting for his father.

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[113] DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2019/01/15, DC: 2019/01/29 & DC: 2019/02/05.
[114] DC: 2019/02/05.

In this case, two different acompas stayed with kids. When the feeling is controlled like the case of Xavi, acompas try to converse with kids, make them aware of their feelings and explain to them that their reality is not the truth; what they think has happened does not necessarily coincide with what the other side of the conflict thinks. On the contrary, Demetri reacted in a more intense way shouting and crying. In this case, acompas do not communicate verbally until the rage has calmed down and can talk about what happened. They instead use touch and art to facilitate the process.

Collective cleaning: After lunch, all kids do general cleaning for about half an hour and are divided into groups with one acompa each. Groups can be seen in the large poster on the corridor with the kids' and acompas' names and photos. The cleaning materials are natural; vinegar, handmade soap, and water. Acompas are there to guide, help and, above all, make sure that everybody contributes to the cleaning tasks. The chores kids need to do are distributed according to their age. The last task is to mop the floor and stairs, and everybody has to leave after everybody has finished with their chores. Despite the material around, kids are not allowed to explore at that time; they only have to focus on their cleaning tasks. When lunchtime is delayed, the family cooking cleans instead of kids, a pleasant fact for kids, most of whom (especially in the case of the older ones) view cleaning as an unpleasant responsibility they must assume despite their zero will.

> Acompas are explaining that there is a change in the cleaning process.. Rosa is standing, talking to a group of four kids who are sitting on the stairs. She tells them there are cards with the things we have to do. .. A boy says that cards must be the same "it is not fair to give the best ones to the trèvolis you like most". "And if its you? What do we do then?", asks Rosa. The boy does not answer but seems to be thinking. Rosa then asks who can read the cards and who needs help. Two of them can and two cannot, to whom she explains their cards. Another boy asks if they would do it "their whole life", and the acompa answers "until you interiorize it and it functions well" (DC: 2018/12/03).

It should be mentioned that in the past families would do the general cleaning. Due to difficulties faced when this was transformed into a kids' responsibility, acompas decided to create cards to share the tasks at the end of the first quarter. This decision was made due to cleaning's super directive character. As a result, acompas thought of the cards as a strategy to reduce the

directivity and boost kids' will by avoiding saying where they should be and hoping that kids would do what should be done in an 'autonomous' way.

The goal is that kids interiorize what needs to be done during cleaning time without being told what to do. This way, prepared environment and material change a guided activity into a self-directed by transferring the control and authority from acompas to the environment and material itself.

5.2.11 Closing[115]

Closing is when everyone gets together at the benches to say goodbye after a collective activity, most times proposed by the acompas. Many kids sit in an acompa's hug or hugged with each other in case they are siblings. Most times, kids who have spent many years in Trèvol participate much, while the newcomers observe in the beginning until they feel confident to take part. After the activity, kids and acompas say goodbye to each other, and Trèvol's main door is open for mapares to enter. There follows a list of the most common activities.

Songs: Camp-like songs like the jungle song, a few monkeys having an assembly, and the president promising to increase the peanuts or another about a sheep that does not come out of its cave. Sometimes an acompa records the song with their phone, and then they listen to it together in the end.

Dances: Most times, dances are accompanied by a song too. One of them is about a cowboy.

Games: The most common one is the ring. A kid passes from everyone holding a ring in their hands, and then they would guess where the ring was left.

Nothing: When there is no time left, kids are gathered and scream Trèvol's outcry or sing Trèvol's invented short song.

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[115] DC: 2018/11/06, DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/12/04, DC: 2018/12/11, DC: 2018/12/18, DC: 2019/01/08, DC: 2019/01/29, DC: 2019/02/05, DC: 2019/02/20 & DC: 2019/03/12.

In case something that happened or has not been announced needs to be communicated by acompas or peers, closing is the time, as in the example that follows. Also, rules and limits still apply during this time, which might serve as a moment to remind them, and kids who are not integrated and tend to get self-excluded sometimes do not participate.

> *Llora* wants to talk about the dog event. Agnès had fallen on Anabel in the morning, who bit her a bit on the face. Some kids are noisy, so *Llora* asks if they are prepared for being here. After telling them that if she repeats that she is annoyed, she will ask them to sit elsewhere, she finally separates them. She then asks kids who witnessed the instance to tell a few things about what happened and how they felt if they want to. After telling a little kid to be quiet, Cristina explains what she had seen, and *Rosa* asks her how she felt. She answers "fear" because she thought the dog would bite her too.
>
> Some kids then narrate stories about their pets. Regina says her cats also bite, but they do it to play. In that case, she thinks Anabel did it for self-defense. Ricardo proposes that next time they should pay attention to Agnès so that she does not fall again, and *Josefina* agrees, saying that he proposes "that we take care of her tomorrow" thanking him for his proposal and adding that she would keep it in mind. *Miquel* adds that while they were in the bathroom, many kids were coming asking what happened and that it is more important to take care of her instead of satisfying our curiosity. While speaking, he looks at *Josefina* at times, who agrees with gestures and nods her head. A girl intervenes to say something about Júlia's birthday ritual, and *Josefina* reminds her it is not what they are talking about now. Agustí moves to the benches, and Aurelia goes to tell him to come back. *Llora* says she already told him, and there is no need; this is something acompas do; it is not her responsibility.

5.3 Mapares Profiles[116]

Parents choosing the project for their kids are diverse in many levels, such as their place of origin, cultural capital, social class, political ideas, life, and school experiences, etc. Despite their differences, all mapares share certain aspects regarding their lifestyle; they share a common culture. While referring to a trèvoli's mother shop with biological products, an acompa commented that among people interested in such education, there is a "pattern" that a mother characterized as a shared "subculture" with slight differences among them, such as the positioning regarding vaccines, but with the centrality of childhood uniting them all.

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[116] DC: 2018/11/18, DC: 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, DC': 2018/06/10, IC1, IC2, IC3, IC4 & IC5.

Also, even though Trèvol is open to everyone, not everyone considers opting for it. Vulnerable social groups cannot be seen there. Many families have one or both foreign parents, but they mostly come from European countries like France, Italy, Portugal, and England. During 2018-2019, only three cases were coming from Latin America (Chile, Mexico, and Argentina), and they were all related to the academic or business field.

According to a mother, the diversity among mapares is high and rare in a project of libertarian education. The specific diversity is interpreted as something positive and enriching.

> ..people who were squatters, people who had no relation to squatting, unschoolers who were sure they would never go to school, people related to the arts, people practicing alternative therapies. .. I have never met in my life such a diverse group as in Trèvol. And that attracts and motivates me (IC2).

However, let's focus on this seemingly diverse collective. Four of the five parents interviewed had completed high studies, and none of them was a salaried employee with low income. Besides, most have experimented a lot in the professional and academic fields, some of them in libertarian education too. Also, many implicate themselves in farming works, like a pharmaceutics university teacher who also does milk checks on farms or the father who works at his orchard with the tools of bio-construction.

Out of the five interviewed pamares, four have completed university studies, three of whom hold a master´s degree and all of whom a series of seminars and trainings, while one of them, the father working in bio-construction had completed primary education only[117].

Their monthly income varies, from 500 to 3000 euros per month. Some families own, rent, or even squat houses from 20 to 190 square meters regarding their housing. Four out of five live in urban, expensive areas of Barcelona. Those renting chose their place of living according to the educational project they were involved in or will enter. Since most families live far away and in various parts of the city, it is not uncommon that they share transportation among them.

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[117] However, it should be mentioned that his partner has completed secondary education and professional training in cinema studies, while she works as a camera operator.

It could be said that despite their diverse economic and professional profiles, all parents hold 'liquid' professional identities, with a significant attraction or even involvement to non-formal learning and neo-rural activities.

Personal educational experiences vary as well, both in their institutional nature (public, private, publicly-funded private) and their perception of their education, sometimes positive and other negative.

Although not related in all cases, sometimes, their personal negative educational experiences lead them in their decision of choosing Trèvol. Having lived strict, oppressing schooling, they knew what they did not want, as the following example of a mother who studied in elitist, private schools.

> I remember when I was eleven years old, looking out the window and telling myself "my children are not going to live this.. they won't spend their childhood bored, looking out of a window".. I wasn't sure what I was going to do but I knew what I didn't want (IC2).

Therefore, we could say that although pamares' social class and cultural capital varies, there is no family with two working-class parents, while their cultural capital probably functions as motivation and entrance to the educational project as well.

Pamares' religion varies too, although there is almost no religious family apart from a Hebrew father; most parents are either atheist/agnostic or spiritual, practicing spiritual naturalism.

Last, despite its history, acompas' political activity, and Trèvol's institutional nature, families are not accepted or rejected based on politics. Instead, they are informed from the beginning of all details and values that mark the project and must agree.

As a result, and partly due to the above, the initial interview functions as a filter, and all parents are leftist, or leftist-friendly at least, either politically active in collectives or political parties or inactive, some of them independentists and few anarchists. In terms of this interview, questions

might be 'why don't you agree with the public school system?' or 'are you willing to take the risks of entering an illegal school in an illegal squat?'.

5.3.1 Birth and upbringing[118]

Most families have given birth at home, and all of them have thought about doing so. Among their primary inspirations are books like Michel Odent's and friends who have experienced home birth before. The reasons that may lead them to this decision are, among else, anti-hospital feelings and the lack of respect attributed to such experiences, along with the need to live the bodily experience and feel free, comfortable, surrounded by familiar faces; in other words, at home. 'Instinct' and 'nature' are two keywords when referring to the raising process. In some cases, the specific decision is taken after reading something relevant, which usually leads to searching for a midwife who can assist it. In other cases, friends might influence the decision for families more than literature. Although families choosing home birth are against modern medicine, they still depend on its security, which is sometimes a key point for their decision.

In case birth was given in other European countries, like Austria in one of the interviewed, it is not uncommon to take place in the hospital due to the opportunity of home-like births it gives, with the minimum presence of an expert. Rural hospitals are also an option for some families who have first come across home birth through their involvement in pregnancy groups, while, when parents disagree on the topic of home birth, an agreement is reached like conducting it with a presence of a (male) professional gynecologist. These birth-related choices might also bring many conflicts with family members, especially kids' grandparents and especially in cases they work in medical professions, due to the risks involved.

Regarding the first years of upbringing, families in Trèvol have followed what could be generally described as 'crianza con apego' or 'crianza natural' (attachment or natural parenting). Among the most common practices are co-sleeping, breast feeding over a long period, and babywearing. Anti-vaccination is also very common but more controversial than the rest. Although they have all read and talked much about it, they have followed different paths according to their instincts

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[118] IC1, IC2, IC3, IC4 & IC5.

and nature's signs. Besides, fears and insecurities derive primarily due to the non-conventional character of their practices and subsequent judgments. In some cases, information that can be found on the Internet is proved helpful, like the website of 'Crianza Natural'[119], for example, or youtube videos of home births.

All in all, two things seem to be more important and decisive in the upbringing choices of mapares: a) information (found on books and the Internet mostly) and b) social networks; friends who have had similar experiences and can provide with support. What is more, these people sometimes replace the role of the 'family' in the traditional sense.

Sometimes, parents read literature that makes no sense to them first, therefore getting an anti-example, something they want to oppose. Pamares are aware of their dispositions obtained from their education and try to fight them.

In general terms, both the focus on instinct or nature and the comparisons to the animal world are frequent and decisive for the participants' imaginary. To them, maternity is an intense, life-changing experience that "awakens" them and brings them back to their roots, reminding them that we are mammals.

It should also be mentioned that upbringing plays a vital role for all participants according to whom schooling is one aspect or its extension; everything is upbringing, and everything is education. As a mother characteristically mentions, "Trèvol is like giving birth at home because it is my home.. and of all the people who are there" (IC4). Also, the focus on upbringing is an aspect of feminism as mothers who participate in Trèvol feel empowered by their kids' upbringing, which gives meaning to theirs. According to the same mother: "Feminist is someone who takes care of herself as a woman and does what she needs.. it may be working like crazy all day long delegating the care of her children, or the opposite" (IC4).

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[119] https://www.crianzanatural.com/

Figure 16: From rebellious mothers, free daughters – Poster at a Trèvol's family house

Source: Personal photographic collection

During the later early childhood years, families follow similar upbringing practices as well in terms of which they all opt for healthy, organic alimentation and alternative education. In any case, every single choice is meant to focus on kids' needs and open to their intervention.

5.3.2 Support networks[120]

If relatives have had similar experiences, alternative education as a choice is less problematic, like the case of a mother whose mother was raised in a kibbutz in Israel. If not, the choice is supported during early childhood only, when play is valued more and official curricular learning is not highly important, while later doubts and fears are created and shared regarding kids' adaptation to the public school system.

I should mention that, although relatives disagree with the families' choices most times, mainly due to the so-called generation gap and their conventional lifestyles, they usually live far away and are incapable of intervening in kids' upbringing and education. Out of the five people interviewed, only one had first-degree relatives living in the same city. Friends replace the

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[120] IC1, IC2, IC3, IC4 & IC5.

unavoidable absence of close relatives. Not only do they support the families' choices but they also form a constructed, expanded family sometimes. The group of people who opt for this upbringing and education is so specific, and the demands their choices bring so many that they form closed, culturally similar social networks. As a mother mentions:

> It is like a ghetto... some people would never make the sacrifice that we do in terms of education... but in general, the profile of friends is quite homogeneous. My family disagrees, and they suffer; for example, they have suffered child-birth. His family is respectful, they do not agree, but they do not get involved either, and my family and I have had more conflicts regarding upbringing, television they may watch when we visit them, sweets they eat, and they allow them everything.. (IC4).

All in all, although conflicts are frequently caused among pamares and family members, this is not the case for friends who all support both upbringing and educational family choices due to affinity. Therefore, instead of facing the family conventionally, parents in Trèvol view it in its expanded form. Neighbors and friends are potential family members, and this is what happens among the collective too. Rather than a simple group of parents, they function as an expanded family, supporting each other in various ways and sometimes filling the gap of relatives' absence. For these support networks to exist, technology is central since mapares communicate through a WhatsApp group mostly.

> You are constructing an alternative infrastructure, learning a lot because being a mother or a father is not easy.. a friendly environment helps you overcome many obstacles that could have been large and seem small .. the idea of leaving the child somewhere and not even thinking about it does not exist here.. some people can give more time, others cannot. However, they will compensate in other ways; more or less, everyone contributes as much as possible (IC2).

Therefore, the organization among families is not only restricted to the assemblies and committees. They also function as a support network, in and out of Trèvol contexts, in practical tasks like transportation and caring. This is being built in time and is a learning process for all ages in Trèvol, which can especially prove its potential in emergency cases like the arson of Foc, where quick problem resolution is required and which, at the same time, facilitate community building.

At first, I felt there was a lack of cohesion, that there was much work to do, many decisions to make, and I did not feel the strength.. But then it changed, suddenly we were all up for it, and it was very nice, a bomb of love, appreciation, and recognition (IC4).

5.4 Pamares go to school

Gender is something that Trèvol has much in mind, therefore trying to employ an inclusive language, using 'mapares' or 'pamares' instead of parents, for example. Like all similar educational projects, pamares' involvement in the project is high and expected. According to a mother, it is a project that requires much involvement as the goal is to make bonds among all families so that children experience it is as an expansion of the family. Although not all families fulfill these obligations, the collective's members try to look at each one's reality and possibilities of participation. Therefore, it is essential to understand the vital role, presence, and involvement of mapares before we explore their profiles.

5.4.1 Before Trèvol and decision-making

Most kids have been to parenting groups [grupos de crianza] before entering Trèvol, and some have also been to kindergartens or other projects of free education. Although all parents are against conventional public education, not all of them are generally against public education. Therefore, many kids have had previous experiences in public kindergartens, which provide families with a shared space and follow child-centered pedagogies focusing on play, respecting kids' paces.

Besides, parenting groups are common among Trèvol's parents who either entered an already formed one or created themselves. I should highlight that many Trèvol families already knew each other from these groups. Families find out about them mainly through friends, pregnancy groups, and the Internet and, similarly with Trèvol, these groups sometimes function as a family and support network, especially important for foreign families: "When we arrived it was like our family, because we needed a support network, to ask someone something and hang out" (IC5).

Last, some families have participated in one or more free education projects for little kids in the past, mainly with Waldorf and mixed pedagogies, or even communitarian education in some cases, both in Catalonia and abroad.

> Last year we spent six months in Mexico where he went to three community schools.. children there are used to taking care of themselves.. we only saw groups of children in the mornings and Demetri being there.. he was educated by the other children.. then he would come back with crabs and fish and stones and papayas (IC3).

One needs to follow a series of actions to enter Trèvol: first, they usually go to the project's 'open doors' [puertas abiertas] or a self-organized event, express their interest, read the pedagogical project and do an interview. Therefore, interested families get in contact by visiting the project and talking to the acompas through the committee of new families or during the project's public presentation in one of its self-organized events. During the whole process, interested families are guided and accompanied by the committee of new families.

But what makes families choose Trèvol? In some cases, negative school experiences might lead parents to rethink education and opt for alternatives. Besides, motivation is linked to Trèvol's key elements, which are attributed a positive value. Some of them coincide with other free pedagogical projects, while others make Trèvol unique, according to parents. Regarding pedagogy, parents value respecting kids' interests, needs, and different learning paces, foresting of creativity and imagination, free movement, and absence of punishments or competitive attitudes.

In addition, what is important to them are the project's values, the absence of gender stereotypes, and its political, collective nature aiming to social transformation and based on self-organization. According to a mother, this "political vein" is why one may find like-minded people and why collective vision and bonds prevail among families. Such aspects, according to her, along with the effort of inclusion, are often missing from other projects of similar pedagogies where individual attitudes are met and instead remind of companies offering services. Some features make the project distinctive, even though the result might not be so differentiated due to the social context, a fact that the collective is aware of:

> Thinking collectively, a sense of community, and above all, social transformation.. these are values in which I believe and which I want to promote.. also the effort to make this something popular, and not elitist.. although it is already elitist since you have to pay for it.. we face the same individualistic culture that is in society.. so it is not so much a matter of results, but of focus, way of understanding the world (IC4).

Last, choosing the specific project is also influenced by practical issues such as low fees compared to similar projects and shared transportation with neighbors attending Trèvol.

When asked regarding their hopes, interviewed parents gave answers that focus both on individual and social aspects. They hope that their kids develop their self-perception, self-sufficiency, self-regulation, and assertiveness. Such individual development is thought to lead to the development of collective aspects as well like social responsibility, critical spirit, and recovery of lost values that, according to a mother, include "respect for nature and life, own and of others, and a more communal feeling, to be able to take into account beyond the individual" (IC4). Last, hopes also have to do with alternative ways of relating to others, based on active listening and emotions, something missing in many grassroots projects.

5.4.2 Separation from kids[121]

There are kids in Trèvol who have never been separated from their family before for such a long time. In line with attachment parenting most follow, this adaptation process is considered necessary so that kids do not experience any kind of violence. According to an acompa, the adaptation period usually lasts between one and two months, depending on the case. However, it is not as easy as it may sound; it rather demands lots of energy from acompas, stressing power relations between them and the mapares and sometimes causing conflicts.

Some factors influence the adaptation process, like the frequency of attending Trèvol and the parents' attitude. On the one hand, the more a kid goes, the easier the adaptation gets. On the other hand, when kids express their emotions shouting and crying upon separation, parents need

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[121] DC: 2018/11/18, 2018/11/27, DC: 2018/12/04, 2019/01/29, DC: 2019/02/13 & IC4.

to manage it by explaining why they must leave instead of attributing a negative meaning, asking the kids not to cry.

As most participants mention, being a parent and an acompa are two realities way too different, which is why acompas would usually complain about parents and vice versa. According to an acompa, "it is complicated with adults". A mother who has worked as an acompa commented that neutrality and objectivity are easier to maintain in this role due to the tools given in a professional context that facilitate self-control.

Most times, separation from parents is a problem for new kids in Trèvol, although kids may face difficulties after the official adaptation process has finished as well. Like most processes in Trèvol, separation is also ritualized and structured since the adult members follow specific steps.

We will now look at an example when kids had already been at Trèvol for four days with their parents present, so it was time that they left for a while. Kids are informed since the beginning of the day that they would need to stay alone. Later, when the time comes for their parents to leave, even if kids are playing or are busy with other things, acompas let them know that it is time to say goodbye and ask them to go with them. If parents need to work, acompas explain to kids why they must leave. Otherwise, they are more flexible with them staying and ask how kids feel about them leaving. After parents leave, acompas inform kids about the activities that follow until their arrival.

> *Llora* asks Joana if she wants her mom to leave for a while, and they agree to leave and come back a little earlier than closing. They go to tell her in the kitchen and say goodbye. Then *Llora* explains to Joana that now they would play, eat fruit, go to the color room to play, and then mom is coming.
>
> Agnès is in the corridor crying because she does not want her dad to leave. *Llora* tells her that sometimes, parents stay a bit more when it is too hard to say goodbye and asks her if she would like him to stay for a while. She says yes, until lunchtime, but *Llora* answers that this is not possible because he works and asks him to stay two minutes instead. He agrees, and *Llora* tells Agnès that this is 'for a while'.

Sometimes, like the case of Joana, separation is easy, while for others, it is a painful process for both kids and parents with much shouting and crying involved. During the moment of separation, and after everything has been explained, acompas acompañan kids' emotions directly and mainly through touch, hugging, cuddling, caressing their backs, and kissing their foreheads.

One of the most challenging cases in terms of separation during the school year 2018-2019 was Hortènsia and her mom, Anaís. There were many times the girl was crying and shouting, almost without voice left. Although acompas tried to accompany her, it normally proved to be a difficult task.

> *Llora* tells her to come with her to the color room since she is angry and needs to go, but Hortènsia says she only wants her mom. *Llora* insists that her mom needs to leave because her car is not parked well, and this does not depend on her; it is not her decision to make.
>
> A few minutes later, Hortènsia's mom goes to the nearby park *Miquel* is, crying. *Miquel* hugs her. She says that Hortènsia does not want to go to Trèvol, and she forces her. Although the girl likes Trèvol, she wants to be with her, and it is always getting harder to convince her to go. *Miquel* then proposes her some therapies and techniques like reiki. After she leaves, *Miquel* comments that Anaís needs to understand that she has to leave for herself.

Based on Hortènsia's example, we could say that separation needs to be facilitated by adults who must all follow the same line; acompas agree that this is much more difficult when separation is a more complex process for the mother than the daughter. This is linked to the general need for continuity between school and home, something expressed by an acompa when commenting on an assembly, and her feeling that they try to change things, but they cannot if parents do not do the same at home.

Before we turn to parents' presence at Trèvol, I should mention that kids are not irrational. Instead, most times, they rather understand when and why they must be alone, and this is why acompas insist on verbal explanations:

> *Llora* enters to say that Mafalda's father must go to work. Mafalda says she wants to be with him, and Xavi tells her that she must go to his work then. Everybody starts laughing. *Llora* then tells Mafalda to say goodbye. She runs to his hug and starts crying. After a

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while, *Llora* and Mafalda enter and sit on a chair, hugged. Mafalda looks relatively calm. *Llora* tells her she could continue playing wherever she wanted, but Mafalda keeps crying. A few minutes later, Mafalda, still crying, stands up and runs outside to look for her dad, who had already gone.

5.4.3 Parental presence and involvement[122]

Parental presence in Trèvol is evident, and one can meet them the whole day, especially upon arrival when they usually stay around for a while or immediately leave if they have responsibilities. If a kid is going through the adaptation process, parents' presence is longer and more noticeable. Regarding gender, both dads and moms can be seen around, depending on their work schedule. Moreover, a grandfather was also present quite a lot in the mornings.

All in all, parents' presence at Trèvol is not something strange, yet not abused either. They stay in the space when they are needed for practical or emotional reasons. Therefore, although all collective members participate in the same way, both adults and kids, the space is for kids, and adults are there in case they need something only.

Sometimes mapares are more involved in pedagogical aspects, taking advantage of their cultural capital. For example, a mother working at the pharmaceutics faculty has brought related material and done workshops about using the microscope, the digestive system, or even how to recognize mushrooms and plants.

Not only kids are learners in Trèvol; adults learn too. Conscious that they need to unlearn to achieve this social transformation they fight for, they are in constant collective formation and reflection, as a mother explains. They educate and re-educate themselves through much self-observation and self-reflection, a work perceived as essential for a project of social transformation: "an issue came up that the opinion of old families has more weight, so how do we change this? Self-reflecting all the time, listening, always working from the consensus is sometimes slow and hard, but also a mirror of change" (DC': 2018/06/10).

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[122] DC: 2018/11/13, DC: 2018/11/20, DC': 2018/06/10 & IC1.

Such perception of the project as a school for both kids and adults is highlighted by many parents. According to a mother who happens to be a PhD student as well:

> It was like the actual PhD we did regarding our understanding of collective work. We had always been in groups where rationality and the voice of the most intelligent prevail, a patriarchal hetero discourse which has also been legitimized in movements and grassroots organizations .. it surprises me when someone comes to an assembly in Trèvol and proposes to value emotions because it is also a space to sustain the emotions of the collective (IC5).

Now that we have referred to the profiles and lifestyles of a few families, I will focus on more Trèvol-related aspects, such as kids' previous educational experiences, the reasons that motivated parents to choose Trèvol and their perspectives on it, kids' trajectories in the project in terms of social life and learnings and plans they have after leaving the project.

5.4.4 Parental perspectives[123]

Answering the question 'how would you call Trèvol' is challenging for most families who give very different answers. The self-defined anarchist father was the only one who labeled it as participatory anarchist [libertario participativo] which has also been a topic of a long debate among the collective's members, while the rest all called it free [libre] due to their heterogeneity. In any case, this labeling seems to have little importance to them.

Regarding the project's key points, these are what were mentioned most in terms of the interviews:

- Its child-centered character and respect for the kid's individual paces.
- The focus on emotions and feelings, considered in their systemic sense, considering what happens home and which are taught how to be recognized, expressed, and managed.
- Limits and respect are viewed as synonyms. According to a mother: "when the authority is communal and belongs to everyone, and not an external authority, limits and respect become the same thing" (IC2).

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[123] DC: 2018/11/20, DC: 2018/11/27, IC1, IC2, IC3, IC4 & IC5.

- Contact with nature and free movement.

- Values promoted like understanding, honesty, social justice, assertive forms of communication taken place according to which kids have the right to be listened to and focus on conflict resolution.

- Care. Trèvol to parents is an extension of the home and the collective members an extension of the family, providing their kids with care.

- Self-reflection, to be able to adapt to the needs that emerge.

- Self-education, with learning acquired by their own and accompanied by other kids and adults.

- Families' presence is expected, and space is given to parents while maintaining the focus on children.

- Trèvol is a project that takes for granted parents' high involvement. This is mainly seen in their expected participation in assemblies, committees, and self-management in general, but it might also expand in other areas, depending on the parents' will and skills. For example, due to her training in group management, a mother would accompany the acompas in terms of sessions when they would focus on relations among them, with families and with trèvolis.

Therefore, being part of Trèvol requires a high degree of involvement which parents might view and experience controversially. On the one hand, many see over-involvement as something enjoyable or responsibility they need to assume so that the project functions. On the other hand, its time-consuming character and tiredness it brings influence parents. Besides, although not directly interpreted as a negative point, families' over-involvement might distance them from those who are not members of Trèvol. This was mentioned by a mother when some friends entered the project before her family had opted for it.

Last, families participate in different degrees, which may also be seen positively or negatively. While some welcome the fact that everyone participates as much as they can, others consider it unfair that there are a few super involved families while the rest benefit from the work of others and never show up.

Just like we ask children to pick up because if they do not, the rest will have to pick up more; if a family does not work, other families have to do more. Why do we put limits on children and not parents? It is not only about paying the monthly fee (IC1).

Regarding parents' perspectives on acompas, positive and negative coexist although the first ones prevail. First of all, acompas, facilitated by their age and marital status, tend to devote lots of time and energy to Trèvol, and this is recognized by parents who view them as the project's key actors and referents for kids. Having said that, as kids grow up, it is considered that they need adults around them who not only offer them love and care but examples of strong women. Acompas' strong personalities, often missing from similar projects, is therefore highly valued, along with the fact that there is a male acompa able to deconstruct gender stereotypes in kids' imaginary. Last, due to the project's high-demanding nature, acompas might get tired and less patient or motivated, which may cause some parents' discontentment.

When asked about the project's positive and negative points, parents referred to kids, families, and acompas. More specifically, many consider their kids' happiness and good time spent at Trèvol a key positive point, along with their learning and social trajectories. Moreover, families' organization and self-management, diversity, and involvement are essential. At the same time, frequent communication with acompas and feedback about kids' daily lives is valued positively, along with their work, which is recognized by all and plays a key role.

Interestingly, most of these positive aspects parents attribute to the project are also mentioned as negative by different ones. Therefore, difficulties and negative points attributed to Trèvol, as expected, are mostly linked with the families' high involvement, which is also a factor of exclusion and, at the same time, considered necessary. Although an agreement can always be reached, it is a project based on parents' time, work, and money. This is also why, during the school course 2018-2019, two siblings who had been four years in Trèvol moved to their neighborhood's public school due to the parents' limited time and money.

In addition, although diversity is thought to be enriching and consensus the best decision-making method, it may become problematic, especially in the eyes of older parents who are tired of the long-lasting assemblies and the chosen forms of self-organization. Besides, Trèvol's complicated

organization causes difficulties in terms of adaption, especially in the beginning. It should also be mentioned that with the entrance of new families and the collective's decision to grow, the group's cohesion has been threatened, and some older parents experienced the changes negatively since when there were fewer families, parents used to be more 'united' as it was easier to relate to everyone.

Moreover, the normative problems due to Trèvol's (non) institutional nature, as explained above, might be experienced negatively, causing frustration. At the same time, most families live far from Trèvol, which may become problematic in terms of logistics, especially when families do not live close to others to share trips, and in terms of responsibility, one assumes when responsible for a shared trip.

Regarding kids' learning trajectories, mapares are generally satisfied and view them as 'natural' and thus effective processes, since they are marked by their own interests rather than imposed. Besides, instead of conventional ways of learning, it is rather experienced and enjoyed; while such trajectories may not be so focused on historical knowledge, for example, but they include other types of knowledge, including how to relate. Of course, families recognize their influence, such as the case of the PhD students whose 5-year-old daughter already reads and writes or kids involved in activities like book reading at home. Therefore, kids do many activities at home as well where, similarly to the educational project, the learning environment is prepared by mapares according to their interests.

Also, although almost none of the trèvolis have language courses, most of them speak two or more languages at home (Spanish and Catalan, Galician, German, Portuguese, Italian). For some parents who speak less common and even discriminated languages, this is a topic of high importance, as it can be seen in the case of the Hebrew family and the kid's rejection of Hebrew due to embarrassment it provokes. According to the mother, whose ancestors spoke many languages: "I keep speaking Hebrew with my mother, and they understand, but at a lower level each time.. the cultural level is decreasing.. we live in a world that seems more and more global, but we are more and more bounded" (IC2).

Although most kids go back home from around 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. due to the long distances, many of them, especially the older ones, are involved in out-of-Trèvol activities, like chess, swimming, and circus, in case they express such interest. Besides, if facing difficulties like dyslexia, they also attend sessions with experts like speech therapists. In these cases, difficulties are acknowledged and accompanied by acompas as the low ratio permits them. Apart from finding ways to overcome the specific difficulties, the specific accompanying process is destined to provide kids with the self-esteem they need.

Sometimes trèvolis participate in the same activities, thus sharing time out of the project, which reinforces communitarian bonds. In any case, they do not participate in activities that reinforce competitive attitudes or transmit values contrary to theirs. Most mapares learn about certain activities from friends similarly involved in spaces of free education. Nevertheless, they are not valued as much as free time and are chosen to develop primarily artistic and psychometric abilities instead of conventional learning competencies.

It should be mentioned that kids, especially younger, learn a lot from older figures like older trèvolis or collaborators who run workshops. At the same time, it is not uncommon that their learning process is determined by peers, as kids tend to be attracted to what their friends are interested in. However, although most parents are satisfied and confident with their kids' learning, they are aware of the formal educational system's exigencies which might cause them fear, especially regarding foreign languages.

Regarding social life in Trèvol, kids in Trèvol relate mainly to each other, even out of Trèvol. Parents interpret this as a consequence of the different education they receive and, therefore, way of being, resolving conflicts, playing, and relating to each other in general. As a result, it is not uncommon that families have stopped seeing friends of different schools due to the lack of affinity and practical reasons such as different schedules and the project's demands in terms of time.

Another reason kids in Trèvol relate primarily to each other out of Trèvol as well is because their parents relate mainly to each other. Kids typically form their social groups based on their

families' social groups, which are very specific and involve frequent interactions, from gatherings and sleepovers to shared vacations. As a father points out, "this project forces you to this communication.. parents approach each other because children have a closer relationship, and vice versa" (IC3).

Play as the center of social interactions among kids is highly valued by parents and thought to help maintain social relations in their original pure form; in other words, it is perceived as a way of resistance to the rapid changes caused in the Information Age. Kids mostly relate to same-gendered kids, especially in older ages, although they interact with all. Also, there is a tendency to prefer interactions with acompas at younger ages and peer interactions at older ones. Last, it is not unusual for kids to enter social dynamics that include lack of respect and egocentric attitudes, which are promoted neither by the families nor by Trèvol.

5.4.5 After Trèvol

Many families leave Trèvol before their kids complete primary education for various reasons. First, as years go by, trèvolis might find it hard to continue in the project due to the lack of peers and the impossibility of the project's continuation to the secondary stage because of the lack of money, time, material, and preparation in terms of pedagogy. Nevertheless, it seems like parents experience this transition much more intensely and negatively than kids themselves.

What is more, the high parental involvement may cause discontent and lead to the decision to leave, along with the monthly cost, the distance between Trèvol and place of living, or the change of residence. In most cases, it is a mixture of the above reasons.

> ..The option of the public school with its gratis character, more extended schedule, not necessary involvement.. also, as she is growing she needs more peers for socialization.. all these ingredients together with a need for a vital change, we wanted to move from where we lived (IC4).

In any case, having been part of Trèvol is regarded as more important during early childhood, when kids are formed in a more determining way and are supposed to get the tools they need for

their future. According to some parents, having experienced another way of perceiving and doing things has developed kids' critical spirit and prepared them for the conventional school system.

Families leaving Trèvol tend to look for a public or private school that ideally is in line, more or less, with their views on education. Two frequent options are Petxina and Pardal.

5.5 Discussion

Inspired by various alternative pedagogical practices and recognizing past experiences and anarchist influences, the collective has developed a detailed project on a theoretical level. Trèvol's pedagogical proposal rejects the segregation of knowledge by subjects and promotes a holistic, integral education based on kids' interests, respect for their individual paces, and experiential learning. Acompas and pamares view education in the broader sense of the word bounded to life rather than schooling (Velasco and Díaz de Rada, 2006; Soto, 2021), the outdoors is considered an important 'classroom' while excursions are frequent, and time spent outside is considered vital for learning and development.

Acompas are not there to transmit knowledge but to accompany kids emotionally, and education does not stop when trèvolis leave Foc. There is instead continuity between home and school and an attempt to break the boundaries between them. At the same time, although not identifying with the anarchist label due to their political diversity, the collective members perceive education as a vehicle for social transformation. Acompas transmit political messages and values through pedagogical material and practices while their discourses are critical, in line with their own anarchist political identities. Aware of the constant incidental learning society transmits (Spindler, 1987 [1967]); Wolcott, 1982; Soto, 2021) they take advantage of topics arisen among kids to make questions that encourage them to think and direct them to reach their conclusions. The ultimate goal is to unlearn incidental learnings acquired that go against the project's values in order to be able to learn that what is transmitted in Trèvol -both intentionally and incidentally- and aims to social transformation.

If we think upon the practices and discourses described in the previous ethnographic sections, we may look at these questions in more depth and face a few from the many contradictions frequently arisen from such perspectives and practices that go against the current. The first one is connected to the project's institutional nature. Although not so present in early ages, there are fears and insecurities regarding kids' adaptation to the official school system as years go by. Therefore, aware of discontinuities between Trèvol and home culture and the conventional school culture, in order to facilitate such process and after pamares' proposals, there is gradual incorporation of the official curriculum and material that is often introduced in traditional ways, through official books and worksheets. Kids, in theory, have freedom of choice, but activities like letters or maths are compulsory. We may look upon some other significant contradictions in the following lines.

On power and limits

Transformative potentials in Trèvol are partly expressed through the horizontality attempted and which may be studied through various points of view.

On the one hand, both for self-management needs and common perspectives over education, there is a hyper-organization with assemblies and committees for the adult collective members. This spreads the power among them, giving everyone responsibilities that rotate, and promotes collective decision-making processes. There may be six adults accompanying kids in their learning journeys daily at school settings, but no one is regarded as an expert, and pamares may also influence pedagogical practices. Acompas do not necessarily hold university degrees. In other words, the educational responsibility falls on both sides regardless of official training.

That attempt does not mean that there are no hierarchies or conflicts caused. There are. If we look at the acompas, the ones who are there longer seem to have more power, a fact that may be seen, for example, through their tendency to speak more and express their opinion more frequently upon decisions in the morning meetings. At the same time, not all mapares implicate themselves to the same degree. Some families take on many responsibilities while others, probably due to time restrictions, are seen and heard less, which creates power relations as well.

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Also, although acompas agree with sharing the educational responsibility, frustration and conflicts may be caused between them and mapares when the latter get into pedagogical matters too much or when they do not follow acompas' pedagogical line, as seen through the section of separation from kids, for example. In these cases, both pamares and acompas claim their rights regarding educational responsibility.

On the other hand, pedagogical practices aim to break the traditional hierarchical relations between teachers and students. This is realized, first of all, through the tendency to sit in circles (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006). The circle is the shape that equates persons in space, and even the traditional desks commented form them, participating in such horizontality attempts. Besides, weekly assemblies are held among acompas and kids in terms of which they are asked to share their feelings and ideas, make proposals and collectively reach decisions based on consensus.

However, not all kids are interested in doing so. Many do not respect the limits set for the assemblies to happen or show zero interest in participating in them. In these cases, acompas intervene, reminding the limits, and sometimes even talking in private or temporarily excluding these kids from collective processes. Even though they are not figures of authority and their role is to set limits as persons of more experience (due to age) in order to offer a secure learning environment, kids perceive acompas' control upon them due to the decisions they can make and the limits they set for them. Interventions in case limits are transgressed are used as a tool for dialogue, but kids often perceive them as an exercise of authority. This does not mean that kids have zero power, of course. While sometimes acompas' interventions lead to gradual obedience to limits, they often develop their strategies of resistance instead. However, let's take a closer look at limits and interventions.

Interventions do not happen only when kids resist their participation in horizontal, assemblearian procedures. Acompas frequently intervene if attitudes contrary to the project's ideals appear, such as cases of injustices, peer dynamics marked by lack of respect, conflicts, etc. As a matter of fact, among kids, power relations are created as well. In these cases, acompas intervene to express

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their feelings by asking the involved kids questions instead of announcing their opinion, focusing on what kids' acts generate to them instead of judging them or their acts.

Certain expressions like 'I ask' and 'I demand' are repeated by the acompas in these cases, acquiring a significant semantic power towards obedience. In other cases, when kids avoid their responsibilities, for example, acompas might intervene indirectly, disguising their directivity and transforming pedagogical material and spaces prepared by them into control strategies, as seen through the example of the cleaning cards. Another strategy of control frequently used may reveal another contradiction between theory and practice; praise and punishment. Although such methods are rejected by the pedagogical proposal and no grades are given, evaluation is constant, and acompas do praise discipline both verbally by thanking, for example, kids' practices that facilitate concentration when needed like raising hands, or bodily through offering their attention, looking and listening to them. The contrary happens when kids resist following the rules and moving inside the limits when they have certain 'consequences' as acompas call them. Such consequences vary depending on the action/attitude and its sources, from going late for breakfast to being ignored, getting spatially separated by one's affinity group, going out if energy is not controlled in concentration spaces, or getting excluded from collective processes as we saw before. Cases when kids transgress limits and manage to have no consequences are interpreted as achievements by them.

What is probably made clear at this point is that there are many and specific limits and rules that are often reminded and thought of as necessary for personal growth, healthy relationships, and a safe environment. Acompas impose limits, but their necessity is explained whenever needed. There is always at least a why every limit answers, and acompas are all aware of it. Although there are a few stable, unnegotiable ones, others change if they do not function, which takes time but is still present and essential to mention. Such an example was the initial ban of football and subsequent incorporation in the weekly schedule under certain circumstances, followed by a new series of limitations.

Nevertheless, these limits come with a state of acompañamiento, which may also be interpreted as a form of vigilance and control facilitated by the low ratio. And this leads to another series of contradictions. Although thought to provide kids the emotional support and safety they need to

develop and explore the learning possibilities around them, acompas' disposal often leads to demanding, authoritative attitudes from kids towards adults.

Therefore, acompas are all committed to the project and follow the same pedagogical line insisting on limits and agreements to which kids reach and commit themselves. There are instances when kids 'obey' and embody them while others they show resistance by a series of strategies employed to avoid control, from performing their expected role when acompas are around or, in other words, make it seem like they have learned what is transmitted, to self-exclusion. In any case, and despite the resistance, such limits lead to a state of responsible freedom and bring us to our next important topic of discussion.

On space and school culture

Although hosted in a squatted building, spaces where learning activities occur in Trèvol are very similar to conventional schools. For example, typical classroom desks and chairs are used. However, their legs are cut to match kids' height, their layout is circular, fostering horizontality, and their use is different. Furniture and pedagogical material are mainly wooden, although not necessarily. The collective's adult members reuse objects such as lego bricks, transforming them into learning material. This is not relevant to aesthetics or economy only; it is a political choice. Trèvol resists consumerism in very concrete ways, one of which is the material it uses. Other examples include offering second-hand clothes or acompas' frequent invitation to reuse and not waste material. Such material dimensions, proper of the project's hidden curriculum (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]), transmit specific values, sometimes intentionally and others incidentally.

At the same time, walls are often decorated by kids' creations, while the latter are engaged in the collective production of annual magazines and calendars for the financial contribution to the project. This is important not only because kids act as cultural producers co-producing their proper school culture. They are also not excluded from the adult world where they actively participate, sharing significant responsibilities like the project's self-management. Besides, calendars, magazines, and other collective products found in Trèvol and at home are symbolic

elements that strengthen collective identity and a sense of belonging, constant reminders that they are part of a bigger whole.

On community and belongingness

Limits and agreements are essential in any project aiming at social transformation. The goal is not only to unlearn what society incidentally transmits but also to create an alternative way of social organization and relating to one another. From this perspective, they are important both due to their effects on unlearning and learning and their prefigurative political dimensions. Every community has its own rules and limits so that members can coexist, and Trèvol is no exception.

In school settings, the organization of time and space (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006), and the daily incorporating rituals facilitate the meeting of all members -kids, families, and acompas (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006; Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). This may be seen at arrival and closing, the main instances for sharing among all and liminal spaces that bridge home and school. This way, kids may experience school as an extension of the home, a goal that is also attempted through material aspects. Among them, many instances facilitate community building, such as fruit time, lunch, cleaning, and other ritualized practices that we saw in the previous sections. Ritualization strengthens the sense of belonging, and the name adult members use when referring to kids, 'trèvolis', also contributes. At the same time, acompas focus on relations, respect, consensus, empathy, and listening, all important aspects in these terms.

In other settings, families' common activities reinforce a sense of belonging and bonding among members. Between them, a support network is created, facilitated by the limited number of families along with their shared culture and social imaginaries which is what mostly brings them to Trèvol in the first place. Despite the diversity members perceive, their profiles, lifestyles and worldviews are quite similar in various aspects that were examined before. Their different views on education, upbringing, and childhood than the dominant ones and the requiring character of their participation in the project lead to a closed, culturally similar social network of mutual aid divided into smaller affinity groups. Bonding and a sense of belonging are developed through the frequent problems they are called to face, too, connected to the project's (anti) institutional

character. We could say that an extended family is attempted to be created, sometimes filling the gap of relatives' absence.

Such dimensions bring us to another series of contradictions related to the project's inclusive character. As a self-managed project, families participating in Trèvol have to waste both money and time. Therefore, although in theory diversity is valued, certain demands exclude a big part of the population. That does not seem to happen frequently, though, and the reason is related to the similarity we referred to before as their social class, although not necessarily playing a significant role in the process of school choice, permits them such participation. But even among the collective members, cultural similarity is stressed while diversity is not underlined, as seen through the case of the Jewish family.

Inclusive dimensions may be looked at from another point of view as well. Social networks of mutual aid are created, but divisiveness is an almost automatic result with them. The educational community does not participate much in the wider local community of Bosc, except the cases when something affects them directly, while the majority lives in other areas of Barcelona and its provinces. In addition, the otherness created due to the members' shared culture and social imaginaries prevents them from socializing with others.

To sum up

Trèvol is not a school, but many school elements hide in it, from pedagogical materials to the transmission of certain values and power relations. What changes is the complete awareness of such and the constant reflection upon what is being transmitted and why. Of course, not everything is intentionally transmitted the same way not everything intentionally transmitted is learned.

In this context, order, structure, and practices that seem authoritative, sometimes interpreted as such by kids, which direct towards obedience, are disconnected from their negative meaning as they aim to a necessary discipline for the co-living of all. In other words, to reach freedom and social transformation, it is vital to construct other realities, and this is a demanding process that

cannot be based on non-directive methods. Therefore, while roles are blurred as everyone is considered both a teacher and a student, a transmitter and a receptor, and while framing and classification seem to be weak, a study of the project's hidden curriculum helps us realize that they are even more potent than conventional schooling and this is partly due to the discontinuity between school/home and the broader societal context (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). Companions and mapares may not transmit official curricular knowledge much, but they constantly transmit alternative values, a process that may be viewed as a manipulation or a counter-manipulation (Diaz, 1978). We choose the second interpretation.

Despite the contradictions we referred to and many more observed, mapares and kids learn how to make their own collective decisions through assemblearian processes, necessary for autonomy and direct democracy (Castoriadis, 1987). A community is this way created, based on similarities, and it is this sense of responsibility and belonging that marks how kids and their families experience Trèvol. In other words, what everybody looks for and what results in positive schooling experiences is the sense of belonging to an affinity group of mutual aid.

6. Public School "Pardal"

6.1 General aspects

      6.1.1 The Context

The public school Pardal is a public school of new creation situated in Núvol[124], a neighborhood belonging to a municipality in the province of Barcelona called Ústria[125]. Although not very far from Barcelona, Ústria is not so well connected to it. One must either spend one hour, half on the train and half walking, or use the public bus whose stop is in front of the school to reach the closest metro station; an option much less demanding in terms of time and walking distances, yet with few buses available in general.

Two essential elements can be easily captured in Ústria: its high level of industrialization and its high immigrant population. Although there is a small artificial park next to the school and a few bigger ones in a small distance, there is an urban feeling prevailing. To this feeling adds the high population density, one of the highest in the metropolitan area of Barcelona[126].

Two stages can be distinguished in the municipality's development: while in the past the agricultural sector was more developed mainly with corn, vegetables, legumes and potatoes and thanks to the abundance of lands and irrigation possibility, this started to change towards the end of the 19th century. Today, agricultural and livestock activities have disappeared and been replaced by industry. At the beginning of the 20th century, a factory was installed in Ústria, followed by more and gradually leading to the industrialization process' maximum development in the 1970s.

As a result, the area's industrialization brought an immigration wave -mainly from the south of Spain at the beginning- and a subsequent demographic growth that continued up to the date.

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[124] Catalan word meaning cloud, used as the nickname for the neighborhood.
[125] Invented word inspired by the Catalan word indústria meaning industry, used as the nickname for the municipality.
[126] www.enciclopedia.cat

According to the official data drawn from INE[127], in 1998, Ústria's registered population was 29.155; ten years later, it was 36.255, and in 2018, it reached 38.347 residents.

Figure 17: Ústria - Evolution of the number of residents 1900-2018
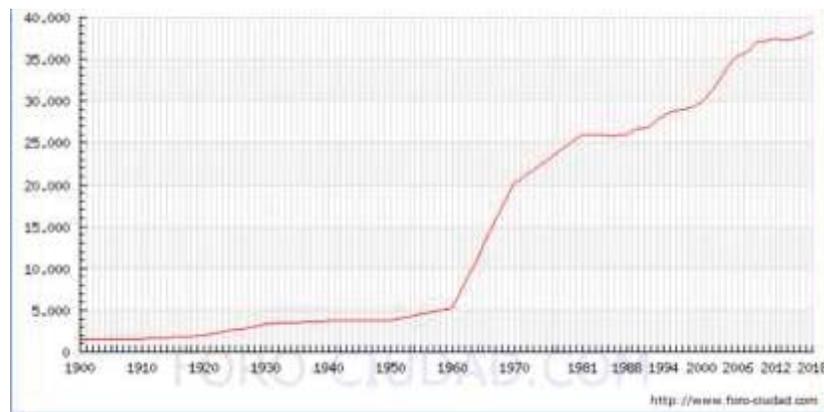
Source: www.foro-ciudad.com , Last access: 2019/05/21

Figure 18: Ústria - Evolution of the number of residents 2001-2020
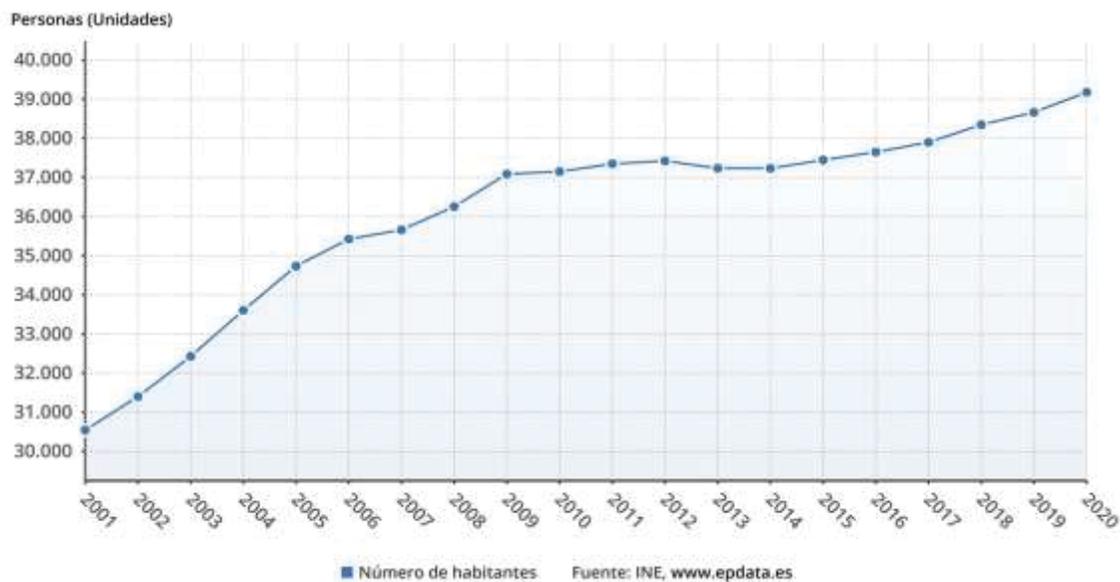
Source: www.epdata.com , Last access: 2021/07/31

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[127] National Institute of Statistics.

Among them, 20.41% are born in the municipality, 65.36% are born in other parts of Spain (42.56% from different municipalities of Barcelona, 1.06% in other provinces of Catalonia, and 21.74% in other autonomous communities), and 14.23% are born in other countries.

Comparing the data of 2018 and 2017, there is a certain increase of residents coming both from other parts of Barcelona and from other countries. Now, let's compare it to 1996 to get a bigger picture of the movements. We can see that there is a general growth: residents born in Ústria have increased from 8.95% to 20.41%, residents born in other countries from 1.76% to 14.23%, residents born in other parts of Barcelona from 28.16% to 42.54%. Only residents born in other parts of Catalonia and the rest of Spain have decreased, the second category in a much more significant way (from 1.47% to 1.06% and from 39.66% to 21.74% respectively).

Therefore, a big part of the current population consists of residents born in other countries (5.356). According to NIE data again, the majority were born in South American (2333) and African (1430) countries, while a few of them were born in Europe (984) and Asia (706). As revealed from the following detailed charts, many people are born in Morrocco whose number experiences stable growth through the years.

Figure 19: Ústria - Evolution of the number of habitants born abroad 2018
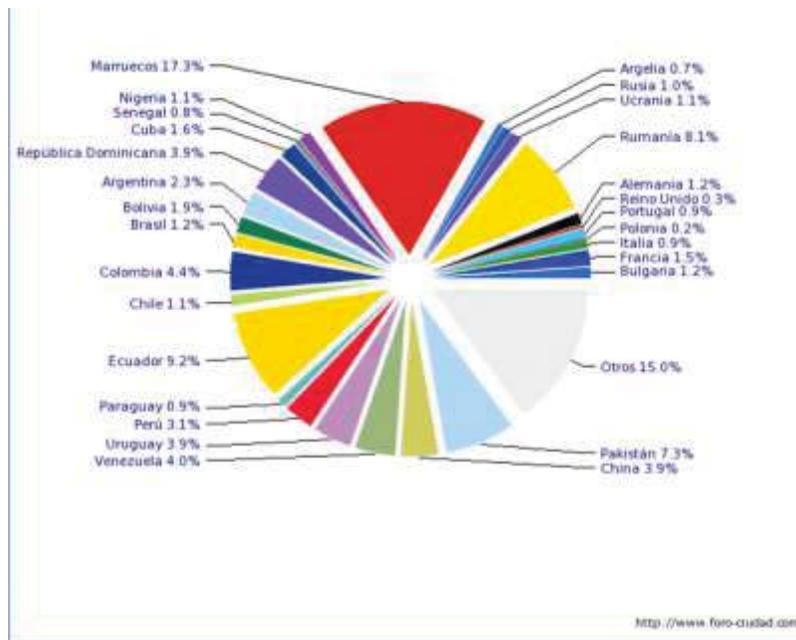
Source: www.foro-ciudad.com , Last access: 2019/05/21

This foreign population can be seen in Pardal's neighborhood, where many Moroccan families live. Yet, most shops are run by Spanish and a few by Pakistanis. What is more, two of those nearby shops are run by Pardal's parents who have moved to Ústria for the school only; a hairdresser's and a shop of biological products; the second now closed. An exception is a Maghrebi restaurant run by a Moroccan family whose kids had been students at Pardal in the past and opened in the summer of 2019.

Regarding school offer in Ústria and according to the town hall's official webpage[128], during the school year 2017-2018, eight public schools were offering early childhood and elementary education, including Pardal, and three public secondary schools, along with one publicly-funded private school offering early childhood and elementary education and two publicly-funded private schools of early childhood, elementary and secondary education. Another of these public schools is alternative, based on similar pillars and following project-based pedagogical methods with high parental involvement, while this one, together with Pardal, managed to include secondary education starting from the school year 2019-2020. However, I should stress that almost all of them are self-defined with alternative pedagogies mentioning an active, respectful and emotional education. The degree to whether such descriptions correspond to the actual pedagogies applied is unknown. Such a growing population and limited school places seem to have led to the creation of Pardal itself.

In short, we should keep in mind that Pardal is a public school built in a municipality where many non-privileged families live and therefore supposed to cover the needs of these residents. We will come back to this expectation various times in the following pages.

> The afternoons in the park (next to Pardal) are way different than the middays. Whereas during midday, the place is 'occupied' by parents and kids who do not live in Ústria, one can meet mothers with their kids in the afternoons, mainly with Moroccan, sub-Saharan, and Spanish nationalities revealed through the languages spoken and phenotypes. Like in the rest of the municipality's parks, while kids play around, mothers interact in fixed groups. Each group is located at a bench, while the moments of interaction between them are rare -if existent (DB: 2018/07/07).

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[128] Ústria's Town Hall (2019).

As seen in the previous extract, although the diverse population in terms of place of origin described previously[129] provides a unique opportunity for intercultural exchange, this is not the case. Families of different cultural backgrounds in Ústria are divided in space the same way as they are in local schools.

Pardal is a school that follows a pedagogy based on contact with the broader community. All kids go on a weekly excursion to a nearby park, sometimes take out the trash or engage themselves in projects developed in the neighborhood.

During non-school hours, many kids meet at the park accompanied by their parents, and during evening hours, those who live in the neighborhood walk around or get involved in activities taking place in Ústria. In the mornings, it is not uncommon to see families hanging out at the bar located opposite the school[130].

Besides, a few mothers participate in local social struggles, such as a feminist collective of the neighborhood, and many parents link their activism to the school. We may explain this last point through two examples:

The Platform 'No gas station at Núvol': In 2017, parents got coordinated in a platform to stop the Catalan government's plan of building a petrol station next to the school through a series of acts. The modification of the project and the decision to install it at the alternative location proposed by the town hall was good news to the platform since the gas station would be far from the school, although the ideal would have been not to install it anywhere[131].

The 'Escola-Institut[132]' committee: 'Pardal wants to grow' banner was hung from the school's terrace both in 2017 and 2018. Alternative secondary schools are rare, but many of Pardal's parents wanted their children to finish their schooling process in a similar educational project. Therefore, getting advantage of the lack of schools in the neighborhood and the

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[129] Partly a product of the school itself as we will later see.
[130] DB': 2018/05/19 & DB': 2018/30/17.
[131] AFI's blogspot & IB1.
[132] The Catalan term for public schools that offer both elementary and secondary education.

subsequent problem of overcrowding to base their arguments on, they formed a committee to work together with other schools' associations of parents and convince the local authorities to expand Pardal to the secondary stage. For this, not only did they organize various acts and meetings with the association of neighbors, political parties, schools, associations of families, and the municipal School Council, but they also got involved in negotiations and even prepared a campaign for change.org[133]. Despite the initial negative response, the plan of the school's expansion got accepted in 2019. The fellow alternative school of the neighborhood was the second school approved for expansion[134].

All in all, many parents are active agents in local social struggles, most times linked to Pardal. Rather than confronting local decision-makers and political institutions directly, the adult members of Pardal's educational community try to make alliances and achieve their goals using them. Besides, not all parents are 'activists'. The profile of those involved in the above actions or other social initiatives in the neighborhood coincides with the profile of the ones participating more in the school in general. We will later explore their profiles in detail.

6.1.2 Basic Features

Although Pardal opened its doors in September 2004, it was a project "dreamt of" long ago. During many years, a group of nine female teachers, all committed to pedagogical innovation, would regularly meet and design the educational project until it could finally become a reality. The school had a clear vision of creating a healthy space for the educational community and was based on respect towards kids' life processes from the very beginning.

More specifically, it all started from a group of eight teachers, all women. Six of them used to work in a public school that was similarly connected to the educational innovation of the era's Catalan context (the 80s and 90s)[135], in a municipality close to Ústria. Their coincidence was just the beginning of a series of regular meetings. When they heard that a new school was about to be built in Ústria, they decided this was the perfect opportunity to make their plans come true.

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[133] Popular petition website.
[134] IB4, AFI's blogspot & local newspaper.
[135] CEPEPC (Col·lectiu d'Escoles per l'Escola Pública Catalana).

As a result, the group continued working while meeting once per week, usually Saturday evening or Sunday morning, in the house of one of them, thinking and talking about the project and reading books. At the same time, they started visiting alternative educational projects to get inspiration, a practice they continued even after the school's opening. Such schools were primarily rural, with a small number of kids, and although very interesting, they were far from what the group had in mind; a public school which everybody can access[136].

The ultimate chance for the school's creation was given during the course 2003-2004 to satisfy the municipality's needs for schooling. Then, the department of education made a call for project proposals for the new school. The pedagogical team presented theirs, which got accepted, and a dream came true; an expression often used by the teaching staff when referring to the school's history[137].

In the beginning, there was no building; Pardal was hosted at a nearby school. Teachers back then used to meet with parents who were planning to pre-register in a room that the town hall offered and inform them about their pedagogical ideas. They showed pictures of other Reggio Emilia schools[138] to convince them that there are experiences similar to what they want to create, which have successfully survived through the years. Later, when the construction of the building started, the pedagogical team, along with parents, actively participated in decisions made for spaces, both interior and exterior ones, as a mother stresses when sharing her experience from those years:

> *Lidón* and I used to visit every week.. there was an architect super receptive to everything we asked.. I remember hiding the phone bills from my ex because I made the calls from my house.. we encouraged parents to come and help us so that our children could start school the same day as the rest. So, there were lots of parents, whether in favor or not, that came. Few parents didn't.. First, we started to form committees, guided by *Lidón* too; we did not know back then, we were the first mothers .. Some parents worked on all the details, the space where the dolls would be placed, a small kitchen.. committees began to be formed, and parents began to support (IB1).

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[136] Pardal's official website (last access 2019/10/02), AFI´s blogspot (last access 2019/10/2) & DB': 2018/06/15.
[137] DB': 2018/05/05.
[138] See p. 28.

Regarding its cost[139], Pardal might be a public school, but it is not completely free of charge; parents pay annual fees. The cost depends on the group age of the kid and is destined to cover the necessary pedagogical material and excursions, 600 € in total for the school year 2017-2018 for the last age group of the community of grans. This is relatively high for a public school due to the chosen material and their complete absence among the objects sent to them by the department of education like desks, books, etc., and frequent excursions. Sometimes, apart from the initial cost, an extra cost for material [preci dels reculls extra] is added during the school year, typically between 15 and 25 euros. Families are notified by e-mail and reminded by a written announcement located at the entrance of each class. Contrary to other schools where the center's administration is responsible for the economic aspects, this is AFI's[140] role in Pardal.

What is more, the cost increases much if kids stay in the dining room for their lunch, a service much more expensive than in many local public schools. Although there is the possibility for certain flexibility and scholarships, given by either the AFI (for the cover of material fees) or the Catalan government (for the cover of lunch cost), these are only received by families whose economic situation is very bad.

For some parents[141], this is a logical cost compared to other schools, while for others, it is offensive to ask for such fees in a popular neighborhood like Núvol, especially due to the use of expensive material and interpretation as a waste of money.

> In theory, you do not pay, and you may not pay.. in practice, there is pressure to do so.. there is some flexibility when there are people who cannot pay fees, some may exchange the fees with work in the school, or people who pay more to help give scholarships to people or state scholarships. But there is a waste of money.. in pictures, books or the colored papers used and all the plastic spent to wrap any crap children make (IB3).

Undoubtedly, Pardal is a different school. Its public institutional identity does not make things easy, causing unrest to the educational community and the local authorities while bringing the

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[139] DB: 2018/05/02, IB1, IB3 & IB4.
[140] Association of families.
[141] IB4 & IB3.

two parts into frequent conflicts and negotiations. One of these examples is the school garden case in 2010[142].

Briefly, according to the Catalan legislation, all school playgrounds must be cemented. However, Pardal's parents had a different plan; they wanted to remove the cement, cover the whole yard with soil and create a biological orchard and a playground with a hedge maze. The idea soon became real, and the town hall's reaction was immediate: they intervened, removing the soil and stopping the project. The official reason given was the need for the space to carry out sports activities. Just like in similar cases, parents' response was not late. They created a committee called 'Let's make the garden', started a petition, and wrote a letter to support the garden project in front of the local authorities.

The letter referred to the garden project's aim; the outdoors expansion of the pedagogical project, which is considered a vital space for kids' learning, well-being, and integral development and where kids spend at least 200 hours per school year. Besides the educational, environmental, and social benefits mentioned as much more important than the town hall's use of space, the letter invoked the agents' interests by underlying Pardal's pioneering character, which has attracted various institutions and personalities working for a healthier and more sustainable society.

Through the project, not only would the industrial landscape change, but kids in the neighborhood would also get the chance to do gardening courses or get sensory and psychomotor experiences in a natural environment with shady areas. What is more, parents insisted that what they ask, rather than a whim, responds to deep reflections on the education they want for their children supported by recent studies, all of which are mentioned, along with a detailed list of the garden's benefits. The letter closes with a request for an interview meeting with the department of education.

Although the committee failed despite the persistence, parents still got the soil back and placed it around the cemented playground, improvising a hilly playground. As a teacher said, commenting on the case, "one must fight to achieve things instead of accepting the no's"[143].

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[142] AFI's blogspot, DB': 2018/06/17, IB1 & IB6.

In general, normative problems derive from the fact that the school's ideals are contrary to the department of education's expectations. As years go by, inspectors pay fewer visits to check if the official school curriculum is followed despite the alternative methodologies. However, there are still some issues that are hard to be resolved, mostly related to evaluation. Despite Pardal's complete lack of interest and dislike towards official exams, they are obligated to do them, the same way they are made to submit grades for each student. Nevertheless, just like the school garden case, adults in Pardal are experts in developing strategies.

For instance, although there are no subjects -in the conventional meaning of the word- taking place in Pardal, apart from English, teachers assign the special ones like physical education and arts to the officially responsible teachers, and write down the grades, without paying attention or caring[144]; they are not even given to parents unless they ask for them. All these games with the official norms make Pardal's situation vulnerable since the staff is aware of the dangers hidden in case certain information reach the Catalan Government's Department of Education. Therefore, they are cautious and protective, partly because of the certain "illegality" embracing some of their practices.

Many goals have been gradually achieved, mainly due to the directive team's devotion and capacity to justify decisions and changes, using semantics for their benefit. This strategy was followed from the beginning, when teachers, divided into small groups, read the official curriculum and developed the educational project based on it and their wishes.

Nevertheless, people apply the laws, and the key people in our case are politicians and inspectors. According to a teacher, "depending on the inspector, you must say what he wants you to say … you have to express things with their words, then what you do within the words is another thing" (DB': 2018/05/05). Therefore, sometimes Pardal's staff has to fight to support the school, while other times, the inspector makes things easy. One of these times was a regular neighborhood meeting of teachers when some complained about Pardal's innovative character. The inspector

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[143] DB': 2018/05/05.
[144] DB: 2018/06/20.

back then defended the school, saying that it is "a school of the 21ˢᵗ century.. but now we all live in the 21st century"[145].

Such issues become less or more challenging to handle depending on the political party elected. This difference is made clear if we compare the politics of the previous more conservative to the current leftist one, which set different limits, levels of freedom, and autonomy to the center. A mother helps us 'travel' back to these struggling days:

> .. There were nights when I did not sleep.. because sometimes we also felt powerless.. with the party we have now it goes very well because they are in favor of Pardal.. but the previous.. they even wanted to call the school 'Reseta Lavi' because they decided that it would be called like that. But the school's management told them that the children and the parents would choose the name, and that's it (IB1).

Pardal[146] belongs to Escola Nova 21's [New School 21][147] list of "impulsion centers and training references". New School 21 is an alliance of schools and civil society institutions, carried out from 2016 to 2019 and aiming to an advanced education system, in line with the 2030 Agenda of the UN and UNESCO's call for educational change.

In terms of this network, thousands of teachers interact and train themselves by participating in related training and by visiting other schools that belong to it. Regarding the latter, four teachers from each school that participates in the alliance visit others for a while, usually a week or a couple of weeks, and observe daily, taking notes.

Escola Nova 21 may be viewed as another example of educational innovation's privatization, and there are many people skeptical towards it, including interviewed parents.

> ..It is all about sending an image that we are European, democratic, progressive.. and it is like a smokescreen to try to justify that something is being done to change an educational system that doesn't work, without thinking why.. now you have to learn to work in a group.. but why? To respond to the big company's interests? If this is what we are

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[145] DB': 2018/05/05.
[146] www.escolanova21.cat (last access: 2020/03/09), DB: 2018/04/09 & DB: 2018/11/12.
[147] See pp. 29-30.

innovating, it is honestly not necessary. I prefer the classic model, which is easy to see that it sucks (IB3).

Last, not all schools belonging to the network can ultimately support the innovative character promoted, due to the incompatible infrastructure and facilities or the educational community's needs, as revealed through the words of a teacher visiting Pardal who said that her school is culturally different due to the immense majority of gypsy families. Therefore, according to her, although they work with projects, they must also work on how to read, write and traditionally do maths since kids do not have help at home, contrary to kids attending Pardal.

> A blonde woman is observing. She comes from a primary and secondary public school. They are new to Escola 21, and therefore, she is observing at Pardal for two weeks, while another teacher substitutes her during this time.. She thinks that Pardal is culturally different. The majority of families at her school are gypsies, so she says they have to do everything. They work with projects, but they also work on "how to read, write and traditionally do maths because kids don't have the families' help at home; it is not like here". She thinks some things could be adapted at their school but not everything. There are many obstacles there, such as the lack of facilities (DB: 2018/11/12).

It should be mentioned that even today, that both the building and the project are ready, and after years of functioning, Pardal is defined as never-ending by the pedagogical team; it is a rather dynamic project that changes due to a constant self-reflection. At the same time, it is a pioneer school that has caught the attention of many involved in education and has brought teachers and professionals from various parts of Spain and abroad, who get to know the project through its annual formations.

Now that we have a general idea of Pardal's basic features, we will focus on the material environment where the majority of Trèvol's activities occur.

6.1.3 Material aspects: learning spaces

Regarding material aspects[148], the school comprises two main structures; a four-floor building (basement included) whose front door is a few steps away from the main entrance and hosts the

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[148] DB: 2018/4/4, DB: 2018/5/4, DB: 2018/10/4 & DB: 2018/17/4.

communities of mitjans and grans, and a smaller one-floor building on its right which hosts the community of petits.

Pardal's pedagogical proposal focuses much on aesthetics. As a result, every single space is carefully decorated and equipped with educational materials. Although we will refer to the spaces used by the community of grans only, all share the same aesthetics in terms of spatial structure and type of materials used; what changes are the learning possibilities offered in each, which depend on the age group.

Upon arrival, on the right, there is a corner to place children's bikes and scooters, only used in case of excursions or for personal transportation to and from school.

When entering the building´s main entrance, the secretary is on the right hand, divided into two main spaces: a room used by the staff, and accompanied children at times, where the doorbell and printer are located and which is visible through big windows and another room used mainly by the management and pedagogical team which is more private and where meetings take place. There are two other rooms on the left hand, one used for meetings among teachers and the other by AFI. In the latest, one can find the first aid kit as well.

Apart from these spaces, toilets are on the ground floor, along with the dining room divided into two spaces: one for the community of mitjans and one for grans. Last, a room equipped with a projector where activities take place is also there.

Surrounded by these rooms, there are wooden benches and wicker baskets in the middle of the floor, one for each kid, where they place their shoes, flippers/crocks, and other personal items like backpacks or jackets. Walking up the stairs, a piece of furniture for rainboots is on the corridor.

On the floor of the community of grans, apart from the bathrooms and the pedagogical team's room, there are the following spaces which are typically called 'spaces' (espais) or 'workshops' (tallers): Kitchen (domestic in the past), which is divided by the Experiments' room by a sliding

door, Symbolic play, Scrapbook and Carpentry divided in the same way, Sewing and Music[149]. Each one of them, apart from the music space, is used as a reference space for a specific group of the community. Due to the lack of space, the third group of the group of grans uses a room in the basement. Moreover, surrounded by these rooms, there are tables in the corridor, also used as micro-spaces for maths, fairies, origami, secret messages, and an elevated place with carpets for book reading[150].

All furniture is wooden, and learning material is abundant, diverse, and rich. Since educational practices are based mainly on the material found in the spaces, this is carefully selected and placed. This way, self-directed activities, and autonomy, at the core of Pardal's philosophy, are facilitated. Spaces are pretty stable, and the material does not change a lot. In case of changes, these are small and usually happen due to the lack of interest kids show or spatial limitations. Teachers then ask other communities if they wish to use it, and, in case they do not, it is transferred to the school's warehouse and replaced.

Each room is equipped with two to three big tables and a few chairs adapted to the kids' height and carton and wicker baskets where projects, notebooks, and personal items are placed. All doors are open so spaces can be seen, and inside, it is usually too hot due to a law that makes schools use heating at certain times and days. This is the reason why windows are usually left open as well. Another space used by the community is the big performance room visible from the playground and shared among all school members for rehearsals, celebrations, shows, performances, or special days.

Last, the exterior is shared among kids of all ages and is cemented, apart from some small dirt hills around and a few more spaces. There, one can find the big orchard used by the whole school community, a natural playground with wooden structures and recreational equipment for games and constructions, two small wooden houses for research -one with material related to bugs and

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[149] Although the music space was not used for relevant workshops during the year 2017-2018, it is equipped by two didgeridoos, four guitars, two carpets and pillows, the drums and some smaller musical instruments kept in a wooden furniture with glass windows (DB: 2018/04/17).

[150] The structure is quite stable, but there is a certain flexibility and changes taking place regarding the materials. For example, symbolic play was added to a space only lately after teachers realized that kids still needed it in the community (DB: 2018/04/17).

small animals and another with material about nature in general- as well as the hills around where huts are constructed and hammocks are placed in case of good weather.

Figure 20: Pardal Plan A

Source: Danai Stavrianou
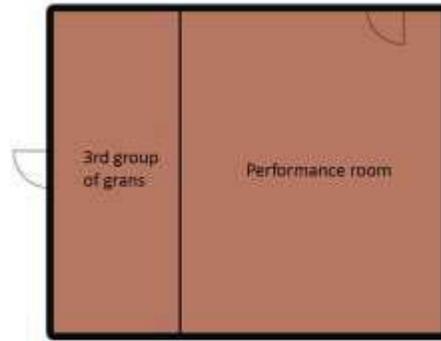
Basement
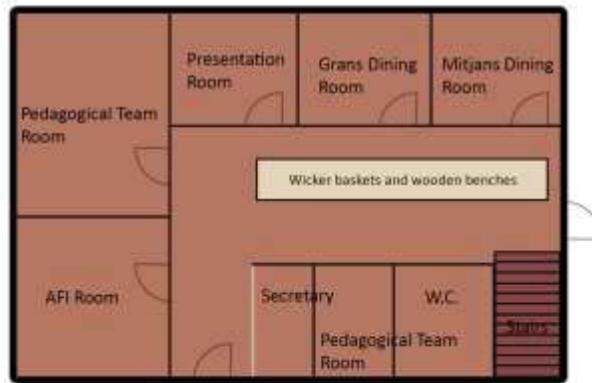
Groundfloor : **Reception**
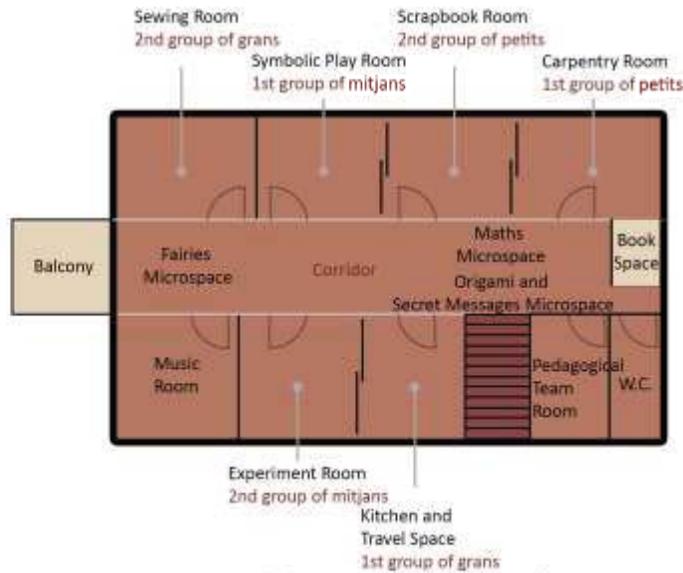
Second Floor : **Community of grans**

6.1.4 Pedagogical Proposal

Pardal could be briefly described as an innovative, respectful school where kids learn how to do things and not the things themselves. The focus, like in all similar Reggio Emilia projects, is on the spaces, both interior, and exterior, which are carefully designed and destined to provide kids with a various range of learning opportunities to explore.

Figure 22: Loris Malaguzzi, The 100 Languages (Poem)
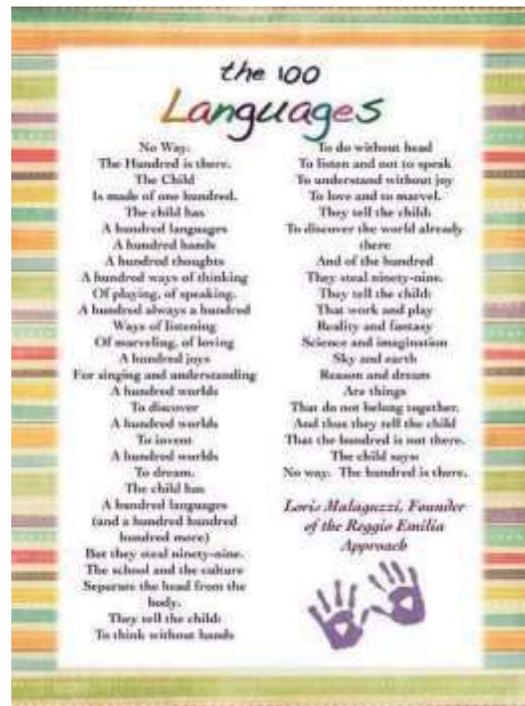
There are a few principles which the educational project is based on and which keep informing the daily pedagogical practices[151]:

Children as cultural actors: Following a sociological conception of childhood, children in Pardal are not just seen as depositors of culture; instead, they are viewed as active agents, influencing ours and producing their own. Therefore, it looks at childhood as a group with its own expressions, gestures, thoughts, etc. This "children's culture" is what Pardal makes visible

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[151] Pardal's official website (last access on 2020/10/2), and published books of the school.

and tries to observe and understand to get to know their capacities and build a new image of childhood.

Focus on learning processes: What interests Pardal is not the teaching but the learning processes. This way, certain redefinitions occur, from times and spaces to the learnings, materials used, or teachers' intervention while accompanying these learning processes. In this context, the teacher's role is marked by an attentive attitude to what is being said, done, or asked by kids, showing trust and respect to their ideas and proposals, and trying to make them possible. Besides, there is a strong interest in the personal and unique learning itineraries, looking at how each child learns.

Well-being and Respect: The way children grow up, and the learnings they acquire are closely linked to what their environment offers. Being part of this environment, teachers in Pardal reflect much on their presence to offer respect and well-being, which is the primary condition for growing up in harmony. Therefore, respect for children's learning processes and actions, understood as ways of knowing the world, along with the preparation of spaces, times, and materials that provide options for experiences, are fundamental.

The centrality of the aesthetics, space, and materials: Each age group of kids[152] has its own space, viewed as a big habitat, a space transformed into place through the children's actions. First, in Pardal, there is much work destined to design a friendly and rich school. Spaces are permeable, with smooth, natural colors like the wood used, while the absence of doors and the big windows permit connection between spaces and the interior and exterior. Secondly, the educational materials offered in the various spaces are diverse, carefully selected, as natural and organic as possible, with little structure and much openness to possibilities. Apart from the numerous learning possibilities, there are also many regarding spontaneous relationships - interpersonal and with the physical world- facilitated and encouraged.

Time (s): A fundamental concept in Pardal is that the learning time is unique for each person, and these times are what they seek to respect through the school's organization, offering a

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[152] Called "community".

wide range of choices, adaptable to everybody's pace. Therefore, the school is designed based on the concept of inclusion, aiming to embrace all these different paces and let children create their learning trajectories without rush, which is thought to contribute to their self-confidence in the long run.

Experiential knowledge: According to the project, to get to know something, one must first understand it, which is only possible by interacting with it. Moreover, far from segregated, knowledge is global and connected. The goal is to provide children with an environment that enables them to build relationships and acquire tools that let them understand the world and therefore helps them develop the competence to decide about their actions, intervene and create knowledge.

Self-directed action: Children, according to Pardal, learn naturally through tactically exploring and acting in the world, and this action must be directed by them to be experienced in a positive, joyful way.

Autonomy and decision-making: Education, according to the project, aims to get people to live their own lives, make life decisions, and take up responsibility. Children, in this context, are viewed as active agents with an implicit autonomy that adults must allow, enabling them to develop competently and unfold their potential instead of making decisions for them.

The concept of teacher: In Pardal, there is a redefinition of the teacher's role who, instead of transmitting knowledge, accompanies children in their learning process. This is done through an attentive, respectful, listening attitude that makes the teacher a facilitator and mediator with the world. Teachers focus on listening, and they are not guides who explain or direct kids' interests to satisfy their demands or desires. Their role also implies researching how kids learn, knowing what they need to learn, and creating rich contexts for this to happen.

Relationships as vital for personal growth and learning: Relationships are at the core of the project, which acknowledges their centrality in our lives from a very young age. Encounters both among children and adults and children of the same or different age groups happen naturally

and spontaneously and are linked to kids' well-being; adults should accompany rather than impose them. Therefore, living in a community at school is thought to be facilitated through subtle architecture. At the same time, school is a place of communication and exchange among families, who are encouraged to participate. After all, only if adults linked to kids are well at school can kids themselves do the same. School is then viewed as an educational community where the agents involved co-grow up and co-evolve as a group.

Contact with nature: Rather challenging due to the school's location, the possibility for children to be in contact with natural environments is central to the project, which aims to provide an education in natural spaces of harmony and well-being. To live in peace with ourselves and the environment, we must be in direct contact with the world around us. Therefore, the creation of the exterior garden and frequent excursions out of the school are thought from this perspective. These moments of contact teach us to be comfortable with slow time, as happens with the natural rhythms, making it easier for kids to develop a greater awareness of themselves and develop more healthily.

6.1.5 Number, ages, groups of children[153]

Pardal is a public school that grows. In 2018, almost 475 kids attended the school, between 3 and 12 years old, divided into three larger and two smaller groups of approximately 25 kids, according to the age, and accompanied by a group of twenty-nine teachers in total. The larger groups, which are divided in space, are called 'comunitats' [communities], and each community consists of kids of three ages called groups, their families, and the teachers who accompany them. This structure is developed to respond to kids' specific developmental needs.

'Community of petits' (small ones) consists of 3 (group of petits), 4 (group of mitjans) and 5-year-olds (group of grans), 'Community of mitjans' (medium ones) of 6 (group of petits), 7 (group of mitjans) and 8-year-olds (group of grans) and 'Community of grans' (big ones) 9 (group of petits), 10 (group of mitjans) and 11-year-old kids (group of grans). There are two sub-groups for each age of 25 kids, apart from the 11-year-old ones that the groups are three. This is

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[153] Pardal's official website and DB': 2018/04/03, DB': 2018/05/05, DB: 2018/04/11 & DB: 2018/05/25.

because of the 'bolet', meaning mushroom, that was established by the Catalan government due to the increased birth rates and added one extra group in the first class of schools; another school every year.

Each sub-group has one reference room and one reference teacher, while one is also shared between the same age groups. These rooms of reference, although similar in aesthetics include different materials, which are thought to be appropriate for the age hosted. The reference teachers are responsible for meetings, documentation, etc. regarding their group, accompanying the kids and their families. Still, they interact with all kids of the community as they most often stay in one space, and kids move between spaces.

Each community has its floor and differentiates itself regarding the decisions, functioning, pedagogical material, and practices. Nevertheless, the educational basis and philosophy marking them are shared among all. For example, while the community of the little ones promotes activities mainly related to movement, sensory possibilities, and affective relationships, in the community of the medium ones, there are more spaces and materials available for symbolic play. These differences result from the varied necessities and paces of kids linked to their age group.

Community of grans is a dynamic community with a wide range of possibilities. Children who belong to the particular community are thought to take more educational initiatives, and their interests often transform into projects they work on, either individually or in groups. For these ages, the group is fundamental due to their intense need for belonging. Therefore, according to the educational project, children tend to look for peers with common interests, establishing relationships, and getting involved in collective practices. At the same time, there is a tendency to explore their interests individually and dedicate time to reading or writing, increasing the awareness of the learning process. Besides, specialization is something that kids show interest in; they like devoting much time and energy to know something or how to do something in-depth.

Regarding their spatial presence, kids of the grans age group are attributed the need to occupy their space and be visible while looking for spaces of privacy. This often leads to shows like concerts, dance, circus, or theatrical plays. Last, movement is also essential, and therefore there

are many spaces the community visits beyond the walls of the school, in terms of excursions, where physical activities are promoted, at times quite challenging.

Besides, sometimes, the number of kids transforms into a learning activity, when kids from the community of the medium ones count the kids of the community of the big ones in small groups of three. They enter the classes holding notebooks, ask how many kids are in the class, and write it down. Also, when kids are about to move to the next community, at the end of the school year, they get a book prepared by kids from the one going to host them, accompanied by a ritual. In the book, activities done in each space are explained in the form of drawings and writing. Last, teachers in each community divide kids in space to form mixed groups occupying the various exterior and interior places in specific numbers.

Figure 23: Structure in Pardal during 2017-2018

Community of mitjans ~ 150 kids 6-9 years old

Group of petits
- 1st group of petits — Reference teacher / Reference teacher / Extra teacher
- 2nd group of petits

Group of mitjans
- 1st group of mitjans — Reference teacher / Reference teacher / Extra teacher
- 2nd group of mitjans

Group of grans
- 1st group of grans — Reference teacher / Reference teacher / Extra teacher
- 2nd group of grans

Community of grans ~ 175 kids 9-12 years old

Group of petits
- 1st group of petits — Marius / Sança / Aloma
- 2nd group of petits

Group of mitjans
- 1st group of mitjans — Lydia / Vinyet / Beth
- 2nd group of mitjans

Group of grans
- 1st group of grans — Èlia / Cèlia / Lidón / Frida
- 2nd group of grans
- 3rd group of grans

3 communities | **9 groups** | **19 sub-groups** | **19 reference teachers 9 extra teachers**

Source: Own elaboration based on DB

255

6.1.6 Pedagogical team[154]

For every group of kids, there is one reference teacher, while there is sometimes an extra teacher supporting both groups of the same age. Although specialist teachers are contracted for subjects like arts or physical education, they have the same role as the rest in Pardal.

Every teacher is mainly connected to the rest of the same community's teachers, forming three groups, one for each community, who refer to themselves as reference teachers, while kids call them by their names. Each group is formed by nine to eleven teachers who work collaboratively to accompany the kids and families of the particular community. In other words, their role is that of a companion and a guide. In terms of this work, constant research and reflection on kids' learning processes are required, which is also why pedagogical documentation is vital. Apart from following kids and their learning processes, teachers make proposals or help them with their projects when needed, either in groups or individually, correct their writings and even participate in their activities, including bicycle or scooter routes, mountain hiking, walking in the rain or swimming in rivers. Last, they work much on documentation, taking photos of activities, and writing down their observations. It is preferred that teachers accompany the same group for an extended period, so sometimes they even move from one community to the other.

They are also alert for possible conflicts among kids that they accompany until their resolution. Besides, far from being distant to kids, they are caring and loving, hugging and casually interacting with them and sharing aspects of their personal life. Last, they have extra roles that do not relate to kids directly but with the project in general, such as administrative tasks.

Although teachers do not reveal their political ideas, all the initial ones are leftists, and many of them active feminists and independentists who participate in strikes, protests, and related events. Among them, there are groups whose training depends typically on their date of incorporation at Pardal. Of course, there are also power relations among them which mainly depend on the same.

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[154] DB: 2018/04/05. DB: 2018/04/09 & DB: 2018/02/24.

The majority are women of various ages, and they have all finished studies that permit them to work at schools such as education, special education, or childhood studies. In general, we could say that they are divided into two broad categories: the ones who are committed to the project and those who disagree with the pedagogical project and are therefore not committed to it. There are times when many new teachers enter, although this is not the case now when the pedagogical team has remained relatively stable during the last years, which has facilitated the maintenance of the pedagogical proposal.

Committed with Pardal: This category consists of teachers who either belong to the initial pedagogical team, are contracted by the Local Government's Department of Education, or are chosen by them later. It is not unusual for teachers of the last category to have worked in the dining room before. Legislation contributes to that; since 2014, the management team has had more control over the pedagogical team, as they may ask for a specific profile for some positions. They understand all the extra unpaid time and effort needed to be spent for the school to survive and evolve, and they are disposed to devote a big part of their personal lives to the project's needs.

Not committed with Pardal[155]: This category comprises teachers always contracted by the Local Government's Department of Education, who find themselves, therefore "accidentally" working at the school. When a new teacher comes to work, they are guided by a reference teacher from the older ones who is responsible for explaining everything about how Pardal works and make sure that after a period of training, a compromise with the pedagogical project is reached. If this does not happen, new teachers typically change workplace after three years, which is the compulsory period they must spend there. This mostly happens due to the cultural compression they receive from the educational community; pedagogical team, families, and kids.

Usually, a new teacher enters a class where an old teacher already accompanies if possible, ideally the middle group of each community, 5th grade (10 years old) in the case of grans. The guidance is made through regular meetings throughout the school year, usually twice per month, in terms of which various problems are discussed, and aspects are explained, from the teacher's

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[155] DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/23, DB: 2018/05/05, DB: 2018/12/10 & IB1.

role or the project's conception of learning to practical issues like how to accompany kids' learning processes. The goal is that all teachers learn to follow the same pedagogical line and respond to the challenges similarly.

The peculiarity of the project with the extra effort that must be done by teachers, the extra time that must be spent, and the need to support it, is made clear to all new teachers in a direct way, as it is revealed through the warning of a reference teacher to a new one who no longer works there: "Do you know that this school is not normal? There are no blackboards or books or homework" (DB': 2018/09/24).

During the compulsory period of teachers who disagree with the project and resist learning how to become 'a good teacher' and perform their expected role, they might get excluded and treated as 'the other' -both by colleagues and kids- and frequent conflicts may arise. An example of such a teacher is *Nina*, usually called 'police witch' by kids, most of whom do not like her. Many conflicts arise between her and the kids that lead her to cry and attempt to exercise her authority. "Kids are talking about *Nina's* conflict with Cloè that made *Nina* cry as usual. They also refer to the day she got so mad that she told them to sit down announcing she will now act as if it was a traditional school" (DB': 2019/02/11). Unlike the rest of the teachers, *Nina* does not share any personal information as revealed during a conversation with a mother and her daughter, "Nit says that she does not tell them if she has kids, and Lidia adds that *Èlia* has even described her first period" (DB: 2019/02/24).

Apart from the teachers, there are extra adults[156] accompanying kids, who are either university students of education doing their internship or volunteers[157]. At least one university student per class, chosen according to grades, typically stays for three months. These extra companions spend a few weeks of observation before they propose a workshop to offer kids to the reference teacher they assist. For example, a workshop offered by an intern during the school year 2017-2018 was musical instrument construction, also related to her final thesis about music as a means of social inclusion in another school with gypsy families.

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[156] DB: 2018/04/03, DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/11/19, DB: 2018/05/07 & DB: 2018/04/16.
[157] I should mention that although the figure of the intern is typical, the same is not the case for volunteers who are generally not met in other Catalan public schools.

These volunteers and interns are especially useful in Pardal, both for days when many teachers are away, the workshops they offer and might be of interest to kids and for daily practices; as the student-teacher ratio is incompatible with the pedagogical proposal, extra adults help a lot to accompany kids individually.

In addition, there are teachers substituting, covering sick leaves, or extra teachers of special education for kids who need to be accompanied in a more personalized way, such as kids with behavior disorders. Although the state covers part of their salary, AFI raises money for those teachers to accompany the whole day if considered helpful.

Last, apart from the adults who accompany kids directly, more adults interact with them, the school's staff, who also form part of the educational community. These are the concierge who has been part of Pardal for many years, two women who work at administration and AFI, the kitchen group, monitors of the dining room, and the cleaning group.

6.1.7 Internal Ogranization[158]

Pardal's educational community is organized at various levels.

<u>School Commitee[159]</u>

The 'Consell Escolar' or school committee is an official participatory board destined to jointly decide upon essential issues related to the school's management. Various groups, like teachers, families (one mother/father from each community) participate in it, staff and municipal representatives. Usually, the committee has four annual meetings, two of them focused on management and the rest on pedagogical topics. At the same time, some of the committee's members are part of the municipal school council, a body that brings together institutions, family associations, and other educational agents in the area.

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[158] AFI's blogspot (Last access: 2017/04/04), Pardal's official webpage & DB': 2018/2/12.
[159] Pardal's official webpage.

In every Catalan school, there is an association of families, usually called AMPA[160]. In the case of Pardal, it is called AFI[161], a vital structure re-formed in 2017 based on collective decision making and horizontality. This is an active association that frequently organizes projects destined to support the school's needs and coordinates all committees. Apart from the mothers and fathers who volunteer at AFI, one mother works as a contracted coordinator and is responsible for various issues and distribution of funds for retreats, dining service, etc.

Parental Committees:

Parents are also voluntarily organized in seven committees, each with a different role.

- Economic [comissió econòmica]: organizes xocolatadas[162] during Christmas, babysitting during meetings and extracurricular activities, helps families with scholarships, etc. Every family must pay a 26 euros fee minimum annually for AFI, which permits them to receive the mentioned services, vote in assemblies, and participate in the committees.
- Dining room [comisió menjador]: Organizes everything related to the dining room service.
- Grow up in community [comisió Creixer en comunitat]: Organizes welcome days for new families at school to find their place in the community and give them support resolving doubts they might have related to AFI or life in Pardal in general.
- Special days [comisió de dies especials]: Helps with Pardal's special days like pedagogical days [jornadas pedagogiques].
- Computing [comisió d' informatica]: Among else, this committee works on setting up Pardal's webpage and improving the reception of e-mails for families.
- Communication [comisió de comunicacio]: This committee is responsible for AFI's blogspot and the external communication of what happens at school.
- Merchandising [comisió de marxandatge]: Responsible for preparing and selling products destined to support the school's activities economically.

Apart from those, there are some temporary committees or platforms generated by the school's needs. Some examples are the committee 'Escola-Institut' and the platform 'No gas station at

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[160] Associació de Mares y Pares de Alumnos [Association of students' mothers and fathers].
[161] Associació de families d'infants [Association of kids' families].
[162] Acts of collective hot chocolate drinking, especially popular in Catalan celebrations and public events.

Núvol' we saw before. Last, AFI is responsible for raising funds destined for teachers who are contracted to accompany kids with special needs so that they can stay more if needed.

<u>Friends of Pardal Association (Associacio d' amics d' el pardal)[163]</u>

A non-profit association, founded in 2007, in which various people participate, Pardal's teachers in their majority and others interested in education and childhood, who all have Pardal as their reference for reflection regarding pedagogical practices. FPA supports studies on pedagogy, publishes related material, and organizes workshops and training days. One of those is the 'pedagogical days' when teachers from all over Spain visit Pardal to learn about the project. The association's ultimate objective -apart from the funds that derive and are destined to buy Pardal's material like books, games, furniture, etc.- is to defend children's right to an education of quality and promote the image of childhood Pardal does.

Meetings[164]: For the existence and continuity of Pardal's educational project, active participation is essential. Therefore, both meetings among teachers and families and among teachers only are frequent and vital for the school's functioning.

Teachers of each community have two weekly meetings, on Monday and Wednesday. The meetings start after school ends, at 4.30 p.m., and last for about two hours. All community's teachers are expected to be present and participate. These are unpaid hours out of the official working shift for the pedagogical team, who interpret this time of devotion as necessary.

Besides, there are three meetings with families during the school year in each community, one every three months, which are optional for family members to assist, plus one personal meeting with every family per year, which is compulsory. The latter is called 'interview', and there is a day per week reserved for this purpose in every class. Most families choose to have more than one interview, either after a teacher's proposal or their own will. Usually, teachers place a list on

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[163] Friends of Pardal Association's webpage, Pardal's official webpage & DB': 2018/08/06.
[164] DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/03, DB: 2018/12/03, DB: 2018/05/30 & Pardal's official webpage.

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their reference room's door with the days and times they are available, which parents are supposed to fill depending on their availability.

I should mention that Pardal seems to have a horizontal orientation despite being a public school, encouraging all members' active participation in decision-making. However, it also has a specific structure determined by the state. Therefore, although everyone's voice is heard, a management team is formed by a director, a head of studies, and a secretary is responsible for administrative and pedagogical management tasks.

The directive group, along with six teachers, form the coordination group. This is what connects the three communities and reflects upon the various lines of work in the school. Besides, apart from their pedagogical function, every teacher must get involved in organizational tasks like economic management or management of excursions.

6.2 One day at Pardal

The following parts describe the basic practices at Pardal, narrated following a typical day there, focusing on the community of grans and highlighting some key aspects. First, I will refer to the daily schedule and rituals of the educational community. Then, starting from the arrival and morning meetings, we will take a closer look at the guided and self-directed learning activities such as proposals and projects. Then workshops and shows will be described. The next sections are devoted to free play, excursions, late breakfast, and book reading, and the last two sections focus on teachers' meetings and documentation.

6.2.1 Daily schedule[165]

All kids are supposed to arrive at 9.00 a.m. -although a few arrive a bit later- when they enter their space of reference and have the morning meeting with the teacher(s) of reference. Teachers arrive a bit earlier to place their items at the teachers' room. After the morning meeting, kids start with their activities until 10.30 a.m., when they have a thirty-minute breakfast break before

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[165] DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/09 & DB: 2018/12/17.

returning to the same or others. The community then leaves at 12.30 p.m. for lunch, while many kids stay in the dining room. Therefore, monitors come upstairs with the list of the kids who are supposed to stay to accompany them to the ground floor. Everyone comes back at 14.30 p.m. and stays until 16.00 p.m. This time structure is imposed by the Catalan government and is not the community's choice. Instead, many of Pardal's members would prefer to have one zone only, from 9.00 a.m. to 14.00 p.m.

Table 16: Time structure at Pardal

9.00 – 10.30	**First Zone Part I**
10.30 – 11.00	**Late Breakfast**
11.00 – 12.30	**First Zone Part II**
12.30 – 14.30	**Lunch Break**
14.30 – 16.00	**Second Zone**

Source: Own elaboration based on DB

According to the spaces open, kids, divided into their communities and classes, are gathered in the morning to decide upon their individualized schedule of the day. Open space means that a teacher is inside to accompany, regardless of whether the door is open.

During the morning meeting, teachers hold lists of children and make questions to write down where everyone is supposed to go, both at the first and the second zone. Since students must spend a minimum of weekly hours for maths, reading, and writing, it is the time when they are made to add these to their schedule in case they have not worked on the particular areas during the week. Besides, teachers encourage kids to visit as many spaces as possible, especially those observed to be stuck in a specific space. In some cases, mainly among the 11-year-old ones, kids prepare their weekly schedule.

Therefore, during the first and second zone, kids are divided into their community spaces and the playground in specific numbers, working on personal or group projects, practicing maths, reading, or writing. The only exception to this personalized schedule is English which kids have

certain days and hours per week to work on. All in all, kids' schedules are personalized, linked to spaces rather than subjects, and classes are mixed. Kids may choose between spaces to move but each space has a maximum capacity so specific number from each class is asked to go every time. There follows an example from a general timetable of a group of 9-year-olds whose reference space was carpentry:

Table 17: Example of the weekly schedule at Pardal

Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
English 1st group/ Corridor/ Kitchen/ Sewing/ Garden	Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Garden	Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Sewing	Carpentry/ Corridor/ Kitchen/ Garden	Music/ Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Garden
BREAKFAST				
English 2nd group/ Corridor/ Kitchen/ Sewing/ Garden	Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Kitchen/ Garden	English 3rd group/ Corridor/ Sewing/ Kitchen/ Garden	English 4th group/ Corridor/ Kitchen/ Garden	Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Kitchen/ Garden
LUNCH				
Carpentry/ Scrapbook/ Garden	Carpentry/ Corridor/ Garden	Scrapbook/ Corridor/ Garden	Scrapbook/ Corridor/ Garden/ Maths Workshop	Carpentry/ Corridor/ Garden

Source: Own elaboration based on DB: 2018/12/17

6.2.2 Rituals[166]

Local festive seasons like Christmas, Easter, or Carnival are not celebrated at Pardal. This is a conscious decision made by the pedagogical team due to the cultural diversity among families and the fact that not all members of the educational community have the same celebrations or customs. The same goes for decoration which does not change during local festive seasons either. This decision is not the same for all public schools, or at least the primary public schools located

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[166] DB: 2018/04/05, DB': 2019/03/04 & DB': 2019/01/09.

at the municipality where AMPAs tend to organize celebrations and teachers prepare related activities for kids. Nevertheless, Pardal is undoubtedly not characterized by a lack of ritualization since the school has instead developed its own daily and occasional rituals.

<u>Daily Rituals</u>

Morning Meeting[167]: The first ritual occurs during the early morning hours, when kids are supposed to be arriving at school, usually a few minutes after 9 a.m. until 9.30 a.m. They enter their room where their reference teacher already waits for them, some accompanied by a relative and others on their own. Then they place a fruit they are expected to bring from home in the basket and sit, either on the carpet floor or the benches around. The teachers are generally seated on chairs, forming a circle. The meeting is usually focused on deciding upon the daily schedule and updating about the projects' progress.

Breakfast[168]: The breakfast ritual starts when all kids have arrived and placed their fruit in the wooden basket. Every day, a different class is responsible for the breakfast preparation for the whole community; three kids usually volunteer during the morning meeting. In case there are no volunteers, the reference teacher chooses them. After the meeting, they gather the baskets from all classes and bring them to the kitchen to wash and share the fruit.

The kids who prepare the ritual are not allowed to eat during the preparation, although there are many times that they skip this rule and eat some dry food secretly when no teachers are around. The specific process lasts approximately one hour, from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., when kids bring the reordered baskets back to the classrooms, along with a cutting table, a knife, and some crackers with marmalade breadsticks, rice/corn cakes, or other dry food. In case there are allergic kids, they bring their taper with dry food.

Sometimes, kids might prepare something special in the kitchen like smoothies or juice, which are offered during breakfast by the kids who prepared it. Seated around the table, kids can start

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[167] DB: 2018/04/05.
[168] DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/05/03 & DB: 2018/05/17.

eating after everyone has arrived at the room and the reference teacher has given the permission, *Beth* in the example that follows, "A boy says that they can start eating, but *Beth* announces that there are many kids still missing, "I'm sorry, but no, you have to wait a bit for your mates'" (DB: 2018/05/17). Before starting, the teacher informs them about the quantity of dry food they may eat. If all kids have eaten and there's more left, she announces how much more they can eat.

Then, both kids and teachers or adults who are there for their internship may cut fruit of their preference using the knife on the cutting board and get the number of crackers announced by the teacher. Just like kids, adults get their late breakfast straight from the cutting table without using any plate, cutlery, or other serving implements. If everyone has eaten, and there are still some left, the teacher announces how many more they can get if they are still hungry.

At around 11 a.m., some kids offer to clean the tables with a towel and bring the remains of breakfast back to the kitchen, or, if nobody does, the teacher gives the role to the ones who haven't done it lately. The kids who prepared the ritual are now responsible for washing all the tools and serving surfaces used, in the kitchen sink, using the necessary equipment. Usually, two kids wash the dishes, and one of them dries them and puts them away.

While the breakfast ritual occurs, kids must stay inside their reference room even when they finish eating and maintain a quiet ambiance. However, they are encouraged to engage in casual conversations or even educational practices, sometimes related to ongoing projects. After eating, kids can stay around reading, writing, or being involved in activities offered in their space.

Tidy Up: Leaving a space without tidying up what has been used is not acceptable at Pardal, where "recollim" (tidy up) is one of the most repeated words throughout the day. Teachers remind kids to do so various times until they embody the rule; some do it faster while others resist for a longer time[169].

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[169] DB: 2018/04/05.

Book Reading[170]: After tidying up towards the end of the first zone at 12 p.m., kids should spend 30 minutes reading a literature book. Although the activity is compulsory for everyone, the details are upon kids' decision: they choose the language (Catalan or Spanish), the book, and the space that will host their book reading. Most of them use either the tables or the reading corner in the corridor, the table in the small outer space, or their reference room.

Arrival and Exit[171]: Periods of arrival and exit at the first and second zones are ritualized. Apart from the presence of more adults like parents, family members, babysitters, or dining room monitors, music is then present, which can be heard in the whole building. Music is non-commercial, most times relaxing and mostly instrumental like jazz, Celtic or Balkan.

Invented Rituals: Ritualized practices are not only imposed by adults; kids create their rituals as well repeated every day. An example is the 'garbage ritual'; watching through the window and hearing the daily garbage collection opposite the school. "After a few minutes, Ovidi stops reading. He says, "I've missed the garbage time" and explains he likes hearing the sound of glass breaking during garbage collection" (DB: 2018/04/17).

Occasional Rituals

End of the school year & community change: A whole rite of passage occurs when kids change community. On the one hand, they are given a book prepared by the kids of their next community, explaining the spaces, activities, and reference teachers. All kids must participate in the process of making the book. Therefore, either in small groups or individually, they are asked to write and draw a part of it. Throughout its preparation, which mainly happens during morning meetings, various aspects arise mostly related to their perspectives on the activities of the specific community, which most kids regard as more demanding:

> *Vinyet* starts reading points kids have already made from the computer such as "you have to listen to the teacher carefully", "double or triple work than in mitjans" or "you've got a

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[170] DB: 2018/04/05.
[171] DB: 2018/04/16.

lot of projects that if you compromise with you must finish; otherwise you've got a problem" (DB: 2018/06/06).

Besides, perspectives on the pedagogical team are discussed; it's the time of their informal evaluation by kids[172]. At the same time, kids get through a series of trials through which they get the first contact with those new spaces. This also marks the end of the school year[173].

The ritual in the community of grans begins the previous day when kids must reorder and tidy up all spaces. This is a positive experience for many due to the collective character it has: "Hana says tidying up the school is fun. Estel agrees, adding that it's only fun at school and not at home because here you do it with friends and the way you wish" (DB: 2018/06/19).

Groups of the receiving community, in mixed ages, are spread among the spaces. Although a teacher is generally inside the room as well, kids are the ones who have the role of the companion this day. Each group is responsible for a trial related to one space. Kids who are supposed to change community hold a passport where they collect stamps after successfully passing through trials like experiments, sewing, English, scrapbooking, origami, jumping, balancing, etc. Teachers view this as a fun way for kids to learn about their upcoming community rather than a competitive activity, a fact that they keep reminding kids who might experience it as a stressful if not competitive process.

> In the sewing room, kids have to sew a button. A girl from the group announces that she finished, and *Aloma*, who's there, asks, "so why don't you help her?". Lia says that they won because one of them has made it. A girl asks if they won after a while, and the girl who finished answers "yes, because I have won". Another girl who couldn't do it says, "I'll do it at home, I don't know what happens here, but I'm getting nervous" (DB: 2018/06/20).

Activities vary according to the space, from sewing a button to writing ten words in English or creating a colorful volcano for the experiments' trial. Apart from the opportunity to learn about the spaces that will host them during the next three years, kids in the role of companion offer their peers some lessons regarding the community's rules. Sometimes these lessons derive from

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[172] DB: 2018/05/30.
[173] DB´: 2018/04/25 & DB: 2018/06/06.

kids who keep escaping them during the year, such as Lia: "Lia is shouting "Kids, you must tidy up. What do you think that you will do at grans, wait for the teachers to do it? Kids are the ones who tidy up'" (DB: 2018/20/6).

> A boy who is accompanying announces that if under half of the kids do not make it, they won't get the stamp. A teacher from mitjans, who is around, says he should come with her back to the community, joking. Lia says, "I will teach you", helping some kids. While giving instructions, she is looking at the teacher (DB: 2018/06/20).

In the above extract, we see how values like mutual support are what teachers expect kids to learn through the teacher's words. Also, through Lia's performative act of solidarity, we see how some kids are entirely aware of the values they are expected to develop.

In terms of the trials, conflicts happen at times among the companions due to the different degrees of participation. This usually occurs when kids are not supervised in contexts of teachers' absence. "Nàdia is lying on the sofa, complaining that the rest of the group don't let her do anything. Alysia calls her stupid; she cannot wait, and she wants to do what Alysia is doing" (DB: 2018/05/20).

But that does not mean that everyone is happy with their role and wants to participate. Kids who are not integrated into a peer group do not like it when they find themselves in such cases, developing strategies to escape them instead, like "becoming invisible" through self-exclusion.

Apart from the groups responsible for accompanying the trials, a group of kids prepares the collective food in the kitchen. At the end of the trials, all kids and teachers get together at the playground, where the late breakfast prepared by the kitchen group waits for them, served on the big picnic tables. This time, it is a bit more special than other days; fruit is already cut in pieces, and apart from dry food, there are also some sweet treats. Kids who have just passed through the ritual have priority over those.

The rite finishes with a water fight. One of the teachers holds the hosepipe in the middle of the playground, and the rest of the kids play around, throwing water at each other using buckets. Some kids and adults wear clothes, while most are in their swimming suits. This is a moment

many kids look forward to during the ritual. Afterward, they all sit in the sun to get dry, eating some leftovers if hungry.

In the end, everyone gets together in the big performance room for the last part of the ritual. Kids sit in a circle in complete silence. Then, three kids from grans bring some boxes with books and place them in the middle. A teacher welcomes everyone in the community of grans, and books about the community are shared among all.

6.2.3 Arrival & morning meeting[174]

As we saw before, a few minutes after 9 a.m., there starts a daily meeting among kids and teachers which lasts until 9.30 a.m. Before we take a closer look at these meetings, I should mention that the same form of morning meetings is often repeated at late breakfast time, when topics have not been covered, or new ones must be announced or discussed.

Upon arrival, kids place fruit in the basket and sit on a bench or the floor carpet to start the daily meeting, while the reference teacher sits on a bench or a chair, forming a circle. Often, especially with specific kids, parents enter the room accompanying them and sometimes even staying for a few more minutes: "Sira explains that she cannot decide if she wants to go to the colonias. Her mom is also there, holding a book of feng shui" (DB: 2018/05/22).

Teachers then make announcements, organize the group regarding colonias or excursions and talk with them to decide upon the personalized schedules of the day, depending on the open spaces available and the number of kids who can go to each. Most times, their choices are influenced by their friends' choices: "*Sança* asks a boy what he wants to do in the morning, and he answers "I am going to think about it". He then asks his friends and tells her "I know now" (DB: 2018/12/17). Open spaces are usually announced by the teachers, who have them in written form held in a folder. As mentioned, all spaces are open, but only those with an adult inside may

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[174] DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/04/26, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/05/16, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/05/22, DB: 2018/05/30, DB: 2018/06/06, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/06/11, DB: 2018/06/20, DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/11/12, DB: 2018/11/19, DB: 2018/11/26, DB: 2018/12/03 & DB: 2018/12/17.

be used. Exceptions can be made sometimes when a small number of kids want to use a specific space, when it opens even without the presence of an adult, reminding them that they must follow the rules of the specific space while using it.

In some cases, during these meetings, teachers also use kids as bridges of communication with their parents when they want to remind them about future meetings or interviews, for instance. Finally, every Monday, kids are given an enigma they are invited to think of until the end of the week when kids propose their solutions and the teacher announces the correct.

When there is some time left, especially when they must wait for a joint activity of the community such as attendance to a performance, teachers take advantage of it to read kids stories, sometimes their own stories written in the school's books: "*Beth* proposes to read a story while waiting for the English theatre. Kids agree, and they ask her to read something from the book 'things of the grans'; the story with the crepes and the story with the experiment" (DB: 2018/04/26).

Some topics that often arise during these morning meetings are the following.

Get busy: It does not matter if a kid chooses to stay inside and get involved in educational activities or outside and play; kids must be doing something they have compromised.

The need to practice reading, writing, maths, and English: As a teacher said during a meeting, "at school, we come to learn, and whoever does not have this clear on mind, has a problem" (DB: 2018/11/15). Some kids still face reading, writing, or maths problems in the community and often try to avoid practicing. Teachers remind them they need to do so, explaining why it is important and encouraging them that it will get easier with more effort.

Kids must understand why they must practice the certain learning activities every week and realize their importance on a practical level. For example, during a meeting, it is discussed that kids do not do maths voluntarily. When a boy asks why it is compulsory, the teacher answers:

"things are not learned on their own, they are learned by doing them.. and these are things needed for everything" (DB: 2019/11/05).

When kids are regarded as incapable or unwilling to internalize the idea and include these activities in their weekly schedules, teachers might develop strategies to impose them. One of them is partly deciding themselves upon when each kid is supposed to do them. Despite the non-negotiable character of these activities, it is not uncommon for teachers to encourage kids to let their interests guide them, as revealed in the following example when a teacher asks what they are going to do and kids who have not written during the week want to play.

> Maties: Play
> *Vinyet*: No
> Maties: Lord of the rings but without sticks.
> *Vinyet*: What have you done during the whole week? Have you written?
> Maties: *nods head yes*
> *Vinyet*: Can you show us?
> *Silence*
> *Vinyet*: There are moments of playing, moments of drawing, and moments of writing. Grab your notebook and write about the lord of the rings game.
>
> *Vinyet* tells Sira and Rita to do the same. Then she comments, "this is not free.. It is a school. One must write.. if it doesn't come from their own will, what can we do… they are nine years old" (DB: 2018/04/27).

The need to finish ongoing projects first before starting new ones[175]: It is not unusual that kids get bored or tired of a project, and instead of finishing it, they rather try to get involved in new ones. This is something not accepted by teachers at Pardal who insist on the importance of finishing some projects before starting new ones. Their number varies from two to four, depending on the age and the group. Teachers usually keep track of the ongoing and finished projects by periodically asking about their progress during the daily meetings.

Behavioral issues: These vary and are connected to what teachers consider appropriate behavior that facilitates kids' concentration during the meetings. For example, if kids sit where they are not supposed to or closer than they should, teachers intervene with phrases like 'get off the table', 'do you want to place yourselves well?' or 'there are many people together'. The

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[175] DB: 2018/04/24 & DB: 2018/04/19.

objective, after all, is to create a familiar ambiance where kids can feel calm and comfortable. Therefore, intervention is also destined to other aspects, such as encouragement to take off clothes if too hot, until the desired ambiance is reached.

The same goes of course for the cases when all kids are talkative; teachers insist that if all of them talk at the same time, it is impossible to organize themselves and sometimes give them the option of leaving the room, reminding them that being there is not compulsory: "Nàdia is talking, and *Beth* says that she does not like the parallel conversation she is having, adding that if she wants to leave there is no problem. Without saying a word, she goes silent" (DB: 2018/06/06).

Interventions might occur in specific cases when kids' behavior is against the 'school's' or 'children's culture' to which they must obey. One of these cases is when a few boys made some drawings of people smoking weed, and the teacher devotes a meeting to talk about it:

> With a loud and angry voice, she asks them if they want a second opportunity or if she should speak with their moms.. "you are kids, not young people or adolescents" she says, adding that "as we do not draw weapons because it is against our school's culture, we cannot draw this either" (DB: 2018/11/12).

When kids insist on resisting the rules imposed, there are consequences, as shown through an example of a teacher reading an extract of a school's book after kids had asked for it: "Rafa comments every time he sees himself in a photo.. Many kids are talking to each other… *Beth* stands up, closes the book, and says "I'm sorry, but I will not continue reading something you are not interested in; you can read it home" (DB: 2018/06/07).

Sometimes, the role of the teacher is taken up by kids who have embodied the school's rules: "Dèlia tells Borja to take his hood off. Asia agrees: "At school, we must take off the hood". Borja asks why and *Beth* answers, "Because it is a rule of the school". Then Borja tells Nàdia to spit her chewing gum" (DB: 2018/05/17).

However, teachers are the ones responsible for reminding of the norms and limits and not the kids, something revealed in the words of a teacher:

There is the typical kid who says, look, he got two strawberries instead of one. We are clear; this is something I take care of because I am the teacher.. you should enjoy being a kid and only bother if something affects you personally (DB': 2018/05/05).

In the case of behaviors affecting the group, such peer intervention is encouraged by teachers who seem to know that cultural compression is much stronger among peers; a strategy employed when a kid was naughty during a meeting, as demonstrated in the words of the teacher. "Really now? Do you think that is funny?" Kids answer no. She continues, "If you do not tell him anything, he will keep like this.. We finish the course as we started it" (DB: 2018/06/20). All in all, the embodiment of the behavioral norms and the subsequent obedience to them is something expected to be developed through time, and the peer group has a significant role in it.

The 'invisibility' of some kids: Although it is expected from all kids to participate during morning meetings, not all of them do so; some instead resist through self-exclusion, as we may see in the following example. The extract is from a meeting devoted to the book kids prepare to describe their community to the new ones, and more specifically, the part of the teachers' descriptions: "Sira hasn't said a word. *Vinyet* asks her what she wants to add; she says she does not know, shrouding her shoulders. *Vinyet* continues: "what would you say about *Frida*, *Sança*, me". Her response is the same" (DB: 2018/05/30).

6.2.4 Learning activities

Proposals & Projects[176]

Most of the learning activities at Pardal are self-directed proposals or projects, accompanied by teachers who keep track of their progress and help in case it is needed. In these activities, kids are encouraged to make their own decisions and do things without external help. They learn that they should not wait for anybody to tell them how things should be, but instead try, look for ways, experiment, and trust in themselves. Limiting the instructions to the minimum is thought to ultimately develop kids' independence on which teachers refer to using the term 'autonomy'. In

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[176] DB: 2018/04/10, DB': 2018/05/05.

the following extract, we focus on two examples that best reveal how teachers transmit the value of this skill and how peers might do the same:

> Some girls ask *Sança* what color they should paint the parrot, she says, "I don't know, that's your decision".. Vanessa asks Asia to tell her what to write about Athens in her travel guide. "Don't ask me", the girl answers, "you have to think yourself". Then she helps Vanessa find some information in the books (DB: 2018/12/17).

The transmission of the particular skill is thought to be essential and, according to a teacher, what mainly differentiates kids from Pardal from those who attend other public schools and need a teacher to guide them, constantly asking what they have to do. On the other hand, kids in Pardal are thought to have much autonomy, ideas, and ways to look for information and solutions, something considered essential for their future.

Kids work on projects and proposals individually or in groups, and there is a limit of how many projects they can be working on at the same time. They must compromise to finish them from the beginning. Besides, there are also some projects which last in time and which kids choose depending on their interests. Nevertheless, they can also make their own projects' proposals on which they may start working if their reference teacher approves.

After the morning meeting, kids spread all over, at the open spaces or micro-spaces where they get involved in guided or self-directed activities. Due to the considerable number of self-directed activities, these are divided into sub-categories depending on where they occur. Some can be realized regardless of where, but most occur in specific spaces or micro-spaces equipped with the necessary material. Before we take a better look at the activities themselves, some general notes follow, originated from these learning activities and reveal central aspects of the pedagogical proposal[177].

\-   First of all, every activity has specific steps to follow. In those based on writing, for example, kids first work on a draft and rewrite it when they get the teacher's approval. The only personal material used apart from the collective material found in Pardal is three personal

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[177] DB: 2018/12/04, DB: 2018/06/14, DB: 2018/06/19, DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/11/19, DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/12/10, DB: 2018/12/17 & DB': 2019/05/12.

notebooks (for maths, English, and writing; one extra optional for drawing as well) kept in kids' boxes.

- It is not uncommon that activities and spaces get interconnected, as the various fields of knowledge are interconnected. Therefore, during English or by writing the prices on a restaurant menu, kids might also be practicing maths. Similarly, apart from cooking skills, kids also practice writing if they work on a recipe proposal. The same goes for travel guides or theatre plays, for which script must be written.

> With the help of teachers, kids create their personalized schedule, depending on their interests and the compulsory learning activities that must be realized. If they run out of ideas or show a lack of interest, teachers may assign them projects to encourage them to explore the various spaces. It is not acceptable that kids wander around doing nothing: "*Beth* sees Borja wandering around and tells him to get busy with something. He asks her what, and she says, "I don't care, read, play'" (DB: 2018/06/12).

- When kids finally explore a space or micro-space in which they have not shown interest before, they often get verbally praised by the teaching staff: "Three boys are doing an experiment. *Beth* enters and says enthusiastically "I can't believe it! Finally, they have come here" (DB: 2018/04/12).

- Similarly, teachers must also be at specific spaces during the day, accompanying kids of the community. Although they rotate in spaces, each has a major one where they acompañan most of the time. Nevertheless, acompañamiento in Pardal is a difficult task due to the big ratio. Therefore, the help of interns and volunteers is significant. Autonomy is connected to the level of guidance needed as teachers usually refer to kids who get involved in self-directed activities and do not need any help using the word 'autonomous'. We may see this through the example of a teacher who differentiated kids playing Playmobil and are "completely autonomous" from the ones creating scrapbooks "relatively autonomous" and others doing maths who might need more help[178].

- Kids are encouraged to develop their creativity while expressing themselves in their ways is given much importance, space, and time, even if that means that ongoing work on

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[178] DB: 2018/05/07.

projects must temporarily pause: "Kids comment on a girl who can cry whenever she wants. She says she must concentrate on something, starts looking at a boy's T-shirt and saying a sad story. *Lydia* asks kids to be quiet, and everyone stares at her" (DB: 2018/05/16).

- Although kids can work on projects and proposals, both individually and in groups, they must clarify from the beginning. Teamwork is encouraged, but commitment is the priority; kids can only help with classmates' projects if they have finished their work. Peer interactions and relationships are not only at the core of Pardal but they are also promoted daily.

- There are many times kids have the chance to cooperate and work in a team, therefore, learning to value teamwork, asking for and offering their help when needed. Kids show each other their creations, explain, help, and observe the rest. They discuss various topics, from video games to personal stories. They also chase flies, clean, put vegetables in the fridge, engage themselves in spontaneous play such as covering a mate's body with pillows, etc. Sometimes intergenerational encounters happen too, especially at the playground, which is shared among kids from all communities, or due to arranged visits of kids to other communities.

- Kids are free to interact and collaborate with peers of their choice, as long as the teachers observe no repetitive conflicts. In this case, they intervene, imposing a distance between these kids. Besides, they also intervene in case kids avoid interactions with peers, which has a negative meaning. What is more, due to the different paces while exploring the material available, some of them have done activities that others do for the first time; a fact that also leads to teamwork and transforms kids who have experience of a particular activity into teachers who give instructions and accompany their peers.

- Spaces are vivid; many things are happening at the same time everywhere. Kids constantly move inside and through spaces, which consists of one of Pardal's key aspects, but it is also vital for kids diagnosed as 'hyper-active'. In addition, activities taking place in a single space are numerous, including card/board games and informal conversations that happen all the time. Gestures, sounds, and smells are also present, adding coziness to the vivid ambiance.

Two girls and doing maths and another is writing, working on the collective 'suitcase' proposal; kids are supposed to write what items they would put in a suitcase. A few girls at the big table are talking about the theatre play. *Beth* is sitting at the small table. Orestes arrives, and she says, "hey, what's up Orestes", smiling; she hugs him. In the corridor, some girls are moving, holding a broomstick. The sound of a metal wind-chime is heard at times (DB: 2018/04/19).

However, despite the vivid ambiance, interior spaces are places of concentration. When kids are engaged in learning activities, it is not allowed to make noise, chat, play or wander around if not needed. Since spaces are small and many things are happening simultaneously, a quiet, controlled environment must be maintained so that everyone can work on their projects. For this, kids must also get their shoes off before entering any interior space and are allowed to enter from the main door only and not from the one facing the exterior.

- Teachers often remind kids that they have chosen to be where they are and must respect the rules. If kids insist on their attitude, they give them a choice to leave the space -in case their presence there is voluntary- or follow the strategy of separation if the problem is repeated and believed to proceed from peer dynamics. Such separation might happen for a short or a more extended period if kids' behavior does not change.

Separation is a strategy followed for cases that happen when teachers are absent as well. For example, during the school year 2017-2018, at lunchtime in the dining room, two ten-year-old girls were receiving a massage from two boys of their age when some kids around started saying -'for fun'- that this is better than porn, encouraging the boys to rape the girls. The boys then grabbed the girls' asses, and chests and the girls started crying. The consequences after the specific event were the division of the boys into two different groups; one with nine-year-olds and the other with eleven-year-olds for a period, as well as the communitarian job (help in administrative tasks) imposed on the kids who had verbally participated.

- Kids transmit culture during informal conversations, sharing knowledge and aspects of their and their families' lifestyles. Nevertheless, although such transmission is present daily, it is most relevant for kids whose parents have consciously chosen the school. Those who face

discontinuities between home and school culture rarely express aspects of their lifestyles if not asked to, as revealed in the following example.

> Olga says she often travels to France, where her grandparents have a huge house. She speaks French with her dad and Catalan with her mom. Khalil is there too. A volunteer asks him if he speaks French too. He says no and leaves. He later returns and says he speaks Arabic, English, Catalan, Spanish and Berber; his mother speaks Berber only (DB: 2018/04/24).

- I should also mention that while kids work on the projects and proposals, it is usual that teachers take photos of them for subsequent documentation. Finished proposals are exhibited for a few days out of the space where they were created so that the rest can see them. At the end of the school course, both individual and collective finished proposals and projects that can be transferred, such as paintings, writings, comics, and crafts, are brought home. They are transferred in plastic bags and envelopes.

- Last, many adult members of Pardal's educational community, both teachers and families, are politically active. However, expressing political ideas is unacceptable in the school, which is supposed to be politically neutral. There follows a clear example: "Nèstor is chanting "Freedom political prisoners[179]" loud, raising his fist like participating in a protest. *Sança* intervenes, saying "Nèstor, I think this is not the place for saying this" (DB: 2018/05/08). However, kids do talk about politics during informal conversations when no teacher is around: "The girls are making fun of Rajoy, "Only his chachas [servants] like him", Nàdia says" (DB: 2018/04/19). This 'political neutrality' is thought to both respect the variety of families' political ideas and keep kids away from something that does not concern them, according to a mother[180].

Interior

English[181]: English is practiced through both projects and proposals regardless of the space. It is the only subject with fixed hours and specific teachers that accompany it who speak

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[179] Popular motto among supporters of Catalan independence.
[180] IC5.
[181] DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/05/08, DB: 2018/05/08, DB: 2018/05/29, DB: 2018/05/30, DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/11/26, DB: 2018/12/10, DB: 2018/12/17 & DB: 2019/03/04.

English only. For this activity, every group is divided into four sub-groups of about six kids, and it may take place in any space available. Learning materials often used may be found in two spaces, but they can be moved where the class occurs. An English class consists of two sub-groups of kids who have the same age. For example, 9-year-old kids of a sub-group who belong to the 1st group of English have English classes with the 9-year-old kids of the other sub-group who belong to the same. At the same time, if individual kids choose to move to the space where the English teacher is during their free hours for more practice, they can do so. They get engaged in various collective or individual activities such as the following:

Board games: Either playing English board games that can be found at Pardal or creating board games, usually in groups of two to four.

Theatre plays: Everything that needs to be done for a theatre play for which kids work in sub-groups. They get involved in various activities, from writing the script in English to creating the tickets for the play and designing the materials needed, and finally, they present it to the rest of the community.

Comics: Mostly an individual activity, kids think of stories and prepare comics in English, the compilation of which might lead to books too. Sometimes, the story is wholly invented, while others, it is already written by the teacher who leaves a few blankets in the text, so kids rewrite it with their characters.

Imagined Animals: This is an individual activity leading to the creation of an imagined animal. First, kids pick up various parts of animals that are cut and kept in a box, place them on a piece of paper and glue them together. The result is their imagined animal. Then, they imagine its characteristics such as its name, habitat, height, weight, and alimentation.

Restaurant menu: Kids, in groups, create a restaurant menu, writing the food and beverages, the prices, and designing the front page. Depending on the kids' English level, the teacher might provide them with a menu written by her, which they must rewrite.

Recipes: Normally in small groups of two-four, kids write recipes in English, such as muffins, that they later cook in the kitchen.

Interviews: Sometimes, in small groups of two to four, kids conduct personal interviews in English, aiming to use them for bigger projects like creating magazines. With the teacher's help, they find English-speaking people and ask a few simple questions, which they record for further transcription. An example of interview questions: 1) What is your name?, 2) Where do you live?, 3) Do you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend?, 4) Do you like Pardal?, 5) Do you like Barcelona?, 6) What is your favorite color?, 7) What do you like doing in your free time?

I should mention that the compulsory character of the activity is not pleasant for everyone and sometimes kids show resistance by trying to escape, although they are aware of its utility, as seen in the example that follows: "Three boys try to escape English, but come back after a while, one by one. Denis says he cannot do English because he has to play.. "it is boring", he says, "but it's compulsory. Besides, it's something one must learn" (DB: 2018/12/10).

Also, as during all activities, conflicts among kids from different affinity groups frequently arise, mostly between peers or affinity groups of different gender, and frequently include insults based on physical characteristics. "While working on their projects, boys start insulting the girls calling them shitfaced and commenting on their work. Girls are telling them that they shouldn't mess with them" (DB: 2018/12/10).

Maths[182]: Despite being a field of knowledge practiced through various activities in Pardal, kids work on maths as an independent activity. The material used is calculations or maths problems based on daily issues, prepared by the pedagogical team and kept in boxes. Although these often occur mainly in the corridor where a table hosts the necessary material, this can be transferred and used in every space. Kids either practice on their own or in groups. When help is needed, a teacher, intern, or volunteer accompanies them. Once they finish, their work is corrected by an adult as well.

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[182] DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/06/05, DB: 2018/06/11, DB: 2018/06/12, DB: 2018/06/17, DB: 2018/06/19 & DB': 2018/05/05.

The material used is mainly wooden, manipulative, and Montessorian. There are cubes and cuboids of different sizes that symbolize the numbers: one, ten, and hundred and are used for summations and subtractions and wooden sticks. Besides, boards with holes on them and colorful beads are used for multiplications and fractions. Calculators are used to checking results only.

Regarding the maths problems, each has its number based on the difficulty. The first task for kids is to recognize the operations needed and then get the necessary material to proceed to the resolution. Also, there is a challenging book called 'dance of numbers', prepared by the pedagogical team. There is a series of numbers on each page, which must be used in calculations until kids reach a certain number.

It is not uncommon that kids of the same age have entirely different levels. While some are still practicing summations, others might be working on the third problem and others on the twelfth. This is something expected and understood by teachers who do not insist on covering a specific curriculum during a certain period, as seen through the example of a kid who asks a teacher if she may skip some exercises to get the answer that she may do them next year as well.

Similarly, ways of learning vary as well. Although teachers accompanying kids and the material available give specific instructions on how to do things, there are as many ways as the kids' number. For example, some kids use the available material for the operations while others do not. Kids are aware of it and confident. It is not unusual to hear expressions like 'I do it in another way'. What is more, the ways kids do things are often transmitted among peers while they often share what they have learned from their own experience when they observe mates making mistakes: "Borja is telling Rafa not to write the numbers so bold because he would not be able to erase afterward" (DB:2018/06/05).

Nevertheless, some results are expected from teachers, and problems arise when time passes, and they are not met. This is uncommon to happen if kids receive help from their families. However,

it is somewhat problematic in the case of kids coming from less privileged families, leading to conflicts between teachers and kids, as we can see in the following example:

> *Beth* asks Àneu[183] about an operation, but she does not know the answer. She asks her for a second time; Àneu remains silent. *Beth* asks again what operation must be done; the girl keeps silent, looking down on the maths problem. *Beth* looks at her notebook and starts writing down notes below the name Àneu that she has already written. Then she tells her to concentrate: and comments on her tendency to escape reading, maths, and English. "You are at the community of grans now, not at mitjans", she adds.

> *Beth* leaves the table, and Àneu starts crying. She says she gets ill quite often. Besides, her mother is learning how to drive, and she usually must help her, so she skips school, but it is not true that she escapes. Sira agrees; her mom has told her that Àneu's mom ran out of money. Àneu keeps complaining about her family, saying that her parents were watching a movie yesterday and she couldn't sleep. Girls say they don't like *Beth* because she doesn't support Àneu as the previous teachers did.

> When the girls leave, *Beth* asks if they finished what they had to do and talks about Àneu, who has no support out of Pardal and therefore must do her best while being there. She then refers to her mom, commenting that she shouldn't give the girl so many responsibilities; she is just a kid (DB: 2018/06/12).

Although teachers recognize the vital role of the family regarding cultural transmission, they sometimes show little understanding. In contrast, others insist on a rather Rousseauian -if not neoliberal- vision and discourse which legitimizes such inequality by attributing the level differences on kids' effort and characteristics. This was also revealed during a school's pedagogical days when a teacher talked about the difference among kids, some of whom are more academic than others adding that everyone is different.

Maths' compulsory character does not mean that kids accept the fact. Some instead develop strategies of avoiding it, like pretending to be working as in the following example:

> Time passes, but the boys do nothing. Khalil is just sitting while Mario is writing and erasing. Domingo gets up to leave a notebook and get another, and Khalil gets up too. When he returns to sit, Khalil sits too.. Khalil is looking at his watch. An intern asks him if he has a notebook, he says no. She asks if he doesn't want to write, and he shrouds his shoulders. Then he starts touching material from the table and looking at Mario's notebook (DB: 2018/04/09).

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[183] A 9-year-old girl from Ecuador.

Last, it should be mentioned that when kids stop using the material or when time is up, they must all tidy up the spaces and put away the material used. Primarily teachers and sometimes peers are responsible for reminding the particular norm every day, while sometimes kids are asked by the teacher to do so. They also remind why material must be tidied up, mainly stressing its shared character and their responsibility to take care of the material they use for their ongoing projects. However, it is not uncommon for kids to resist the rule.

> *Beth* asks Lia to help tidy up the big table she was working at, but she avoids staying seated at the math table and keeping herself busy with the calculator. […] It is time for all to tidy up. Ovidi puts away the board game he has been playing with and immediately starts to read his manga. *Beth* is once again mad at Lia: "Lia, tidy up", she shouts. Lia lies that she has already done so (DB: 2018/04/12).

Writing[184]*:* Writing is another compulsory self-directed activity practiced in various ways, times, and spaces. Kids often choose to write either in the corridor or their space of reference. Although it is an individual task, they tend to sit in groups and sometimes collaborate. Teachers are around in case their help is asked and to correct the writings upon finishing, but they do not intervene; their role is to be present and control that there are no needs uncovered.

Kids are encouraged to write freely and make errors about a topic they choose, instead of copying from a book, and they must choose the topic themselves. Texts can be either imaginative or real. For example, kids may choose to write about topics such as the formation of a rainbow, the transition to a community, the recent colonias, or something utterly fictive like the following: "His story is about a boy who finds an injured bird. Since nothing can heal it, he goes to find a witch who tells him that he must look for some plants on the other edge of the world" (DB: 2018/05/16). Sometimes teachers make writing proposals, suggesting a topic on which kids can write freely. These may be either optional or compulsory for all. In some cases, kids may get involved in more extended writing collective projects such as writing a whole book.

All texts must be written in Catalan or Spanish, and it does not matter whether letters are capital or small. Teachers correct them using a colored pen and sometimes making notes. Kids write

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[184] DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/23, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/05/15, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/06/07 & DB: 2018/12/17.

their draft text using a pencil, and once corrected, they must re-write it with a pen. When they finish, they are encouraged to grab a book and read until the end of the time zone. As seen in the example below, it is not unusual for peers to practice reading and writing simultaneously.

> Hana is reading to another girl who is writing each letter in a different color. When she is about to change a word, Hana says "separated". … Next to her, Alysia is writing about India; she was there when she was a baby. *Aloma* corrects Alysia's text using a black pen, while when she wants to add something, she writes numbers in the text and adds her notes in the end. Then Alysia comes back saying, "so many errors!" (DB: 2018/06/07).

Besides, kids sometimes avoid writing, even if it is on their schedule after teachers' intervention, by talking to each other instead of working or wandering around, including changing spaces. As spaces are rich in material, and the teacher-student ratio is high, escaping the teacher's eye is sometimes easy. When noticing such cases, teachers insist on the non-negotiable character of the activity, remind them to stay concentrated, and develop strategies to achieve it, such as separating affinity groups in space. We will take a closer look at the above through two different examples:

> A. Rita and Sira are sitting doing nothing. .. After a while, Rita agrees to write. Sira keeps doing nothing, just sitting on her chair. .. A few minutes later, she leaves the room. *Vinyet* sees her in the corridor and tells her, "please, can you sit down and write?". She shakes her head no, and *Vinyet* says, surprised, "no?!". Sira returns to her seat without answering. She starts moving her chair forth and back, pretending to be writing at the table using her finger. Then she starts touching the scrapers and the material in general, moving around in the room, sitting and lying down. .. Later, *Vinyet* explains to her that she now must write and has no other choice.. Commenting on the girl's attitude, *Vinyet* expresses her worries due to her tendency only to play alone (DB: 2018/04/27).

> B. Two boys are supposed to be doing maths, but they are mostly talking to each other. *Beth* says she will send them to different spaces if they do not stop talking and start writing instead ... Nàdia is wandering around. *Aloma* sees her and says: "Nàdia, what is going on? Don't you have work to do?" (DB: 2018/05/03).

It is very common that during this time, kids reveal their perceptions about Pardal, who are aware of its difference to conventional public schools. This differentiation is mainly made by kids who have previously been there and for whom Pardal is free, sometimes even conceptualized as the opposite to public: "Nàdia writes the word 'observe' correctly as she

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learned it at her previous school which was public, so they were learning by books. Aureli*[185] tells her that Pardal is public too, and she says "no, this is free" (DB: 2018/04/23). This freedom attributed to Pardal is not commonplace, as the meanings kids attribute to school vary, from looking forward to it to start to pretending sick to avoid it and comparing it to jail.

Despite the compulsory character of many learning activities, kids often think of Pardal as a place to play and be with friends. What is more, for some of them, home is where they do the most significant part of academic learning: "While writing, Cesc says that he has many ideas home, but nothing at school. *Lydia* asks him if that happens because there is a place to play, he nods yes. "It should be a place to study too", she answers" (DB: 2018/05/16).

Many times, kids worry about their future experience at high school [instituto], where staying seated and studying are the primary activities. Teachers accompany them through these moments of frustration, reminding them to look on the bright side: "Cesc, worried about high school, says he does not want to go and stay seated all day doing maths. *Lydia* explains that when kids are eleven, they want to go, "it is an adventure, there are new things that Pardal doesn't have" (DB: 2018/05/16).

Last, during writing time, kids must follow school's norms which are reminded by either teachers or peers, usually those that do not belong to one's affinity group:

> The boys are noisy, and Rosalia shouts at them to volume down .. Some other boys are playing with scissors. Asia enters and says they cannot play in this space. .. .. Lia is holding Dèlia in her arms and enters the room. *Vinyet* says "no no no", and Lia leaves her immediately on the floor (DB: 2018/06/06).

Comics[186]: Comics is an activity during which kids draw, paint, and write -in any order they wish- in English, Catalan, or Spanish. Comics may be written either individually or in small groups and typically require a few weeks of work. Stories are primarily imaginative, sometimes including real elements, opening this way doors to other fields of knowledge:

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[185] One of the interns. I will use this form 'name*' to distinguish the persons who have a role as interns.
[186] DB: 2018/04/02, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/16 & DB: 2018/04/27.

Two girls are making a comic. They are the protagonists -with different names- and visit Pluto, where they find a whole city and then return to Earth. During the comic's creation, the girls are talking about asteroids and the solar system. With the help of a book, they are looking for information about Pluto (DB: 2018/04/12).

When kids finish writing, drawing, and painting their comic, teachers explain how to transform it into a book and what materials to use to be easily read. In the case of collective ones, one kid keeps the original, and the rest get copies. If more kids want to keep the original, teachers propose they decide randomly using a method such as rock, paper, and scissors.

Like in all activities, conflicts might happen as in the example that follows and in which the intervention took place after kids asked for it, although that is not so usual. "Cesc is fighting with two boys arguing that his drawing is not original; it is copied. He says they keep insulting him, and he's had enough. He calls *Lydia* to intervene, and they all speak together" (DB: 2018/05/18).

Kitchen[187]*:* Previously called 'domestic', the kitchen is much used in Pardal. It is an open space that frequently emits a smell of freshly baked food all over the community and with it a homelike feeling.

There, a group of kids must collaborate in preparing late breakfast for each class of the community in the morning and wash the dishes afterward, a process during which conflicts might be caused among kids, usually linked to the responsibilities, when some avoid cleaning, for example, leaving more work to the rest.

Apart from the preparations and cleaning needed for the late breakfast, there are many times kids make extra breakfast treats, usually wearing aprons that can be found there. The most common treat is fruit smoothies or juices using the fruit that remains. Sometimes, kids take the initiative to make them while teachers may also encourage them, especially in case they do not accompany at the time and spot kids doing nothing: "*Aloma* calls Salma to make a juice with some apples that are in the fridge, "Salma come. I'll teach you how to make juice" (DB: 2018/06/07).

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[187] DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/18, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/25, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/12/10 & DB: 2018/12/17.

Additionally, kids prepare salty or sweet dishes in terms of projects. In this case, they write the recipe at the big table next to the kitchen and then cook it. Dishes might include cookies, cakes, pancakes, and even burgers with organic ingredients. Those are offered to kids and teachers upon the time zone changes, as seen through the following examples.

> A. Two girls, wearing black aprons, enter with a chocolate low-sugar cake they made, brought straight from the oven. The teacher tells kids, "your mates will pass to give you a piece of cake", before suggesting they go slowly; "there is enough for everyone". One of the chefs adds that they should also not comment on the size of the piece since it has happened before. The girls cut and share the cake in little pieces using four yellow napkins they reuse after kids eat their pieces. They give the teachers in the end.. After offering in another class too, they return to offer teachers some extra pieces. Kids ask them for more, but they deny (DB: 2018/12/10).

> B. Three girls in aprons enter. They place two plates of hummus and bread on the table with a paper that writes the recipe and their names, each word with a different color. Eva is taking photos with the camera. The girls start calling kids to give them food (DB: 2018/12/17).

Travel [188] *:* Geography is not taught conventionally, but kids in Pardal have many opportunities to mentally travel and acquire knowledge about the world that surrounds us. We will focus on two of them:

Geography projects: Kids, in groups, work on related projects, which usually take place either at the big table next to the kitchen or their reference room, using material that can be found in other spaces such as books, laptops, and atlases. For example, for two months, a group of three girls was working on 'the highest mountains in the world'. Teachers guide kids on what they must decide or how to find the information needed without giving them the answers.

> In the beginning, the girls had thought of looking for 100 mountains, but now they have changed it to 14. They have also changed a few more details in the title. Àneu looks for the mountains with more than 8000 meters on the atlas. Nàdia tells her to stop looking for them on the atlas proposing to use the laptop instead .. Àneu brings the laptop, googles the topic, and starts writing down the names of the mountains that appear (DB: 2018/04/11).

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[188] DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/25, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/03 & DB: 2018/07/07.

However, although kids are free to experiment and make mistakes, teachers have certain expectations which must be met: "Nàdia is repainting the world map; she has to repeat it since her first did not look good to *Vinyet*; she didn't like the water" (DB: 2018/06/07).

Travel guides: This is a proposal taking place at the big table next to the kitchen. With the help of travel books that can be found around, kids write down either actual or imaginative travel routes. They, therefore, include the cities they have visited and describe them. In this case, using information from the computer is not allowed. There is a specific teacher who usually accompanies these activities. Similarly, errors are corrected, sometimes in a way that reminds a lot of traditional methods, as in the following example. Also, patience is often asked due to the student-teacher ratio of kids and teachers because of which kids must learn to wait.

> At the kitchen's big table, Nàdia and Àneu are copying the world map while Lia and two girls from another class are working on travel books. At the smaller, Alysia and Xènia are working on their travel guides as well. *Aloma* explains to the girls that their problem is that they write where they want to go but without describing the places. She proposes they look at the book for the cities. *Aloma* is at the same time working on documentation, removing some old stories from the wall. Alysia asks for too much help, so *Aloma* comments joking, "Alysia would like to have a teacher for her only, but that is not possible".

> There are many questions regarding orthography from Xènia, who is writing using both capital and small letters, and her notebook is filled with arrows that refer to things to be added. Lia has written 'it's very cool', and *Aloma* tells her that when we write, we must use words for writing and not the ones we use when speaking. A few minutes later, kids start asking one by one; she comments that she feels like a doctor.

> *Aloma* keeps correcting orthographical errors commenting "such a difficulty to write" and reminding that "we do not write the way we speak. We must write formally". Asia and Lia talk about Lia's invented Egyptian goddess, similar to one she found in a book, while Xènia writes about her journey to Mexico and Frida Kahlo, looking for information about her (DB: 2018/05/03).

Experiments[189]: The space located next to the kitchen and divided by a sliding door is where various kinds of experiments occur. Apart from the necessary material, such as test tubes,

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[189] DB: 2018/04/02, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/16 & DB: 2018/12/17.

it is equipped with a sink where objects can be washed. There are two basic categories of experiments:

Artistic: Kids experiment with their artistic skills on the big table. Apart from finding material that may be used for painting and crafts, there is a permanent proposal that keeps many of them busy: creating colorful bookmarks by mixing shaving foam with colored inks.

Figure 24: Bookmark created by a student of Pardal, using the artistic experiment space

Source: Halma

Figure 25: Bookmark - drawing of myself created by kids of Pardal, using the artistic experiment space

Source: Community of Grans, Group of Mitjans

Scientific: Kids also do scientific experiments. After they choose one, they gather the materials needed and follow the instructions written. These may be done either in groups or individually, and they may last a short or a more extended period to be completed. In the last case, experiments become a common interest for kids who gather around them to notice their evolution in time. "Two girls and three boys are doing an experiment. They first put two eggs in bowls, one with salt and one without, to see if they float. They then put an egg in blue-colored vinegar and leave it there" (DB: 2018/04/09). "A girl is adding various colored liquids in a bottle, forming a rainbow. She explains that the liquids do not mix because they have different densities" (DB: 2018/04/11).

Sewing[190]*:* Opposite the experiments, sewing is a space where kids, mostly girls and fewer times boys, sew various clothing or decorative items using the abundant material and sewing machines which can be found there and following the proposals placed on the tables. This is a mainly individual activity during which kids sit in groups and make cloth or sock puppets, bags, wool caps and scarves, carpets, and clothes.

Teachers -especially the one who mainly accompanies these activities- remind kids that they should ask for their help if they are unsure of a technique used. At times, kids get engaged in collective activities as well: "*Vinyet* and some girls are making a bride dress. *Èlia*, standing on a chair, is the model and the rest are standing around her, holding pieces of clothing, chatting, and laughing" (DB: 2018/04/24).

Symbolic Play and Scrapbooking[191]*:* The space next to sewing is partly devoted to symbolic play, which has only recently been added due to the pedagogical team's needs. Kids play with small toys like Playmobil on the wooden structure in groups and sometimes on their own. Another option of symbolic play includes plastic animal figures and various tiny objects such as stones, shells, and wood.

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[190] DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/23, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/02 & DB: 2018/05/08.
[191] DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/04/10 & DB: 2018/05/15.

Sometimes, kids get engaged in related activities by visiting the community of mitjans, where more space, time, and projects are dedicated to symbolic play. An example is the McDonald's restaurant mitjans had created, where fake money is given to buy plastic food, which was very popular with many kids of grans wanting to visit it during the school year 2017-2018.

Scrapbooking is an individual activity that mostly happens in groups in the other part of the space, divided by a sliding door, and is chosen mainly by girls. First, kids put a protective paper on the table, and then, using the material provided, they create their personal or family photo albums.

Carpentry and Painting[192]: Apart from symbolic play, kids are provided with many other learning possibilities in the space of carpentry. Similarly, a teacher (the only male one) is always available to help and give tips and instructions.

Painting: There are big canvases and all the necessary materials, such as paintbrushes and watercolors, for kids to mix colors and freely create.

Clay crafts: These derive from proposals and include structures like clay baskets with small balls, imaginative shoes, or houses. The sum of kids' creations might result in a final exposition.

Wooden constructions: Apart from the wooden constructions that kids can use to play with, they are also encouraged to create their own, constructing them with the tools placed on the big table and painting them in the end.

Corridor Micro-spaces[193]: The corridor is a space where many things happen at once. Apart from maths, drawing, writing, reading, painting, and various projects on which kids work, there are many micro-spaces:

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[192] DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/05/15 & DB: 2018/05/16.
[193] DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/08, DB: 2018/05/16, DB: 2018/05/18, DB: 2018/05/25, DB: 2018/06/05, DB: 2018/06/06, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/11/12, DB: 2018/11/19,

Magnets: Kids can play with the colorful magnets as they wish. "Two boys are playing with the magnets, pretending they have the Force. They are excited to see that the magnets' power goes through the hand as well" (DB: 2018/04/19).

Origami: Using the material found there, kids, most times sited in small groups, can create origami structures. This is an activity during which they may also practice maths, like in the case of a boy who asks if he must multiply to find out how many cubes are needed for his origami construction.

Secret Message: Either individually or in small groups, kids can write a secret message destined to a specific peer. They first create a codified alphabet made of drawings and then write the message in English, Spanish, or Catalan using the alphabet. In the end, they rewrite it in the form of a scroll and seal it. The content of the message is like a challenge, and the kid who receives it must decodify it, translate it in case it is written in English, and proceed to the challenge. An example of the last phase follows:

> Kids and teachers are sitting in a circle. In the middle, two girls and a boy are dancing contemporary dance. In the end, *Aloma* asks them to explain the process. One of the girls explains that she received a secret message from another girl telling her to dance with a boy and a girl. No boy wanted from her class, so she asked in the rest of the classes, and Fabi accepted (DB: 2018/12/17).

Fairies: Inspired by the Waldorf pedagogy, there is a micro-space where kids can use the various materials to create their custom, handmade no-face fairies.

Similarly to all interior spaces corridor must also maintain calm, as revealed through the following words of a teacher: "At the corridor, two boys are playing, fighting. *Lidón* passes by and says "boys boys boys, this is not the garden" (DB: 2018/04/27).

DB: 2018/12/03, DB: 2018/12/10, DB: 2018/12/17 & DB: 2019/03/04.

Other: Projects and proposals are not limited to the above; during the school year, kids get engaged in many learning activities. Although some of them are pretty permanent, many instead change in time.

These may include long-lasting projects, on some occasions with three-month duration, on which all or some kids work. Sometimes, the initiative comes from the teacher, especially in older ages, and has to do with curricular learning such as biology projects about the human body, history, or mythology-related projects. "In groups of two, 11-year-old kids are working on the computers, drawing the Olympic gods or preparing personal handmade notebooks with questions and answers they have written about the Vikings and the Aztecs" (DB: 2018/04/19).

On the other hand, projects might also be proposed as a response to the community's daily life, such as the paper project a teacher proposed due to the huge paper waste in the community.

> Lia, Ovidi, and Borja inform every community class about a new project they started and ask kids to put paper in the trash bin only. Lia explains that Vinyet told them off for wasting too much paper and asked them to do a project about the amount wasted in the community of grans.
>
> Kids put some papers they had prepared for the project on the walls of every space. It is a drawing with three clouds, inside which a tree, a factory, and paper are depicted. The following message is written below. "Hi, we are doing a project about how much paper we waste in the community of grans. Every afternoon we will come to look for your trash bins. Please, do not mix paper with other things. Many thanks, Lia Ovidi and Borja" (DB: 2018/12/17).

Teachers also tend to organize intergenerational projects, sometimes conducted by mixed communities. Last, it is not uncommon for some kids or even whole groups to come up with project ideas, such as creating football cards, Japanese culture, or a project about the neighborhood's public schools.

Exterior[194]

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[194] DB: 2018/04/18, DB: 2018/05/15 & DB: 2018/12/03.

During school hours, kids do not learn only inside Pardal's building. Proposals and opportunities can be found outside, which is thought to be a vital learning space. Unlike other public schools, the cemented part of the playground is the least used by kids who cannot play football or other ball games[195]. The pedagogical team made this decision due to the gendered character such games have that lead to the use of the central space by boys and leave the girls in the periphery, the association of the ball with competitive games and consumerism, and the abundance of spaces where kids may get engaged to these activities in their free time.

There follow some of the primary activities that kids are encouraged to get engaged in outside, apart from free play.

Crafts: These are usually based on proposals and may include painting stones or creating messages in bottles.

Gardening: Gardening activities occur at the upper part of the cemented playground, where the orchard is located and might include planting or taking care of the vegetables.

Research: This may include nature-related or animal-related projects. They partly take place outside and in one of the small wooden houses of the playground: one dedicated to bugs and animals and the other to plants and nature in general. A teacher, who rotates, is always outside, responsible for opening the doors, control that everything is fine, and respond to every possible question. Upon entering each house, kids find themselves in a rustic wooden room filled with related books, microscopes, and objects such as animal bones.

> Two boys are preparing a treasure hunt for the rest of the kids who are supposed to collect all the clues, complete a puzzle and find the spot on the map where biscuits await them. They are talking about bats, spiders, and other insects (DB: 2018/04/18).

Norms are, of course, not absent and often reminded among either teachers or peers, from taking care of the material to waiting for a teacher to open the door, even if windows are open.

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[195] However, kids may bring balls in their backpacks if they want to use them when they leave school. Many boys do so as they play football during lunchtime or after school. When they try to play in school spaces, there is an immediate intervention by peers, adults, or both.

At the playground, two boys place some wooden objects on the ground pretending to be planting them. A boy is watering the wooden plants. A teacher tells him to stop because this is not allowed, highlighting that it is a norm and they know it because they have played here before. The boy insists on watering, and the teacher gets the watering can from his hands. (DB: 2018/12/03).

Kids' proposals[196]*:* Kids might as well make proposals for activities that end up in short-term or long-term projects if the reference teacher approves. A few examples are creating a movie about a monster visiting the kids' colonias, colonias' diaries, monster cards' creation, or diaries of phrases kids hear around and want to remember.

Another long-term project was 'the change', conducted by Lia, Nàdia, and Dèlia, who wanted to learn about kids' experiences upon changing community, either from petits to mitjans or from mitjans to grans. Once the reference teacher gives her approval, she starts asking questions. The first step, in this case, was to think of the interview questions they wanted to make and write them down. Kids then meet to work on their project at an agreed time. They do lots of brainstorming and ask for help in case they are not sure of something. Initial plans often change a lot: "They bring their notebooks and start writing the title.. Nàdia proposes to write thirty questions; in the end, they decide on five.. They write down three of them, and Dèlia proposes to meet at the second zone to finish" (DB: 2018/04/05).

When the necessary preparations are made, kids can proceed with the project; the interviews in this case. They ask for an empty space, and after they get permission from their reference teacher, they get the camera and move there. They then look for kids who want to get interviewed. Rotating, one records and another conducts the interview. As kids conduct their project, they interact with kids of various ages with whom they might not be in daily contact -if they belong to different communities or peer groups-, they learn about others' perspectives and experiences and discuss certain aspects. These might include their feelings upon changing community or their favorite learning spaces. Last, they also learn how to conduct interviews and how to use the camera.

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[196] DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/04/25 & DB': 2018/05/18.

<u>Workshops & Shows</u>[197]

Contrary to projects and proposals which largely depend on kids' interests, workshops have to do with adults. Teachers, interns, or volunteers offer a series of workshops that kids can attend for the period they last if they correspond to their interests. The only requirement is that they compromise to attend the whole series of sessions. Workshops may be whatever if the reference teacher approves if interns or volunteers realize them. Some examples are a body percussion workshop offered by a teacher, a yoga workshop offered by a volunteer, and a musical instruments workshop offered by an intern. In some cases, like the body percussion, workshops may also lead to final shows in front of the communities. Kids may also have an idea of a show, the preparation of which is consequently accompanied by an adult, like circus performances.

Besides, the preparation of a short-term project might result in a spontaneous show presented to the community, either whole or part of it, as was the case of a dance show. First, either the kids involved or their classmates let the rest know about the show and the details they need, such as place and time. Then, when kids and teachers have gathered, the show starts, an excellent opportunity for cultural transmission among peers.

> Frederic and *Sança* are moving a table for the needs of the show. Thirteen girls from the classes of *Èlia* and *Cèlia* start dancing. They all wear colorful Arabic clothing, makeup, and dots on the forehead. The lyrics of the song, transmitted through a colorful small speaker, are Arabic, and their moves remind of Bollywood. Hana, who is in the middle, seems to know the choreography more than the rest who look at her. She later explains that she had listened to the song from the radio and brought the clothes from her house (DB: 2018/12/17).

In general, when kids from a group give a show, it usually takes place at the big performance room, and the public is the rest of the kids of their community. An exception to this is the English

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[197] DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/04/18, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/23, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/04/25, DB: 2018/05/03, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/05/14, DB: 2018/05/15, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/05/22, DB: 2018/05/24, DB: 2018/05/29, DB: 2018/05/30, DB: 2018/05/31, DB: 2018/06/04, DB: 2018/06/05, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/06/11, DB: 2018/06/12, DB': 2018/06/11 & DB' 2018/11/29.

shows that take place in the kitchen or the music room most times. These usually are shorter, with fewer actors, and repeated for the various groups.

We will now take a better look at a collective theatre show kids were working for six months during the school year 2017-2018. After the idea of transforming the book 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl into a theatre show in January, they started rehearsing accompanied by an intern. In the beginning, they had one rehearsal per week, while later, it was twice per week plus a meeting. All kids were classmates, but not the whole group participated. In total, there were twelve actors and four helpers responsible for the stage setup, a decision spontaneously made by kids.

The rehearsals always start with kids setting up the stage by moving the various materials, mattresses, and wooden furniture. Kids improvise depending on their role. As weeks go by, they start giving the show a structure. When the rehearsal is over, they usually play around doing psychomotor activities on the mattresses if there is time left. In the end, they put away the things used and leave the space. Most times, they also have two meetings, one upon arriving and one in the end. Besides, during the weekly meeting, they do extra things needed apart from rehearsals, such as scriptwriting, decisions to be taken, or scenery construction.

Rehearsals are an excellent opportunity for kids to develop their creativity and teamwork skills. "While painting the airplane, some kids start using their hands instead of paintbrushes, more and more join. They end up painting their bodies blue. Bruna says she looks like a smurf" (DB: 2018/05/30).

Additionally, due to the initiatives taken, some of them develop a sense of collective responsibility. "Dèlia and Xènia are talking about how incredible it is that they have been rehearsing five months, and yet they do not know what to do. Dèlia says that she doesn't accept a single mistake tomorrow. They then refer to the boys who take it as a game" (DB: 2018/06/04).

In any case, despite the "autonomy" kids have on decisions and their possible acompañamiento by interns or volunteers, teachers have a certain control over their activities and intervene when

they think it's needed. In our example, such intervention happened due to the tendency of kids to include various individual dance performances for a scene in the theatre play:

> During late breakfast, kids have an informal meeting with Aureli* about the show. *Vinyet* intervenes to remind that it is not a dance show but a theatre play and that they chose to do something different from the rest; this was the idea. Therefore, they should only do one collective dance. The show should also be half an hour maximum so that the public would not get tired. She then looks towards Nàdia and says, "forget about seven dances; we see you every day; we don't need that much presence". A few minutes later, Nàdia complains about *Vinyet* with a loud, angry voice: "Why can't I enjoy dancing alone in front of a public? It's not my problem, okay?" (DB: 2018/06/11).

Despite teachers' interventions, there is no collective dance in the show. Nàdia resists Vinyet's orders and partly disobeys by maintaining her dance show, although more limited in time than the initial thought, while the rest of the kids maintain their shows as well.

The last preparatory step is when kids create a poster and the invitations and print them to share among the classes of the community a few days before the show.

During these activities, one may notice that the sense of teamwork that predominates is the half picture; kids tend to work well in a team and show solidarity with their affinity group -most times consisted of the same gender- and be competitive or laugh at peers, either due to physical aspects or their skills. This tendency sometimes creates otherness with the broader community, which seems to reinforce bonding among the affinity group[198].

> Nàdia and Alysia are watching *Lydia's* class from the window, laughing at them and commenting how bad the rehearsal is. Dèlia joins them and comes back saying, "what have I just seen, dancers setting up the scene!". .. The group talks a bit about the public. Asia says that she doesn't want other groups to be there because of the negative comments. Lia thinks that Aureli* should say in the beginning that whoever from the public doesn't like the show must leave instead of staying and comment (DB: 2018/05/30).

Last, kids are conscious that they must embody the various unwritten norms, existent in workshops and shows as well, and that this is a learning process: "Aureli* tells Nàdia that he has

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[198] DB: 2018/12/17 & DB: 2018/05/30.

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already told them to put cardboard on the floor so that they don't paint it. Nàdia answers "we are kids, we have to learn" (DB': 2018/06/11). "Aureli* says a kid is missing, and Lia stands up to go out to look for him. .. The boy enters the room, and Lia pushes him lightly, saying "shoes off" (DB: 2018/04/05).

Therefore, as in all daily activities, kids learn to be responsible for the spaces and the material they use. They cannot sit on furniture other than benches or chairs and must be careful not to destroy anything. Besides, despite the abundance of material available, kids also learn not to waste it if they do not really need it.

> Some girls are painting their hands using colors. *Vinyet* asks who is going to buy the colors to replace them. Girls do not answer. She tells them that if they want to do it, their parents should buy new ones; as long as the cost is shared, they can't. They immediately stop (DB: 2018/04/25).

If something is broken or misused, consequences are both for kids, who must fix it, and their families who pay for its replacement. This was the case when a few kids had written on some wooden tables. Apart from scrubbing them, their parents had to buy new ones, while the families of kids who had not written anything could choose if they would pay or not.

6.2.5 Free Play[199]

When kids do not work on a specific proposal or project, they usually play freely either inside or outside, individually or in groups.

Inside, they usually play with the various board games available in most spaces like chess, Dixit, Uno, Piko Piko, Kaleido, or Space Poker and invent games that do not need any special equipment. They can play whatever they want as long as it is not against the school culture and compatible with the norms.

Outside, kids play in the garden, popular games like tag or huts and similar invented games. Besides, the playground is the space where kids mostly interact with the rest of the communities.

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[199] DB: 2018/04/02, DB: 2018/04/12, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/04/24 & DB: 2018/05/07.

Nàdia, Asia, and Lia are playing ninja at the playground. Moving their hands, they try to hit a person in the group and at the same time avoid the hits of the others. More kids start playing as well. They first form mixed teams, then couples, and finally a boy and a girl group are made .. Kids are seen in many places outside, observing, doing experiments, and playing tag or with the huts. Two kids from the grans are walking, holding a smaller kid from the hand in the middle. *Cèlia* announces it is time to tidy up. A teacher walks with a small girl who is crying, explaining what has happened (DB: 2018/04/17).

At the same time, it is a space where conflicts often arise as well. If there are many kids involved, or if the conflict is important, intervention usually takes place with the whole group in terms of the morning meeting or another meeting called by the teacher upon a time zone change. In general, kids handle the conflicts themselves if they are not too significant or long-lasting. Due to the high student-teacher ratio, teachers are not always aware of them or do not have the time to acompañar. However, if conflicts have a certain continuity and influence kids, as the example that follows, teachers proceed to acompañar them by first talking with the kids involved -both individually and in a group- and with their families.

Beth is talking to kids who sit on benches and the floor, as there were boys at the playground saying, 'you are a girl, and you cannot run, you can't play with us'. A boy says "it was not me" and a girl answers "yes it was you". The boy replies, "did you see me? Holy shit, shut up". *Beth* highlights that the people involved are here and asks for explanations.

The girl starts explaining; it is a conflict that occurred during the tag game. Kids talk a bit more about what happened. They blame each other. *Beth* intervenes, "if we do not know who it was, we do not know.. putting labels on others does not help. It's not a competition".

The girl then informs *Beth* that in the end, they agreed that boys should play with boys only and girls with girls so that there are no problems. A few kids start talking with each other, and *Beth* tells them to stop and share everything they want to say. Whenever someone interrupts her, the girl says that this is a lack of respect.

Then, *Beth* comments that "in the society with all the differences between girls and boys, the last we should do is start it here at school when all of us are people when all of us can play together". She also mentions that it is something they have discussed many times and that games have rules that we must all follow (DB: 2018/05/07).

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6.2.6 Excursions[200]

Kids in Pardal go on frequent excursions. Once per week, different for each age, they go to a nearby open field. Besides, they sometimes go on longer bike excursions to the beach, the river, parks, or the mountains. Apart from excursions in nature, kids sometimes go to the theatre or other cultural spaces.

Last, kids also have the 'school retreats' [colonias] twice per year, the small in autumn and the big ones towards the end of the school year. The first colonias happen when kids are five years old and last three days. These are especially important for kids of the 6th grade whose final colonias last up to 11 days and are -contrary to the previous ones- generally out of Catalonia and whose destination is a surprise for kids. Nevertheless, not all kids participate, a decision taken mainly by their families and culturally influenced. If the obstacles for kids' participation are economical, AFI tries to raise funds to cover the particular needs.

During excursions, kids get the chance to get in touch, observe nature and invent their activities. But above all, it is a time when they can interact with each other and when their sense of belonging is developed and tested. Similarly, as on a daily level, certain norms need to be followed by kids. Limits are clear and must be respected. Let's now take a look at an extract of an excursion.

> On the way to the field, kids pick up and eat some berries from the trees. They ask for adults' help to reach the highest. Upon arrival, *Lydia* informs kids about the spatial limits which define where they can go. All kids are listening. When she finishes, they run away, forming extensive groups. Most kids start playing tag and other similar games. Aureli* comments on how they always play in groups. Other kids are collecting garlic from the field or playing drawing games.
>
> On the way back to school, *Lydia* stays back to resolve a conflict. She tells kids to keep moving and not wait for them. "We are a group and should not divide". Some kids keep moving slowly. She highlights that if they want to pick up flowers, they should do it on our way to the field, not the contrary (DB: 2018/05/10).

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[200] DB: 2018/17/4, DB: 2018/19/4, DB: 2018/25/4, DB: 2018/3/5, DB: 2018/5/5, DB: 2018/8/5, DB: 2018/10/5, DB: 2018/14/6, DB: 2018/19/6, DB: 2018/20/6, DB: 2018/7/11, DB: 2019/17/2 & IB6.

At this point, I should devote a few lines to talk about the sense of belonging. As we saw, this is a key feeling constructed in Pardal. But this is not the case for everyone. While most kids, especially those whose families have consciously chosen the school, do experience such feelings, others feel excluded and exclude themselves from the school environment. These are mostly kids who live in the neighborhood and most times coming from less privileged families. We will take a better look at this matter through a specific case.

Salma's family is from Nador, Morocco. They still visit sometimes. She lived there until the age of three before moving to Spain. She has been living in the neighborhood since then and has spent all her school years in Pardal. She speaks Arabic but does not know how to write it.

> Salma is there, alone. She opens her (torn) backpack and finds her banana, open and too ripe. Referring to her classmates, she comments that sometimes they play with her and sometimes leave her alone. .. She did not go to the colonias this year. When asked why she says it is cold outside at night (DB: 2018/05/10).

Salma is one of the examples of kids who do not feel like they belong at Pardal. "She says she doesn't like being with her friends; sometimes they tell her there's no space for her" (DB: 2019/12/17). These kids have no affinity group, they do not participate much in colonias or school celebrations, they do not feel accepted by others, and they are frequently excluded, self-excluded and alienated. Although the reference teacher makes efforts to change it, almost obligating her to socialize with peers, she attributes the responsibility of this exclusion to Salma and her lack of effort.

It is not uncommon for conflicts to happen as well, about which teachers are usually not aware and sometimes even justifying and normalizing, as revealed in the following example:

> She is looking at a photo album in which her head is cut and comments that Jamal did it because he hates her. .. When asked, the reference teacher says he was not aware, but "this often happens among Muslim kids, mostly boys; although they respect girls avoiding interactions, they do not respect Muslim girls; it's a cultural thing" (DB: 2018/06/19).

What is more, both they and their parents rarely interact with their classmates and their families out of Pardal. We will look more into these dynamics of exclusion in the families section.

6.2.7 Late breakfast[201]

This is the second time, after the morning meeting, when kids from the same reference room come together. It is a relaxing break during which they interact in various verbal and non-verbal ways; they hug, chat, and discuss personal stuff or things happening at Pardal. What is more, kids are encouraged to get involved in casual conversations or even educational practices, sometimes related to current projects: "Many kids are gathered around the egg. *Vinyet* tells them they should change vinegar every day; she later explains why. Two girls then change it. While doing so, most are watching around the experiment, while others stay seated while eating" (DB: 2018/04/16).

Despite the relaxed environment, norms are still present; the ambiance must be quiet and the material used must be tidied up, although kids usually try to skip the rules "When *Beth* enters some boys are playing, fighting. She says, "it cannot be" and they immediately stop" (DB: 2018/05/03). In these cases, the teacher reminds them by intervening whenever needed, sometimes in a calm way and others not much, depending on the teacher and instance. Again, this is expected to get embodied as time goes by: "*Beth* is shouting to put things away and stay calm when it is breakfast time. She then says they should know from the beginning of the school course and it's almost finished. Kids go silent" (DB: 2018/05/15).

Therefore, obedience to rules disappears when teachers are not present. This can also be seen in the following scene during which kids resist the rule that prevents them from eating when preparing or cleaning in the kitchen: "Nàdia says she is hungry and starts eating cookies and breadsticks. She then says "we have worked hard". The rest of the girls answer "Nàdia, stop eating", while they start eating too" (DB: 2018/05/07). Also, I should mention that it is not uncommon to notice the dynamics among kids or even gender division during this relaxed, casual context of socialization, as kids tend to spread in the room in boys-only and girls-only groups.

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[201] DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/23, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/05/15, DB: 2018/05/29, DB: 2018/11/19 & DB: 2018/12/17.

Last, before every activity, the material must be tidied up before breakfast. "It is time for late breakfast, and *Lydia* is saying "tidy up please". *Vinyet* tells kids to tidy up the sewing space too, reminding them that if they abandon their material, anyone could get it" (DB: 2018/08/05).

6.2.8 Book reading[202]

Book reading is a compulsory activity that can happen everywhere, on the floor, at a table, on a bench, the kitchen's sofa, the reading corner, outside at the terrace, or even under the table. It is also allowed to sit in groups. However, it is an individual activity, and kids are expected to stay concentrated on their readings. They may choose a book from the available ones, but they must stick to it until finished.

Teachers, volunteers, and interns accompany kids who face difficulties or kids who ask for it. They stay next to them, and kids read them out loud a few pages of their books. Adults write down their observations regarding kids' reading skills and intervene when they need help. Since levels vary among kids of the same age, some can read fluently while peers spell slowly. When reading on their own, kids often use bookmarks to follow the words.

Despite the lack of official books, many books can be found in spaces frequently replaced by new proposals. Books read by children vary from Roald Dahl, Pippi Longstocking, riddles and tales to comics and journals such as National Geographic. Apart from classical kid literate, there are plenty of books related to sexuality and feminism, such as 'the red book of girls', 'the treasure of Lilith' or a book about girls' puberty, one of the most popular among kids of the community.

While reading, kids tend to ask for words they do not know, sometimes commenting on what they read or what they remind them, either to the adult who accompanies or peers who sit next to them. This is a time of concentration, and limits are also present, even though kids tend to

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[202] DB: 2018/04/04, DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/09, DB: 2018/04/10, DB: 2018/04/11, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/17, DB: 2018/04/18, DB: 2018/04/19, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/04/25, DB: 2018/04/27, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/07, DB: 2018/05/08, DB: 2018/05/16, DB: 2018/05/17, DB: 2018/05/31, DB: 2018/06/05, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/06/17, DB: 2018/11/05, DB: 2018/11/12 & DB: 2019/12/03.

transgress them when no teachers are around: "Some kids enter from the back door. Borja tells them they are illegal" (DB: 2018/05/14).

When kids avoid reading, the teacher who walks around making sure everybody is involved in the specific activity reminds them. Frequently, kids change attitude depending upon the presence of a teacher. In many cases, they avoid reading and talk with each other when no teacher is around, as seen in the following examples: "Some kids are reading, others talking, others pretending to be reading.. .. Kids at the terrace are chatting. When *Vinyet* goes outside, they start reading" (DB: 2018/04/08). "*Beth* comes to take photos, and a girl starts pretending to be reading. When *Beth* leaves, she stops looking at the book" (DB: 2018/04/25).

Therefore, norms are reminded by teachers as many times as needed until they get embodied by kids, and they obey them, even though kids develop their strategies to pretend that they do so: "*Beth* enters at 12.10 p.m., some kids are not reading yet. She says that kids in this group are mistaken if they think they can skip reading at reading time. "We don't function this way; it is time for reading" (DB: 2018/04/04) "*Beth* enters the room and says, "it's the reading zone, and there are many many many kids who are in this space without a book at hand". Kids who are not reading, immediately get a book" (DB: 2018/05/02).

6.2.9 Pedagogical team meetings

Teachers hold regular meetings, usually twice per week among the same community, and fewer among all. However, when deadlines for documentation or evaluation are near, it is not uncommon for the group to cancel meetings to focus on those tasks.

Having said that, on Mondays and Wednesdays, after exit, teachers get gathered in a room with enough space, put together some tables and chairs, sit around in a circle and start discussing organizational and pedagogical issues. During these meetings, teachers briefly update the group about their class, share thoughts or experiences and reach collective decisions upon pedagogical

practices. A careful look can be used as an introduction to problems or topics that frequently arise in Pardal[203].

Learning: There are often doubts about both kids' learning processes and teachers' consciousness regarding them. Despite the peculiarity of the project, "let's not forget this is a school" is a common phrase that the pedagogical team uses to remind themselves of the importance of reading and writing along with play. Play is vital for kids' well-being and development; yet, viewed positively only when accompanied by such activities.

It is widely understood among them that kids have different paces and do things in different ways. For example, while mitjans usually draw and then write when working on projects, grans tend to do the opposite. Nevertheless, and according to teachers, their job is to get to know what they do. In other words, it is accepted that kids have different levels, but to accompany them, this level should be known. Therefore, they insist on the importance of being aware of each kid's moment in the learning process and register. Careful observation and contextualized documentation are often proposed in these terms, which would besides help them detect learning difficulties. Observing a small number of kids at a time, for example, during a specific period, while writing down in detail from a systemic point of view, considering family contexts, is a strategy used to view their evolution.

Also, the pedagogical team frequently refers to the 'invisible' kids, as they call them, who make their job demanding when it comes to discover their level or detect learning difficulties like dyslexia, as well as the help or lack of help from family members and kids' general backgrounds that lead to a considerable variation of same-age kids' levels. Frequent examples are given from classes with kids from Moroccan families who often find difficulties in writing due to their custom of writing Arabic words from left to right. Last, the use of the word 'autonomy' by the pedagogical team. Autonomy is widely used when they refer to kids who do things without the need of adult supervision or the help of a dictionary.

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[203] DB': 2018/04/04 & DB': 2018/04/09 & DB': 2018/04/11, DB': 2018/04/16, DB': 2018/05/02 & DB': 2018/05/16.

Play: The opposite might happen as well. Although free play is not explicitly tied to curricular learning, it is considered an important educational activity and one of the kids' basic needs for healthy development. Similar problems with the first category arise here as well:

-       The incapacity of registering certain aspects of kids' progress like movement, especially relevant for groups of kids that spend much time on the playground.
-       The lack of interest for outdoor free play shown by specific kids.

Family issues: For the educational practices to reach their goals, families' collaboration is necessary. Therefore, family issues are also frequently commented on during meetings.

For instance, during a meeting with parents, teachers had prepared a few taboo questions, which were all kids' concerns, mostly related to sexuality. Although these topics often arise among kids who mostly start asking when they enter puberty and menstruation, and although they are normalized and encouraged to be discussed in Pardal, some parents expressed their doubts and perceived it as an invasion in their space. However, this is not the case for all, since many kids naturally talk about sex precisely because parents talk with them about it.

6.2.10 Documentation

Committed to 'children and their culture' documentation is an important process that occurs daily at Pardal. On the one hand, it is a key element and research process that allows teachers to know more about kids' learning processes. At the same time, it opens a dialogue with families, letting them know what happens at school, which is both their right and an opportunity to view children as members of a wider community. Last, it allows Pardal's public visibility[204].

For the needs of documentation, teachers usually move around with a belt pouch where they have a notebook and a pen, sometimes with a hanging camera and few times a video camera or voice recorder, equipment that permits them to register certain activities taking place. Teachers perceive this daily activity as a learning process for themselves; learning how to document is to

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[204] Pardal's official website (last access on 2020/10/2), DB & books of the schools.

learn how to look and show 'kids' value' to the rest[205]. The main results of documentation are stories and books.

Stories

When something catches teachers' attention in a learning space, they get closer to observe it, write down or record what kids say, and take a photo. Then, teachers conclude with some final 'stories,' as they call them, which consist of a text written by them that most times includes kids' dialogues and photos that illustrate what happened. Due to the subjective character of what is captured and verbally expressed, the teacher who captures the story signs the text. According to a teacher[206], they collect stories, conversations, and things that happen, not only on a learning level but also feelings, relationships, conflicts, and how kids resolve them. A few stories are selected to be hung on the walls of the space which hosted them. These usually stay for a year before getting replaced by new ones. Sometimes, kids' projects are hung next to them, such as the 'spontaneous refracts', portraits of kids and teachers. According to the pedagogical team, this is very important for the project as it focuses on how kids learn instead of how they teach, and these learning processes are what stories make visible.

These stories are either brief moments or projects that take place during various days. Teachers choose some, which are later placed in couche paper on the corridor walls between the reference rooms of each group, sometimes inside learning spaces also. They stay there for between two weeks and one month, and they are later replaced by the subsequent stories. This way, what happens at school is shared with families who can glimpse when they enter upon arrival and exit. They open dialogue and invite families to view their kid as a member of the community. Parents get a book with all the year's stories from their kids' group, wrapped in paper and ribbon at the end of the school year. In the case of divorced families, each parent gets one book. After the big colonias, teachers and parents of each group meet to look at and talk about the book prepared.

The pedagogical team is aware and comfortable with the fact that they cannot observe everything

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[205] DB': 2018/05/05.
[206] Ibid.

taking place, while this process serves so that they follow kids' learning and emotional processes and can accompany them better. But apart from getting to know kids' interests, self-reflection, showing what teachers perceive and give value to, and sharing it with parents, stories, according to the pedagogical team, contribute to the creation of the school culture, as they reveal values behind specific activities.

Books

Apart from the families, the documentation process also functions as a bridge with the wider public. This is mainly done by publishing books that explain the pedagogical proposal through daily practices, organized and funded by the Friends of Pardal Association. These books are less personal than the ones delivered to the families and focused on pedagogical aspects. Two of them serve, at the same time, as Pardal's pedagogical project; the first created after ten years of its functioning, on the occasion of its anniversary, is, in fact, the school's pedagogical project as a whole, and the second is more recent, focused on the community of petits.

At the same time, books also contribute to creating the school culture and its sharing, shaping "the school's and the kids' identity", as a teacher explains. In other words, along with the books prepared by kids themselves that we saw in the rituals section, they are a symbolic element of the educational community's identity, holding a 'sacred' meaning and reinforcing the sense of belonging.

I should mention that both the stories and the books that result from the documentation are aesthetically compatible with the educational project; stiff paper carefully selected photographs and poetically written texts accompanied by an author's quote that reflects what the teachers want to transmit. Artistic and creative moments are magnified, while moments when kids get bored or frustrated for doing something compulsory they are not up to are absent.

In addition, kids' visibility is not the same for all. Just as in everyday life, as we will later see, teachers recognize that books capture the 'visible' kids, those who have a protagonist role. The rest appear mainly in the background without much intervention in the text. As a teacher says:

"We try to include all kids although parents know that everyone is located through their way of being. .. There are children who are always blurred, sitting on the periphery, or not appearing at all" (DB': 2018/05/05).

Kids are used to being observed by teachers, and they know that their daily activities and interactions are the source of stories. What is more, they sometimes even ask for them, either verbally or bodily, trying to capture the teacher's attention and posing for the photographs. However, documentation processes do not get accepted by all. Even though teachers explain to them that what they do is take photos of the activities and not the kids themselves, many develop practices of resistance, from speaking so low that their conversations cannot be heard or stop talking when teachers get closer. These cases are a challenge, according to a teacher[207], since they must be careful not to invade and block their story.

Apart from books and stories, documentation serves for the reports given to families, which are described in the following lines.

Learning results[208]

As in all schools in Catalonia, kids have exams twice during primary education, once when they are eight and once when they are eleven years old. The second ones are compulsory contrary to the first ones. The subjects examined are the competencies considered to be more important by the department of education: maths, English, Catalan, and Spanish, although they sometimes change.

Grades are not given importance by teachers who instead face it as a simple procedure they must follow to send to the department of education, but with no importance. Therefore, although they are made to submit them for all kids, they are put away and only given to families if they ask for them. According to a teacher, "..after all the law forces you.. there are some tables they ask us to

[207] Ibid.
[208] DB': 2018/03/17, DB: 2018/04/05, DB: 2018/04/16, DB: 2018/04/24, DB: 2018/05/02, DB: 2018/05/08, DB: 2018/05/16, DB: 2018/06/06, DB: 2018/06/07, DB: 2018/06/20, DB: 2018/11/05, DB': 2018/12/03, DB': 2018/05/05, DB': 2018/06/15, DB: 2018/06/20, DB' 2018/12/03, IB3 & IB4.

fill, then we insert them in the computer and send them.. but we do not deliver them to the families.. Families value our conversations and the report" (DB': 2018/05/05).

Grades are either 'notable', 'satisfactory' or 'excellent' while it is infrequent for a kid to repeat a course. This, instead of difficulties regarding the curriculum, only happens in case a kid faces significant problems regarding relationships with classmates. In other words, kids might repeat the school course to find a sense of belonging in another peer group, which generally happens during the first school years.

Instead of focusing on grades and official exams, the pedagogical team prepares detailed reports for each kid who is their chosen evaluation method. Two are given each year, one in January and one in June. Besides, one extra is delivered from the dining room service for the kids who attend it. Reports are personalized and offer the teacher's perspective of how they see the kid when writing the report.

We will now look at and comment on two reports for Nit (10 years old, community of grans, group of mitjans) during 2017-2018. The reports are always written by the teacher(s) of reference. The first is given in January and the second one in June.

Envelope – Front & Back covers

Figure 26: January 2018 Report – Front Cover

Source: Nit

The front cover of the envelope is always an individual proposal created by the kid, like the above. The teachers give the topic, and it is the same for all the community kids and each time different from the previous. The envelope's back cover explains what it is about and what can be found inside the envelope. The back covers of the reports mentioned are the following:

> *In this envelope, you will find…*
>
> *A text written by the teachers who accompany her in her steps in the community of grans. A text written through the desire to share our perceptions, experiences, doubts, … in our shared times. It is, nevertheless, an attempt to put words in what appears as a mystery to us as well: the other, seeking to put respectful words, however, through the possibility of the question.*
>
> *Out of this envelope, you will find…*
>
> *An illustration of your kid, accompanied by a brief text, about a place where they would like to hide. This proposal is born as a result of reading the illustrated album Hiding in a corner of the world by Jimmy Liao. A personal place or, sometimes, an actual or dreamed refugee, where kids can shun from the world's immensity, hide themselves from the fears or the ghosts -sometimes imagined, sometimes real- and find, in intimacy, this encounter with themselves. A place where every kid can submerge, dedicate their own time, let their imagination fly, even if it is only for a short time. A friendly place, an inhospitable place; a cozy place, an empty place; a nearby place, a place far away; a real place, a dream place… In short, the place of each.*
>
> *January 2018*
> *Community of Grans*

In this envelope, you will find…

A text written by your son or daughter based on a possible journey to an uncertain place without a return date. A long, personal, unforeseen journey where they need to think carefully about what to carry in their suitcase. Objects that will accompany them in this adventure, essential to them, unique and unrepeatable, without the possibility of finding them anywhere else. Objects, which upon opening the suitcase and finding them, will make them feel again close to those they love, offering a big dose of forces and energies to continue a new travel stretch.

A text written by the teachers who accompany her in her steps in the community of grans. A text written through the desire to share our perceptions, experiences, doubts, … in our shared times. It is, nevertheless, an attempt to put words in what appears as a mystery to us as well: the other, seeking to put respectful words, however, through the possibility of the question.

Out of this envelope, you will find…

The image of her suitcase, with her personal objects carefully chosen and placed to embark on the journey.

June 2018
Community of Grans

The Kid's text (draft and edited) and the Report

Inside the envelope, one can find the kid's text, both the draft version written in pencil and the final version in pen, as well as the report written by her teacher of reference.

Reports may shed light on the pedagogical team's focus and pedagogical approaches, and writing them is not an easy job. It is instead a long reflexive, and demanding process that requires much time. They include an evaluation of the kid's group and the kid individually and are written in a poetic way that matches the school's aesthetics. The same goes for the artistic proposals that teachers assign and are printed on the envelope's front cover.

Teachers comment on the kid's and the group's attitudes towards learning and changes. They refer to the activities most frequently chosen by the group and a general idea of interest shown and progress in maths, writing, reading, and the arts. Besides, every year, new projects and

proposals are recommended to kids. Teachers evaluate their attitude to novelties and their willingness to explore them both on a group and an individual level.

Then, a more detailed description of the individual learning processes is given, including the field of knowledge that most interests the kid, the path she chooses to learn focused on her tendency to collective or solitary learning, the topics of writing, and the books she prefers along with her reading skills. A similarly big part of the report is devoted to relations and feelings. The teacher starts with general notes about the relations between kids of the same group and their openness to others.

Then, there follow some general observations about the kid and changes in attitude and character observed. Besides, the teacher refers to how the kid tends to interact and develop relationships with the pedagogical team and their peers, commenting on how the kid feels regarding her relationships and how the teacher sees her in the group. Worries are mostly related to the lack of willingness for teamwork or negative feelings the kid tends to experience. In the end, the teacher advises on how to advance and ends up with her hopes for the upcoming school course.

In terms of the report, teachers do not employ an authoritative role when referring to their observations and recommendations. Instead, they offer their perspective, explicitly writing how they feel about the kid's attitude and progress. They write how they see kids, how they move in school and during excursions, how they relate with others, how they compromise themselves with the activities and proposals they show interest in. Last, teachers recognize the family's importance regarding education and use the reports as another bridge of working with them to feel more secure, loved, and therefore able to develop her skills.

Competències bàsiques[209]

As mentioned before, in all schools in Catalonia, kids have exams twice during the years of primary education; once when they are eight and once when they are eleven years old. The second ones are compulsory contrary to the first ones. The subjects examined are the

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[209] DB: 2018/05/05.

competencies considered to be more important by the department of education: maths, English, Catalan, and Spanish, although they sometimes change. These so-called 'competències bàsiques' aim to evaluate the educational centers and therefore give a common grade instead of evaluating each kid separately.

Pardal is no exception to this rule, and the school must adapt to the discontinuities provoked. For the community of mitjans, this is not such a big problem since kids whose parents decide so can skip school the days when exams take place. This is not the case for the community of grans, where two changes contribute to this adaptation process: a) Kids of the grans' group have extra compulsory hours of maths and reading/writing each week. Besides, every Friday, they stay after school for some extra practice accompanied by the teachers. b) A few days before the competencies, kids practice using previous exams, therefore getting to know the type of questions asked. As a teacher explains, they might know the answer but not the format. They give them a piece of paper and explain all the things they never do at Pardal, like the fact that they must sit separated and that they cannot look at others' writings.

Perspectives on Pardal are often revealed in terms of these days, when kids have a feeling of reversal and when norms about desired behavior are suspended. Most kids are aware of its difference from other local public schools, which is best expressed through the words of a girl while talking with a classmate about an imaginary scenario, according to which kids would have frequent exams apart from the official ones: "It would be like a different school" (DB: 2018/05/08).

In general, there is no problem regarding the content of the exams since Pardal bases its proposals on the official curriculum. Kids during the competencies face difficulties mainly due to the different ways of doing things and the different expectations. Most of them have to do with the time limits, the compulsory sited position, and the prohibition of teamwork. At the same time, such difficulties coincide with the ones that most will face soon in terms of secondary education.

The ways kids react vary and seem to depend on the kid mainly. This can be seen in the following conversation on the bus between two parents of similar backgrounds: "Lorena's mom

says she went to the osteopath due to the stress. Isidre, on the other hand, likes competencies; it's a challenge to him" (DB: 2018/03/17). Nevertheless, parents' attitude often influences a lot, as in the case of a girl who characteristically says that she doesn't feel nervous because her parents do not care about competencies.

 6.3 Parent Profiles[210]

Parent profiles have been changing as the years go by and are linked to the public imaginary around Pardal. In general, we could divide Pardal's attraction to families in three main phases:

a) The initial 'autochthonous' period when there were families living in Ústria only.

b) The intermediate 'boom' period when school got famous and started attracting more and more people from other neighborhoods. At the same time, locals began to attribute Pardal a negative meaning, leaving their place for the families attracted instead.

During these years, there was much prejudice towards the school. Rumors were frequently transmitted among neighbors who were talking about Pardal's dirty, naked, savage kids, who have no limits and only play instead of learning, which is what should be done at school. This is why many kids massively changed school after their families' decision or even when the Imam of Ústria intervened and called the Muslim community to move to another neighborhood school, as a father narrates (IB3).

Therefore, many families -Moroccan and sub-Saharan mostly- left Pardal due to the negative meaning attributed to the school. At the same time, others were attracted and started to 'occupy' the school, many of whom knew each other from other educational projects and for whom education was not only school's but also home's responsibility. Therefore a distinction started to arise among the population, clearly demonstrated through the following example in the park narrated by a father: "We were eating, and there was a man with his dog passing.. he said "shitty

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[210] DB': 2018/04/07, 05, 11, 17, 18, 23, 24, 26, DB': 2018/05/02, 05, 07, 09, 14, DB': 2018/06/05, 07, 15, 17, 25, DB': 2018/07/06, DB': 2018/10/15, 16, 31, DB': 2018/11/19, DB': 2018/12/26, DB': 2019/01/12, 20, DB': 2019/02/11, 17, 24, DB': 2019/03/04, 10, 17, 24, DB': 2019/04/01, 16, DB': 2019/05/05, 17, IB1, IB2, IB3, IB5, IB6, IB8 & IB10.

hippies, go to your town, go to Barcelona"... it was like an invasion, many families came like clans" (IB10). Nevertheless, such distinction is made vice versa as well, a fact that can be seen in the words of a mother "A man is wearing a civil guard T-shirt, and Abellera refers to him commenting "the autochthonous are like that". .. On the way back home, she says "we are a sect", joking (DB': 2018/07/06).

Due to the legal system, interested families proceed to strategies that prioritize them in Pardal's waiting list, such as the census certificate, with the help of other families normally. While in theory, they state that they live in the municipality to local authorities, they live in others. Such example is a mother whose daughters managed to enter the school even though the family lives 10km far from the neighborhood, thanks to this strategy.

c) The current 'mixed' period when Pardal recovered its fame among the locals, and it, therefore, became more difficult for others to enter. During this period, there are both local families and families from other municipalities, either moving to Ústria or remaining in theirs. According to some parents and teachers, this change of attitude might have happened due to the general public acceptance of alternative educational projects or students' continuation to secondary schools.

The census certificate, much prevalent during the second period, started decreasing in the third phase due to the school's high demand combined with ever-increasing controls by local authorities. It is when local families started even denouncing others for not living in the municipality and thus illegally occupying a school place. Therefore, there are still families coming from other provinces of Barcelona, although this phenomenon is much more limited.

Although there now seems to exist a balance, we will focus on the families who have consciously chosen the school for their kids' education, most of whom have migrated to the neighborhood. What is common among those 'educational migrants'[211] is the importance they give to the education of their kids which leads them to a series of sacrifices and life changes.

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[211] The certain term is emic, used by a mother for self-definition.

One of these examples is a family who lived in a mountain village, one hour and a half by car away from Pardal. During the second phase, their registration at Pardal could be done due to the census certificate strategy. Therefore, they would be moving every day for the first years until they ultimately moved to the neighborhood, a decision taken by many due to the practical difficulties regarding transportation. Since then, the mother is highly implicated in the school community, actively participating in AFI. According to a teacher's words, this change of "modus vivendi" took place because the mother had found "the place where her kids could develop in the way she believes in"[212]. At this point, we could also reflect upon the so-called 'freedom of choice'; a concept much valued by these families -who consider freedom to decide upon their kids' education a parental right- yet a privilege.

But this 'modus vivendi' or lifestyle is another significant similarity among families choosing Pardal, who could generally be described as 'alternative'. Most mothers differentiate themselves due to their 'awaken mind', 'open mentality', 'unwillingness to follow the norms', and 'inquietud'[213] .

This 'open mentality' shared among families brings them together in various spaces like biocultural fairs, and the encounter with 'alternative lifestyles' often leads to the questioning of educational aspects itself. We will briefly see aspects of such lifestyles.

Polyamory: Either having tried it or currently practicing, there are many mothers attracted to polyamory, some of whom participate in the polyamorous community of Catalonia. Nevertheless, even if they are not polyamorous themselves, all of them are sexually open-minded. Few are even activists, participating, for example, in HIV support groups or giving talks about polyamory. It should be noted that this involvement does not always go without questioning, as revealed through an example of a mother who decided to disconnect from the polyamorous community due to the general consumerism of bodies and relations prevailing and inequality felt because of the economic stability of most members.

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[212] DB': 2018/05/05.
[213] Emic concepts from DB': 2018/10/16, DB': 2019/02/24, DB': 2018/04/07 & DB': 2018/02/05, frequently used by mothers to refer to their curious, questioning, learning spirits.

Spirituality: Many mothers are interested or even professionals in spiritual philosophies and practices such as Buddhism, yoga, reiki, tai-chi, or reflexology. Some have traveled to India and China in the past, and many have spiritual guides or therapists.

Well-being: Most mothers invest much in well-being by consuming ecological, healthy products, while many are vegetarian or vegan.

Learning: Many mothers study at the university or are enrolled in courses. Their lifestyle is created around learning both in everyday life and in official institutions.

This 'sectarian' lifestyle introduces us to another topic: feelings of superiority. As a few parents observe and interpret, some parents regard themselves as unique, (morally) superior to others, whose way of doing things, way of thinking, and way of being, in general, is the correct one; a common issue in alternative movements. According to a father[214], the differentiation from the majority and positive valuation of oneself based on it unites many parents involved in Pardal who respond to a specific pattern, generating, in a mother's words[215], an "urban tribe".

Although there is a considerable diversity regarding families' social class in Pardal, the visible ones seem to be middle-classed in their majority. Among else, parents work at universities, libraries, cultural centers, administration, bakeries, restaurants, run companies and publishing houses or work as engineers, designers, scientists, police officers, teachers, psychologists, therapists, artisans, artists, actors, directors, journalists, social workers, etc., many of which are temporary. Almost all have university studies, while many have recently started them or decided to continue.

Housing varies as well; while some live in family properties or bought houses, most rent, in some cases sharing with other families from Pardal; a phenomenon most common in the case of divorced families and chosen by mothers. Some of them live in Ústria, others in expensive areas of Barcelona and its province. Last, family income varies too, from 1000 to more than 3000

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[214] IB3.
[215] IB9.

euros per month. It could be said that despite their diverse economic and professional profiles, most parents we focus on hold 'liquid' professional identities, as their profession changes quite frequently, with a significant attraction to both formal and non-formal learning.

Personal educational experiences vary as well, with few having been to private schools, others to publicly-funded private, and others to public schools. Some of them were religious -run by nuns-, others secular and the majority conventional, non-alternative. Nonetheless, a few interviewed parents have studied at innovative, progressive schools for their time, the so-called 'Catalan schools' or schools cooperatively run by parents and teachers.

Their perceptions of these experiences also vary -offering from positive to negative memories- and are not especially connected to their decision upon their kids' education. Nevertheless, they sometimes are, such as the case of a mother whose parents did not let her go on excursions and her teachers used to punish her for looking out of the window or feelings of incomprehension experienced by another. In these cases, personal educational experiences function as anti-examples.

Political ideas also vary among parents. However, what everyone among the families who have chosen the school seems to have in common are their leftist and feminist political ideas. A big part is independentists, some vote for or are members of leftist parties, others are "not interested", and few of them are self-defined as anarchists.

It should be mentioned that although mothers are active feminists, there are many who question the commercialization of the movement and although there are a few sharing anarchist ideas, most mothers opt for voting mainly due to the popularity a far-right party has gained lately and their subsequent fears.

Although most grandparents are religious (Catholic Christians), parents are not in their majority. However, there are a few Christians and Muslims while many are exploring their spirituality, especially mothers.

6.3.1 Birth and upbringing

Many mothers of those who have chosen the school believe that violence starts with birth, agreeing with Michel Odent, whose book 'the baby is a mammal' is especially popular. Briefly, this philosophical trend supports that we must first change the way of being born to change the world. Many of them are against medical intervention and have opted for a natural birth at home, generally with the help of a paid midwife, or participate actively in associations such as the Catalan association for respected childbirth. Others have given birth in hospitals, at times with specialized services offered to support and take care of the mother and the newborn, and some of them have suffered obstetric violence. In their discourses, there are frequent references to biology, instinct, and nature since they argue that we are mammals, and as a species, we are born to develop in another way than the currently established.

Many mothers have already met before, in groups of shared upbringing, lactation groups, or/and coincided afterward in nursery schools. This is the most common way of entrance to the world of alternative education as well. Giving birth and upbringing for these mothers is one of the most -if not the most- life-changing experiences during which they learn and grow in community. On the one hand, maternity moves emotions, and at the same time, it sheds light on social aspects bound to capitalism, patriarchy, and power relations. In other words, they perceive maternity as it is; a political matter, and at the same time, maternity becomes their starting point for a general questioning and an empowering process, as many of them narrate.

Regarding upbringing, the families we examine usually follow principles of attachment parenting such as extended breastfeeding upon demand, baby-wearing, and co-sleeping. They read related books, some of them decide not to vaccinate kids, many of them even quit their jobs to dedicate themselves to their kids' upbringing, while others change their professions to new compatible ones. Sometimes, the Internet is also essential regarding their imaginary shaping, as they often virtually connect to mothers with the same worries through forums, exchanging experiences and information.

It seems like there is a new life starting with the beginning of the explorations around upbringing and education, which are quite the same thing to these mothers.

6.3.2 Support networks

In general, first-degree relatives tend to disagree with the upbringing and educational choices of the families. Although there is acceptance and support during the first years, they usually start worrying about kids' learning processes after the age of six. Others think that such parental effort for kids' education is not worth it. In most cases, relatives respect their decision without getting much into it except the judging comments. However, there are times when more severe conflicts appear or when handling the differences becomes complicated as a mere discussion might be perceived as a judgment: "At family dinners, you cannot talk with people who have children, because they feel threatened like you're criticizing them in their way ... and we do not want it, but it always ends up being like that" (IB10)

Although friends from before might, in some cases, think differently about related matters, the ones that influence them and usually become their new social network have similar perspectives since this is also the linking point of their friendship. Families who have chosen Pardal tend to socialize mainly among them, getting engaged in the same leisure time activities, and supporting each other with upbringing and any other needs they might have. It is interesting how this general questioning affecting their lifestyle, attracts them to common spaces where alternatives to social norms are planted, differentiating them and bringing them together: "A mother comments that she had already met another before Pardal as they were the only ones in the neighborhood carrying their babies in slings" (DB': 2018/05/09).

This networking can be best seen at the nearby park during lunchtime, where families coordinate to look after a group of kids by sharing the days of the week or by forming groups of kids and looking for an adult who can accompany them, most times English-speaking so that they can teach the language in terms of daily interactions.

Networks are experienced as family extensions, with kids often referring to other moms as second moms, for example, kids calling peers of family friends cousins or mothers perceiving them as their family of choice.

Therefore, a sense of belonging and bonding extends to these families, while there are moments that provide more significant opportunities for the development of such feelings in bigger groups. One of these was the announcement day of the Instituto's creation in the park: "Many kids are jumping, celebrating, while moms are hugging and kissing each other ... everyone talks about the good news. Eight families are sharing chips and wine to celebrate. They are talking, drinking, and taking photos" (DB': 2019/01/12).

These families give each other all kinds of support. For instance, many kids attend dance classes given by a father, they share car trips to and from the school, participate together in local cultural acts such as the carnival, and some of the "educational immigrants" even share housing. Last, they have a big WhatsApp group to ask/give support and organize themselves for meetings, celebrations, or other acts. These networks sometimes continue even after kids leave Pardal.

All in all, in these groups, which become their new core of sociability, mothers create strong links that last in time. But above all, there they find an affinity group, a mutual aid network, an extensive family which helps them cope with emotions of loneliness, isolation, impotence, sadness, or tiredness they might experience.

Excluded from Networks: But what happens with the rest of the families? The few times they coincide in the park, their interactions are limited or non-existent.

> Salma with her family are having lunch; sandwiches, bananas, and juice. Other groups of kids with mothers eat using plates and share food, like rice with chicken, placed in the middle. After lunch, all mothers get together and start talking, apart from Salma's, who stays at the playground area watching her kids (DB': 2018/10/23).

Due to the differences in lifestyles, challenging communication, and "lack of affinity, both at an emotional level and regarding the way of thinking"[216], in a mother's words, these families are excluded and exclude themselves, becoming invisible, in the same way kids do in school settings. Therefore, although there is respect and a few encounters, LSCD families[217] do not participate in the support networks that we saw before.

Although there have been parental attempts in the past to keep such families informed, like the afternoon tea gathering, or even to include them in their networks by inviting them to birthday parties, they had no success in the long run. A few tend to naturalize this exclusion explaining it with our tendency to get together with the ones we have more similarities, although many would prefer it to be different.

In any case, what is certain is that such cultural differentiation leads to a form of self-segregation of which most are aware of, even self-defining themselves as an "endogamous sector"[218].

6.4 Parents go to school[219]

     6.4.1 Before Pardal and decision-making[220]

Most kids of these families have been to parenting groups. Many continued to public kindergartens -both conventional and alternative ones-, private and self-managed projects of free education run by families, while few even opted for creating their projects with other parents. Some have chosen them for their pedagogies, others for convenience, while many tried to combine both.

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[216] IB8.

[217] Linguistically, culturally, and socio-economically diverse (Doucat, 2011). I will use this term to refer to them as it embraces many differentiating aspects.

[218] DB': 2018/17/6.

[219] DB': 2018/04/18, DB': 2018/04/23, DB': 2018/04/24, DB': 2018/05/02, DB': 2018/05/03, DB': 2018/05/05, DB': 2018/05/07, DB': 2018/05/08, DB': 2018/05/14, DB': 2018/05/30, DB': 2018/06/04, DB': 2018/06/07, DB': 2018/06/15, DB': 2018/06/20, DB': 2018/11/04, DB': 2018/11/12, DB': 2019/02/24, DB': 2019/05/12, DB': 2019/06/17 & DB': 2019/06/30.

[220] IB1, IB2, IB3, IB4, IB5, IB6, IB7, IB8, IB9 & IB10.

Although the process of choosing Pardal and each family's path differs, the primary initial sources of information are social networks of families and information available on the Internet. Most parents are already aware of the project through information they get in XELL (Xarxa d'Educació Lliure[221]), parenting groups, or other alternative educational projects, while the fact that it is the first public referent on alternative pedagogies has made it quite popular among these social groups. Some of the families are also influenced by their training, in case they have education-related studies, or by their life experiences abroad where formal educational systems are different like the case of a mother who lived in Germany before: "parents entered, accompanied kids to class, children went barefoot, played ... The relationship between parents and the teachers was different, everything was very different, and it caught my attention" (IB2)..

Then, most parents attend one of Pardal's 'open doors', usually after visiting other centers in their neighborhood and sometimes in groups. Parents' motivation to choose Pardal varies; sometimes, it relates to what it is thought to offer kids individually, while others, it is more bound to its potential for social change. In most discourses, there is a reference to both.

> I wanted my kids to develop in harmony, even though society clashes with almost everything you want ... that they were respected, and not subjected to violence, which occurs in the educational system, such as the limitation of movement, action, will, although it is necessary to be aware that at certain times you have to limit your movement, that your action also depends on others ... not understanding it from an unlimited license. Besides, I believed there was a good emotional or relational accompañamiento, especially in conflict issues (IB3).

But why do they decide to choose Pardal instead of other similar educational projects? In many cases, this is related to the school's public character, which makes it economically accessible, the medium level of parental involvement and encouragement of parents' presence at school, as well as specific characteristics, from aesthetics and popularity to teachers' discourses and child-centered pedagogy.

Besides, there are also references to diversity as one of the key factors differentiating the school from other projects with similar pedagogies. The school's location makes it unique in some parents' eyes, offering possibilities non-existent in most alternative educational projects to get

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[221] Catalan Network of Libertarian Education.

together with people who do not think in the same way and avoid creating a 'ghetto'. At the same time, the industrial zone that hosts it has a negative meaning to others.

There follows an extract revealing the value a mother gives on diversity, based on her previous experience at a Waldorf school's open doors and explaining why it was rejected. It is interesting how 'wealth', a concept used by many mothers to describe the cultural wealth among the families who have chosen the school, bound to a specific lifestyle, is now replaced by a wealth offered by the diverse lifestyles coexisting:

> We went to the open doors, and they forced us to do a ritual, so I thought if you don't get up thanking and hugging a tree, maybe you don't fit there .. or we are not vegetarians, but on Mondays, there is quinoa, Tuesdays tofu, Wednesdays seitan .. Pardal is richer because in Ximo's class there is Hamza who comes from Mauritania and Patrici who is from Ústria and is gypsy.. to me this is enriching, that such a different project, with this desire to transform, is in a context like this and not something privileged.. for people who not only look for this option but also those who find it and know how to value and appreciate it and those who find it and do not understand it.. the possibility for our children to live in a reality that, in another context, they would not have had (IB9).

Now, what do these families hope that this education can bring? Parents' wishes are compatible with their own experiences and how they perceive education, focused on relationships, emotions, values, self-knowledge, personality development, and the freedom to explore their interests instead of acquiring academic knowledge. What is more, they tend to refer to both an individual and a social level as interconnected, mainly solidarity and equity, critical spirit, and questioning through respect.

6.4.2 Separation from kids

In general, parents are not allowed to stay at school for much time, apart from a few minutes upon arrival. The adaptation process occurs during the first year only, and the duration depends on each kid's needs. In case kids start school when three years old, the adaptation period is usually more extended than those of 6 years old. During this period, which is quite long for a public school, parents may stay without interacting, except the moments kids need them.

The limits for parents -mothers typically- set by teachers are clear; they must stay seated at an agreed place around the space; they cannot move, follow their kids, or play with them. The only exception to this is the times kids need to be accompanied to go to the bathroom. This way, parents form "a membrane that protects them", available for kids if they need them. Teachers insist that this space is for kids and not for parents, recognizing that adaptation is a double process; parents, mothers mostly, must get adapted to the separation too. In some cases that mothers have fears, according to a teacher, they have to tell them that their kid is prepared, and they must leave to give them the opportunity and permit them to be without them.

This difficulty of separation mothers face can be seen in the narrative of a mother when she reflects on her daughter's adaptation process when she was three years old:

> As soon as we got there, she told me, well, mom, you can go now ... the only thing I was not prepared for was for my daughter to tell me you can go … where would I go? I had neither work nor anything; I was planning to spend months for the adaptation ... the times that I had been alone without my daughter were few, I did not even know how to walk without a child hanging on my sling, I felt naked ... I remember leaving school and seeing myself there alone ... it was like what do I do now (IB8).

After the first period, the second phase of adaptation is when parents can stay reading quietly in a separate space out of their kids' reference room. The third adaptation phase is when parents finally stay further away in a separate room to prepare fruit for the little kids (3-6). They, therefore, explain to kids that they are in the school's space in case they need something. Besides, during the whole adaptation period, parents can stay to accompany kids in the dining room or during their naps -in the case of 3-year-olds. Exceptions to all the above exist if there are special, unpredicted family conditions when the adaptation period normally extends.

I should mention that more structure and limits are added as the school grows and if parents abuse the space given, as revealed through the words of a mother when commenting on such changes. While rules now exist, they did not when the school opened its doors and for the first years, when parents could stay the whole day and even had a proper space for them, the 'espai familiar', meaning 'family space', which we will explain more in the following section.

Back then, parents interacted with the children. A few years later, they established the rule that parents during adaptation had to sit in one place, they could read a book or something, but not interact or accompany their children ... depending on each case, they do not put a time limit, but if they see that a child's adaptation takes longer, they talk with the families about what they think could be happening, and what would facilitate the child to have more confidence (IB8).

6.4.3 Parental presence and involvement

Pardal's space is for kids, and parents have nothing to do there in the case of older ages. Parents in the community of grans are usually seen in the spaces upon arrivals and exits only. Many of them, mothers in their majority, and occasionally grandparents, walk up the stairs to accompany or pick up kids from their classes of reference when they get the chance to meet, hug and interact with teachers and fellow parents – a possibility much appreciated by them.

The primary way parents get involved is their attendance at interviews and meetings and participation at AFI committees. They, therefore, get engaged in various activities related to school and contribute in the ways they can. At the beginning of the school year, teachers propose that parents write down their hobbies and professions to contact them, if needed, instead of local authorities who are usually late.

There are times when mothers are observed in the pedagogical team's room helping in their free time if there are school needs. Help is varied from administration work and printing to painting figures for the space of symbolic play. Other times, parents -especially fathers- are also seen outdoors on the playground getting engaged in tasks such as constructing tables or moving furniture. They also help with the fruit cutting for the community of petits or gardening.

In case collective projects are done by kids, such as film trailers, parents stay a few minutes upon exit to watch them all together. The pedagogical team encourages parents to be present at school and even organizes gatherings, debates, seminars, talks, etc., with professionals of education, psychology, and related disciplines in the evenings, most times with a cost of attendance.

Last, they organize school celebrations in which they sell handmade artisan products such as soaps, jewelry, dolls, perfumes, cosmetics, and food and drinks, destined to fundraising for the school. During the celebrations, parents share all roles; they present, welcome new families, cook, and perform dancing and singing. A few fathers have even formed a rock group called 'Els Pardalets'.

Nevertheless, teachers make sure to set the necessary limits not only for kids but also for parents who are indeed the biggest challenge in such projects where responsibility regarding education is shared; a fact about which most parents are conscious of: "the most difficult thing in a more free or open project is the families because we sometimes hinder" (IB10). This is best shown through the example of the 'family space'; a space initially destined for parents, where they could stay during school hours. However, due to the tendency of some to make it theirs, staying the whole day without taking care of the space and excluding others, the school decided to close it. As a mother explains from her experience with the specific category of parents: "it was a bit invasive ... there were parents who would maybe want to stay, but depending on how they looked at you, you could enter or not" (IB1).

This example introduces us to another topic; conflicts among parents are quite frequent due to their high presence and involvement and their resolution by the school.

> The excuse of the school was that it needed more space … but some families made it their home, occupying everything, it was not a space to share. .. Sometimes there was a lack of people to cut fruit, they were in the family space but would not go because it wasn't their son's class. There, a conflict happened, so the school resolved it by removing the space. Well, we have had some conflicts. For example, one that I had is that many artisans wanted to exhibit. But of course, parents are not here to earn a living; Pardal is for children. They may do so, but only as long as it benefits the school.. Some parents could not understand (IB6).

Shared Wealth: Every Monday, after lunchtime and until the exit, mothers gather at the dining room for the so-called 'riquezas compartidas' (shared wealth), a parents' initiative which is organized by themselves since 2011, and especially one of them; Dànae. Although it is open to everyone and the invitation e-mail reaches all families, the number of participants is usually low; six to ten, and there are (almost) only mothers participating. The idea behind these gatherings is

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that there is an amazing wealth among parents, and therefore mothers share something they know or think that would enrich the rest.

Aspects of participants' lifestyle and social class are often revealed during these meetings. Most of them could be described as 'hippy', wearing pendants with symbolisms such as the triple goddess and the tree of life. A few mothers also participate, although their kids are older and no longer Pardal's students. According to the participants, despite the mixed character, fathers rarely attend due to the "feminine energy".

Examples of such gatherings include chakras workshops, homeopathy, sexuality, menstruation cycles, minerals, astral projection, contemporary dance, or life stories. Two key aspects are the central concept of nature and the questioning of professionals. Participants usually talk negatively about our growing up in a culture where doctors are the ones who give instructions to mothers. Informal discussions also include yoga retreats or feminist issues such as the power women have during menstruation and ritualistic practices like the use of the blood as an offer back to nature or charging stones. This space is highly potent regarding the bonding developed among the participants who use the school space in the double roles of mothers and learners while reinforcing their mutual aid networks. There follows an example:

A life story of spirituality

She starts explaining her hard adolescence due to the conflicts with her father, her addiction to drugs like ecstasy, her car accident, panic attacks, depression. The medicines doctors gave her led her to something that changed her life: the healing power of Bach Flowers, with which she experimented a lot, especially after her father's death. She realized how many similarities we have with the world of plants; just like tress, we have our roots, our unconscious dark side that depends on our ancestors, and our visible side.

She then refers to her experimentation with peyote, San Pedro, and Santa Maria (cannabis), narrating the pilgrimage of nine days she participated in, along with a specialized nun and six more people. She insists on the importance of love and its sharing and mentions other spiritual paths she follows lately, such as mindfulness and spiritual experimentation with music, referring to her belonging to a group of women who meet every full moon. She closes her speech by saying that "the observer is the one who creates reality" and suggests to look at our unconscious dark side and have no fear of discovering it; conflicts give us a unique opportunity to do that.

In the end, all the participants close their eyes in a meditation status, and she reads a text about love. She then sings a song about Mother Nature, accompanied by a tambourine, shows the rest a dance, and they all dance together. They hug each other and leave (DB': 2018/05/07).

All in all, despite the limits set by teachers, parents' involvement at Pardal is both encouraged and expected as long as it is not a problem to the school's function. Besides, parents generally appreciate it, although it usually decreases as years go by and they get tired. This high involvement makes Pardal a communal learning space for some parents as well. As a mother says at a school celebration, "we are not here to learn but to learn together; and this together changes it all"[222]. Apart from aspects of the pedagogical proposal, they learn to live in a community, collaborate, fight, help each other, self-organize, and the importance of having a mutual aid network. This is made explicitly clear in the words of another mother during the same event when she thanks teachers for the education parents received: "as parents, we have also grown experienced personal growth in all these workshops and meetings"[223] and an interviewed mother: "it is a learning process at all levels. If you don't want to take advantage of it, you don't, but if you want to, it is super enriching" (IB6).

It is not a causality that most parents still study or decide to study at the university after entering the project; cultural transmission from teachers to parents and among parents is continuous and strong. In a way, especially during the first years, the pedagogical team educated parents by inviting them to university conferences of Rebeca and Mauricio Wild[224] and explaining the educational project in detail. In the following words of a mother, we may look at the intensity of learning, mainly to parents who have not moved to the neighborhood for the school but have chosen it due to spatial proximity, when she says that to her, "it was like an awakening .. I chose this school for my daughter because it was the closest, and it was years of learning in all senses and areas" (IB1). The same mother later explains about the hologram therapy her daughter does and which she knew because many parents are keen on such therapies. Therefore, although this is

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[222] DB': 2018/06/17.
[223] Ibid.
[224] See p. 28.

not the rule, parents at Pardal sometimes acquire the shared culture and develop their sense of belonging to the educational community.

But are all parents present at school and implicated to the same degree? "If kids have no learning or family problems, I can guarantee that they are gonna shine"[225], says a mother at a school celebration shedding light on an important aspect: cultural discontinuity as an exclusion factor. In the same way some kids become invisible or develop distancing strategies, some parents avoid events, meetings, gatherings, or any other kind of involvement and are rarely seen at Pardal. They do not enter the building to accompany their kids to their reference room but instead, wait outside or let their kids go alone, especially at older ages. Although invisible kids do not always come from these families, it is very common.

According to a mother, apart from the language barrier, non-privileged families have different needs than looking for the best school for their children as many of the rest:

> Many of them have lots of children or work .. they are different realities and needs. I met an African mother who needed her children to learn reading quickly because she could not read, neither in her language nor in any language. So when she got the chance, she took them out of school and put them in a traditional school .. these families have not chosen this school because they want to.. and their perception is as true and as important as mine (IB4).

Language barriers are not only caused by families who are not Catalan or Spanish-speaking, but also due to the school's special language code, which is key to the shared culture of specific families and exclude others, as revealed through an example given by a mother:

> A family that did not choose the school participated in a meeting. The father asked about a verbal term used a lot, like from the ghetto, 'accompany'. He said, I accompany my daughter every day, I leave her to school and pick her up .. he made this reflection, why do they all speak this way. It is like the assumption that when I say sustain, everyone understands what it is to sustain emotionally because I assume that everyone who comes has this way of seeing life ... I think that for immigrant families, it is much more complicated than any other center because it has the complexity of understanding the project, understanding the reasons why (IB9).

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[225] DB': 2018/17/6.

Families whose home culture does not meet school culture are probably not familiar with the language code used by Pardal's educational community. Although there are cases when parents get interested and learn the language code, others do not. Therefore, not having access to it, their participation and involvement are prevented while their exclusion is rather facilitated.

Last, views on education and family and ways of life might be the reason for significant discontinuities that influence some parents' presence, between what happens at home and school, or between what is expected to happen at school and what actually happens, as another mother explains:

> To them, family is something else; it is the care of the siblings, attention, housework ... education is deposited in the school ... they have a different way of thinking.. they would prefer to teach them in a traditional way how to read, write. Many are also Muslims; they go to the mosque to learn reading and writing ... there is a difference between what they do at school and out of it (IB10).

All in all, one of Pardal's failures is its inability to adapt to all its members' needs and help certain families develop their sense of belonging, an opinion shared by many parents as well. Although there is an effort to respect them -by not celebrating festive religious seasons, for example- LSCD families who do not learn the school's language code do not know what is going on and get excluded.

A discussion with a Senegalese mother shows us their lack of knowledge of what is going on at school and the teachers' failure to communicate with them and make the necessary cultural adaptations. The same is revealed through a conversation with a Moroccan ex-mother of the school when she explains how both she and other Moroccan mothers used to attend meetings at Pardal but stopped because they could not understand Catalan and teachers would not switch to Spanish. Some of them got angry with the school, while she just stopped going. As she says, "I'd rather be doing the dishes than staying there like an idiot" (DB': 2019/06/30).

This problematic situation can also be seen through an example given by another mother. An African father let his kid join colonias once, but he had a hard time; not even having access to the

WhatsApp parents' group, he was sending voice messages to the mother, asking about his son and why he does not contact him.

Inclusion attempts made by teachers, such as discussions with parents, with kids translating, are usually interpreted negatively, as attempts to make more money through the fees for the colonias, for example. At the same time, parents who have chosen Pardal or have positive perceptions regarding it in general sometimes interpret such resistance as an aspect of their traditional lifestyle, which includes -in their imaginary- values and behaviors contrary to theirs, such as beating their kids or limiting their freedom. A mother asks herself, "If I was Moroccan, and I wanted to continue with my religion, would I go to a school that they allow you to be who you want? Maybe they do not want children to be so free" (IB2).

Last, there is a limited understanding by teachers as well, which may be seen in the answer Salma's reference teacher gave when asked if her parents are aware of her alienating experiences at school "she says her mom doesn't speak any Spanish, and when her dad goes sometimes, he only asks 'how does my girl go?' She tells him to go discuss, but he never does; he just appears, "obsessed about learning" (DB': 2019/01/14).

Now that I have referred to the profiles and lifestyles of a few families, we will focus on more Pardal-related aspects, such as their kids' previous educational experiences, the reasons that motivated parents to choose Pardal and their perspectives on it, kids' trajectories in the project in terms of social life and learnings and plans they have after leaving the school.

6.4.4 Parental perspectives[226]

When asked how they would define Pardal in pedagogical terms, most families find difficulties, and their answers differ. This happens mainly due to the mixed pedagogical material used, combined with the official curriculum. Most of them, therefore, use more general terms to define it, such as 'respectful' or 'innovative' while many refer to the concept 'free' which, according to

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[226] IB1, IB2, IB3, IB4, IB5, IB6, IB7, IB8, IB9 & IB10.

them, would not be adequate to describe it, although there is much more freedom than other public schools.

Regarding the project's key points, these are the ones that stand out:

- Respect of how kids are, awareness and quick adaptation to their needs.
- A focus on kids' happiness.
- The enhancing of creativity.
- Questioning of established practices and consciousness of what is being done and the reasons why.

Regarding parents' perspectives on the pedagogical team, most appreciate the pedagogical team's extra work and commitment to the educational project and kids' acompañamiento despite the difficulties of realizing it.

Nevertheless, there are also many negative aspects perceived and expressed in the discourses of parents, who acknowledge the way teachers take care of kids but think that such work is not done with adults.

First of all, teachers seem to be divided, and power relations arise through this division. On the one hand, the founding group holds the authority, controls everything, and takes all decisions; the "middle or high-class sacred cows" as a father describes them (IB3). On the other hand, new teachers incorporated are constantly watched over and judged. In addition, teachers do not take care of parents either. Therefore, although the educational responsibility in Pardal is shared among teachers and parents, in practice, driven by their systemic vision, teachers tend to blame families and avoid taking up responsibilities about things that do not function, either related to learning trajectories or social life, proposing systemic therapies instead.

In addition, due to the focus on learning, there is neither observation nor acknowledgment of kids' lack of learning for various reasons, like learning difficulties, many of whom belong to the

category of the 'invisible' kids we referred to before. The interviewed who mentioned this aspect are the ones whose kids are diagnosed with dyslexia.

Parents tend to give their opinion frequently, but responding to the diversity of perspectives is challenging. Feedback and criticism coming from them, whether about learning difficulties or dynamics generated among kids, usually is not welcome and denied, like the case of a family who was told that they might need to look for another school if there are so many things they do not like. According to this mother, "criticism and questioning are not accepted .. you raise a problem, and they deny it, either there is no problem here, or it is a systemic issue" (IB10).

This brings us to another point: protection. Due to Pardal's differences compared to other public schools, along with its hostile reception by the people of the municipality and local authorities, but also the considerable number of individuals involved, teachers had kept a somewhat hermetic and defensive attitude to protect the project and the pedagogical proposal behind it, especially in the beginning when it was too fragile.

When asked about the project's positive and negative points, interviewed parents referred to kids, families, and the pedagogical team. More specifically, many consider abilities and skills taught to be necessary, like teamwork, respect, and compromise through engagement with projects. Besides, parents usually value the way kids learn, after their innate interest, in their paces, through play, without being obliged to and using the unlimited learning possibilities found in each space. What is also frequently mentioned as a positive point is that kids can move around instead of staying sited, which is considered both absurd, against kids' necessities and killing their eagerness to learn, along with the frequent contact with nature through the various excursions and colonias.

In addition, many perceive their possibility of entering the school as a continuation of their attachment parenting. At the same time, it is a chance to keep daily contact with the teacher, explaining things that have happened at home and an indirect way to participate in their kids' school life. Regarding the teaching staff, lots of parents value the trust and care shown to kids,

the school's child-centered and changing character according to kids' needs, as well as the fact that non-normative kids do not get labeled, punished, marginalized, or medicalized.

Before we continue, it is interesting to see how these positive points highlighted are completely different in the case of other families who appreciate specific learnings instead of attributing value to the pedagogical choices. An example is given through the conversation with the Senegalese mother who, when asked what she likes most, refers to the fact that her daughter learned how to ride a bike and how to do house chores "She now helps a lot with the house; she does the dishes and she cuts fruit like a professional" (DB': 2018/06/20).

We could say that among the reasons parents attribute negative meaning to Pardal, the main ones are opposite perspectives; the first is disappointment with Pardal's excessive structure, and the second regards slow learning processes. Some parents get disappointed due to Pardal's excessive structure in pedagogical terms, the limited presence they are allowed to have, or the difficulties of the pedagogical team to detect learning difficulties such as dyslexia and cases of violence among kids. Therefore, in the first case, kids' learning process is also mentioned as a negative point. Kids' considerable number is also another common problem, especially for families who have previously been to smaller educational projects, along with teachers' acompañamiento, either due to the student-teacher ratio that makes conflicts and incidents of exclusion or even violence hard to notice, or teachers' varied profiles some of whom are not compatible with Pardal's pedagogical proposal. Moreover, some parents question the lack of limits set by teachers, which sometimes leads to dangerous situations, while bureaucratic or normative problems often arise due to Pardal's institutional nature that sometimes adapts to the system, which causes frustration to many. Last, a few parents attribute negative meaning to Pardal's 'political neutrality' and lack of critical spirit that is thought to reproduce individualism, consumerism, and the status quo in general.

At this point, I should mention that, although documentation is usually valued positively by families who appreciate the teacher's efforts, the possibility to access their kids' daily school life, and the beautiful visual memories, others do not agree. Arguments mostly regard the opposition

to the importance of image or the importance given to results and the violence some kids may experience during this process.

Others are unhappy with kids' slow learning processes or that they play too many hours and under the sun. Besides, incidents of racism and discrimination happen among kids, which teachers are often not aware of or able to handle. For example, a Senegalese mother explains that, when her daughter was younger, some kids called her' diarrhea', an attitude she attributes to the education their parents give them. According to her, kids would deny it when she told parents, and she got tired of telling teachers and nothing changing either.

Regarding kids' learning trajectories, most interviewed parents are confident. Many are convinced by Pardal's pedagogical proposal, according to which every kid has different learning paces, and appreciate the fact that they are not obliged to learn things that do not interest them, which is thought to kill the desire and eagerness to learn. Many kids advance in maths, reading, and writing from an early age, while others learn much later, like a girl who learned at the age of eight: "just when she began to worry and believe it was necessary for her .. for a couple of weeks she said I will never learn .. and almost overnight she did, now loves to read. After reading, she started writing" (IB8).

Nevertheless, many doubts and contradictions might be generated by their choice regarding learning trajectories as, despite the acceptance of the pedagogical proposal, there are still fears that kids might never learn what they are supposed to. This is probably stronger in cases mothers school choice does not have the complete approval of fathers, adding an extra responsibility to mothers.

Some parents are less happy about their kids' learning trajectories because of their difficulties and limited knowledge. According to a father[227], what knowledge is necessary to acquire is not clear and there are many possibilities for kids to avoid working on specific areas until they move to the community of grans where they are made to learn certain things.

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[227] IB3.

Problems increase when we look at families whose kids are diagnosed with dyslexia. Most times, such difficulties were not detected by teachers who used to attribute them to kids' emotional state or family issues, although this seems to have changed now with teachers informing parents as soon as they detect a difficulty. Respecting personal learning paces is wonderful, but what if they do not learn because they face difficulties instead of a lack of interest?, is a common question among these parents.

Most times, kids who have had severe dyslexia have negative school experiences mirrored in their relational problems with peers or their tendency to become invisible. Many parents feel frustrated or anger by this situation. At the same time, they understand the reasons behind it, such as the student-teacher ratio, and some think that Pardal has given them the advantage of not being labeled, especially in the case of mild dyslexia diagnosed.

Kids' trajectories regarding social life in Pardal, according to parents, vary; some have been better than others who have suffered exclusion or even bullying. Moreover, the fact that many of the families do not live in the neighborhood does not facilitate kids' social life out of Pardal. We will focus on two repetitive issues: groups formed and gender.

Kids tend to form their affinity groups according to their parents' affinity groups since they usually get together in out-of-school contexts too. Most times, they are aware of this indirect parental intervention that facilitates the reproduction of culturally similar social networks: "We have not been selective ... what happens is that over time you stay with the one you are more linked" (IB6).

Also, as we saw in previous chapters, affinity groups formed among peers are usually gendered as kids grow; boys tend to relate to boys and girls to girls while activities and daily practices are frequently stereotyped in terms of gender. Although not so extended among little kids, it is more and more visible in older ages. According to most parents, this is related to the discontinuities between home and school faced in new generations, due to the increasing attendance of autochthonous families, and the lack of teachers' intervention.

All parents seem to acknowledge the impact of self-displayed culture as the primary source of contradictions in upbringing and education; how the wider society influences kids is the primary factor for this differentiation, while a few are not satisfied with the way teachers manage it. What is not shared among them is whether this gendered differentiation is biological or socially constructed.

At this point, I should highlight that, even though kids spend many hours at Pardal daily, school is not the principal educational place, and their learning takes place in multiple contexts in and out of it[228]. After Pardal or during weekends, many kids are involved in activities, primarily artistic and movement-related such as music, theatre, ceramics, face-painting, dance, football, swimming, running, tennis, karate, surf, paddle, acrobatics, and English classes at language schools or with the help of aupairs. Regarding football, most parents are unhappy or even discourage their kids from this sport. However, most boys enjoy it. They, therefore, allow them to participate in non-competitive leagues of the neighborhood and control the time spent in it.

But learning happens everywhere, and home is one of the primary places. Based on a specific family unit consisted of a mother (Mireia) and her two kids (Lea, 13 years old & Eleuteri, 11 years old) along with a few more who have all consciously chosen Pardal for the kids' schooling, we will now look at these transmission and learning processes and reflect a bit upon them.

In our case, kids have many books at home, mostly Catalan and a few Spanish, which they sometimes read independently or by their mother. They often play board games that offer them academic knowledge, such as trivial pursuit. Mireia accompanies the daughter with homework and exam preparation, something unnecessary in the case of the son who sometimes works on the 'Pardal diaries' on his own; a kind of school journal with the newsfeed, jokes, and activities from riddles to sudoku and letter soups. Mireia also accompanies Lea to work on her dyslexia using a particular website. Other kids, especially the older ones, sometimes work through 'summer notebooks'.

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[228] DB': 2018/04/10, 12, 23, 25, 26, 27, DB': 2018/05/07, 08, 10, 16, 18, 24, 25, DB': 2018/06/04, 05, 06, 07, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 25, 29, DB': 2018/07/03, 05, DB': 2018/09/24, 27, DB': 2018/10/10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 29, 30, 31, DB': 2018/11/02, 04, 07, 08, 12, 19, 21, 22, 26, 29, DB': 2018/12/03, 16, 17, DB': 2019/01/12, 14, 20, 28, 29, DB': 2019/02/04, 11, DB': 2019/03/04, 10, 17, 24, DB': 2019/04/08, 16, DB': 2019/05/05, 12, 15, 17 & IB9.

Despite Lea's school stress and frustration around learning, there is continuity between academic learning at home and school since Mireia's perception of learning is compatible with Pardal's pedagogy. Therefore, she encourages Lea to learn what she wants, relax, and not pay attention to exams and grades. She is convinced that we are educated to learn through fear but to learn, one needs to feel safe.

Apart from home, kids are exposed to academic learning in other spaces, such as the park. Many of them who do not have lunch in the dining room service spend their lunch break there, either accompanied by (their) parents or English-speaking nannies and occasionally by grandparents. Academic learning is often spontaneous and happens between kids; for example, kids ask each other multiplications or play interview games and prepare the written guides.

Having said that, although academic learning is present at home, social-emotional learning is given much more importance. Coming both from the adults and the kids, hugs and other caring acts such as massages and verbal expressions are frequent. Love is the core of such learning, an emotion that organizes everyday life.

The educational responsibility in these cases is not restricted to either the family or the school; it is instead shared among parents -especially mothers- and teachers, who collaborate to make sure kids experience a certain continuity between home and school and learn the wished values.

When his attitude worries her, Mireia talks with Eleuteri's reference teacher with whom -according to her words- they are a "team"[229]. For example, during almost three months, they were talking about Eleuteri's -and some peers'- tendency to have a leader attitude, "like a rooster entering a coop"[230] when he has a fringe, a hood, or whatever covers his eyes, which was ultimately prohibited both at school and home.

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[229] DB': 2018/10/17.
[230] DB': 2019/01/12.

What is mainly transmitted at home are values -which set certain limits- and ways of living. Mireia insists on respect as a key-value that should underline every practice. She does not perceive the lack of respect as a synonym for swearing, which is allowed if the intention is not to insult. Besides, kids learn that the responsibility of the house is collective and help with house chores, which are shared among the three. They take care of their personal items, they sometimes go shopping, do the laundry, cook, prepare their lunch box, set the table, and serve themselves the amount of food they need. They also clean the house every Sunday together and, if there are small kids, they take care of them.

When kids avoid their responsibilities, Mireia intervenes, insisting on its importance until done. Once again, she is conscious that she must be responsible if she wants to transmit that. Solidarity is also often transmitted. On a daily level, Mireia insists on the importance of sharing and caring. She often gives away clothes they do not need anymore to friends or neighbors in need, and she is a charitable NGO member. Kids tend to offer their help on many occasions too. This can be especially seen during games when they immediately run to make sure the person involved is okay in case of an accident.

In addition, Mireia is an active feminist, participating and supporting feminist collectives and participating in related protests or mobilizations. When the topic arises, she talks about gender since, according to her, we mark it from the day we are born, when a name is given. Apart from talking about it, kids, girls mostly, have feminist books, wear feminist T-shirts, participate in feminist protests and events, and are -in some cases- raised exclusively or mainly by their mothers. In general, they are surrounded by a feminist culture. Nonetheless, kids, especially boys, may show resistance in acquiring those values. Boys and girls tend to form separate gendered groups in most public spaces, getting involved in different activities; girls mostly dancing, symbolic play or crafts, and boys playing football and running.

Boys usually play alone and occupy much central space while girls stay around, accompanied mainly by adults. In addition, boys often keep a competitive, even aggressive attitude and insulting behavior, calling girls fat, commanding, or excluding them from acts of solidarity and sharing, destined exclusively to their male peers. Last, topics related to sexuality are often

discussed openly, and Mireia even taught Lea how to use the reusable menstrual pads, the ecological tampons, and the mooncup when she got her first period.

There is a particular lifestyle based on the physical and emotional well-being transmitted home. Families consume biological and fair-trade products. They also tend to practice co-sleeping until kids decide to leave the room. Alternative medicine such as homeopathy or bach flowers and therapies are used both for physical and emotional well-being. However, Mireia insists on individual freedom of choice, presenting the specific methods as options equal to others. Such families' lifestyle is transmitted not only to kids but also to the whole neighborhood. An evident example is a family who moved there for the school opened and was running a biological shop.

In addition, popular culture is not always accessible at home. Depending on the occasion, Mireia permits or forbids kids from watching programs or listening to music. The main criteria regard the values transmitted. Besides, they can watch specific series accompanied only so that Mireia gets to intervene whenever needed, like the cases of gender stereotypes reproduced. The same goes with Youtube videos and music. These prohibitions are perceived as acts of care. On the other hand, kids are exposed to various cultural spaces, frequently going to theater plays or listening to music with lyrics compatible with home and school culture.

So far, we have already seen family rituals such as Sunday cleaning or dinner preparation. However, there are many more, some taking place on a daily level. These rituals are vital since they give kids a sense of security and belonging while strengthening the transmitted values. For example, every night, after dinner, Mireia spends a few times in the kitchen smoking a joint and reading a few pages of her book while kids start watching an episode of a series. She then joins them, and they watch it all together, hugged and lying on the colorful carpet cushions on the floor, always in the same position; Mireia in the middle, Eleuteri on her right, and Lea on her left.

What is more, norms and limits are given much importance and must, according to Mireia, be as transparent as possible. This way, kids are free to do whatever they want as long as they respect the limits. Although Mireia does not like the meaning authority has today, she thinks there should be; she can set the limits because she is an adult and has more experience than kids. In her own

words: "..maybe in another society they are not necessary, but not in ours. .. Kids ultimately feel that you take care of them this way and show their gratitude" (DB': 2018/06/07).

The level of learning by kids varies and depends on various factors. In our example, Lea is the one who has learned and embodied the sense of responsibility, transmitting it herself, even using the exact words and color of voice as Mireia when Eleuteri shows resistance. Mireia mainly intervenes whenever she observes a lack of respect by kids who have learned to recognize, name, and demand this value.

It should be noted that when limits are transgressed, consequences follow depending on the case. For example, when it happens due to kids' necessities such as movement, the consequence is going out to run. Automatic sorry's are not accepted; only acknowledgment. Mireia is the educational responsible at home, and it is her role to make sure that kids respect the limits: "While taking a shower, Eleuteri is singing a hip-hop song. Lea tells him to stop because it is sexist. Then she shouts at him because he has not cleaned the bathroom. Mireia asks her to stop acting like the police" (DB': 2018/10/11).

At the same time, Mireia is aware of the social context's important role in cultural transmission and acquisition. For example, in the case of Eleuteri, she thinks that his resistance derives from the strong patriarchy that still prevails and discourages him from expressing his feelings. Although she explains why he reacts this way, and he understands, he insists on the same attitude.

All in all, kids are thought to have much freedom but only inside very specific limits. If they transgress these limits, there are consequences that adults do not perceive as punishments but as acts of care. In other words, they set limits because they take care of kids. However, this is not the case for kids, who tend to perceive it as an exercise of authority. This is clearly shown in the following example; a conflict between Lea and Eleuteri over the amount of sausage eaten, during which they start hitting each other. The consequence announced by Mireia is the prohibition of eating their favorite dishes over some time. "Eleuteri complains that she commands, and Mireia admits she does, adding that he will do the same when he becomes a father" (DB': 2019/03/10).

Interestingly, such resistance does not always occur; kids are somewhat conscious of the values transmitted and moving between agents of resistance and transmission.

All the above sheds light on a series of contradictions experienced by many of Pardal's parents, along with discontinuities between the values transmitted at home and school and those transmitted in other social contexts. In our case, part of Mireia adopts the Rousseaunian idea that kids are good by nature, but they cannot be given complete freedom, at least not here and now. "There is the kid, and there is society; maybe in a closed community, this freedom could be given but not in ours".

Gender is an aspect that can help us reflect more on these contradictions. For instance, football is everywhere, and girls tend to assume responsibilities while boys escape them. According to Mireia, this is a shared responsibility between her and Pardal. On the one hand, she takes up all the responsibilities when kids need something, and their father does the basics only. On the other hand, teachers do not work much on gender issues, sometimes even justifying the gender division, supporting they have different energies, a perspective shared by a few parents.

Another contradiction experienced by Mireia should also be mentioned. Although limits are essential, transgressing them is interpreted in both negative and positive ways. In other words, although she sets clear limits, she partly wishes kids to transgress them because she values disobedience and critical spirit.

Resistance to values transmitted is often connected to (power) relations. Small groups of kids usually insult or laugh at peers and superior attitudes or attitudes of leadership are shown. Such competitive or unrespectful expressions -usually directed to specific kids- seem to primarily arise when kids are with certain peers and used as a strategy to mark their alliance. In other words, kids take advantage of the power they feel over others, and therefore, through hierarchizing, they sometimes create otherness, reaching a higher bonding, and a stronger sense of belonging. This sense of belonging to an affinity group marks kids' experiences in Pardal, defining their perception of it and their sense of belonging to the educational community in general.

Community building based on otherness is especially evident in the case of kids from less privileged families. Due to the continuities experienced between the values and lifestyle transmitted at home and school, some kids develop feelings of superiority towards those who experience discontinuities and build peer alliances, bonding, and a sense of belonging upon this differentiation. At the same time, they contribute to the exclusion and alienation of kids who already struggle due to the discontinuities between home and school.

To shed more light on these aspects, we will look again at the case of Salma.

> ..She refers to three girls and two boys from her class who said that in Morrocco, they do not have food and live in houses made of mud. .. Then she talks about *Beth*, who makes her do maths, write and read all day and asks about the tree of life; some classmates wear such pendants. … Two girls start playing a game pretending that their nanny is the queen and they are her guards. Salma is an invader who wants to visit the queen. They proceed to physical control every time Salma approaches to bring flowers to the queen (DB': 2019/04/16).

In kids' imaginary, just like in parents', there seems to exist a division between families from the neighborhood, who have not been integrated into the educational community, and the rest. This division is based basically on the different lifestyles revealed through aspects of physical appearance such as clothing or tattoos.

Last, bonding gets stronger through common fights, which usually get reminded in gatherings such as events or parties, preserving Pardal's communitarian memory. In Pardal, one of these recent wined fights was the announcement of the instituto's creation. The day of its announcement offered us another example that sheds light on the above:

> Aristotil and Eleuteri tell Khalil the good news. Khalil says he will go to another secondary school anyway. Then, the boys start laughing at him. After leaving, Aristotil comments he will go because of his brother, who already studies there, adding that he is poor and has no dignity for Pardal (DB': 2019/01/12).

6.4.5 After Pardal[231]

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[231] DB': 2018/05/05, DB: 2018/06/20, DB: 2018/12/26, DB: 2019/01/12, DB: 2018/05/15 & DB: 2018/06/17.

Although most kids finish primary education at Pardal, some parents who chose the school get disappointed and even leave. Despite their power on how the school functions, teachers keep the limits clear as it may be revealed through the words of a teacher:

> She explains that parents who are unhappy with Pardal are primarily of two profiles: the ones who did not choose the school and the ones who would like it to be different in some aspects, for instance, more time spent by parents or more 'free'. The teacher then highlights that both parents and kids have to be well, "if they do not like it because they have a different mentality or if the mentality we have here for them still isn't what they want, they have to go somewhere else".

After Pardal, some families opt for secondary education schools similarly alternative and project-based, about which they learn through their social networks[232]. Most times, they are either private schools or private schools publicly-funded since public ones are not easily accessible due to their high demand. In most cases, the decision mainly depends on kids whose only criterion is to enter the same school as their affinity group.

In general, they adapt pretty quickly, although the beginning is difficult. Problems frequently faced have to do with homework, punishments, limited movement, and some teachers' disrespectful attitude, including insults and shouting. Most parents attribute this ability of quick adaptation to the fact that kids do not carry a "schooling burden", are quite "autonomous", and eager to learn or even explore ways of learning that are new to them, such as official books and homework.

Values during these years are contrary to those transmitted in Pardal for many kids, but teachers are confident about the importance of the first years in a child's life. As a teacher says, "I remember courses of Reggio Emilia; they used to tell us that what is important is the house's fundamentals.. then you can beautify the house more or make it poorer.. and its true" (DB': 2018/05/05).

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[232] Although this situation is now changing due to the creation of Pardal's instituto; a relief for many families.

6.5 Discussion

Pardal is a public school with lots of families, kids and staff involved. Although many alternative pedagogies inspire it, it is based on Reggio Emilia and views the environment as the teacher. Therefore, the focus is on spaces where the material is abundant, and learning is project-based, experiential and holistic, connected to life and based on kids' interests and not segregating knowledge by subjects.

Through learning activities, architectural dimensions, and shared material, collaboration is developed, independence, and the ability to make own decisions. Although learning proposals are based on the official curriculum, there is no use of official school books, and there is frequent contact with nature through the time spent outdoors, both at the playground and in terms of the many excursions taking place.

Therefore, Pardal might be a public school, but it does not look like it. A difference that marks it from Catalan conventional schools is the respect for individual paces according to which kids learn naturally when they are ready. Teachers' role is not to transmit knowledge but to provide kids with all the necessary tools to explore their interests. Having said that, there is still specific curricular learning expected to be obtained by kids, and an imposition to work on it in cases there is no interest shown by kids.

Of course, maintaining such an alternative pedagogical proposal is challenging for a public school as many obstacles are set, from the compulsory heating in spaces and the cemented playground to the evaluation system based on grades and exams, the high teacher-student ratio, the extra working hours needed and the institutional character of teacher selection. Although many contradictions derive from such, with the help of families, teachers cope with them developing strategies to prove that the educational community will have the last word. Strategies include no deliverance of grades to families, prohibition of ball games at the playground, collaboration of interns and volunteers, etc.

But obstacles are not set only due to its institutional nature. Pardal proposes values and meanings that are not dominant in the broader social context. There is, therefore, an intense conflict between what is transmitted at school and out of it, which we may see better when we look upon gender. In school, football is prohibited, feminist books are found all over, but still, groups formed in old ages are mainly gendered, conflicts often happen between them, and the ones who have the educational responsibility are in their majority females.

Another element of Pardal is that, even though it has a specific structure marked by the Catalan government, there is an attempt for horizontality and inclusion of the whole educational community in decision-making, through the creation of committees, meetings with families, meetings taking place with kids and circular sitting during learning activities. Power relations are still evident on all levels, among teachers, among teachers and families, teachers and kids, or families and kids, among families and among kids. We will focus on three levels, starting from the hierarchies established among students and teachers.

On power and limits

Morning meetings let students express themselves, but teachers still guide them and have specific organizing purposes. Apart from that, and although there is a certain degree of freedom of choice, limits are clear, reminded whenever needed, and kids perceive teachers' authority daily. For example, kids choose the spaces they want to explore during the day, but they must be busy with something; doing nothing is not allowed. There is a minimum of weekly hours for math, reading, and writing activities, it is not allowed to sit on the tables, talk during meetings, misuse the material, create art that goes against school culture, and the list goes on. Such limits are frequently reminded by teachers and peers who have embodied them, encouraged by teachers, and who exercise cultural compression to the rest. At the same time, space has a significant role in such maintenance due to the total visibility that derives from the large windows and open doors and facilitates total control and vigilance.

There are, therefore, many unwritten rules that kids are expected to embody in time, about which they are completely aware. When asked about them, teachers usually reply "because it is a school

rule", underlining their unnegotiable character. This does not mean that they always obey, of course. They often rather pretend to do so when teachers are around only while transgressing limits when they are not or develop other strategies of resistance like escaping from spaces or becoming invisible to avoid control and vigilance (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). Self-exclusion is stressed among teachers who even call some kids "invisible". After the first interventions and if kids keep transgressing a limit, there are consequences taking place, depending on the case and the teacher, from communitarian job and fixing something broken to removing material from hands or separating from peers. These consequences, which remind much of punishments, are accompanied by verbal praise directed to kids who follow the norms or the school's culture.

On a second level, teachers have been encouraging parental involvement since the beginning in various ways. Parents enter the school upon arrival and exit to accompany their kids, and they sometimes stay longer. Through documentation and meetings, they are aware of what happens at school on a daily level. Besides, they are present during the adaptation process or when there are tasks regarding educational material or administration, and they offer to help the pedagogical team. Parents also form committees through which they organize various activities. In this sense, we could say that parents educate themselves in collective self-organization processes that distribute power typically centralized in school institutions and unlearn to assign responsibilities to others.

However, this is not the whole picture. Although there is an attempt for power distribution and teachers cooperate with parents sharing educational responsibility, the pedagogical team sets limits in a clear unnegotiable way. They remind them that school is destined for kids and not adults and that they may only partake in decision-making processes as long as they do not contradict the pedagogical proposal, impose their opinion or create conflicts. Therefore, they develop strategies to limit parental involvement when needed, set specific limits during the adaptation process, or limit their spatial presence by closing the espai familiar. At the same time, such encouragement for parental involvement is exclusively destined to committed families, whose home culture is in accordance with school culture, without making an effort for those linguistically, culturally, or socio-economically diverse (Doucat, 2011).

Last, cultural compression takes place towards new teachers as well whom older teachers educate. Some accept and learn their expected role, while others resist and leave after the compulsory time spent at school due to cultural compression (Spindler 1987 [1967] as cited in Soto, 2021) and internal exclusion. In any case, one older teacher functions as a reference for a new one and acompanies her in adaptation. She explains the pedagogical proposal, how the school functions, etc., until the new teacher embodies its culture and reproduces it. To this process, kids also contribute who are active agents of cultural compression as well. Last, such transmission occurs in a self-displayed way (Spindler, 1987 [1967]), through seeing what other teachers do and self-education, a process facilitated by the school's architecture with transparent windows and visible spaces.

On space and school culture

Pardal's pedagogical proposal is alternative on all levels, and one of them is aesthetics which is very different from conventional schooling spaces. The school might be placed in an industrial zone and hosted in a typical school building, but it is not ordinary. Spaces are carefully designed, decorated, and equipped with furniture and pedagogical material. We already referred to the importance of space regarding limits' maintenance and control, so now we will keep exploring the school's hidden curriculum (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]), stressing on material dimensions this time.

Through the extensive work done regarding documentation, there are stories hung on the walls and Pardal books that may be found all around. These may be interpreted in various ways; I will focus on two dimensions. On the one hand, we could say that they are an essential symbolic element in terms of identity that reinforces community-building, reminding interactions or collective moments and strengthening the sense of belonging. Children are viewed as active cultural agents who produce their own culture, which is what the school wants to understand and promote.

At the same time, they are party excluded from the 'adult' culture. Politics is absent from school, which is considered politically neutral, and where relevant discussions are not promoted nor

allowed. In a way, we could say that kids are recognized as cultural but not political subjects, revealing Pardal's failure to look upon the interrelations between education, culture, and politics. For instance, and contradictory enough, talking about independentism is prohibited, while feminism is accepted and encouraged, as if it were not a political matter. In these terms, material dimensions play a significant role as well. Although pedagogical material or material used in the documentation process is abundant and carefully selected to motivate learning, it could be argued that, in a way, it incidentally transmits consumerist values (Spindler, 1987 [1967]); Wolcott, 1982; Soto, 2021).

Similarly, although there are projects taking place from time to time that aim for environmental awareness, it could not be considered an eco-friendly school if we think of the plastic used or the absence of related discussions. This leads us to another contradiction. Adults are aware of such matters, some of them are actively engaged, but the school's curtain hides society's unwanted aspects, contributing to their reproduction instead.

On the other hand, documentation is an indirect evaluation method, which is daily and made public. Kids are constantly observed and controlled. Some of them accept and even call for such observation, while others develop strategies of resistance by 'going invisible', speaking low, or stop talking when teachers get closer. Stories stress creative and artistic moments and hide boredom or lack of interest. Therefore, in a way, they reward 'visible' students who meet Pardal's expectations, getting busy with the educational material and exploring learning proposals, the same way as they get rewarded through individual work exhibited in public spaces such as the corridor and upon bringing their work home. But what happens with the rest?

On community and belongingness

Some families get involved in Pardal in various ways that we saw in the correspondent ethnographic sections. However, not all of them do. Other families are somewhat alienated and excluded from school, which happens for a series of reasons that could be summarized in the incompatibility between home and school culture. We will first look at the 'visible' ones.

Many similarities regarding their lifestyles connect families who actively participate in Pardal. Some are "educational immigrants", since they moved to the municipality due to their school choice or keep living in others. They already know each other from previous educational projects, and they have a shared culture with similar perceptions over upbringing, education, and childhood. There is continuity between home and school culture, and this is also revealed from Pardal's home-inspired character that informs space with symbols connected to it. From the slippers used to the freshly baked smell often transmitted. Of course, their social class removes concerns regarding academic results and permits such high involvement, which is demanding in terms of time (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bernstein 2003 [1975]). They perceive themselves as learners, and educational responsibility is shared between them and teachers. Such perceptions and worldviews, along with their shared culture, lead to forming social networks of mutual aid among them, which, in some cases, function as an expanded family, sometimes filling the gap of close relatives' absence. Through their parental involvement, frequent communication with teachers, and common challenges they had to face, there is a bonding and sense of belonging developed, as they feel like they are part of a community.

However, not all families hold a shared culture. As a public school in a working-class municipality, Pardal is marked by diversity, which reveals and helps us explore dimensions absent in other alternative schools and their contradictions. Most adults seem to value the diversity found in the school and teachers to be aware of the challenges it brings in terms of inclusion, but there is a little work done in practice to include and meet the needs of LSCD families whose imaginaries are informed by different values, perceptions, and expectations (Doucat, 2011). They might perceive school as a place of exclusively official curricular learning, not recognize play as a vehicle to learn, and, in general, not identify with important aspects of Pardal's pedagogical proposal. As a result, due to the discontinuity between home and school culture, they avoid school events or accompanying kids at school and even change school in some cases, a process facilitated by the language code used that does not manage to transmit the proposal effectively. Such lack of interaction is often normalized by parents who argue that we tend to "get together with the people we have more similarities with". There are, of course, exceptions who overcome such obstacles and get educated in the school's culture. But in general

terms, LSCD families get excluded in school settings due to the lack of similarities with the rest, while at the same time excluding themselves, actively resisting their integration into the school culture.

A similar situation is met when exploring the daily dynamics in Pardal as well. Teachers recognize the differences regarding the help kids receive from home, but they tend to individualize pupil's role involvement (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]) and attribute their failure to meet learning expectations upon the students' effort and personalities. The same goes in case kids do not meet other expectations such as teamwork and socializing when exclusion and alienation experienced is also attributed to them. Although these 'invisible' kids, kids who have no affinity group or the ones who resist school culture, often come from families who experience the same, the abundant data and instances of learning and resistance do not let us generalize and make a direct connection between such processes.

What is sure is that peer relations, collaboration, and learning to live in a community are promoted in Pardal both through architecture and learning activities. A community is built based on a shared school culture with its own rituals, symbols, spaces, and times. And this sense of belonging is vital for kids' learning as their interests and choices depend a lot upon their affinity group. But although this is true, it is also true that solidarity and teamwork among kids are mainly shown with their affinity group, while competition and lack of respect are common towards other peers who often function as 'the other'. Such cases are often difficult to be spotted by the pedagogical team due to the high student-teacher ratio and constant movement.

To sum up

Pardal is a public school that proposes an alternative perception of education, schooling, childhood, relations, and learning. As such, approaching it is challenging, especially in terms of comparative research. But what it brings to light has great value.

Exploring the school's daily life, we may realize that despite the differences, there are many traditional schooling elements reproduced, from power relations to values and results expected.

Contextualizing such observations with data from non-school hours and the broader context, we may get aware of the series of contradictions faced that put obstacles in realizing the pedagogical proposal.

A particular culture is imposed, teachers and parents practice their authority when needed to maintain discipline, rules are many and unnegotiable, interventions are frequent while control, vigilance, and authority are spread through peer cultural compression and prepared environments as well. Framing and classification (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]) although seemingly weak, keep being strong. However, kids are not passive receivers of what is transmitted. In other words, what the social context transmits and what is incidentally transmitted at school are so different from the intentional transmission that, combined with resistance (Willis, 1981), what is finally acquired is uncontrolled. Moreover, we could say that diversity is there, but it is relatively hidden and ignored due to the various factors mentioned and certainly more that exist. Despite a few attempts, there is no systematic cultural understanding and exchange so that bonding and mutual aid can expand beyond one's affinity group.

Therefore, daily dynamics invisibilize and exclude a big part of kids and their families, both in school contexts and out of it. Such dynamics vary, from ignorance to expressions of cultural superiority. But despite these contradictions and more, either briefly mentioned or not examined, both parents and kids learn to live in a community, share, support each other and grow together. Belongingness is developed, and affinity groups of mutual aid based on shared culture emerge. Positive schooling experiences seem to be directly connected to this sense of belonging, which applies not only to kids but also to parents and teachers.

7. Private school "Petxina"

7.1 General aspects

       7.1.1 The context[233]

Petxina is located at Aigua[234], a small coastal, urbanized municipality located north-east of Barcelona, privileged due to its proximity to the sea and the mountains. The school is easily accessible since it is a 15-minute walk from the nearest train station, connecting it to Barcelona. The route lasts half an hour and passes by the sea, parallel to the main road.

Aigua is a relatively young municipality, established at the beginning of the 19th century because of the population growth and economic vitality derived from the trade with America, while it kept growing throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The increase is much more significant since the beginning of the 1960s, mainly due to immigration. Since then, fishing activity and sea trade have been reduced and replaced by floriculture -favored by the installation of greenhouses- industry (construction and textiles) and services, along with summer tourism and maritime leisure offers.

To get a glimpse of the population flows and growth, we can look at the following charts based on the Spanish Statistical Office (INE) data. As we may observe, the population starts increasing from 1960 to 2019, the year the last data is available, with 28.119 registered residents.

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[233] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, enciclopedia.cat (last access on 2020/06/13), epdata.es (last access on 2020/06/06) & foro-ciudad.com (last access on 2020/06/07).
[234] Catalan word meaning water, used as the nickname for the municipality.

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Figure 28: Aigua - Evolution of the number of residents 1900-2018
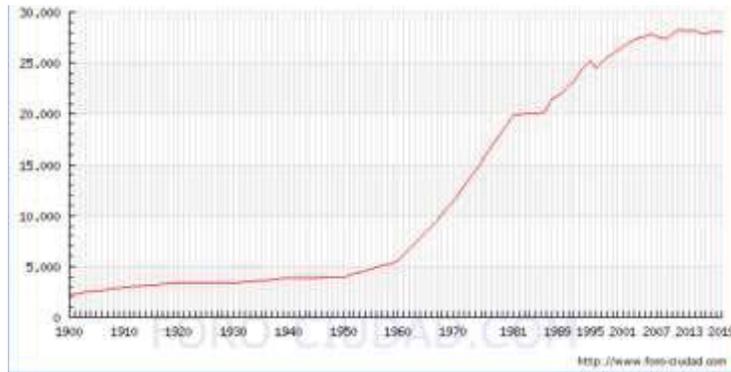
Source: www.foro-ciudad.com , Last access: 2019/05/21

Figure 29: Aigua - Evolution of the number of residents 2000-2019
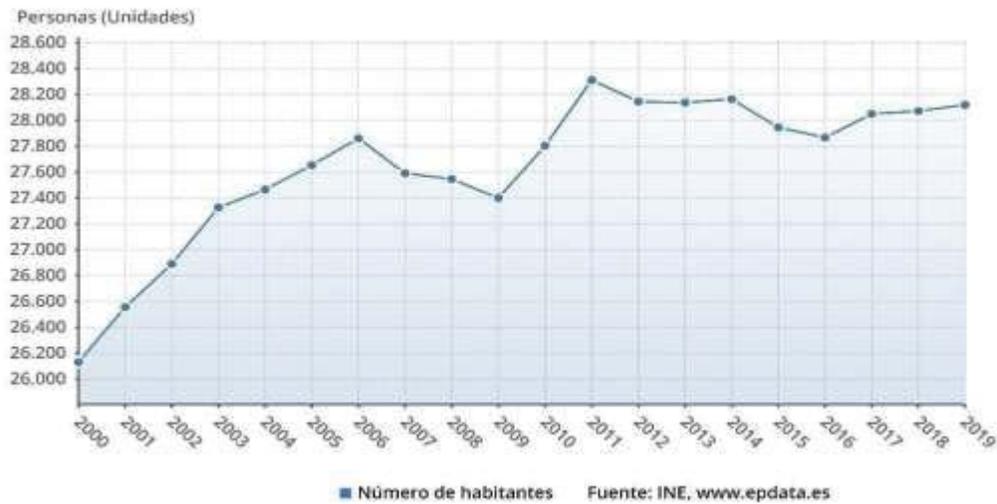
**Source:** www.epdata.es , based on INE, Last access: 2021/07/31

Among them, and according to the same source, 22.43% were born in the municipality, 65.89% were born in other parts of Spain (41.69% in other municipalities of Barcelona, 1.77% in other provinces of Catalonia and 22.43% in other autonomous communities), and 16.48% were born in other countries.

Comparing the data of 2019 to 1996, we can see that there is a general growth: residents born in Aigua have increased from 17.28% to 22.43%, residents born in other countries from 5.70% to 16.48% and residents born in other parts of Barcelona from 41.69% to 45.13%. Only residents born in other parts of Catalonia and the rest of Spain have decreased, the second category in a much more significant way (from 2.71% to 1.77% and from 29.19% to 17.62% respectively).

Therefore, a big part of the current population (4.635) consists of residents born in other countries. According to NIE data, the majority were born in South American (1971) and African (1643) countries, while a few of them were born in Europe (733) and Asia (284).

Figure 30: Aigua - Evolution of the number of residents born abroad 2018
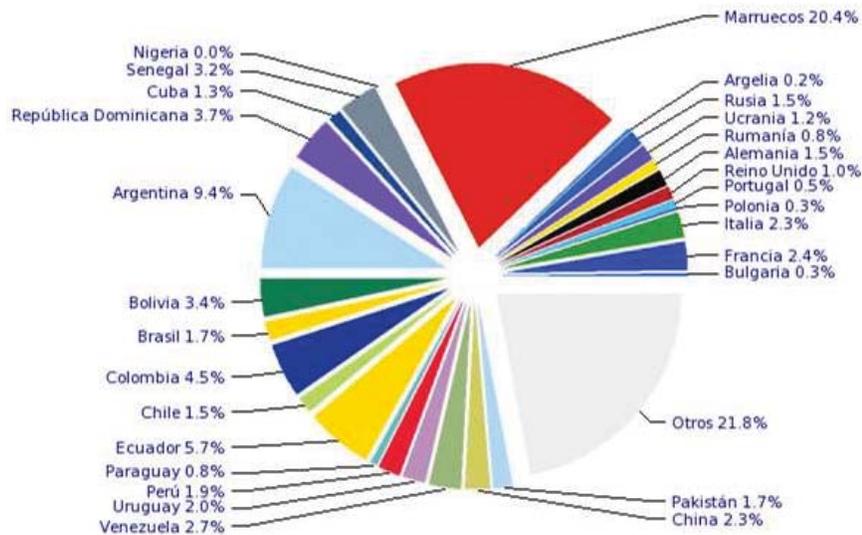
http://www.foro-ciudad.com

Such a diverse population is not depicted in the school, as expected, which due to its private character, attracts a particular profile who may afford to pay for schooling and who often come

from other municipalities of Barcelona and its provinces. Therefore, although 20,4 % of the population is from Morocco, there are no Moroccan students at Petxina.

Last, a brief mention should be made upon the school offer in Aigua. According to the town hall's official webpage[235], during the school year 2017-2018, five public schools were offering early childhood and elementary education, one public secondary school, and three publicly-funded private schools offering early childhood, elementary and secondary education. It is interesting that among them, all public schools and two out of the three publicly funded ones are self-defined with alternative, project-based pedagogies mentioning, among else, innovation, renewal, emotional education, and experiential learning in the description of their pedagogical project.

7.1.2 Basic features[236]

Created in 2011, according to its PEC and official webpage Petxina is a Catalan, secular, active, and homologated free school of new creation, providing primary and now secondary education (ESO) as well, where the kid is the protagonist, accompanied by respectful educators. Moreover, it is open to the families and viewed as the extension of homes, where adults and children can coexist without authoritarian hierarchies.

The project is a parental initiative born of personal enthusiasm and commitment to providing an education that corresponds to kids' needs. More specifically, it was created by a couple whose kids used to attend Pardal in the past and who were not satisfied by the limited parental presence and other pedagogical decisions taken by Pardal's pedagogical team. At the same time, Petxina is viewed as a general response to a growing demand of parents with a desire to enhance their emotional ties with their children.

When it was first created, the school was based on free movement counting with thirty kids and a small group of tutors. As the years went by and kids' number multiplied five times, more

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[235] Aigua's Town Hall, 2019.
[236] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, Petxina's official webpage, Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, DA': 2018/01/09, DA': 2018/01/10, DA': 2018/01/22, DA': 2018/02/06, DA': 2018/02/08.DA: 2018/01/08, DA: 2018/01/10 & DA: 2019/04/24.

structure was added, and Petxina, according to the educational community, lost its free character to transform itself into an active Montessori school with a concrete time structure. Therefore, although kids would move and choose freely, certain compulsory hours were gradually imposed destined for curricular learning.

Regarding its cost[237], registration fees at Petxina are 250 €, while afterward, the monthly payment is 340 € with discounts for siblings (565 for two and 770 for three). This is a generally low cost compared to other private free local schools where it is rarely below 500 € per month. It should be mentioned that although the price is relatively fixed, families are paying less in case they practice homeschooling, paying more in case they are willing to, or exchanging part of or all of the cost with workshops.

Now let's focus on some normative issues[238]. In theory, Petxina´s educational project is in coherence with the official education system due to its following priorities:

- The use of Catalan as the primary language of learning, communication, and administration of the center.

- The inclusive schooling of all students, prioritizing, when possible, their maximum participation in school settings.

- The decisions upon the organization, objectives, and contents of learning activities according to the official curriculum aiming at develop the basic skills (competències bàsiques).

- That all students reach a good level of reading comprehension, oral and written expression, calculation and problem-solving skills, and autonomy in learning.

- Promoting a multilingual project and foreign language learning in terms of which Catalan is learned in parallel to other

- The integration of Learning and Knowledge Technologies (TAC) in the teaching and learning process and evaluation.

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[237] Petxina's official webpage, IA9 & DA': 2018/02/06.
[238] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, DA': 2018/02/15 & IA9.

-       The integration in the teaching and learning processes of areas linked to co-education, citizenship, coexistence, environmental education, health, audiovisual communication, access to information, and pleasure derived from reading.

-       The coordination among the teachers of the various stages promotes the coherence of the educational process and improvement of learning (PEC 2012, p. 8).

Local authorities seem to have never actually read the educational project, although normative problems did exist. According to the director, many spatial aspects needed to be taken care of to get legal permissions. From the length of the rooms to the type of wood used, all details had to be explained in a plan, which must get official approval. After the project became a reality, the inspector visited the school to ensure that reality corresponds to the approved plan.

However, the educational project does not matter to the local authorities, apart from using it against the school. According to the director again, the school's creation was first voted by right-wing parties; a private school hosted in a country house in the middle of a neighborhood with a migrant population was viewed as a way to advance the area. However, when they got aware of its free pedagogical character, Petxina started facing some problems with the local authorities, who even blocked the school's expansion to the secondary stage with the official excuse of being on vacation! The problems generated, among else, by the wood aimed to construction and located at the playground for days, combined with the director's networking with prestigious persons and journalists, led Petxina to the simultaneous publishing of three articles of complaint and the subsequent immediate permission given by the authorities.

Normative problems continued when Petxina wished to homologate the secondary stage, but there were delays in the process. After inspectors' visits, it was decided to be practiced secretly. According to a father[239], sixteen kids went to the mountains and attended the first class of secondary stage to avoid related problems until the final approval towards the end of the school course (IA9).

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[239] IA9.

Last, Petxina belonged to XELL (Catalan Network of Libertarian Education) and even hosted the network's meetings at school. After some disagreements and different points of view over pedagogy and education between its members and Petxina's director, the school got off its list.

Now that we have a general idea of Petxina's basic features, we will focus on the material environment where the majority of the school's activities occur.

7.1.3 Material aspects: learning spaces

According to its official webpage, Petxina is an open place hosting non-directed activities. The exterior and interior spaces are rich in physical and intellectual stimuli, prepared to provide free choice. The educational project takes place at a fenced emblematic country house (masia), where the director lives with his family. Constructed in 1881, the house is considered a building of historical interest by the local authorities. It is there, on the inside, where we can find meeting rooms, multi-purpose spaces, and offices. The house is surrounded by a spacious garden, carefully designed to implement the project, which needs an ample exterior space where kids may deploy their skills and where various workshops and activities can be realized.

At the back of the building, wooden multi-purpose modules are constructed in the garden with glass walls that permit total visibility. These spaces function as a reference for the tutorial action and a source of materials for all members of the same social group. Starting from the primary stage, the school is structured in two main prepared spaces with Montessori material and methodology, called 'Montessori Workshop I' or 'Module I' and 'Montessori Workshop II' or 'Module II'. The specific spaces permit both collective project work and individual work.

In Workshop I, mainly used by kids from six to nine years old, there are three spaces connected through open doors. The first is the cinema and hosts some couches, a screen, a chess board, and a wooden piece of furniture with individual open boxes where kids may save their work. The other two have some wooden tables with chairs where kids may work and wooden furniture with learning material, board games and material for crafts. Older kids use the third often as it is also a space for maths. Material is stored on shelves with wooden boxes while baskets and tables,

chairs, and carpets are used. The material is varied; although there are some proposals on paper, it is mainly Montessori, manipulative, and wooden. There are colored pearls representing numbers (for example, gold represents the decimal system), wooden Seguin boards and slats of numbers that also serve to associate and relate numbers, a box of stamps used to work on additions and subtractions, geometric solids, wooden logic blocks where each piece is defined by four variables: color, shape, size, and thickness, Abacus columns, etc.

Workshop II, mainly used by kids from nine to twelve years old, is also divided in three spaces connected through open doors as well. The first hosts wooden furniture, a big table, and chairs, the middle has a wooden structure used as a reading corner, and the third is the library with a bookcase, another big table, and chairs. The library is equipped with many books, from children's literature to radical and leftist political comics and books such as the communist manifesto.

Next to the Workshop I there is the director's office with more wooden tables and furniture that is sometimes used by older kids as well, while next to the Workshop II, the theater is located with musical instruments like drums, piano and guitars.

A bit further, atelier is designed for video workshops, free or technical drawing, and carpentry. Atelier, a space located at the school's outdoor area, is a bit further from the rest of the modules. Equiped with a projector, computers and wooden furniture, it offers possibilities for wooden constructions, video workshops, and scientific, technological, and mechanical experimentations. It is also a space for creative experimentations, and especially drawing.

Last, the outdoor space offers unlimited possibilities to learn, relate, play, discover and develop motor skills. The garden in the form of a mandala is an external classroom where botany, cultivation and permaculture methods are practiced, and the dining space – three wooden structures with benches and canopies – also located in the outdoor space, is destined to offer a space for lunch. Besides, there is a tree-house, a big fenced doghouse, some corners with denser flora, and many benches, made of wood or stone, all around.

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I should mention that the specific spaces frequently change -the same way the project changes itself- both during the same school year and upon its change. For example, during 2016-2017 there was no Montessori room, while a year later, in 2019, Petxina had transformed into a fully Montessori school with completely different furniture, aesthetics, and use of spaces.

Figure 31: Petxina Plan
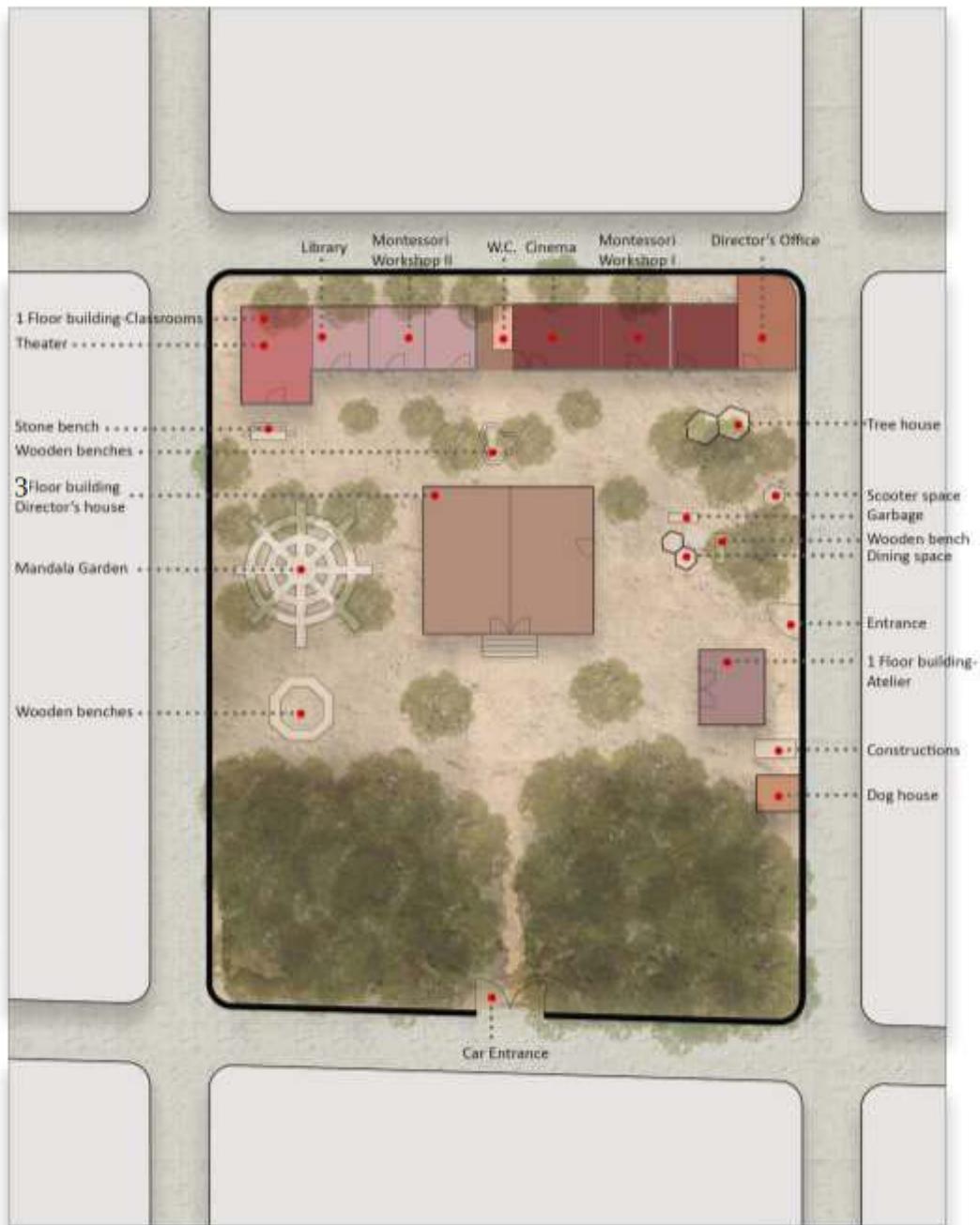
Source: Danai Stavrianou

7.1.4 Pedagogical proposal

According to its official website, Petxina is an inclusive, welcoming school, a space of tranquillity, respect, and freedom where every kid feels accepted and supported. The central axes of the pedagogical project are the following:

- Respect for the child and the development processes, in terms of which kids learn according to their needs and interests.

- Affective accompanying for kids since development processes can only be constructed based on secure emotional ties; therefore, parents play an essential and active role in the school, and the school accompanies and supports them in upbringing.

- The idea that human beings need to live and develop in community.

Petxina's educational project is a mixture of pedagogical lines which make up the theoretical base upon which daily practices are constructed. These include: Vygotski, Piaget, Montessori, Freinet, Rosa Sensat, Pestalozzi, Rebeca and Mauricio Wild, Malaguzzi, Neill, Vergés, and Carl Rogers. Briefly, it is believed that we learn only what we learn by ourselves and that it's impossible to disassociate from any social understanding of the reality that surrounds us.

According to the project's PEC, these are the identity features:

- Catalan school immersed in the context of Catalan culture and language as elements of social cohesion. Catalan is the educational community's primary language of learning and communication, both for internal and external activities. Spanish is considered the second language, and the goal is to make it easier for students to be multilingual. English is considered the school's third language, receiving special attention so that a meaningful and functional approach is enabled playfully and experientially.

- Democratic school based on the values of our democratic society. Its fundamentals are tolerance, freedom, non-discrimination, respect, coexistence, responsibility, solidarity, pluralism, autonomy, and co-education.

- Intercultural school, respectful towards cultural diversity and promoting the coexistence among diverse cultures.

-        An inclusive school that provides the necessary curricular, methodological, and organizational elements for all students to participate, especially those who find more barriers due to personal conditions.

-        School as a learning community, where importance to both personal and collective responsibility is given and where habits and norms form a framework towards personal security and autonomy and collaboration with the social group. Students have many possibilities for working for the community, both the school's community and the neighborhood's.

-        Active school focused on students' initiatives, where kids are protagonists of their learning process and their developmental needs are covered. In this context, their curious innate attitude is accompanied and taken care of.

-        A school that encourages creativity, where kids have enough tools to create art, while comparisons or unique models are avoided and the contact of each one with their own potential is favored.

-        A school that prioritizes artistic and musical education, where the conditions are given for a collective experience of music, in terms of which adults practice, and kids participate in their way, either watching, listening, or practicing singing and playing.

-        A school that encourages kids' desire for literary productions, in line with the philosophy and practices of the French pedagogue Freinet.

-        A school in outdoor, natural spaces, where most activities and experiences are allowed and encouraged outdoors, in contact with nature. The school's playground is considered the extension of the classroom and the main educational stage in terms of learning acquisition, always considered when planning the curricular activities.

-        An environmentally friendly school, where healthy spaces are created both for kids and the planet.

-        An open, welcoming, and participatory school, favoring the families' active and diverse participation, which is thought to nourish the project.

-        A school that prioritizes emotional education, which improves kids' emotional state, self-esteem, self-knowledge of emotions, and self-control of behaviors that hinder coexistence. As a result, and looking at the whole educational community, Petxina prioritizes kids' emotional support creating affective bonds that provide them with the security they need for their development, learning, and well-being (pp. 3-4).

All in all, and as a result of its identity, some of the priorities making up the project include:

-        Respect for each child's developmental processes.

-        Permanent adaptation to the educational needs of every kid through a continuous evaluation.

-        Active participation of the students in the learning process.

-        Affective support, taking care of kids' emotional well-being.

-        The idea of community finding its full meaning accompanied by the close participation and collaboration of families, teachers, and kids.

-        Daily and direct contact with Nature (PEC 2012, p. 12).

In Petxina, how a child learns is more important than what is learned. Therefore, students work and experiment according to their own experiences and interests, with the pedagogical team's support. This way, they are thought to construct new meanings of the reality surrounding them, enriching their previously acquired knowledge and applying it to new situations. Kids are viewed as protagonists, free to move, research and explore at their own pace, capable of learning innately, and confident that their interests will be valued and supported in a respectful environment. The educational action takes special care of the attention to diversity, aware that all children learn in different paces and that the best time is when chosen internally and spontaneously. Play is viewed as the activity most linked to kids' integral development and a natural source of learning.

One of Petxina's primary interests is to preserve the innate capacity of kids to learn, organize the curriculum through activities chosen by themselves, and deploy their full potential by providing adequate materials and prepared spaces where students can freely interact with both academic and manual, physical activities. Besides, kids are considered to understand the world by imitation, both imitating adults and peers belonging to their age group and others. Therefore, relationships among ages are fostered, and kids are allowed to mix spontaneously and naturally with peers of the same and different ages, which contributes to their mutual enrichment and unfolds a tremendous educational potential.

Last, starting from a topic of interest, students build their learning, using different points of view and resources and relating different areas of knowledge. The use of various communication

languages, from oral, written and mathematical to psychomotor, musical, audiovisual, and plastic, are encouraged, and frequent excursions complement the work done at school.

To achieve all the above, and according to a school's documents and official webpage, there are some limits or rules of a certain common sense aiming at the maintenance of a relaxed environment which permits the well-being of everyone:

- No physical aggression is allowed. All feelings are valid, including anger, rage, and sadness, but not all ways of expressing them are acceptable. Adults should not prevent spontaneous physical activities since kids out themselves what they can and cannot do. In case of misunderstandings or conflicts, all should stop, then or later, talk and share how they lived the situation. If a child tries to attack another, adults should physically prevent, but not make her/him feel worse; instead, they should accept and accompany her/him in a long process during which, little by little, the child learns to explain what is happening to her/him.

- Care and respect for furniture, plants, and teaching materials.

- Everyone has the right to work and play without being disturbed.

- Respectful attitude inside the modules. No running or shouting is allowed to maintain the silence.

- Eating is not allowed inside the modules.

- Before entering the modules, shoes must be taken off and left tidied.

- Everyone is responsible for their personal material and the teaching materials they use. At the end of an activity everything must be tidied up, clean and in order.

- Each kid must bring their notebook and a case with the basic utensils.

- It is very important to respect the things of others (shoes, notebooks, cases, food, etc.).

- It is not allowed to throw stones, cones, or any other object.

- Plants, trees, and the garden must be respected.

- Animals found in school must be taken care of, and no harm to them is permitted.

- Everyone has the right to be respected and the duty to respect others.

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-        Students and adults at the center are not allowed to use mobile phones; parents who need to communicate must leave the school. Only educators can make use of them, and only when needed for their job.

-        Trash must be thrown in the bins.

-        The new area for meals must be cleaned and collected before leaving.

-        Healthy eating habits must be encouraged, and meals must be complemented with fruit. No sugary industrial foods are allowed.

-        Adults cannot direct or anticipate kids' interests or needs, say how things should be done, interrupt kids' work or play (Dossier Inici de curs 2017-2018, p. 5).

All the above is in line with the Montessori pedagogy [240] that the school is gradually incorporating. According to this, all areas of knowledge are connected, experience and observation come before theory, and what leads the curriculum is the student's interest.

Following the Montessorian ideas or the ones expressed in the work of Rebeca and Mauricio Wild[241], the materials[242] and prepared environments are essential for kids to experience learning as a meaningful game, in their paces and ways. For this to happen, the most necessary condition is to provide spaces rich in all kinds of materials, as natural as possible with no chemical ingredients, where kids can find what they need for their personal development in a relaxed, safe, and loving environment.

Regarding learning results, in primary education, according to the educational project, the curriculum focuses on the 'basic skills', officially marked, from which Petxina considers certain aspects more critical:

-        The development of personal autonomy, responsibility and independence in an environment of equal gender rights and opportunities.

-        Development of oral expression.

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[240] See p. 27.
[241] See p. 28.
[242] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, DA: 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/17 & DA: 2018/02/06.

- Learning, development and stimulation of writing and reading.

- Development of mathematical skills.

- The promotion of foreign languages (PEC 2012, p.10)

Therefore, in primary education, the evaluation process, documents, and formal requirements are regulated by the Catalan government[243]. At the end of the mid-cycle, a diagnostic evaluation is performed, which, rather than affecting the individual academic record, has a guiding role for the school and an informative character for the families and the whole educational community. The diagnostic evaluation results are used to take measures in the third cycle of primary education and make sure that all students achieve the basic competencies expected for this schooling stage. At its end, an individual global report of the process is prepared regarding learning and basic competencies, sent to families and students' following tutors.

Tutoring, which involves individual and collective monitoring of students, helps ensure that each child is developing their full potential and takes care of their social integration, contributing to the involvement of students and their families in the school. Tutors are responsible for ensuring the progressive achievement of the 'basic skills' and the coordination, to this end, of all teachers who affect a specific student. They are also responsible for conducting interviews and meetings with parents or members of the family.

At Petxina, evaluation of students' learning processes is expected to be both continuous and global so that their progress in each curricular area is followed and the degree of achievement of the predetermined objectives is verified. Such evaluation aims to detect difficulties as soon as possible, discover their causes, and take the necessary measures so that every student can successfully continue their learning process.

This is considered an integral part of the activities. It respects the different learning paces and is an active tool that guarantees the school's inclusive character. Besides, self-evaluation has a particular value; the evaluation made by students throughout their learning process. Similarly, teachers continuously evaluate both students' learnings and self-evaluate their educational

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[243] Ordre EDU/296/2008, 13 June.

practice to reflect upon and improve ways of intervention in students' learning process and the various procedures used in the school.

According to the pedagogical project again, to follow, describe and interpret, and evaluate students' experiences, systematic observation is used, with clear guidelines agreed by the educational community. Observation, documentation, and analysis of the learning process are the means that let the pedagogical team know about each child's progress and the degree of achievement of the established educational intentions and objectives, therefore helping to decide upon the type of help students need.

Each tutor coordinates the evaluation and observation activities carried out and is responsible for transferring them to the pedagogical team and exchanging information with families. Nevertheless, students' evaluation is the responsibility of the whole pedagogical team involved, and if progress is not as expected, measures are established to facilitate the acquisition of basic learnings and continue their educational process.

In practice, evaluation processes are not clear and paid little attention to. On the one hand, the exams of 'competències bàsiques' are compulsory at Petxina due to its homologated character. However, tmost adults are either indifferent or against them, whereas kids might experience anxiety during the process[244]. This may be seen in the following extracts, the first from the director's, the second a tutor's, and the third a mother's perspective.

> Even if you go in the middle of the woods, you will find a way to bring school with you, says *Antón*[245] with reference to Lerena. He then speaks about a mother of Petxina whose girls are homeschoolers, and they only come once per week because they don't want to come more. She doesn't want them to write the competències although the girls do. According to him, it is this attitude that gives importance to them. "I had forgotten about competències until I spoke with you", he told her. He says that kids do not seem to be bothered or get stressed, it's just something they need to do (DA': 2018/03/02).

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[244] DA: 2018/01/17.

[245] The school's director. I will use this form '*Name*' to distinguish the persons who have a role in the management team.

> Some parents prefer that kids repeat the year thinking that the important thing is that they are well now, others who are very worried, and others who are worried about what the kid is learning but are happy about her emotional progress (IAT).

> ..We do not care, but since last year one of his friends was quite distressed, and I don't want him to be distressed, we told him, if you don't care, it's okay but, if you want to go prepared, apart from what you do at school, we can see things here, so sometimes we practice something ... For now, it seems that since it's not important to us, he doesn't care.. that is another thing that I like, that they don't care .. Of course, the adult's expectation makes the child tense .. when there is no expectation, there is no tension, and they learn better, what they want and when they want (IA6).

In January already, kids prepare themselves a few hours per week by filling previous exam worksheets. This is done to prevent inspectors' possible interventions if there is much absence or negative results. Despite parents' and tutors' indifferent attitudes, such exams tend to provoke stress in many students.

On the other hand, an individual book with kids' work is created at the end of the school year, which functions as documentation and evaluation. Last, there is a will to systematize such documentation and following of the learning processes by the school's management team[246].

7.1.5 Number, ages, groups of children[247]

According to its PEC, and in line with the pedagogical proposal, which respects kids' paces, Petxina permits relationships among different age groups since interests between older and younger peers might coincide. In other words, the most important thing kids have in common is not their year of birth. Older, more experienced kids are perfect companions for younger ones, at times resolving better what adults can only intuit or imagine. As a result, kids have a "three-level protagonism: omnidirectional when they are the center of their universe, transversal when they are both receivers and transmitters towards other kids, and vertical when they interact with teachers".

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[246] DA: 2018/01/10.
[247] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, DA: 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/15 & IA1.

Considering the above, prepared spaces must allow the creation of interest groups and individualized curriculums according to personal desires and regardless of age. This shaping of mixed-aged groups, the recognition of development's both general and individual character, and teachers' personalized attention is essential for:

- the inclusive role of education to be realized,
- the integration of kids with psycho-physical problems, and
- the ultimate shaping of a community of personal and group growth.

Therefore, despite the structural adaptation of spaces, educators, and activities according to ages, it is acknowledged that kids have always been organized by themselves, deciding what their class/group is according to their affinities; what they call their social group. Each social group has its own rules of functioning, hierarchies, and complex power structures; it consists of "a dynamic classroom that claims to be recognized in its identity". These groups have been identified by educators and are the center of cognitive relationships.

Social or relational groups are consisted of eight to twelve kids and are supervised by a tutor. Each tutor supervises about two-three social groups (20-30 kids), observing their interests while at the same time preparing weekly cognitive activities in coordination with the rest of the pedagogical team. Therefore, each kid is part of a social group and has an assigned tutor responsible for monitoring how the kid moves and what they do and do not do.

Kids' total number is almost 160, although they do not all come every day or stay the whole time. In general terms, they are divided into 14 social groups according to their ages: Kids from 6 to 9 years old belong to groups 1-4, kids from 9 to 12 years old belong to groups 5-10, and ESO kids, from 13 to 16 years old belong to groups 11-14. However, there might be cases of kids who do not know how to write and therefore join a group of younger ones, for example, or younger kids who advance faster, so they belong to groups of older peers. In any case, rather than their cognitive level, what seems to matter most and lead to frequent changes, are the social relationships produced so that kids' affinity and social groups coincide.

It should be mentioned that kids' number is not static; in the beginning, there used to be thirty kids, and as the years go by, Petxina gets bigger and bigger. Last, the relatively high teacher-student ratio, which is a conscious decision made by the director, is an exception to most free schools. There, the average ratio is a teacher for every seven kids and corresponds to his perception that it does not cause problems and his idea that the low ratio is ambivalent for this education, hiding elitist concepts.

Figure 32: Structure in Petxina during 2017-2018
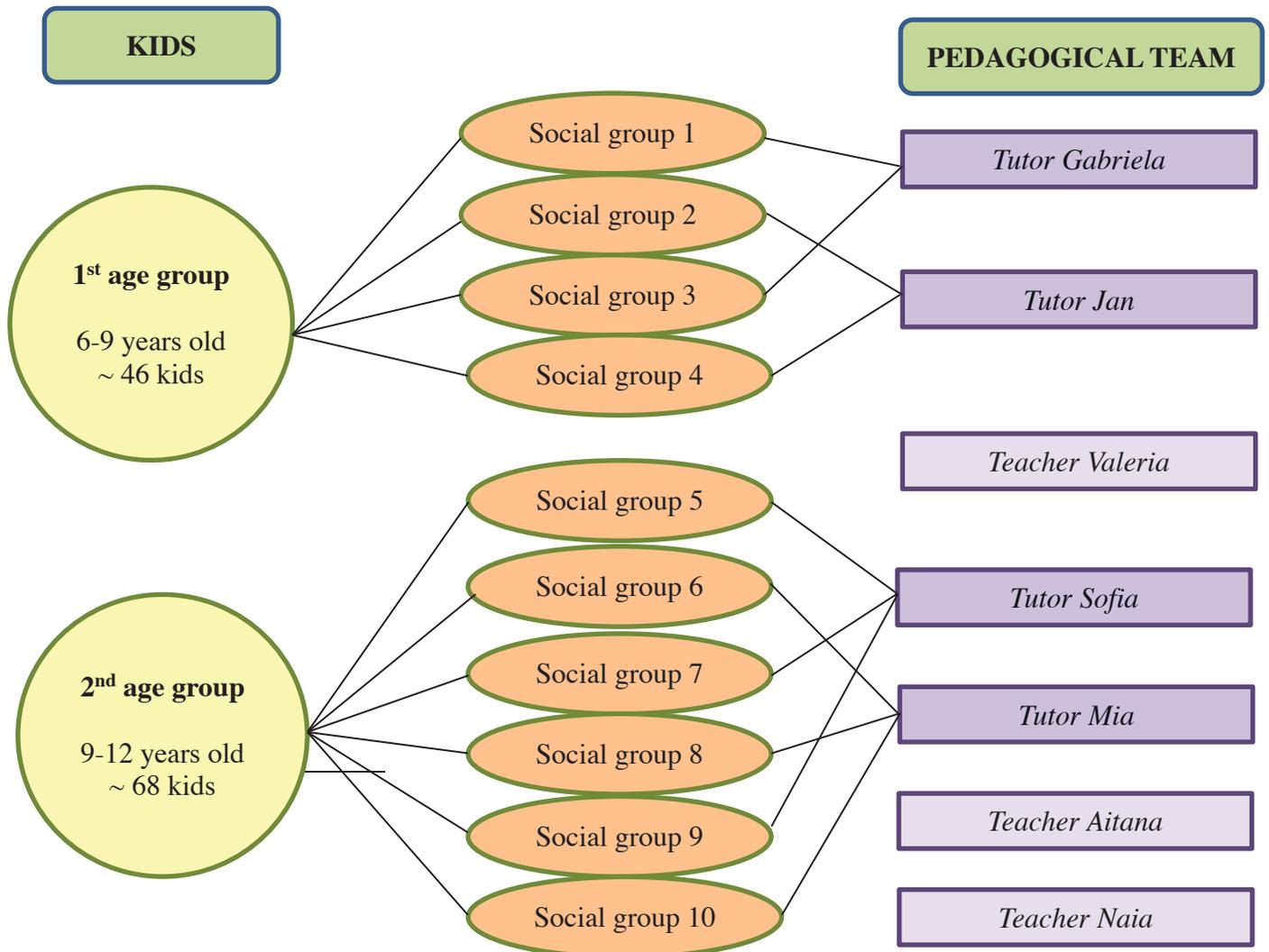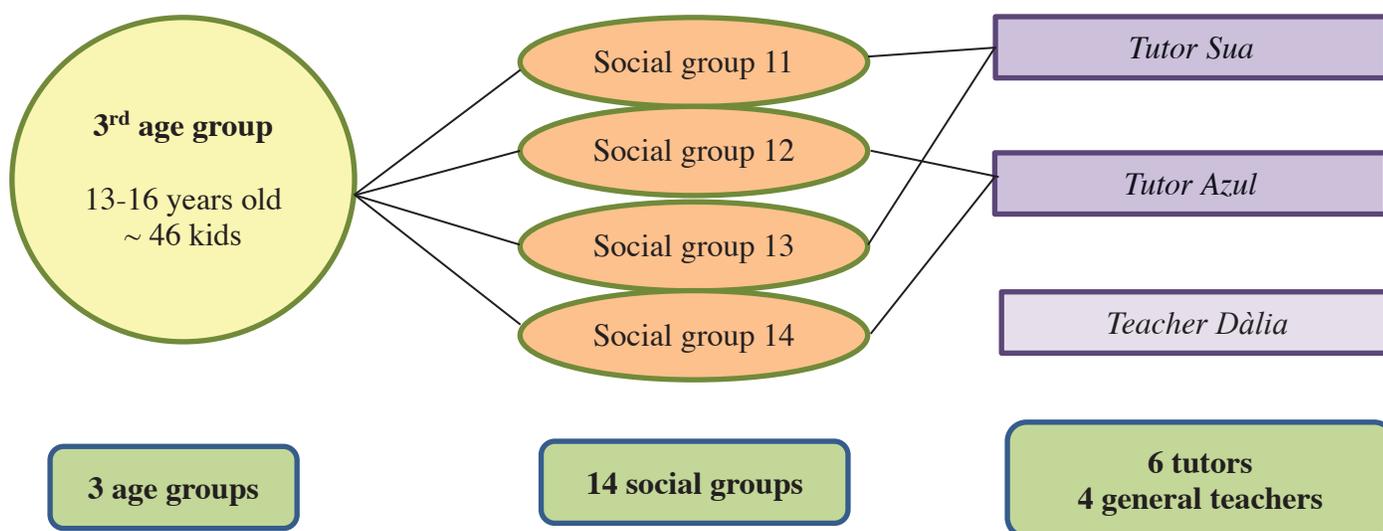
Source: Own elaboration based on DA

7.1.6 Pedagogical team[248]

There are many adults present at school daily: the pedagogical team, the director and his wife, the school's staff, and parents. To achieve the educational goals mentioned in previous sections, adults have a significant role. According to its pedagogical proposal, Petxina has the following priorities:

- Encourage the participation and involvement of all members of the educational community in school life.

- Take care of the relationships among the members.

- Guarantee and favor that the pedagogical intervention is coherent, coordinated, and assumed by all (PEC, 2012, p. 13).

The pedagogical team is small and expanding according to the school's demands depending on the number of enrolments, while their primary responsibilities are coordination, teaching, and tutoring. More specifically, they are responsible for "organizing the space, the times and the

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[248] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, DA: 2018/01/08, DA: 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/11, DA: 2018/01/15, DA: 2018/01/17, DA: 2018/01/18, DA: 2018/02/13, DA: 2018/02/24, DA: 2018/02/26, DA: 2018/03/05, DA: 2018/09/28, DA: 2018/04/24, DA': 2018/07/01, DA': 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/12, DA': 2018/01/14, DA': 2018/01/15, DA': 2018/01/18, DA': 2018/01/27, DA': 2018/01/28, DA': 2018/02/03, DA': 2018/02/05, DA': 2018/02/14, DA': 2018/02/16, DA': 2018/02/26, DA': 2018/01/27, DA': 2018/01/08, IA1 & IAT .

activities, while applying strategies that permit the maximum development of kids' potential, observing and respecting kids' interests and contributions with the collaboration and involvement of families".

Teachers are expected to organize and provide a rich environment in terms of materials and educational proposals, safe and respectful, where students can develop their learning. They accompany kids in their process and ensure optimal conditions for their interaction with the environment, considering all their emotional, affective, intellectual, motor, and relational needs. One of the priority goals is to ensure kids' emotional well-being. Therefore, the role of the adult at school is closely linked to affection. It is thought that without establishing relations based on affection, the educational practice makes no sense. Through adults' listening, availability and empathy, kids may feel accompanied and respected. In other words, teachers' role as 'acompañantes', is linked with their availability to welcome kids' emotions.

During the school year 2017-2018, ten teachers comprised the main pedagogical team, nine of them working full-time and one part-time. Among them, five teachers and the part-time teacher were tutors. Therefore, 20-30 kids correspond to each tutor more or less, a ratio relatively high for a free school. Tutors have lists with the groups they are responsible for and mark the days kids are absent. The way they are offered the position and contracted depends upon the case. Most seem to reach the school through social networks, as teachers tell them when there is a need for staff that matches their profile. Then, they send their CV to the school, and the management team calls them for an interview. After a few days of trial, they are contracted. Their contract normally lasts for the rest of the school year, and it is then renewed.

The main pedagogical team consists of:

Gabriela: Primary school tutor and in charge of the Montessori I module.
Jan: Primary tutor in Montessori I and in charge of the atelier.
Mia: Primary school tutor and English specialist.
Sofia: Primary school tutor and language specialist.
Valeria: Primary school teacher and Montessori specialist.

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Aitana: Responsible for the outdoor spaces and relational, academic, and emotional support.

Sua: Head of Studies and High School Tutor.

Azul: High school tutor and science specialist.

Dàlia: Music specialist.

Naia: Montessori teacher, trainer, and coordinator.

Most times, kids call teachers by their names, while others use 'animator' or 'monitor'. They often have physical contact with them, for example, laying their heads on their shoulder or hugging.

Teachers' profiles vary in all aspects. Apart from *Gabriela*, *Aitana*, and *Sua*, the rest are pretty new at Petxina, where there is a general tendency of changes regarding the pedagogical team. Their ages are from 23 to 40 more or less. Apart from *Aitana* who doesn't have any related academic studies, all the rest had university studies in the field of education in terms of which most get in contact with such alternative pedagogies that are briefly mentioned. Some have had extra training, like *Valeria*, who specialized in Montessori and worked for half a year at a Montessori school in Argentina, or others who had training and seminars in free and active pedagogies. Some hold MA diplomas, such as *Sofia* in psychopedagogy, and all have anarchist, leftist or leftist-friendly ideas. *Jan* is interested in anarchist education, Mia actively participates in the local feminist movement, while *Azul* has attended permaculture courses and supports anti-capitalist local movements.

However, most of them have doubts regarding the possibilities of applying these methodologies, especially at late educational stages and the commercialized character they have acquired. According to *Valeria*, although Montessori was destined for the poor, it has become commercialized and like a "sect"[249]. Therefore, unlike in the past, more and more middle-class families with a specific cultural profile choose the certain schools, while the working-class get excluded.

Having said that, some tutors like *Jan* are committed to the project, while others like *Sofia* have already worked in traditional schools and rejected that option: "I chose it because I did not want

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[249] DA: 2018/01/11.

to work in a traditional school where I tried already.. this is a different school, and it matches my ideals quite well". Others, like *Mia*, perceive it as a temporary job instead. It is common for them, especially the second category, to complain regarding the working insecurity or the time they must devote, which does not let them have a life out of school. *Mia*, for example, whose interest is in translation rather than teaching, frequently complains about spending the whole time in Petxina[250]. Although they earn the minimum wage, which depends on their contract, they seem to be satisfied as they know the precariousness that generally exists in such alternative schools.

Nevertheless, all seem to agree on the limited communication among them. Their relationships are not friendly, and they often create small groups gossiping about each other's work: "*Mia* and *Sofia* are talking about *Valeria*. They comment on her tendency to avoid responsibilities related to kids" (DA: 2018/01/11).

Teachers do not have a standard line regarding their work at Petxina, and the frequent changes in the pedagogical project do not help either. According to them, how pedagogy is applied depends on the person, while the announcements by the management team regarding changes in the pedagogical proposal, from spaces to time structure and ways of functioning in general, are frequent and demanding, as they call them to adapt to new conditions constantly. What is more, not all of them support the particular changes, as shown in a discussion between *Dàlia* and *Valeria*: "*Dàlia* says that Montessori, rather than free, is even more traditional due to the manipulative material and lack of freedom. *Valeria* argues that there is freedom because kids can move freely; it is free in terms of an organized structure" (DA: 2018/01/18).

Apart from the main pedagogical team, collaborators frequently change as well, according to kids' interests and ***Antón***'s judgment. *Teo* is responsible for the video workshop. *Marc* specializes in drawing and fine arts, *Pelai* for drums and percussion, and *Agatha* cine-forum. Three of them, *Pelai*, *Marc*, and *Teo*, are also parents of kids attending Petxina, therefore using their job there as a way ofpayment. Also, from time to time, volunteers contribute to the pedagogical team, who most times exchange their work as English teachers with accommodation in the house and food.

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[250] DA: 2018/01/10.

Although this is not true for collaborators who exchange their work with the monthly fees for their kids, we should mention that, the same way -if not more- as most teachers perceive it as a temporary job, some of them are not committed to the project and often express their negative thoughts upon Petxina regarding the disrespectful attitude prevailing and the problematic management. This can be seen through the following conversation between *Agatha* and a mother named Paula at the school's outdoor space:

> *Agatha* tells Paula that ***Antón*** and ***Adelaida*** describe Petxina as a wonderful place, but it's not like this in reality; it's a complete chaos. There are many arrogant kids, while their families are not like that. When Paula leaves, she adds that she cannot understand why families pay 400 euros for kids just to go and play and that older kids are 'lost'; they only smoke weed. She then refers to some students she had who used to come in her class and say 'what is this shit' and others who are nine years old and do not know how to write; but they do not know any music, art or cultivate vegetable either (DA: 2018/01/17).

Besides, both collaborators and teachers frequently complain about the school's current state and the director's attitude, as seen in the following informal conversation between two *Sofia* and *Mia*:

> They say they are not happy with the school; teachers do not have a standard line for dealing with conflicts, and there are no limits. "I know it is a free school, but it is not working", says *Sofia*. *Mia* complains about the money she needs to spend on the material as well. They agree that ***Antón*** talks much, but he never concludes or finds a solution (DA: 2018/02/01).

It is also important to mention that changes in the pedagogical team are more than frequent. Two teachers and one collaborator were working at the beginning of 2017-2018 who were not there in January when teachers were replaced by *Azul* and *Dàlia*, while the collaborator did not get replaced. In February of 2018, *Dàlia* left as she was offered a position in a public school. In the school year 2018-2019, the pedagogical team had changed once again. In general, teachers come and go for personal reasons combined with the director's will that depends much upon his daughters, as seen in the following extract from an interview with a mother.

> We had a Montessori guide three years ago, but on the one hand, ***Antón*** wanted the space to be Montessori, and on the other hand, he did not.. there was no one supporting this girl ... she had to take care of the children, teach them the Montessori material, and at the same time to act as the police .. because children would come and bother, there were children who did not want to be there, and she had to take care of everything.. then kids started complaining about her, I suppose that ***Antón****'s* daughters specifically.. Now he is

bringing Montessori again, and it seems that this time he is serious. He understands that the space has to be respected, and teachers do not have to be acting as the police (IA1).

All in all, both teachers and collaborators frequently complain about kids' disrespectful attitudes, expressing their thoughts on their lack of appreciation for being there and the director's constant change of mind and decisions taken. At the same time, they seem to be aware of their exclusion from decision-making processes, as *Jan's* words reveal, "My opinion can influence, but I do not make decisions in the school structure, the management team makes decisions".

Having said that, the role of the director, ***Antón***, is central in Petxina. He is expected to:
- direct and coordinate the educational activities according to the educational project,
- be responsible for events taking place,
- direct the teaching activity of the staff, and
- issue certifications and academic documents.

Antón is a well-known figure in free education and a great talker, frequently invited to share his opinion and knowledge. His daughters used to attend Pardal before, which the family abandoned due to his long-lasting stays and different views regarding pedagogical matters.

Having studied much, ***Antón*** is a critical defender of free education, arguing that it is an illusion, as is freedom in general. He often insists on social structures, power, control, the difference between theory and practice, and the importance of semantics in such educational projects. As he characteristically says, "punishment is not a consequence like capitalism is not free market" (DA': 2018/01/08). According to him, many of these projects are more conservative than the conventional schools. At the same time, despite the big revolutionary tradition in Catalonia, renewing the educational system today is an elitist matter in the hands of a small bourgeoisie, a fact that explains the obsession with emotions.

Antón has a vast library and reads pretty much anything related to psychoanalysis and sociology of education, from Lerena to Bourdieu and Foucault. His interest in sociology grew when he was a leftist militant, which also conditioned his interest in educators like Makarenko.

It is not hard to observe the director's power and authority exercised in daily life. Contrary to the teachers', his presence has a unique effect in terms of obedience. Kids' attitude towards the school's norms changes if he is the one who reminds them, as it can be seen through the following extract: "A boy tells another "I do not recommend you fighting in front of **Antón**". … A few minutes later, **Antón** returns to remind kids that they are not allowed to jump on the benches. They immediately stop" (DA: 2018/01/12. This can also be seen in the words of Nicolas, as a response to a boy who is making fun of him: "Nobody commands here, here only **Antón** commands" (DA: 2018/02/26). As a result, both teachers and kids use his authority to defend themselves or restore order in conflicts and provocative attitudes.

Teachers are aware of **Antón**'s power and authority, not only regarding kids but also upon them. He is the one who can hire and fire them, give directions -usually changing- and decide about everything in general. This was obvious, for example, when the construction of the new Montessori room was decided. Parents would ask the pedagogical team to present it to them, but teachers would direct them to **Antón** instead. **Antón**, on the other hand, is aware of the power he holds and uses it frequently "**Antón** comments "I became the authoritarian director today" (DA': 2018/02/14). Moreover, he frequently complains about the teachers' focus on emotions, their resistance to changes, and pedagogical practices that fail to capture kids' interest, connect the experience to theory or create structure on the outside, spaces for spontaneous assemblies, organization among kids and social criticism, among else.

> **Antón** thinks that *Aitana* tends to focus on minor conflicts to gain recognition due to her lack of studies and uses excuses to justify, such as the lack of teachers. He then comments on his problematic role, arguing that he does not like authority, but on the other hand the pedagogical team denies getting the autonomy he gives them to organize things (DA': 2018/02/27).

In addition, teachers have limited power, but they are also often unaware of the norms that depend on the director. For instance, when *Aitana* is asked if a few ESO students can go to the park for lunch, she says she does not know what to say and goes to ask **Antón** instead[251].

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[251] DA: 2018/03/16.

What is more, in case kids transgress limits, they worry that **Antón** does not find out. **Antón**'s house is an attraction itself, calling kids' curiosity and tempting them to transgress limits since there are many times that they try to see what is inside and enter; something forbidden. However, knocking at the door is frequent, either to ask for **Antón** or without any reason, just joking.

Last, **Adelaida**, **Antón**'s wife, has a similarly important role, both upon him and the pedagogical team and educational project, although holding a lower profile. Coming from an upper-class family, she inherited an important editorial while directing a few journals hosting critical articles and authors. Teachers often complain about the different instructions they get from **Antón** and **Adelaida**, like in the case of *Mia*; when she first came, **Adelaida** asked her to only speak in English with kids, while **Antón** told her to practice some grammar, so she chose to do a bit of everything[252].

Regarding their own kids' upbringing, they follow, more or less, attachment parenting theories. **Adelaida** still sleeps with at times with Erica, their older daughter (15 years old), while both she and the younger, Inés (12 years old), are free to express and experiment in open limits as shown, for example, through a conversation over the dinner table during which Erica narrates her first time smoking weed in **Antón**'s car. The power the director and his family have upon the project is evident to the whole educational community. A father characteristically says that "Petxina is homeschooling for **Antón**'s daughters.. homeschooling with money. Petxina will die the day his two daughters leave" (AI9).

Last, there is some extra staff[253], both permanent and temporary according to the project's needs. The permanent includes the school's cleaner and the gardener, while one of the temporary ones was a psychologist hired -and paid by the parents- to accompany a specific kid who used to provoke many conflicts, as we will later see. Sometimes, the house's cleaners and cooker interact with kids as well.

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[252] DA: 2018/01/11.
[253] DA: 2018/03/09.

7.1.7 Internal organization[254]

<u>Meetings</u>

In Petxina, meetings with families are considered essential and realized at least once per year with each. In terms of these meetings, tutors share their reflections about kids at school, their academic trajectories, and their general presence regarding their psychological status and social life. At the same time, they consist of moments of reflection upon the relation of adults -both tutors and families- with the kid and the educational action. These are individual meetings every Wednesday and Thursday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., and families can approach their kids' tutor, preferably after 4 p.m., to demand a day and hour for their meeting.

From time to time, there are bigger meetings among all parents and the director when changes in the educational project are presented and discussed. Last, there are also two weekly meetings among the pedagogical team and the director, one dedicated to the pedagogical team's formation on Montessori and the other related to general topics. There follows an extract from the second category.

> They are all sitting, as always, around the table. This time they also have some dishes with cheesecake on. They start talking about specific kids. First about Cayetana and her family problems because of her sister who got operated. *Antón* says that school is the enemy for kids like her, and teachers are punishment symbols. *Adelaida* argues that they should not accept old kids from now on, and *Antón* agrees. Then they talk about Pere and his psychologist's presence at school. *Antón* wants to arrange some meetings with the kids. According to him, he is the figure of the father and the law.

> Later, they discuss about the group of teenage girls, as well as the new choral teacher who is soon coming. *Sua* refers to an ESO group that used to work better before some new kids joined it, proposing a change in groups, and they start discussing the bad functioning of the groups and possible changes, focusing on ESO sudents' late arrival at school because they are at the park smoking weed.

> *Antón* says, joking, that Erica is very punctual and worried about arriving on time at the park. They agree they should rethink groups and hours. Since they realize that *Gabriela's*, *Aitana's*, and *Antón's* kids are all skipping classes or coming late, *Antón* proposes that

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[254] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, DA: 2018/02/23 & DA': 2018/03/12.

they start changes with their own kids. *Adelaida* insists that the failure is that we do not propose something that interests them.

Later they comment that although many kids were entering spaces before, that is not the case now. *Sua* thinks that it is only because of the energy existing outside that prevents them from entering. *Antón* brings the discussion to the brigades saying that those participating are the same as those who enter to study. According to him, kids wish to do something in non-normalized ways and insists that what happens outside influences the inside. He wants to give a structured sense and says that it is essential to organize the existing brigades and create new ones, with the tutors' help in the beginning. The brigades' objective, after all, is sovereignty and autonomy; the goal is not to need the adults. "They will liberate us.. kids doing their things", he comments. According to *Antón*, conflicts deriving from what happens in terms of the brigades would be more important than conflicts deriving from 'identities at war' (DA': 2018/03/12).

There are a few essential aspects revealed during the staff meetings. First of all, although food is sometimes shared, and everyone is in a circle, teachers and directors do not have friendly relations, and hierarchies are pretty clear. Teachers speak their perceptions, but *Antón*, aware of his authority, guides the discussion. Therefore, everybody may express their opinion, but *Antón* and *Adelaida* have the last word, frequently attributing the school's bad functioning to the pedagogical team.

7.2 One day at Petxina

    7.2.1 Daily schedule[255]

The school is open from Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. In theory, arrival at Petxina is at 9 a.m. while exit takes place at 4 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. with a lunch break between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. During this break, ESO kids are allowed to go out of the school, whereas the rest remain. However, this is quite flexible since most kids arrive much later or/and leave much earlier.

Each social group has a different weekly timetable about which tutors are responsible for preparing and inform kids. To prepare it, they talk with them and ask regarding possible group changes or workshops they would like to attend. In the end, each group must spend some hours

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[255] PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, Petxina's official webpage, DA: 2018/01/08 & DA: 2019/01/15, DA: 2019/01/17 & DA: 2019/01/22.

with workshops or courses given by tutors, and the rest of the hours are free. Exceptionally, every Thursday, all kids go on an excursion, usually divided into groups according to their age.

It should be mentioned that changes in time structure mark Petxina. For example, during the second quarter of 2018, kids first had a few compulsory hours in the morning only, and then they could do whatever they want, while later they were given two options to choose from, after the compulsory hours and before their free time. By the beginning of the following school year, 2018-2019, many teachers had come and gone, spaces had all changed, workshops such as aikido were added, and the project had transformed into an almost entirely Montessori school with much more structure, and norms added.

7.2.2 Rituals

Daily Rituals[256]

There are no specific rituals in Petxina at a collective level and no structure regarding greetings or time changes. However, specific kids or groups of kids might develop their own, as in Nicolas's case, who picks up a flower every time he leaves the school, for example.

Occasional Rituals[257]

Similarly, local seasonal rituals are not regularly celebrated in Petxina. Nevertheless, some of them, like the carnival, are celebrated by some kids/groups that come to school dressed up. At the same time, they sometimes establish and organize their own, like the 'Petxina awards':

> In the space out of the theatre, kids and tutors are already sitting on chairs and the ground. Àlvar, in the role of the presenter, first explains about the awards and then announces the first performance: capoeira by Nona. Nona starts dancing capoeira while Virgili is playing the drum. She tells Virgili to change the rhythm sometimes, and he does so. … Then, Àlvar asks the audience to vote for somebody as he makes questions like 'who is the kid who works most' 'the kid who does more sport', 'the funniest' 'the coolest' 'the most popular' etc. Afterward, he does the same for the tutors. *Gabriela* asks if they can

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[256] DA: 2018/03/16.
[257] DA: 2018/02/06, DA: 2019/01/17 & DA: 2019/02/09.

only vote once, and he says, "yes, you can vote once only; democracy". The last vote goes for 'the most special kid'. It is all conducted informally. In the end, they do a 'goodbye dance' (DA: 2018/02/06).

7.2.3 Arrival[258]

Although kids are supposed to have arrived at school by 9 a.m., most arrive later, either accompanied by parents or alone in case of secondary school students. Upon arrival, there is no specific ritual or morning meeting. Many kids hug tutors and start talking with them, commenting on schedule/group changes and personal experiences. Then, kids spread in space, normally according to their peer groups and weekly schedule, while most parents leave and others stay longer.

7.2.4 Learning activities[259]

Educational activities in Petxina are guided, semi-guided and self-directed. Guided activities are mainly workshops offered, while self-directed include spontaneous and mostly playful practices. Regarding guided activities and according to the pedagogical proposal, kids' work is mainly conducted in corners: the teacher makes a proposal, and kids choose among the various materials available to realize it. Material is rich and varied, complemented according to needs, including recycled, natural, purchased, paper, or photocopied worksheets. When kids are done with it, they tidy up. Corners may include activities that allow students to practice or develop learning they have received, require a high degree of autonomy, let kids use their imagination, and involve manipulative/experimental work.

More specifically, each corner offers many possible activities that can lead to different results and develop manual, creative, and musical skills. They correspond to kids' needs and desire to acquire new knowledge and be responsible for their learning. At the same time, they encourage autonomy during the whole process, from the activity's choice to its realization and evaluation, research skills, the use of different techniques and strategies for problem-solving. Last, collective

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[258] DA: 2018/01/08.

[259] PEC 2012 (Projecte educatiu de Centre).

work is also encouraged among peers. Working in corners requires kids to behave by established rules and therefore stimulates personal autonomy and collaboration with the social group. Kids learn to organize, share, discuss, agree, respect peers' ideas, value all efforts and differences, and ask for or accept their help.

Besides working in corners, project work is another tool to accompany kids' interests and questions, constantly and naturally generated. Through projects, kids work the various procedures related to learning such as experimentation, information seeking, hypothesis making, work planning, expression of conclusions, concept mapping, etc. Projects at Petxina are optional, and teachers do not decide upon the topics or the number to be carried out per course. Kids are responsible for designing what they want to research and how. However, at least one interdisciplinary work or project is proposed to kids of primary education.

Projects are, by definition, global, drawing from various areas of knowledge and aiming at various learnings and skills. Kids, either in a group or individually, choose a topic, think upon their knowledge, and express their expectations. Then they plan the work needed to be done with the help of a tutor and realize the activities planned for the project, which might include readings, visits, interviews, internet search, experimentation, observation, etc. In the end, they present their conclusions through oral presentations, graphics, summaries, or conceptual maps and evaluate their project, thus becoming aware of their learning.

I should mention that every day and during the whole day, there is much movement, and many things are simultaneously happening while it is uncommon that a space is left empty[260]. The sound of drums or other musical instruments coming from the theatre is usually heard, adding to the vivid atmosphere. Kids come and go in all spaces, and there is a general ambiance of unrest. This is the case for outdoor and interior spaces, where the problem worsens due to the limited space shared among various groups. Therefore, interventions to make silence are frequent.

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[260] DA': 2018/01/24, DA': 2018/01/22, DA': 2018/02/06, DA': 2018/02/08 & DA': 2018/02/15.

Guided and (semi) guided activities at Petxina vary and usually are connected since there is a broad weekly/monthly topic upon which teachers are expected to make proposals[261]. Although activities change a lot - the same way as the educational project itself -, there are a few stable compulsory ones, while more structure is added as time goes by. However, kids, especially at older ages, tend to show little interest in general, even though they are the ones who have chosen the activities, and tend to escape them by not appearing and hiding somewhere instead.

Sometimes, the reasons behind this are relational, when kids do not feel comfortable with their social group, but most times they are related to a collective general lack of interest which is evident in case they are made to attend a class when both concentration and participation are low. Although few kids express their discontent with school's limited structure, free time is most kids' favorite activity: "Three boys are jumping and dancing, cheering "we don't have any class", and dancing" (DA: 2018/01/10).

Teachers often go to look for the groups and invite them to the classes, explaining that it is okay to do another activity as long as they choose to do something, but kids normally ignore them and leave, lying that they will be back in a minute. Phrases such as 'when will the damn class be over' or 'I don't wanna go to the fucking class' are frequently heard by kids in the form of complaints, confirming their resistance to get involved in guided activities.

The director's key role is evident in these cases, since he is used by the teachers as a strategy for kids to obey, although not always with success, as it can be seen in the following example*: "Mia* tells a boy she will speak with ***Antón*** if he does not go to the English class and he answers "I don't want to go and if it's compulsory I will escape" (DA: 2018/01/08).

All in all, during learning activities, there is general disobedience and a lack of respect expressed towards peers, teachers, and people they do not know. Although teachers intervene, they seem to have low, if not zero, influence. We may see such examples below:

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[261] DA: 2018/01/08, DA: 2018/01/09, DA: 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/12, DA: 2018/01/15, DA: 2018/01/18, DA: 2018/01/19, DA: 2018/01/22, DA: 2018/01/23, DA: 2018/01/24, DA: 2018/01/26, DA: 2018/01/30, DA: 2018/02/02, DA: 2018/02/05, DA: 2018/02/07, DA: 2018/02/13, DA: 2018/02/16, DA: 2018/02/20, DA: 2018/02/26, DA: 2018/02/27, DA: 2018/03/02, DA: 2018/03/05, DA: 2018/03/06, DA: 2018/03/09, DA: 2018/03/12, DA: 2018/03/13, DA: 2018/03/19, DA: 2018/03/20, DA: 2018/03/21, DA: 2018/09/28, DA: 2019/04/04, DA: 2019/04/24.

Kids comment on Montessori, and Unai says that *Naia* and *Valeria* are too boring. Rocio, and Celeste agree and start making fun of them by speaking slowly. Porfiri brings Enzo's backpack and throws it a few meters away. Then, with a stone in his hand, he threatens he will throw it to the dogs. His friend does the same. *Sofia*, who sees it, intervenes, proposing that Enzo may stay if he does not use guns and wants to participate, but the boys announce they will leave if he stays (DA: 2018/02/27).

The same goes for limits. Both when coming from teachers and peers who do not belong to one's affinity group, kids tend to ignore all interventions due to the lack of punishments, their perceptions over Petxina, and how freedom given is practiced in this context:

A. Because of the hard rain, most kids stay in the classrooms. The math teacher is giving a class to ESO. In the room, kids are involved in various activities; most are playing, three girls are making crafts, others balls of threads, and a few reading stories. Suddenly, a group starts playing with threads producing a chaotic situation. Others start playing with the pillows on the sofa.

The math teacher starts asking them to be quiet, and they tell him they cannot be punished. Every time he leaves, they start playing again, carrying the pillows to the big table to build some kind of refugee. The teacher intervenes again, saying they cannot act like this and there are some rules to stay together in the same space. A girl answers that this school is not like that (DA: 2018/01/26).

B. Blanca is annoyed by a plastic box a boy has left at the table. She gets it and throws it away. .. A few minutes later, Katia, Desirée, and Malak are climbing at the wooden structure of the dining space. Blanca keeps telling them, "you cannot do this"; a few more kids from her affinity group join her (DA: 2018/03/07).

We will now look at the (semi) guided learning activities during the school year 2017-2018. Starting from projects, I will then refer to Montessori, English, music, cine-forum, video, science, survival, corners before we look at the assemblies and other activities that take place from time to time.

Project: Accompanied by a tutor, kids work with their social group on the week's topic, discussing, researching, reading, and writing. Based on a specific topic, teachers make proposals for projects in Spanish and Catalan upon which kids start working and then continue in a more self-guided way, either individually or in a group, until the project's completion. There follows the list of the topics proposed for the course 2017/2018:

\-   Countries/Continents: Geography, History, Great writers, musicians, painters, filmmakers of that country (trying to include as many women as men), nature, animals inhabiting that country, economy, inventions, popular culture, kids' or their families' travels. (France, China, Russia, Catalonia, Africa, USA).

\-   Our body: Anatomy, Biology, What we feel and why, Natural things and cultural things, Great researchers, thinkers, scientists, What benefits and what harms that part of the body; Representations of that part of the body in culture, How other cultures have seen it, how it is in other animals (Brain, Sex and Gender, Senses, Heart, Body and Beauty, Childhood and Adolescence).

\-   Ecology: How the human being transforms the world, Ecology, and health, what can we do to take care of the planet, Capitalism (Plastic, Transportation, Sugar, what we eat, Biodiversity, Water).

\-   Ecosystems: Who inhabits those ecosystems, how they relate to each other, Being human in this ecosystem, Transformations throughout history, Geography, Ecology, Explorers, Discoveries (Sea, Forest, Insects, Deserts, Fossils, Animals).

\-   Sciences and Technology: Planets, Universe, Information, Big Data, Inventions, Maths, Future.

\-   Culture: Theatre, Music, Dreamworld, Literature, Cinema, Mythology (Temas Proyectos Curso 2017/18).

The actual topics upon which kids and tutors worked from January to March 2018 were the following:

Week I (8-12 Jan): Mythology
Week II (15-19 Jan): Dreamworld
Week III (22-26 Jan) & Week IV (29 Jan-2 Feb): Water
Week V (5-9 Feb) & Week VI (12-16 Feb): Cinema
Week VII (19-23 Feb) & Week VIII (26 Feb-2 Mar): Body and Beauty
Week IX (5-9 Mar) & Week X (12-16 Mar): Science Fiction
Week XI (19-23 Mar): Fossils (Temas Proyectos Curso 2017/18).

Montessori: This is the primary way reading, writing, maths, geography, and other subjects are taught. When kids have Montessori in their daily schedule, they enter the correspondent module and sit around at the wooden tables or on the carpet floor. The tutor

introduces a topic, and kids are invited to practice it, using the material around and through worksheets.

English: English is mainly practiced through games such as mafia or taboo, either on the playground or inside classrooms, tale reading for younger ages, and informal conversations, usually guided by the teacher. These activities are often related to the weekly topic, and there usually are two English-speaking companions around. The decision of what to do every day is up to them and the kids who might take the initiative of proposing a topic of discussion or activities.

In general terms, kids show little interest and find it hard to concentrate during English time. Exceptions to this are multilingual kids, who already speak in English at home and sometimes even ask for practicing more reading and writing after their parents' demand.

Music: There are various instruments in the theatre room with which kids can experiment. The tutor playfully accompanies them: "*Dàlia* with two boys play the tambourine, and another is pretending to be the conductor, moving his hands up and down in front of them" (DA: 2018/01/10). Besides, there is also the option of having more structured classes of guitar or drums in case kids are interested.

Cine-forum: During this workshop, kids learn how to make movies. Accompanied by the specialized teacher, they first write down stories. They then transform them into scripts, share the roles, look for the necessary material and clothing and film them.

Video: This is a special workshop on how to use the camera for filming. Kids get to experiment with various techniques.

Science: Science is taught through experiments. Accompanied by the teacher, kids learn, for example, how to make soap or colors by natural materials, from plants to fruit.

A topic that emerges quite often in terms of activities at Petxina is freedom. When kids are asked to conceptualize it, they usually think about compulsory activities, labeling their previous

projects as free if there were none and, similarly, making meaning of Petxina. Therefore, it is not uncommon to listen to kids expand their comparison of schools to jails, including Petxina. Such an example is a conversation taking place during a science class with kids of 6-9 years old who were experimenting with plant-based colors outside, at the front stairs next to the garden: "Suddenly, the main door opens, and kids start running towards it shouting "freedom". *Azul* says, surprised that they act like they are in jail, mistreated. Virgili responds, "mispaid in your case" (DA: 2018/03/21).

Survival: This is a learning activity usually taking place in the outdoor space and accompanied by a tutor, quite similar to scouts. The tutor explains to kids how to use a compass, plan excursions, construct huts, etc. "At the dining space, *Aitana* and a group of kids are playing a game of senses; they have to identify items keeping their eyes closed. .. Later, kids are asked to draw a square at a tablet with their eyes closed as well" (DA: 2018/01/22).

Corners: Inside the classrooms, kids can get busy with various learning activities, from sewing to board games, either accompanied by tutors or on their own.

Assemblies[262]*:* Although there used to be once a week in the past, there are currently no regular assemblies at Petxina after ***Antón's*** decision. When asked, teachers said they did not know why as it was never explained to them. The decision seems to have been made due to the director's conviction that there should be "spontaneous assemblies and not ritualistic ones"[263], as what happens, in his imaginary, at Trèvol: "In the context of anarchist educational examples, he comments on the 'ácratas', the people of Trèvol, who have an assembly even for moving a chair (DA': 2018/01/08).

Nevertheless, general meetings sometimes happen for which the term 'assembly' is often used. There are two categories of such 'assemblearian meetings'; a) the ones invoked by the director when something important has happened that influences all and b) the ones invoked by the pedagogical team or part of it which involve fewer kids and are thought of as an organizational

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[262] DA: 2018/01/31, DA: 2018/02/06 & DA: 2018/03/01.
[263] DA': 2018/01/29 & DA': 2018/02/15.

means. In both cases, kids show little interest and respect, as we will see through the following extracts, one for each category:

A. *Sua* and *Mia* walk around, telling everybody that they should go to the big benches for the assembly. There, ***Antón*** stands in the middle, surrounded by the benches and kids, while teachers either sit or stand around him. ***Antón*** says that they would talk about three things: first, shoes disappearing. Sheila says who might be responsible; many kids laugh at her. Virgili refers to something irrelevant.

Antón continues. He says that people steal things, and this should stop. Kids then, raising their hands or simply intervening, start giving examples, commenting on things having been stolen. During the 'assembly', kids are talking, laughing, and ESO students are running around. ***Antón*** sums up 'you cannot touch bicycles, shoes or backpacks'.

Then, Nicolas talks about some people who dismantled his painting equipment, and ESO students laugh at him: "You think it is fun, don't you? Every artist needs their space". Many start clapping their hands and laughing, ESO boys make fun of him, "you are an artist, Picasso". A boy says it was Hernán, and everybody starts repeating "Her-nánHer-nánHer-nán". Nona then goes in the center of the circle to say something, but it cannot be heard because of the noise. Alex says something as well about some lost bottles, but nobody pays attention anymore. They all start leaving gradually, and ***Antón*** stays talking with a group of kids (DA: 2018/01/31).

B. *Sofia* and *Mia* decide to have a morning assembly with their groups in the theatre module at 10 a.m. When kids enter, some of them start playing with the drums and tambourine. Amalia and Aloia do not want to come. *Sofia* insists that they do so because otherwise, they would not hear the things said, but *Mia* proposes that the more you force them, the more they will not come. Porfiri then opens the door and shouts, "you have to come", "it's not compulsory", Amalia replies, and Porfiri says "it is, the teacher says so". They finally enter. While waiting for the rest, they play a group game.

It is time to start the assembly, but kids will not get quiet. *Mia* shouts, "Porfiri, kids, silence". Anselm says, "I do not like this class", and *Mia* replies, "if you want to go away, keep quiet, listen, and we will go". *Sofia* then starts talking, asking kids what they would like to change in Petxina. Everybody raises their hand when they want to talk, and *Sofia* gives permission. Nona refers to the trash and Maialen at the timetable; she does not like being with other groups at Montessori. More kids agree with her.

Meanwhile, three boys make shuriken origamis without paying attention, while Porfiri, Anselm, and Guerau are playing around, not listening, and making noise. *Sofia*, annoyed, shouts that the next of them who would talk will leave at 12 p.m. with the teachers, in the end. Porfiri insists on the same attitude, and *Mia* stands up and goes towards him, saying, "okay, Pofiri, you are out". He wraps himself in the carpet to hide.

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The 'assembly' continues, and Celeste says that two hours of Montessori are too much; she would prefer one only; the rest agree. *Gabriela* goes outside and comes back with some other kids of the group who were till then outside. Unai and Martí are crawling towards the door, trying to escape, but *Mia* sees them and gets them back. The proposals continue, and a girl refers to the wooden table that used to be outdoors, and she wants it back. Kids start talking with each other and asking when the assembly will finish. *Sofia* says that if they continue like this, they will stay longer.

Guerau and Anselm are fighting on the floor. Forty minutes after the assembly started, it is complete chaos. Nona wants to say something, she starts speaking twice, but nobody pays attention to her. In the end, she tells *Mia* only, who is sitting next to her. Then, *Mia* goes to sit among the noisiest kids who are playing on the carpet. The proposals continue a bit: a room where kids can eat and a bigger module. Martí tries to escape from the window, and *Mia* says that if he does so, ***Adelaida*** will learn about it in five minutes because she would send her a message. He immediately returns. A few minutes later, *Mia* opens the door, and the kids run outside. Guerau shouts "freedom" (DA: 2018/03/01).

Other: From time to time, there are various activities taking place at Petxina, both guided such as kung fu, and semi-guided such as organizing the school library, planting groceries, or watching a movie at the cinema space, which is used by teenagers mainly. Critical films are often chosen in terms of these film projections, from feminist documentaries to movies about the war, diversity, etc.

Since it is raining, there are not many kids at school today. *Sofia* discusses with Pere, who keeps telling her, "I do not want to go to the fucking class". Among the pedagogical team, there is confusion regarding what kids will do. *Mia* proposes getting together and talking to decide, so all the teachers gather outside and do so. They divide the modules among them. A group stays in the cinema room with Aitana to watch 'Wonder' as they do not want to watch 'Persepolis' that was proposed first. .. Kids are sitting on the sofá. Aitana is hugging her daughter, and a girl is sitting on her sister's feet (DC: 2018/02/28).

Besides, when kids show a specific interest, teachers of the secondary stage who are specialized in it may accompany them: "Accompanied by *Sua*, the girls are making parodies of beauty magazines; Katia is dressed up with dragon pyjamas, Malak is wearing high knee colorful socks, and Desirée is taking photos" (2018/03/12).

Last, on special occasions, interests and proposals might as well appear, and tutors might be asked or offered to accompany them. Such an example is the feminist strike:

Àlvar proposes organizing a protest for women's rights, so they start discussing what they need with Virgili and the English volunteer about what they need… They prepare a "stop sexism" banner with Virgili, Olaia, and Antonella. At 13.30, they start protesting around the school with Amanda and Nona, who join; Virgili is making noise using his food tapper (DA: 2018/03/06).

Politics is very present at school, as kids are free to express their political ideas and curiosities in any way they want as long as it does not harm or bother the rest. Most times, if a kid has a specific interest in history and politics, they talk with *Antón*, and their interest leads to joint research. Therefore, due to the open character of the activities, kids get the chance to bring their topics of interest to school and open a dialogue around them: "Virgili says "I propose a thing to debate" and then shows the newspaper he is holding; it is about a boat of Ope n Arms[264] which got seized by Italian authorities" (DA: 2018/03/20).

Last, although in general (self) guided activities are a bit more controlled than self-directed, kids sometimes take advantage of teachers' temporary absence to initiate or continue conflicts. We can see this in the following example taken place at the cinema, the same day as the extract we saw before: "*Aitana* leaves the module to make a phone call, and Enzo attacks Vito telling him "you are gonna die". Vito runs to hide, and Enzo starts attacking Ubal and some other kids with pillows" (DA: 2018/02/28).

7.2.5 Free play[265]

Self-directed activities and free play are at the heart of Petxina. On a daily level, there are plenty of small talks around, moments of sharing as well as conflict. However, let's take a better look at what happens out of the programmed schedule. The particular activities are divided into two big categories: the ones that take place inside and those which happen outdoors.

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[264] Spanish NGO devoted to search and rescue at sea.
[265] DA: 2018/8/1, DA: 2018/9/1, DA: 2018/10/1, DA: 2018/12/1, DA: 2018/15/1, DA: 2018/16/1, DA: 2018/17/1, DA: 2018/19/1, DA: 2018/22/1, DA: 2018/23/1, DA: 2018/26/1, DA: 2018/29/1, DA: 2018/31/1, DA: 2018/2/2, DA: 2018/5/2, DA: 2018/6/2, DA: 2018/7/2, DA: 2018/9/2, DA: 2018/13/2, DA: 2018/16/2, DA: 2018/17/2, DA: 2018/20/2, DA: 2018/23/2, DA: 2018/26/2, DA: 2018/27/2, DA: 2018/28/2, DA: 2018/5/3, DA: 2018/6/3, DA: 2018/7/3, DA: 2018/12/3, DA: 2018/13/3, DA: 2018/14/3, DA: 2018/16/9, DA: 2018/19/3, DA: 2018/20/3, DA: 2018/21/3, DA: 2018/23/3, DA: 2018/28/9, DA: 2019/24/4.

<u>Exterior</u>

The biggest part of the self-guided activities and free play is outside, while the director keeps reminding tutors that the classroom is there. In fact, the exterior does not seem to be considered as a learning space as there are many worries about children spending all day outside and not entering the modules among both families and the pedagogical team, and this is one of the main reasons Montessori was added as a compulsory activity and changes are made towards adding more structure that forces kids to enter.

Petxina's outdoor space would generally depict teenagers sitting and talking, sometimes listening to reggaeton music, smaller kids playing around, and various informal conversations happening among the educational community members.

I should mention that apart from conversations and relations -and therefore learning- among peers; they also develop at an intergenerational level like in the following example with two boys of 14 and 6 years old as protagonists. "Màxim is climbing a tree but keeps falling. After observing him for a while, Ramón tells him, "this happens to you because of smoking" (DA: 2018/17/1).

It is also widespread that kids express their perceptions of school and schooling in general during self-directed activities. Since many have previously attended other schools -some of them the same ones, public, private, or private subsidised with public funds - they often comment on their negative experiences, frequently with bullying involved, and compare these schools to jails. Examples include punishments, an attitude of ignorance towards kids and their questions, and authoritarian behavior in general.

> Nona says that the physical education teacher made them do push-ups. Virgili comments on another who was chilling with magazines and coffee while showing them videos. They then talk about a video about the school they filmed once, for which they had told them to look happy (DA: 2018/03/20).

When kids are asked to compare Petxina to their previous schooling experiences, they tend to focus on a) their previous learning difficulties, feelings of boredom, and lack of understanding

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due to the book-based pedagogies and homework and b) Petxina's teachers' mood and relaxed attitude which emits happiness compared to the teachers they have had in the past. At the same time, kids are aware of the school's lack of consequences expressed both by their attitude and verbally. For example, during a conversation between two boys, one says that "here you can insult without consequences" while the other comments that "this happens only in this school; not in others" (DA: 2018/02/16). Either due to such comparisons or not, many kids are happy to be there and experience positive feelings: "Delfina says she likes the school because she can go wherever she wants. The only thing she would change is the tree-house; she would make it bigger and safer so that she can also play there" (DA: 2018/02/07).

Nevertheless, some kids attribute negative meaning to Petxina and even feel obliged to attend it, as revealed in the following dialogue between two boys: "-Didn't you want to quit school? -Yes, but my mother does not want to, okay?" (DA: 2018/01/08). Negative experiences and meaning attribution depend on many factors and are usually related to kids' social or academic life. In other words, sometimes kids express them due to the compulsory character of certain subjects which do not interest them, while other times they do so due to personal conflicts or the general chaotic ambiance that prevails.

This variety of perspectives is met regarding school's changes as well, as revealed through the following extracts of the same day: a) Two kids chatting on the playground "-I don't wanna go - Me neither -It is not a free school anymore" (DA: 2018/01/15) b) "Leonor says she prefers the school the way it is now; it was too boring when there were no classes at all" (DA: 2018/01/15).

Regarding limits outdoors, these are usually harder to control and include climbing/ jumping/ sitting at the top of the wooden structure at the lunch area, walking/ running on the benches, etc. Therefore there is a chaotic situation normally, with kids climbing on trees, walls, and fences and making noise. Sometimes, due to this situation, accidents happen. Conscious of this, there are many times they verbalize their observations, comparing Petxina to a zoo, for example. As kids grow, this reality intensifies; ESO students, for example, use their mobile phones during school hours, even though this is not allowed. Also, insults, conflicts, and fights pretty much define the school's daily life, rather than exceptions to it.

Kids, especially boys, provoke and insult a lot every day[266]. There are many times they make fun of migrants with racist and xenophobic comments and expressions, while their provocative attitude might also extend to peers: "Àlvar is angry with Virgili because he tells everyone Àlvar is in love with Ale. Àlvar, annoyed, says Virgili is in love with teachers and his penis gets hard when he thinks of them at night" (DA: 2018/02/02). Apart from insults, they fight a lot, punching, hitting, throwing stones at each other, etc. This is something normalized, and there are many accidents and bad experiences involved: "Anselm is fighting with Dimas, almost suffocating him and screaming "I'm gonna kill you" (DA: 2018/14/3).

Interventions by teachers are direct in case they are around. However, due to the vast space and dense flora at some playground regions, it is not uncommon that conflicts happen when no adult is around. Kids then, either the ones involved or observers, often call some teacher to intervene. Typically, different teachers discuss with the involved kids first, and then the group is gathered to talk together.

Now that we have a general idea of the ambiance outdoors, there follows a list of the main outdoor activities:

Nature-related: Kids interact in various ways with animals and plants found at Petxina. From observing and catching butterflies or spiders that can be found all around, taking care of the plants, bringing their little pets such as hamsters, or interacting with the three dogs living there in the big doghouse. "Everybody is excited about the new dog, a German Shepherd who bites a lot. Two kids are eating there, one commenting: - Do not do that, when you give him food, and you take it back it suffers" (DA: 2018/01/08).

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[266] DA: 2018/01/15, DA: 2018/01/19, DA: 2018/02/27 & DA: 2018/02/02.

Besides, there is the dogs' brigade, the only one functioning during the school year 2017-2018. Kids belonging to this take care of the dogs living in Petxina and sometimes bring them on excursions. In general, brigades are formed either after kids' initiatives or encouraged by some teacher or the director and consist of mixed-aged kids responsible for a specific task in Petxina. In the past, I should mention that there used to be more active brigades such as the library or the security brigade; the first responsible for the books in the library and the second being a kind of police using scooters with alarms on them. Even though some kids are willing to organize more, the school's magazine, for example, they find difficulties due to the low interest and lack of responsibility most of their peers show.

Sand constructions and games: There are two main areas where kids get involved in activities related to constructions with sand; the playground around the tree-house, the space right next to it and the space in front of the doghouse. Some with shoes or boots when it is rainy and others barefoot, some in group and others individually, kids play in various ways.

Next to the tree-house playground: Playing with the mud when it rains, often using branches, stones, and other natural objects that can be found around.

At the tree-house playground: Invented spontaneous games such as hiding objects in the sand for the others to find.

In front of the doghouse: Digging in the sand and transferring water to shape rivers, lakes, or small pools, usually in small groups. Sometimes they ask for the help of the cleaner to get access to the water:

> A root is blocking their way, and Virgili tells Aran, "Be a man and kill the root". They look for the school cleaner to open the box with the water and fill a small and a big cube. They pour the small one, and later Romina runs to look for an adult who can help them pour the big one too, due to its weight. When the water is finally in the river, they scream "tsunami" (DA: 2018/01/10).

Arts and Crafts: Either accompanied by an adult or on their own, both individually and in a group, there are many times that kids, especially girls, make bracelets, origamis, or paintings; normally to give them away to friends and family members, while they sometimes experiment with their hairdressers' skills and make braids. In terms of this context, much time and space are given for spontaneous conversations and constantly developing relations.

> Julieta tells Sila that she would make slime for her. A few minutes later, she changes her mind "it is too much work, I have to think about myself". They start making thread necklaces. Julieta asks Sila not to copy her and then lets her do the same but different colors (DA: 2018/03/13).

Nicolas is the kid mainly observed painting outside, on a daily level, and during many hours. Nicolas is 15 years old and is diagnosed with autism. He likes magic tricks, painting, and gardening, and he is usually observed cleaning the playground from the trash. He often talks about his suicidal thoughts, his perception of himself as a bad person and frequently goes through an aggression crisis, expressed in self-destructed acts or shouting. He sometimes imagines stuff like a brother he has and wants to kill, who goes to another school in Barcelona.

In terms of a conversation, he links this tendency to paint with his autism: "Nicolas says painting helps him at a psychological level; he has stopped breaking things" (DA: 2018/01/09). He uses a canvas and various painting methods from carbon to acrylic colors to create fruit and landscapes. This activity attracts many kids' interest and admiration. "Two boys come to see Nicolas painting

and discuss -Nicolas, from a big magician has become a big artist -Isn't it very cool? -Cool? Hallucinating!" (DA: 2018/01/12).

However, not all kids and not always have such an attitude towards him. Nicolas expresses his feelings by crying, painting, or writing a diary, often due to issues with kids at Petxina who often marginalize or make fun of him. Many view him as an easy victim to break out on since there are many times that they insult and provoke him, either verbally or pushing other kids towards him. His reactions vary; sometimes, he ignores them, others he shouts at them, while other times he gets anger crisis. Due to all the above, there are many times he talks about his wish to leave Petxina: "The problem is that he feels overwhelmed because he never knows what to do and where to go; he needs someone to explain to him how we work here" (DA: 2018/02/20).

Symbolic and Role Play: Spontaneous symbolic and role-play is what little kids mostly get engaged to. Some of them include lava (imagining that a specific part of the playground is lava), the horse (one of the kids being the horse and the other one the rider), the lion (a kid in the role of a sleeping lion and the rest trying to steal something (s)he's holding), the restaurant or pastry shop (creating food out of sand and natural objects and playing in the role of the waiter/tress and client) and star wars (pretending to be jedis and siths fighting).

Reading, Writing and Word games: Less frequently, kids play games such as taboo, write diaries or stories, and reading tales or books.

(Semi) guided activities: Few times, kids are observed working on (semi) guided activities as well, such as working on ongoing films: "Some kids are with Teo who teaches them how to film. Two of them pretend to be trying to rescue a girl from a tree while he is showing the rest how to handle the video camera" (DA: 2018/01/02).

Nothing: Last, it is common to see kids doing nothing special; just relaxing together or alone. "Next to the tree-house, the twins are relaxing; Abby is laying down with her T-shirt semi taken off, and Ilana is laying on her belly, kissing it from time to time" (DA: 2018/01/10).

Sometimes, relations become a game when little kids make and unmake friends with each other, while other times they live them negatively. In these cases, teachers might intervene to accompany kids' emotions like in the following examples; the first with Blanca, a new girl at school who finds it hard to enter a social group, and the second with Ilana and her affinity group. "*Jan* is talking with Blanca and the group of girls. Blanca is sad because they sometimes play with her and others they do not, so she does not know if they are her friends" (DA: 2018/01/22) "Ilana and Abby come looking sad. Ilana says she is sad today because one of her friends told her that she doesn't like her anymore, so she is thinking of not inviting her to her birthday" (DA: 2018/01/17).

It should be mentioned as well that body contact in the school is frequent. Kids hug and touch peers and teachers a lot. Expressions and explorations of sexuality are encouraged only if there is a consensus from all parts involved. Besides, due to the intergenerational shared spaces, kids hold spontaneous related conversations and are exposed to such expressions coming from ESO students, mostly a couple of a boy (*Aitana*'s son) and a girl (*Jan*'s nephew) who are often expressive, hugging and making out.

> The boys start talking about the couple who are sitting on the ground making out. They comment that they have been like this for one hour and a half. They then refer to the time when the girl was giving him a hand job. Luisa comments that she does not like that they are kissing all the time (DA: 2018/01/09).

Transmission of information related to sexuality and gender also happens due to the various encounters taking place daily and time and space for spontaneous peer socialization given. To this contributes Petxina's openness and the non-conventional lifestyles and identities many families hold. This is best seen through an informal conversation at the playground among two girls of 11 years old, a six-year-old boy, a seven-year-old girl, a mother, and a 14-year-old homeschooler, self-identified as agender, whose sister is a Petxina's student, and she pays frequent visits since she likes the school:

> The homeschooler says she likes both boys and girls and explains that she is in love with an agender, aromantic person. "I hate it when they call me a girl. Respect my identity; I am agenderω, she says, then referring to her own sexual identity. An 11-year-old girl expresses her annoyance when people tell her 'hello beautiful'. She then asks the

homeschooler what her favorite name is, and the homeschooler asks back: "in which culture?" (DA: 2018/01/12).

However, despite the school's environment where sex education is very present and where students learn to normalize related aspects, kids like Virgili resist such normalization. We can look at this through his comment while reading a tale about birth-giving: "Virgili says his parents would never do such a thing and that he prefers not having children himself than doing something so disgusting" (DA: 2018/01/29). It is interesting how such kids come from families who do not hold the alternative worldviews and lifestyles often met in alternative schools and experience a conflict as there is a discontinuity between home culture and school culture. This usually is not a problem as long as it remains within verbal limits, while it might be the cause of conflicts between the school and families in other cases, one of which narrated by the director: "He talks about the time when some kids were caught masturbating in the bathroom. ***Antón*** was decisive; he said that this was not a kids' problem and whoever did not agree should leave. One family did so" (DA': 2018/02/15).

Last, in terms of self-guided activities and free play, conflicts among kids often arise. There follow a few scenes from a typical day at Petxina:

> A six-year-old boy is running to hide from three peers who are running after him; they are fighting. .. The school environment gets more intense as Nicolas starts shouting at a boy, another boy on the floor is accusing someone of bullying, and Enzo hits Celeste's head with his gun. The rest of the girls tell him to go away, and she stands up angry, asking him if he wants her to hit him. .. Celeste comes back a few minutes later with *Gabriela*, who takes his gun from his hands. However, she gives it back to him after a while as he gets angry. Then she heads to the little kids, and after they explain to her what happened, she tells the young boy who was running that hitting is not a way to resolve a fight. Inés, who has witnessed it, defends the boy (DA: 2018/01/16).

Apart from the punctual conflicts generated from misunderstandings or different points of view, there are repeatable aggression cases, provocative behaviour, insults, and violence from and towards specific kids: Nicolas, Pere, and Enzo; for different reasons each.

Pere is 12 years old and quite eccentric, diagnosed with a psychotic disorder. He tends to provoke both kids and teachers and make fun of them. He uses social media and has a Youtube

channel where he uploads gaming videos and often refers to topics related to sexuality. Transgressing the limits is very common for him.

> Pere joins the group saying that he likes killing pigeons and that humans are superior to animals because they have weapons to kill them. Then he says that it is cool to be a lesbian; he would be a lesbian if he were a girl. However, it is not cool to be gay when you are a man. *Gabriela's* son replies that he is stupid. Then Pere starts commenting on ESO girls, commenting on whom he would fuck, and arguing that it is worth killing the new dog because Inés told him she would punch him if he did so; he is thinking of throwing acid to it. *Gabriela's* son tells him, "you are a fucking psycho" (DA: 2018/01/12).

Pere is often away from school for a few days, after extreme behaviors such as when he bit *Sofia's* arm, who intervened after using his knife to warn a kid. There was an intent to resolve the situation when Pere's family contracted a psychologist who would accompany him the whole day, but problems did not disappear, and Pere abandoned Petxina after a while; a sign of the school's failure, according to **Antón**, since it is not prepared to receive kids like him. "*Gabriela's* son asks the psychologist if she is Pere's monitor. She replies she is there for everyone, but the kid insists, saying she is there only to take care of Pere because he is problematic" (DA: 2018/03/09).

Let's also take a look at the example of Pere and the 'orange movement'; a political party in Mexico whose song, sung by a young boy, got quite popular and upon which he was researching with **Antón**:

> He says he would climb up to the school's roof and sing the song with his megaphone. A few minutes later, the orange movement is heard all over Petxina, sung by Pere, who is now standing on the roof. Some teachers, especially *Jan*, intervene, asking him to stop it. He then goes down and starts running with the megaphone around the school's playground, repeating and shouting "son of a bitch" (DA: 2018/01/19).

Enzo is 12 years old as well and diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. He usually wears a marine hat, holds plastic, fake guns and has aggression crisis, expressed in violent ways towards others, pushing and hitting them. Most of his targets are kids with whom he used to be friends in the past.

> A. Virgili, a little boy, explains *to Jan* that Enzo took his head and pretended to be hitting it on the ground. *Jan* starts shouting at *Jan*, "let him in peace, you cannot do that". Then

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he sits on the pavement and suggests talking, but Virgili answers that he does not want to be with Enzo, 'neither friend nor enemy', and leaves (DA: 2018/01/15).

B. Enzo is constantly asking for Unai to leave the class and play with him. The rest of the kids keep telling him to leave, commenting that Unai should decide for himself. Celeste says that he is 'subnormal' and never at class because he has a problem. They then tell him that they study so that they do not become like him, "to not become stupid like you" (DA: 2018/02/27).

Interior

Kids can get involved in self-directed activities in the modules only if a tutor is present in the space. These activities must be quietly realized so that they do not interrupt the rest of the (semi) guided activities taking place simultaneously.

Although there are some general basic norms, reminded by teachers mostly and sometimes by peers, similar to the exterior, there is a tendency of resistance among kids who keep transgressing limits, ignore norms and keep an irrespectful attitude, provoking, insulting or even harming others. Examples include fighting, playing, or making noise in spaces of concentration "Two boys enter and start running and jumping on the sofas. The girls are angry and ask them to leave; *Sofia* intervenes" (DA: 2018/02/16).

The consequences for disobedience are rare and not clear; most times, there are none, while others, kids get temporarily excluded from spaces. At times, there are more significant consequences, like meetings with the director and even expel from the school. There follows an example from a typical day in a module:

Two boys are fighting, and another goes towards them, saying, "this cannot be done. Fight outside". Another comments then on the pillows, "we have to tidy them; Gabriela is coming". Blanca comes in annoyed because of some boys who 'ruin the class'. A kid is passing by, outside, and spits towards another who is inside the classroom (DA: 2018/01/22).

However, kids do not just resist norms; there is a general cultural resistance towards the culture promoted by the school. For example, Petxina, in theory, is against hierarchy, gender roles, rewards, and punishments. Nevertheless, kids during play transmit such values:

Miriam says, "I am the boss". They then start placing some stars stickers if they follow the classroom rules: no running, no fighting. Miriam's brother reminds everyone, "you cannot run or play". After a while, Miriam starts crying because her brother removed a star from her page while she was running. She complains that this always happens with the boys (DA: 2018/01/15).

Arts and Crafts: Either individually or with peers, kids often make bracelets, draw, and paint, both their creations and copying/coloring others such as mandala.

Board Games: Especially when getting bored, they sometimes choose to play one of the plenty of board and paper and pencil games that can be found in the modules or created by kids such as Pictionary and puzzles, the hanged man and tic tac toe or even orbits that kids bring with them.

Reading & Writing: Either asking for a teacher to read them or reading themselves, kids often choose one of Petxina's library's books to spend some time with. Besides, some of them write diaries, comics, short stories, or whole books in the case of few kids who even participate in writing contests. Among the popular, one is a feminist book, revealing the mothers' interests as well who tend to speak with them or read them about relevant topics: "Romina picks to read the book 'girls are warriors', and Blanca comments that it is good; her mother reads her every night before sleeping" (DA: 2018/02/01).

Despite the school's attitude against competitiveness, encouragement to learn in own paces, respect towards different ways of doing things, and no judgment of cognitive skills' development, this is not the case for certain peers. In the following example between two seven-year-old girls that took place at the playground out of the theatre, competitive and comparing attitudes of superiority are expressed:

Ilana is writing a tale, and Sila starts correcting some letters and judging her way of separating words. Ilana says, "you tell me what to do, and you make me even sadder .. I do it my way", and Sila responds, "you will never learn", adding (referring to Ilana and her sister) "you cannot do anything". Ilana replies that this is not true because yesterday she finished a book she was reading. Ilana is sad, saying, "at least understand me .. I am not talking about you, and what you cannot do, I respect you; respect me too". Then Sila

starts talking about her toys and her dance classes, where they teach her a lot, and, according to her, this is why she is better (DA: 2018/03/06).

Free Play: Although it is a school's norm and tutors always remind kids that if they want to stay in the modules they must be completely quiet, they still tend to ignore them and play in a free, usually loud way, fighting, playing with the pillows of the sofa and running around. If teachers' interventions do not work out, all kids must go out, and the module gets locked or **Antón** is asked to intervene.

7.2.6 Excursions[267]

One of Petxina's central concerns is to make sure that kids go out of school a lot. This way, they get to know the surroundings, do outdoor activities, and have constant contact with nature. Therefore, one day per week is dedicated to excursions, Thursday for the school year 2017-2018.

Although there usually are many kids missing, who do not come at all or join later at the excursion place, accompanied by their parents who either stay or leave, everyone is supposed to have arrived at Petxina's outdoor space by 9.15 a.m. Often with kids' help, tutors divide them into big groups, and then, each group leaves school accompanied by a tutor. Depending on the destination and personal preferences, groups might head to the closest train or bus station, use scooters/bicycles/rollers/skateboards, go walking, or combine means of transportation. In addition, groups might visit the same place or divide; these are all decisions made in advance by the pedagogical team.

Destinations vary and include parks, beaches, the pool, mountains, libraries, and museums, while during the school year 2017-2018, an excursion took place in a squat, coordinated by the English-speaking volunteer. Upon arrival, kids spread in space, normally divided into their social groups. "Kids are divided into four groups. *Mia* is asking and writing down their names. Each group is supposed to visit different places and do different activities. The options are caves, wooden sticks, Iberic village and do nothing" (DA: 2018/01/25).

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[267] Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, DA: 2018/01/11, DA: 2018/01/18, DA: 2018/01/22, DA: 2018/02/01, DA: 2018/02/08, DA: 2018/02/22, DA: 2018/02/26, DA: 2018/03/15, DA: 2018/03/22 & DA: 2018/03/23.

At the excursion times, they get involved in spontaneous self-directed activities, informal conversations, and free play, while sometimes teachers prepare activities for them. Self-directed activities might include football, playing in the parks facilities, swimming, shell gathering, playing with the sand, or board games such as Pictionary, chatting, relaxing, and listening to music, usually trap and rap in case of ESO students who usually carry a sound-system with them. Kids adapt their activities depending on the surroundings, which at the same time consist of significant learning possibilities: "Abby starts running telling everyone there is a dead dog. Some remember it from the last time they were there. Bringing stones and sticks, and while talking about death, kids proceed to its burial" (DA: 2018/01/25). What is more, the current political scenery is sometimes used for kids' scenery of play: "Kids comment on the game they invented at the excursion; they were playing that they are Mexican citizens who cannot pass the borders, which were the rocks on the beach" (DA: 2018/03/23). Guided activities might happen as well, although less frequently; an example is the Olympic games prepared once by *Aitana*.

In terms of excursions, it is important that kids respect the space limits and do not go away without an adult accompanying them. Therefore, adults spread in the same way kids spread so that they constantly surround the latter. On some occasions, kids themselves ask for teachers to accompany them if they want to move further. Last, ESO kids might be given the option to stay in a nearby area where they can have some intimacy, as long as teachers can see them.

Excursions are where kids interact with others not belonging to the educational community as well, as seen in the following example that took place on the train when two little kids start talking with the old man sitting next to them: "He tells them about the largest airplane, among else, and comments that he prefers talking with kids because they give happiness, contrary to adults. Blanca adds that adults learn from kids as well" (DA: 2018/03/22).

In the same way, as shown towards peers and teachers, kids might show a lack of respect towards people they do not know. Although teachers intervene, they seem to have little influence. What is more, sometimes, transgressing certain limits is dangerous: "when kids leave Petxina's playground, Víctor starts walking on the fence. *Aitana* gets closer and tells him that this is super

prohibited. He does not seem to care and continues walking the same way" (DA: 2018/02/22). Therefore, adults frequently express their worries, like a teacher in the example that follows: "Some boys are about to jump from the fence and *Agatha* says "they are gonna kill themselves", adding that there are many kids with serious problems" (DA: 2018/01/17).

Intergenerational relations and learning happen as well spontaneously.

> On the way back to school, Katia finds a condom, and kids start playing with it, putting it on their hands and filling it with water. Blanca and Lorenzo ask what it is, and Nona says they are too young to know. Then, she grabs Blanca by the shoulders and tells her it is used by people when they want sex but do not want babies, adding that it is placed on the boy's penis (DA: 2018/03/22).

Last, conflicts during excursions often arise, stressing that conflict resolution is not something that may be described clearly, since not all teachers and not always follow the same line. One day of excursion[268], for example, when a young boy gets attacked by another who wants to paint a penis on his face, *Valeria* intervenes. Since the boy would not listen to her, she grabs him from his arms and says, "Do you want me to get serious?" a rather opposite reaction to what the pedagogical project proposes and what is tried to be done in general.

7.2.7 Lunchtime[269]

According to Petxina's official webpage, eating from a social point of view is not a simple activity of nourishing; it instead has a meaning tied to family and affection. Therefore, it is essential for kids not to experience lunchtime as a compulsory, militarized sequence of a stress-based curriculum and the subsequent free time as a parking lot until the continuation of the school routine.

The pedagogical project is not against routines and structures, which are considered vital. However, instead of making them a goal and fall into the trap of nonsense, "it should be kids

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[268] DA: 2018/01/11.
[269] Petxina's official webpage, PEC 2012 Projecte educatiu de Centre, DA: 2018/01/16, DA: 2018/01/19, DA: 2018/02/06, DA: 2018/02/21, DA: 2018/02/23, DA: 2018/03/14, DA: 2018/03/16 & DA: 2018/03/20.

themselves who manage this moment of social encounter, a moment that holds great potential for coexistence and mutual belonging".

Kids bring their lunch from home, usually packed in a tapper. Food can be anything that does not contain much sugar, and kids can enjoy their lunch wherever, and with whomever they wish at the playground (or in the closest park for ESO students). Most times, their tapper includes something like integral rice/pasta with vegetables or legumes, while on excursion days, many of them enjoy some sushi instead. In the case of rain, there is the option of eating at the carpentry. Kids have lunch at the time of their choice between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. approximately. Such a decision is thought to be giving them the option of eating at home or school accompanied by their parents, if there is a possibility, thus contributing to promoting family ties. Parents' presence in accompanying lunchtime is considered as a part of the school's tradition.

In practice, kids make decisions upon time and place depending on their affinity groups. While eating, informal conversations co-occur with spontaneous games and activities, from Pictionary, card games, and taboo to painting. Apart from a few exceptions whose parents join, kids are mostly accompanied by peers, while tutors tend to eat out of the school, normally at *Gabriela's* terrace, close to Petxina. During lunchtime, parents come and go, as it coincides with the exit time for many kids who leave earlier than 4 p.m.

Sometimes, kids take advantage of the exit time to sell food they have made, and which is generally prohibited at school: "Virgili says he will sell chocolate cake today at 4 p.m. with his sister; 50 cents per piece, to make money for pokemon cards. Julieta goes to ask her mother for money who gives her one euro to buy two" (DA: 2018/02/23).

During lunchtime informal learning takes place, both among peers and intergenerational, as kids observe and interact with the rest. "Erica and her friends are dancing out of the theatre, and some little kids are watching them while eating. Every time someone swears, Blanca says "what a swearword" (DA: 2018/02/21).

These encounters with others are facilitated by Petxina's open character to the whole educational community. Family members, both (grand) parents, and siblings who are homeschoolers are often there, interacting with kids.

Limits and norms are also very present during lunchtime, along with attitudes of transgression and interventions regarding them and expressions of kids' perceptions over the school. Popular and repeating examples are escaping through the main door or trash. Teachers who are outside often ask whose trash it is, reminding kids to pick up theirs and throw it away.

> A. A few little boys are playing with the trash at the dining space, removing the recycling bins, and entering their wooden structures. Genari starts getting pieces of paper from the bin and throwing them at Gedeo, threatening him that he will throw the organic. A bin falls on the ground. *Gabriela* intervenes and asks Gedeo to clean it up. She looks for a broom, but she cannot find it and comes back after a while. She tells the boy that he cannot continue like that. Gedeo is then sitting on the ground with another boy who tells him, "in the normal school you would have to sit down, do homework". Then, the boy says that *Gabriela* is the best teacher and Petxina the best school. Another little boy joins them. They are asked again to pick up the trash, and the boy tells Gedeo, "either you do it, or you do it" (DA: 2018/01/16).

> B. *Aitana* asks a kid if a plastic piece of trash on the ground is his. He says no, but *Aitana* insists that he never gathers. He repeats it is not his; he threw his away, and *Aitana* tells him that he did very well if he did so, then picks it up to throw it away herself. *Sofia* tells some boys making origami to stop because it is a mess, but one of them says it is not their fault; other kids had not thrown away their trash. She says it does not matter; we are a group. When *Sofia* leaves, the boys run towards the main door. They see a volunteer looking at them, and one of them says they will come back soon (DA: 2018/03/01).

Nevertheless, norms are not always explicit, neither to kids nor teachers, as we can see in the following two cases: "Haidée is eating a croissant, and a girl tells her it is not allowed. *Aitana* later confirms it is not, but she let's them have it; she is strict with chewing gums and candies only" (DA: 2018/02/06) "Chantal disagrees with Blanca, who claims that the use of the tablecloth is a school's norm whereas Chantal tells her it is not" (DA: 2018/03/20).

Of course, conflicts are once again not missing.

> Enzo hits Virgili, who is sitting at the dining space, eating his sandwich. Virgili starts crying and asking for his mother. When Enzo goes away, the boy keeps looking afraid,

looking around to localize where he is and not eating his sandwich. Some other kids are also there, having lunch at the same table. After a while, Àlvar asks who wants to expel Enzo from school, and all kids raise their hands. Then he asks who has been attacked by him; some kids say they have been while others say they have been insulted, such as Romina, whom he called 'daughter of a bitch' (DA: 2018/03/21).

Interventions by teachers are direct in case they are around. However, due to the vast space and dense flora at some playground regions, it is not uncommon that certain cases happen when no adult is around. Kids then, either the ones involved or observers, often call some teacher to intervene. Usually, different teachers discuss with the involved kids first, and then the group is gathered to talk together.

> While eating, Miriam is playing on the slide. When she leaves for a few minutes, Katia takes her place, and Miriam gets angry because she would not leave. She throws sand towards her, and Katia throws her back much more, destroying her hamburger. Miriam starts crying and tells *Valeria* and *Dàlia*. Both go to speak with Katia, and Miriam stays with *Jan*, who asks her to explain what happened. Then Katia's group comes to the bench where *Jan* is sitting with Miriam in his arms to talk altogether. *Jan* says they should not react this way; they should speak instead (DA: 2018/01/11).

7.3 Parent profiles[270]

Parent profiles vary the same way as the reasons they have chosen Petxina. In general, and as *Jan* points out, there are two types of families. On the one hand, some are committed to alternative education and have chosen Petxina for its pedagogy, the "convinced", as *Mia* calls them. On the other hand, others chose the school but are not convinced by alternative education. Most times, although not always, the reason for their choice is because they have had problems with conventional schooling and are "desperate". Therefore, their decision "does not derive from a pedagogical or educational conviction that calls to question authority or give the freedom to make decisions".

According to *Jan*, kids belonging to the first category face no difficulties at school, while others cause problems. "He brings the example of a girl whose mother chose Petxina because she had not played enough as a kid, compared to Màxim who only talks about violent video games and cannot adapt to an environment like this" (DA: 2018/01/22). *Mia* thinks that there are conflicts

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[270] DA: 2018/04/24, DA': 2018/03/08, DA': 2018/03/19, IAT, IA1, IA2, IA3, IA4, IA5, IA6, IA7, IA8, IA9 & IA10.

due to the discontinuities between home and school culture. In her words, "you are asking the kid to decide between what the school and the family believes and in some cases ideals are different" (IAT). In some cases, such conflicts lead to problems experienced or provoked by kids and exclusion from activities like excursions after their parents' intervention[271].

All in all, it would be impossible to categorize families strictly. However, what is for sure, and what the pedagogical team reaffirms, is that, while some families exchange their work for monthly fees and who 'make sacrifices' so that their kids can attend Petxina, they all belong to the same social class, as they all have the necessary cultural resources to reach the school. As *Jan* says, although the school has tried to be as inclusive as possible, there are still two filters; one economic and one cultural, the second one being the major.

> There is an economic filter that always makes you experience a certain contradiction as whoever cannot pay cannot be in the school and a cultural filter.. not all social classes have sufficient cultural access to be informed that there is another way of schooling.. and the easiest option is to bring your child in the nearest school (IAT).

Regarding their place of origin, some are from Catalonia and Spain while others come from European countries like Italy, Denmark, Germany, Austria, France, or England and Latin American like Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, San Salvador, and Argentina. In some cases, kids are adopted from Latin American or African countries.

In terms of an attempt to recognize the major profiles, a big part of them consists of:

- Alternative mothers, interested in psycho-spiritual development, alternative therapies, yoga, meditation, biological food, non-violent communication, emotions, and Gestalt, sometimes even working in the certain fields,

- Complicated upper-class families such as Bernat's; many members of the educational community remember the story of social services' intervention at Petxina for his removal from his father's house, after his parents' constant fights over the child's custody,

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[271] DA: 2018/02/08.

-        Homeschoolers who usually attend Petxina fewer days and hours per week, such as two sisters who would attend Petxina twice a week from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The main reason behind such choice is to protect themselves from social services that might intervene or have already done so due to homeschooling's illegal character in Catalonia.

-        Parents of varied profiles, but with shared negative experiences in previous schools where kids had troubles or did not fit in, mainly due to learning difficulties, developmental disorders, or behavioral problems, and whose economic status permits them to afford the cost of Petxina. According to the director, local inspectors even direct families facing problems at conventional public schools and can afford Petxina, asking him to accept them.

Regarding parents' studies and professions, while most hold PhDs or MA diplomas from both Catalan and universities abroad, one or more, plus courses and seminars, others have abandoned school early to dedicate themselves to music, in one example interviewed, and not even attended the secondary stage. Regarding the first category, some of the university studies are biology, third world studies, audiovisual, cinema, business administration, medicine, chemistry, special education, psychology, fine arts, MA in human resources, translation, marketing, etc.

Professions also vary and are often irrelevant with studies. These include the owner of an ecological bakery, life coacher, graphic designer, doctor, university teacher, pharmaceutic, educator, artist, therapist, web designer, freelancer, etc. Interestingly, a few mothers have radically changed their careers, choosing professions much less stable and secure after essential life experiences, one of which is maternity.

> I worked for many years as a human resources manager in multinationals, but I always wanted to dedicate myself to therapy. Since I had the girls, it became more evident to me... then I had an illness, cancer, which made me decide to leave the company and dedicate myself to being a therapist... so I am now a Gestalt psychotherapist (IA10).

Family monthly income ranges from 1500 € to more than 3000 €. More specifically, among the interviewed, two families gain 1500 € to 2000 €, three 2500 € to 3000 €, and five more than 3000 € per month.

Although the majority can afford this and even a more expensive school for their kids, there are a few exceptions that attribute such an important meaning to school choice that they prioritize it finding solutions when necessary, from giving workshops at school in exchange for a discount to limiting leisure time activities. However, the major presence of wealthy families may also be problematic, regarding kids' demands and their management, along with consumeristic values transmitted when they compare their material realities to their peers' and ways of living with frequent trips abroad. Among the typical destinations are European or South American cities in which family members live and even more distant ones such as Malaysia, Thailand, or Jamaica. What is more, the choice of the school for many of them is an extra activity that completes the homeschooling they are practicing. Such an example is Andromeda, whose parents, for example, want her to become a scientist or a judge. In such cases, this type of education is clearly viewed as a means of social reproduction.

Family housing varies as well, and houses are located both in the municipality and in other neighborhoods of Barcelona and its provinces, with areas ranging from 70 m^2 to 230 m^2. Sometimes they are rented while many times they are bought. It is also widespread that the family already owns a house in another neighborhood or city they decide to rent or sell.

Last, parents' personal, educational experiences might influence, in some cases, their choices regarding their kids' education. Interviewed parents have attended public, private, or publicly-funded private schools, some of them religious, among which many alternatives at their time. Some of those experiences were in Barcelona and others, both in Spain and abroad, while many parents have more than one experience. In general, we can divide their experiences into three categories: positive, negative, and mixed.

Positive experiences are built upon the pedagogy followed in the schools and parents' memories of their social life in it. A few attended schools which they consider alternative, for that time and for now, belonging, for instance, to the CEPEPC[272], characterized by the lack of judgment and excessive structure, experimentation, and openness. At the same time, although many of this

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[272] Collective of Schools for the Catalan Public School.

category have bad experiences at an academic level, what seems to matter most is their sociability.

> They started it in 67 or so. It was part of a movement called CEPEC, schools that were cooperatives of parents or teachers... we had a garden, animals and we took care of them... there was a schedule and classes, and we had some books, but they were few... it was not free, but very alternative for that time and for now... it took the tradition of the Republic's schools. When I was little, many leftist teachers talked about politics in class, or sexuality.. one teacher I had was the most political; he was an anarchist, and he explained all his ideas (IA1).

Negative experiences include memories of learning useless information and skills, authoritarian relationships, violence between teachers and students and among peers, and pedagogical approaches focusing on academic success.

> To me, so much rigidity, discipline, and demands only lead to having a bad time. This has to do not only with the school but also with my parents, and I think it has influenced how I have decided to educate my daughters because I have gone to the other side... we have tried to give them more hours of play so that they do not see school as a horrible obligation (IA10).

Last, a few parents' discourses regarding their own educational experiences are neither positive nor negative; their feelings are mixed. This might happen due to the different schools they have attended, or are their memories of the teaching staff and peer relations.

Political perspectives and identities vary as well, but the big majority of parents at Petxina are leftist. Some of them vote for leftist parties, some are independentists, while others do not feel identified with any, some are militant, whereas others share the ideas only. A few of them changed political ideas over the years, and many were introduced to them by persons belonging to their social networks. Last, one mother considers feminism and even her child-centered points of view defining her political ideas.

> I am angry with the whole political system.. it does not matter what label you put. Socialist, Communists left, right, center, it is all a prank.. if patriarchy does not change, man will always seek power.. something that Claudio Naranjo says is that we were all in a matriarchy, we passed to patriarchy, it is time to move to a childarchy.. where there is innocence.. we have a lot to learn from our children.. we think we can teach our children, but our children have to teach us a lot (IA3).

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Religious identities and practices also differ among parents. Many are atheist or agnostic, few are catholic, and some, mothers especially, explore their spiritual paths in a broader, even secular sense. Last, quite a few among them express their anti-church feelings openly due to its oppressive and commercialized character.

7.3.1 Birth and upbringing[273]

Regarding birth and upbringing, there is a similar variety among families. Many mothers have given birth at hospitals, while others have considered or opted for birth at home. Some keep working shortly after birth with the help of a 'mother of day' or kindergarten, whereas many prefer to get maternity leave. In any case, there are certain common aspects detected:

Attachment parenting: A considerable number of the interviewed parents follow attachment parenting or respectful / natural upbringing. This includes breastfeeding upon demand, co-sleeping, and baby-wearing. What is more, there are many times mothers' lifestyles bring them to such upbringing theories and practices, abroad or in Barcelona, which consequently define their educational choices and may introduce them to local parenting groups. For example, a mother joined the natural nurturing networking in England, according to whom "this leads you to lots of such people, it is a very natural evolution.. from natural birth to breastfeeding on demand and co-sleeping.. and those people are always interested in an alternative education" (IA1).

Nature and Instinct: Nature and instinct are central for many mothers, who highlight our mammal nature that contradicts our cultural habits. Based on books and their instinct, these mothers learn how to be mothers, creating a different model from the one inherited.

It should be mentioned that apart from their lifestyles, parents get introduced to such upbringing theories through books or blogs. There, they sometimes discover something that completely

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[273] DA: 2018/01/11, DA: 2019/01/16, DA: 2019/01/22, DA: 2018/02/05, DA: 2019/03/07, IA1, IA2, IA3, IA6, IA7 & IA8.

changes their points of view, while sometimes they also find the understanding and support they are lacking, which helps them make meaning of their points of view. Examples are Carlos González, Rebeca Wild, Dorothy Corty, Jean Leadloff, and Laura Bootman. These theories and practices have also gained popularity in Barcelona, making access to information a much easier task, as a mother argues comparing the local reality to her experience in Italy.

Having said that, parents do not depose the responsibility for their kids' education at school. Instead, they recognize the responsibility their role holds and see upbringing and education as a whole.

The choice of attachment parenting sooner or later is widespread but not the rule. It is interesting how parents who have not chosen the school because of its pedagogical proposal but because of problems faced in previous schooling experiences usually opt for a conventional upbringing. This can be seen in the words of a mother whose daughter is at Petxina because of her absenteeism from her previous school: "there are some parents who are so loving, respectful and available... I have not been... I love my daughters very much, but I scream, and I am quite normal... totally conventional" (IA8).

7.3.2 Support networks[274]

In no way have the relatives of the families influenced their choices regarding their kids' education. Most times, fathers do not agree with these choices either, sometimes keeping an indifferent attitude, while others, even conflicts are caused between the couple due to the lack of understanding or unwillingness to understand.

Besides, although this is not the case for uncles and aunts who might be in favor, many grandparents do not agree with the upbringing or educational choices and practices either. However, they do not intervene due to the limits the family marks, their respectful attitude, their distance from the family's residence, or a combination of the above. Most times, the certain opposition and lack of support do not affect parents, although it might cause them doubts and

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[274] IA1, IA2, IA3, IA4, IA5, IA6, IA7, IA8, IA9 & IA10.

insecurities, mainly related to kids' learning trajectories. Last, as time goes by, their opposition sometimes weakens, and there is a change of attitude.

Friends do not seem to influence or intervene in these choices either. For most of the interviewed parents who have chosen the school due to its pedagogical proposal, friends are divided into two categories. First, there are the ones they had before they became parents and got interested in this type of upbringing who do not understand the family's efforts and sacrifices for their kids' education or the education itself. Also, those they met in related networks share aspects of their lifestyles and points of view.

> Our friends are parents of the school, and it is very enriching .. I felt there I had nothing to learn from the people around me in Seville because we did not think the same, here I learn a lot by listening to my friends .. and what I like about the families I have met in Petxina is their variety. We are not all the same or think the same, but we all try to love, support, and listen to our children (IA).

Regarding in-school networks, although small family groups are created, it is rare that the parents' main support networks are from Petxina, something narrated by one interviewed mother only. It is essential to highlight that the specific family is one of the most committed to the school and has moved from Seville to gain access and is one of the few who live in the school's neighborhood. According to this mother, the support network she has created with a few other families from Petxina covers the lack of support from relatives due to the distance -either physical in our case or ideological-, and becomes her new family or tribe as she calls it.

> I have the feeling of a tribe, of having someone to count on.. sometimes a mom asks me to stay with her daughter, then I do... we help each other.. We are not all the same, and we do not all have the same opinion, but we all try to love our children, support them and listen to them, and there are moms that I take my hat off for the way they support their children (IA6).

If families have not consciously chosen the school and are simply there out of necessity, they do not seem to change their lifestyles or their networks. "Well, we have made friends here.. but I have not gone vegan, I watch soccer, and while I recognize that these are healthy habits, I haven't made any change" (IA9).

7.4 Parents go to school

    7.4.1 Before Petxina and decision-making[275]

Schooling experiences before Petxina vary and include public, private, or publicly-funded private schools, some conventional and others following alternative pedagogies, in Barcelona and abroad. The first category usually leaves these schools due to problems faced. On the other hand, families belonging to the second category make this decision because educational projects prove to be different than expected or after moving to another city.

Most times, kids have previously attended more than one school, either due to negative experiences or a change of family residence. A few parents started their kids' schooling at three years old due to ignorance about its optional character, similar to vaccines, according to a mother[276]. What is more, many have chosen another free private school for kids of 3-6 years old located in the same neighborhood with which -according to a six-year-old girl- Petxina is a family. The schools' directors, who have been known each other for many years, propose each other to interested families who have kids of relevant ages. Last, homeschooling families usually have no previous schooling experiences, but they have often attended or even organized groups of sociability with other homeschooling families.

Previous negative experiences might be caused due to problems in kids' social life, including conflicts, fights, and bullying, like in the example of a public quite alternative school based on projects. There, the kid was suffering 'in silence', according to the mother[277], because of the problematic peer interactions. This situation led her to conclude that what matters more is not the pedagogy but the people in it. Other times, problematic situations might derive from language barriers if the mother tongue is different from the language spoken at school.

Moreover, many negative experiences are linked to the pedagogies followed, which, according to parents, are based on obedience, authority, adultcentrism, homework, exams, punishments, and

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[275] DA: 2018/03/16, IA1, IA2, IA3, IA4, IA5, IA6, IA7, IA8, IA9 & IA10.
[276] IA2.
[277] IA1.

parental absence. In alternative public schools, there might be new teachers who choose certain practices despite the school's line or theory might not correspond to practice, as a few mention.

Families who are at Petxina due to kids' problems and not because they consciously chose the school for its pedagogy have similarly faced negative experiences but for different reasons such as absenteeism or conflicts with the school's staff.

The process of decision-making that leads families to Petxina differs depending on the family. Some already know the school's existence due to their friendship with *Antón*, while others listened to him talking on the TV. Some learn about the project from social networks, especially if they belong to parenting groups and/or have alternative lifestyles, while others attend the neighboring school for their preschool education, in terms of which Petxina is recommended as a posterior option. Also, the Internet is a common way parents discover Petxina since it is one of the few homologated free schools registered on popular websites such as Ludus.

Most parents make their final decision upon visiting the school, usually after having visited others as well. Distance is never an obstacle to parents who either move to the neighborhood for it or travel from other regions every day, while the neighborhood's non-central location and safe environment sometimes even contributes to the decision.

The first day at Petxina is most times in terms of a personal interview with *Antón*, conducted in a rather informal way, and during which references in psychoanalytical and sociological theories are made but not much is explained about the pedagogical project in practice. Less frequently, parents might first visit the place in terms of its open doors.

During this first visit to Petxina, most families pay attention to what ultimately makes them choose the project: the general ambiance, open spaces with much light and without heating, wooden furniture, the option of parental presence, and the friendly, trustworthy teaching staff.

7.4.2 Separation from kids[278]

Parents are welcome at Petxina regardless of time since it is a space for kids and their families. As it is not considered that kids have to adapt themselves to something, there is no 'adaptation period', and parents are always welcome at school if their working conditions permit it.

Therefore, there is no special line teachers follow for kids' adaptation. Nevertheless, it might be challenging in some cases, especially when there is no integration in a social group or when the ambiance of violence prevailing affects kids. Therefore, there are a few kids who do not want to stay alone and keep crying asking for their parents to stay, a problematic situation according to a few, like a mother who gives an example: "her little son who has been at Petxina for three years does not want to stay alone... and he is afraid to go by bike or scooter because one day they broke it... being afraid of going to your school is very strong, very sad" (IA1).

7.4.3 Parental presence and involvement[279]

According to Petxina's official webpage, parents' presence at school helps create a welcoming and familiar environment from which all kids benefit. Keeping in mind that kids' well-being and learning depend mainly on their experiences at home and with their families, Petxina wants a place of growth for children and their parents.

Although families are very welcome at school and their presence is considered vital, parents must consider what drives their presence there. The space is destined for children, and such presence must promote and encourage the child's activity, development, and learning instead of limiting it. Therefore, only when kids claim it and there is a necessity is it okay for parents to stay there for the time needed.

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[278] Petxina's official webpage, DA: 2018/01/10 & IA1.

[279] Dossier Inici de Curs 2017-2018, Petxina's official webpage, DA: 2018/01/08, DA: 2018/01/10, DA: 2018/01/11, DA: 2018/01/12, DA: 2018/01/19, DA: 2018/02/23, DA: 2018/03/09, DA: 2018/03/14, DA: 2018/03/21, DA: 2018/04/24, IA1 , IA2, IA3, IA4, IA5, IA6, IA7, IA8, IA9 & IA10.

There are certain parents, mothers mostly, who tend to stay for a longer time than others. Sometimes, during their stay, they observe their kids while reading or chatting with other parents, and sometimes, especially during lunch, they also interact with them. Last, they usually talk with the teachers as well or have individual meetings with *Antón*. Other family members also come less often than parents, such as grandparents or aunts/uncles.

I should mention that there is nothing similar to an AMPA at Petxina, where families are not organized in any association or group. This was not the case in the past when the school was still small and when parents used to be more implicated, doing weekly workshops every Friday. Nevertheless, the director uses a mailing list to communicate with them and a monthly meeting with families and him (although sometimes it gets canceled), which used to take place on a weekly level in the past. These meetings have an informative character; the director announces changes regarding Petxina, while parents' doubts or insecurities might also be expressed.

Some parents justify the low frequency of the meetings due to the large number of families currently attending the school or their tendency to complain. This is explicitly expressed by Teo, who has a double role as a father and a teacher: "from the beginning, parents were invited to participate, but they did not understand that it is necessary to participate in a positive way" (IA5).

Apart from some who either justify or do not care about it, most parents view this low parental participation and intervention negatively. According to a mother[280], whereas in the past, when Petxina was still small, and everybody knew each other, there was a feeling of family and home, it now reminds more of a typical school with parents participating less and knowing less of what is going on daily.

Having said that, although for some their working hours might be prohibitive for their participation, most consider the certain absence and lack of participation as the director's intention and fault. The same mother[281] explains that there has never been an announcement board or a space for parents. She then adds how *Antón* used to narrate about his experience as a

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[280] IA6.
[281] Ibid.

father at Pardal, where he was very present and where the more he asked for, the more the school reduced, admitting that he now does the same as a director. In other words, using his authority, the director sets strict limits to parents, reducing their space in the school and consequently their involvement, while attributing them responsibilities in case something does not function.

As a result, it is very common to meet his authoritative figure in parental discourses about their involvement as many of them point out the project's one-man character, limiting the space for collective decision-making and the project's horizontality. A mother explains her perspective from the meetings with him: "when someone raises their hand and says something critical, he ridicules them, laughing at the nonsense they just said .. or saying that the fault is in their house .. to him, the school is never to blame" (IA1).

At this point, it should be mentioned that there have been attempts of self-organization out of the school's contexts, but with no success due to most parents' lack of interest in participating. Trying to explain this tendency, and based on her unsuccessful attempts in the past, the same mother comments that this is a general tendency in society, being busy and finding it hard to manage our time. However, according to her, Petxina does not welcome families either, promoting individuality instead of collectivity (Ibid).

Although mothers often refer to maternity as a deep learning experience, this is not the case for their participation at Petxina, probably due to low parental involvement. Among the interviewed, only one mother did so; the committed I referred to before, who is also one of the few who live in the school's neighborhood. According to this mother, fellow parents teach her how to become a mother.

> I felt that I had nothing to learn from the people around me because we did not have the same opinion, but here I learn a lot... for example, sometimes I see that my children do not maintain the hygiene that I want and I get angry. And then I see my friend's children, with their dirty black nails... and she is calm. That teaches me because I think her children are much dirtier, and she does not get angry or force them to bathe. Well, maybe I have something to learn from my friend (IA6).

7.4.4 Parental perspectives[282]

When asked how they would characterize Petxina, interviewed parents use the words 'radical', 'free' and 'active' or compare it to other local schools of the past, such as the Modern School, in the case of a father. Many of them also refer to its Montessori pedagogy, the protagonism given to kids who create their learning process, free movement, a state of constant change, as well as mixing elements which make the task of describing it a rather hard one, as it can be seen in the following interview extracts. "I don't know.. it changes a lot the whole time. Active maybe.. it is complicated. Today I wouldn't call it a free school because there is no free movement. My kids say it is not a free school anymore" (IA6).

> We were talking about this the other day .. if I had to explain it to a person who does not know schools well, I would say a free school, because it is a word that is used more .. but I don't know if it is free, because children have the freedom to decide, live, active school .. there is a Montessori classroom, but it's not a Montessori school and its not democratic because not everyone decides.. I don't know; each year, everything changes (IA7).

Generally speaking, some parents value structure and school's late efforts to add some through Montessori and others value the exact opposite since they interpret these changes as aspects that limit kids' freedom of choice and movement.

Most positive aspects parents stress are related to kids' protagonism and the possibility to follow their interests and paces. They value, among else, kids' free choice and movement, the lack of authoritarian relations, homework, exams and pressure, the non-directive pedagogy followed by the pedagogical team, and learnings gained regarding handling conflicts and confrontations. Also, the flexible time structure, possibilities for exploration and learning given in the space outside, the variety of proposals related to art, the encouragement to express feelings and experiment, the acknowledgment of mistakes as lessons, the school's inclusive character to kids with disorders or marginalizing behaviors, its mixed and homologated character, aesthetic aspects like material used and spaces in general, the inter-generational character promoted, natural communication in various languages and the possibility of parents' presence at school.

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[282] DA: 2018/01/17, DA: 2018/03/09, DA: 2018/03/21, DA: 2018/04/24, DA: 2018/09/28, IA1, IA2, IA3, IA4, IA5, IA6, IA7, IA8, IA9 & IA10.

However, apart from the positive points parents mention, there are plenty of negative they highlight, especially those who have spent many years at Petxina, some of which other parents interpret as positive, and vice versa. Points mentioned frequently include social, pedagogical, and structural factors.

First of all, some parents negatively value the fact that kids are divided into fixed social groups, and there is no effort done to direct them and make them relate to others. Therefore, integration is not facilitated, and the feeling of belonging is non-existent in many cases. The permanent teaching staff is constantly changing, while essential skills and values are missing, such as solidarity and empathy.

According to most interviewed families, the environment is far from respectful with a lack of loving emotions and much aggressiveness and violence instead, both physical and emotional. This is directly connected to the lack of clear limits and consequences which, according to many, leads to a status of 'license' as seen in the examples given by a mother: "my son has told me there are children who hit, with no consequences... his conclusion is that talking is not useful... because they repeat... I have seen children putting their shoes full of mud on the table while I was eating" (IA6). Apart from such lack, the entrance of new kids with previous negative schooling experiences and families who do not "believe in this education"[283] is also mentioned quite often, along with negative influence from older kids to the younger.

Secondly, the freedom of choice given to kids and limited structure and control is often viewed as something they do not know how to handle, whereas other parents think there should be even more. This freedom, along with the few interesting proposals, is thought, by the first category, to push kids back from learning, a topic that also worries lots of parents since many students do not know how to read or write despite their old age. Their learning progress is not transmitted regularly, and communication between parents and the pedagogical team is limited.

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[283] IA6.

Such fears regarding learning paces and processes are often expressed in meetings with the pedagogical team. According to *Jan*, convinced families ask more things about kids' emotional state while those who have not chosen the school for its pedagogical proposal ask questions about concrete curricular learnings. However, as *Sofia* adds, such fears regarding learning paces increase in the 6th grade and are often expressed by convinced families who get to worry about such aspects as their kids grow[284].

Last, decisions regarding pedagogical aspects aiming to resolve problems often remind conventional schools, and there is much distance between theory and practice. Some parents consider the added time structure a negative aspect, while others would like it to be more. In any case, changes affecting Petxina worry the majority, partly due to the non-participatory character of decision-making and the director's central figure in such processes because parents feel like they are not listened to.

In general, while a few refer to positive aspects, most parents tend to focus on its negative points. What is more, it is interesting how those who have consciously chosen the school express their discontent more often than those who are there due to problems faced in other schools, who view Petxina more optimistically, since it covers their needs. We may see this in the example of a mother whose daughter had school absenteeism

> The school can respond to problems that the conventional school cannot.. through a homologated education because it is complicated when cases of unschooling are detected.. I think they do not know how to acompañar concrete difficulties, or at least how to communicate it. Nevertheless, the important thing is that my daughter is calm (IA8).

All the above are directly connected to parents' perspectives on the director and pedagogical team. Apart from two exceptions of a mother, who has been facilitated on an economic level, and a father who is also a teacher in Petxina, all the rest seem to coincide, considering that the director has excessive authority and power, limiting both parents' and teachers' participation in decision-making. Some mothers view such a figure as a symbol of patriarchy, while others regard Petxina as an experiment that serves *Antón's* daughters upon whom all changes depend.

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[284] IAT.

Last, although parents value the affective relationships between teachers and kids, they highlight the frequent lack of acompañamiento or problematic situation due to changes in the group, since the staff is not taken care of or into account. According to a mother: "kids are abandoned... the work done at the emotional level is very punctual, only when a serious conflict has to be resolved... the tools they have to accompany the child are minimal" (IA1).

What motivates families to choose alternative education for their kids' schooling differs significantly, but most discourses have something in common. A few mention what the school has to offer, such as its homologated character that protects them from legal problems and its pedagogy which, in theory, and according to them, is following the education given to kids by parents which aims to happy, integral people. Another frequent reason behind their choice is their opposition to the schooling system, which is outdated, prepared for the industrial era, and focused on the learning outcomes without respecting kids' different needs or abilities and without developing their critical spirit. Last, there are cases that motivation is exclusively related to bad experiences or conflicts in previous schools. Therefore, most argue that what they knew is what they do not want from their kids' schooling rather than what they do want.

Most parents' hopes of what this kind of education can bring are related to their kids. They hope that they receive love and respect in an environment where they are free to make their own decisions and be themselves without authoritarian relationships and adults' orders. Moreover, they hope that kids develop specific skills and values such as teamwork, self-regulation, and self-confidence. Although academic topics are not mentioned a lot, it is essential for some parents that the emotion and desire to learn does not get lost, the opportunity to choose what they learn according to their interests is given, and the innate capacity to learn that kids are considered to have is maintained. Besides, kids must learn how to relate to each other, set limits, make decisions for them and develop a critical spirit. Only in one discourse was society mentioned directly when the mother talked about both personal and social change which are interconnected.

> A school is a place designed for the industrial era that generates people who do not think for themselves, which serves the state so that we are all quiet and obedient. However, I do not want my children to be like that, nor society to be like that. For a social change to happen, there has to be a change in the families and how we educate our children first. The president of the government, thirty years from now, is now in a school... in the future,

if there were more schools like this, and more children educated like that, I want to believe that they could generate a social change... the system as it is now cannot get worse, any change will improve things (IA6).

Regarding kids' learning trajectories, most parents are not worried about them since they are either satisfied or indifferent due to their conviction that they learn what they need and when they need it. Doubts seem to be generated or increase in older ages when parents are unsure whether kids will adapt to the conventional schooling system. For some of them, doubts are also derived from teachers' lack of communication of such trajectories.

In any case, especially when practicing homeschooling, most parents recognize themselves as the main responsible actors for their kids' education without depositing such responsibility to school where kids are not expected to receive academic learnings. In these cases, some of whom attend Petxina to a lesser degree, like once or twice per week, it is very usual that parents offer kids many cultural resources.

> We keep doing the academic part at home in a very classical way. We try to spend as little time as possible and get the best results possible... and we practice the fundamental subjects, English, mathematics, Spanish, Catalan, and history. Learning is always parents' responsibility... many think that learning is the school's responsibility and this is a mistake that causes many tensions... because they ask something from the school that it cannot offer... school will teach if the child is willing to learn. If not, they cannot force you; parents can force you (IA5).

Academic activities are often acquired in a self-directed, experiential way, mostly at home, both when kids ask for them and after parents' proposals. Kids have vast learning possibilities out of Petxina, which might occur in spaces out of homes, such as museums, theatres, and libraries. Sometimes, private teachers are contracted, while a kid is registered to a high school in the USA that offers distanced learning. Therefore, kids do not learn at Petxina only; every space is a learning space, from their house to the park[285]. Instead, for some, Petxina is more like an extracurricular activity than their school.

Moreover, and although parents have no such intention, according to them, there are many times kids ask for and therefore practice activities out of school, mostly related to arts and sports such

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[285] DA': 2018/02/05, DA': 2018/02/26, DA': 2018/03/12 & DA': 2018/03/19.

as film studies, dance, tennis, martial arts, capoeira, field hockey, horse riding, mountain climbing, rugby, graffiti, etc. Last, many learn English out of Petxina, in language schools, with aupairs / private teachers through games, or when their parents talk to them in English at home, in case of bilingual families or those who have lived abroad.

I should mention that although families transmit kids a series of learning and home is considered the center of their education, there is an important resistance taking place by kids, which leads to contradictions. Examples of such resistance are their mentioned tendency to participate in free-time activities and their wish to use technology and indifference for open-air and manual activities. This leads parents to set limits in order to control what kids learn: "I have come to this type of education, and both he and his friends spend all day with mobile phones. So he has an hour per day which can spend at the computer, two hours on weekends" (IA6).

Kids' trajectories regarding their social life vary significantly and include both positive and negative experiences. In general, groups formed at Petxina are quite gendered, with kids from around the same ages, while others tend to socialize with different ages, too. If kids are not new in school, groups seem to be fixed and closed, whereas new kids explore more on a social level.

Although it has started to change lately, relationships generated are spontaneous and not directed by adults. A few parents consider this normal and positive, while others do not agree, thinking instead that teamwork in changing groups should be promoted. This latter category consists of those whose kids have had bad experiences, either due to conflicts or limited time spent at school and therefore lack of integration. Regarding conflicts, it should be mentioned that kids are mostly negatively affected by those related to power relationships and exclusion in their affinity group.

7.4.5 After Petxina

After completing the primary stage, kids are given the option to remain at school due to the secondary studies offered. However, for all the negative aspects mentioned above and especially for kids' lack of integration, many leave Petxina even before they complete their cycle of studies

and opt for different schools instead after their parents' intervention. In the case of conventional schooling after Petxina, most kids tend to adapt quickly to the different school's culture.

There follows an example of a family with two kids with entirely different experiences. It should be kept in mind that Rocio is a girl who has had conflicts and has experienced feelings of exclusion in Petxina, opposite to Haron, who had a stable affinity group

> Haron was at the local high school, and it was horrible; they were treated like numbers... there was much pressure... when kids from alternative schools go to high school, they take it more or less well... it is hard sometimes. However, they soon adapt to the rhythm of exams, studying, and everything.. but for him, it was a drama because he suffered a lot with homework. When he had to study, he procrastinated a lot... this generated many conflicts in the family. He used to skip school a lot, getting sick, or sleeping in the morning and arriving late... so in the third year, when Petxina opened the high school, I brought him here again.

> Rocio is not well here, she never wants to go.. so I am thinking of a Catholic school, one publicly-funded private that is very small so very home-like.. A mother of a girl who was in Petxina and went there told me about it... because last year she did not feel integrated into the group of girls, now she says that she feels very comfortable... they have homework to do. However, she says she is satisfied.. they have much confidence in the kids, they do not treat them as if they were delinquents, which is what happened in the high school where Haron was, where until one proves otherwise, they are guilty... it was a very jail-like environment... there they have their time to record their videos, their dances, their interests, and they are not very Catholic. . They understand that there are children of all religions, and when they study religion, they do it from a broad perspective... which I do not think is bad because it is part of society's culture and my children do not know anything (IA1).

All in all, there is no general rule about after-Petxina decisions and experiences, but there are two crucial factors. Regarding decision-making, parents usually ask their support networks or fellow parents from the school who have had to take a similar decision. As for kids' schooling experiences, they vary a lot, the same way as they do in Petxina, but they are also defined in a high degree by the same factor. Regardless of the pedagogy followed, they seem to be positive if there is a sense of belonging in an affinity group, otherwise negative.

7.5 Discussion

Petxina is a homologated private alternative school of primary and secondary education that is

very connected to Pardal because it is an educational project born out of a (wealthy) family who used to attend the school. Its pedagogical proposal is not clear. Not only due to the pedagogical syncretism that defines it but also because of the constant changes.

What is clear is that there is a variety of alternative pedagogical proposals applied and that the pedagogical project is liquid. Through time, especially during the school year 2017-2018, significant changes took place that transformed Petxina. From a free school where kids could move and choose what to do with no adult intervention, it became a semi-Montessori school, with compulsory Montessori hours in the daily schedule. But even this way, and although the official curriculum guides the learning proposals, certain aspects remain stable.

No official school books are used while the environment is equipped with varied learning material and given the role of 'the teacher'. Knowledge is perceived holistically, and education is based on experiential learning and kids' interests, as tutors prepare social groups' timetables according to them. Students' paces are respected, and there is frequent contact with nature since the outdoors is considered as the most important classroom where kids spend much of their time and where they have the chance to interact with animals, such as the dogs of the management team, while excursions are organized on a weekly level. To this, Petxina's architecture contributes, permitting the connection between spaces. Tutors have the role of companions rather than transmitters of knowledge.

However, if we think upon the practices and discourses described in the previous ethnographic sections, there are a series of challenges and contradictions faced, which partly lead to the changes mentioned. The first has to do with learning. While the outdoors is considered the space where most of it happens, there are worries among the adult members of the educational community regarding kids who spend all day outside and never enter the school's modules. This is reflected in tutors' and families' discourses, many of whom become worried about learning results more and more as years go by. In other words, kids, in theory, are capable of choosing what to learn, where, and when, but in fact, there are other expectations that remind of the ones found in any 'conventional' school, as they are made to follow a schedule when they keep not entering the modules. The second has to do with the tutors. The way they apply the pedagogical

proposal differs and depends on each of them, and there is no single way of setting limits or dealing with conflicts. At the same time, many are not committed to the project, perceiving their work as a temporary job instead and often complaining about the time they must devote to it out of their shifts. The relations between them are not always friendly, and there is a lack of communication. Also, the relatively high teacher-student ratio, double than of most free schools, makes acompañamiento a challenging task. Last, changes are frequent as they come and go, and while this sometimes has to do with their compromise, another factor should be discussed, the management team, which calls us to think upon a major topic of contradictions.

On power and limits

Transformative potentials are not absent from Petxina. Although most families do not consider social change as the primary motivation for their school choice, critical discourses are present in books that kids may find in the library and read, films projected, and spontaneous conversations in daily school life. Expressing political ideas is acceptable, and conversations regarding social issues sometimes arise from kids or the teaching staff and collaborators. In some cases, they even lead to activities such as the excursion to a squat or the feminist protest. The militant leftist youth of the director also contributes to the transmission of critical ideas through his informal conversations with kids. Nevertheless, his role does not seem to help in this direction in general terms.

The director symbolizes authority in Petxina. His power is unquestionable and removes any possibility for horizontality. He is the ones who decides, a fact about which the whole educational community is aware. Teachers and parents have little power. While they may express their opinion, they never have the last word, while they are often attributed responsibilities regarding the school's problematic functioning. Instead, the only ones who take part in decision-making processes seem to be his wife and his daughters, who also happen to be students in the school. Therefore, meetings are not an attempt for horizontality but a vehicle of transmission, a way that the management team can announce their decisions.

As parents, kids are conscious of the director's authority, contrary to teachers who have limited if none. As a result, only when he is around or intervenes is there obedience to limits which are otherwise usually transgressed. Despite this, teachers often intervene to remind them of the limits when kids skip compulsory activities, arrive late, disturb activities running, fighting, and yelling in modules, exercise verbal and physical aggression, sit on the furniture, play during meetings, leave their trash, climb in dangerous sites, or even leave school escaping through the main door. The glass doors permit total vigilance, but kids develop strategies to get away from the adults' eye and control (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]), mainly using outdoor spaces. Limits are there, but they are rarely respected. Many kids, on a daily level, rather consciously transgress them.

Sometimes, peers who have embodied them remind the rest. Whether kids embody or resist limits has to do, to a considerable degree, with their families' motivation behind their school choice. Although some have chosen Petxina for its pedagogical proposal, many use it as an alternative to conventional schooling after problems faced there. Therefore, kids who experience discontinuity between home and school culture are often those showing resistance.

In any case, the most effective way of obedience is teachers' warning that they will tell the management team. Along with the little teachers' authority, another important reason is the absence of punishments or consequences. Apart from one 'asemblearian' meeting where kids had to stay longer as a consequence of their disobedience and changes that happen in social groups when peer pressure is thought to cause disobedience, there are generally no consequences of their acts which leads many parents and teachers to worry about the lack of respect or license prevailing Petxina. I should mention that kids' resistance is shown not only towards certain limits but also to the school's culture in general, as they often develop disrespectful or competitive attitudes.

On space and school culture

Petxina's aesthetics is very different from conventional schooling spaces. The modules that correspond to the traditional classrooms surround a big country house, the director's family residence; a symbol that materializes his power and authority, attracting kids' curiosity due to its

non-accessibility. Inside the modules, spaces are carefully designed, decorated, and equipped with wooden furniture and pedagogical material. Exterior spaces are similarly carefully designed, with a big garden in the shape of a mandala and corners of dense flora.

But school culture translated in spaces is not collectively produced; teachers and kids have no part in it. The management team chooses every single aspect, making frequent changes as well by removing and adding expensive material, while staff is contracted to take care of the school spaces, from the gardener to the cleaner. Such decisions, linked to the management team's social class, give Petxina an elitist aesthetic character and incidentally transmit consumerist values (Spindler, 1987 [1967]); Wolcott, 1982; Soto, 2021). At the same time, they limit possibilities for space appropriation and the development of the sense of belonging.

On community and belongingness

Therefore, in this context, belongingness is limited to one's affinity group, which is pretty stable. The chances for interactions among all ages are many and collaboration is promoted through the open architecture and flexible schedule. But the use of peers and modified self-pacing in this case do not lead to experiences of participatory democracy, as Giroux and Penna (1979) propose, and solidarity is usually shown towards one's affinity group. At the same time, conflictive and disrespectful attitudes are more than frequent towards other peers. Affinity groups define kids' decisions and motivation for learning activities, spaces chosen, even the level of obedience. Aware of its importance, the pedagogical team sometimes experiments with social groups to facilitate cultural transmission but still lets kids be with their closest peers. Social groups are fixed to a big degree, and teachers do not intervene in such dynamics, integration is not facilitated, and some kids are left with no affinity group. These alienated kids (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]) often get excluded and self-exclude themselves in daily life, find it hard to separate from their parents, and seem to have negative schooling experiences in general.

Therefore, a sense of belonging and bonding is limited to one's, usually small, affinity group and community building is not reinforced. In many cases, these relations are influenced by parental networking, which is limited, and affinity groups are few. The ones existent are based on their

'alternative' shared culture with similar lifestyles, upbringing, and education in its core, and sometimes replace their family and cover the lack of support from first-degree relatives due to distance, either physical or cultural. Nevertheless, as kids, this happens in small groups with no main network, while parents do not experience a sense of belonging to a broader community due to various factors.

First, it is partly connected to the motivations behind their school choice. Families who have chosen the school for its pedagogical proposal tend to have low parental involvement. They do not perceive school as a learning space for themselves or space to develop a support network. This observation also applies to families who have consciously chosen the school but view education as their responsibility exclusively and Petxina as an extracurricular activity, some of whom are homeschoolers. Second, parents' residence is another factor, as most families live in other parts of Barcelona and its provinces, and the time spent at Petxina is the only chance for socializing.

Also, parental involvement, although encouraged in theory, is not fostered by the school. Families, even those who are more implicated or want to, are present during arrivals and exits and sometimes lunch when they talk with teachers, a possibility they seem to appreciate. However, meetings among them or with teachers are not frequent, and there is no parental association or space given to families who perceive the school environment as unwelcome. As with teachers, the management team sets strict limits to parents, reducing their space in school and consequently their involvement while attributing responsibilities to them if things do not function well.

The last issue we shall discuss in terms of this section is diversity and inclusion. As a private school, Petxina is chosen mainly by a similar population regarding their socioeconomic profiles, and there are no working-class families. In this sense, one would expect that there would be no diversity. But there is. Not only on a cultural level as not all families share the same home culture but also because of the many kids diagnosed with disorders and developmental or psychological issues. The pedagogical project might provide these kids with an important space to explore their interests, respecting each individual with their particularities. However, despite the many

benefits diagnosed kids experience, we could not say that the school is prepared to receive them as there is much aggression and violence daily, sometimes directed to them and others deriving. An example of such failure was the ultimate expulsion of the conflictive student diagnosed with a psychotic disorder, even after the hire of a psychologist to support.

To sum up

All in all, Petxina is not just an alternative private school. It is one of the few alternative schools, during the course 2017-2018, which provide official secondary education too. Its homologated character attracts families from various parts of Barcelona and Spain who either look for a pedagogical project that is not restricted to primary education and families who face difficulties in the official school system.

Although critical in many aspects, it cannot be considered a project aiming at social transformation for a series of reasons. The main ones are two. First of all, the authority of the management team that functions as an obstacle to any horizontality attempt. What is more, values contrary to the pedagogical project are often transmitted and acquired, and the sense of belonging is weak, opposite to individualistic tendencies that frequently develop.

Both aspects may shed more light if we consider the lack of ritualization. There are no specific collective rituals in Petxina, and kids have developed one only, Petxina awards, a differentiating one (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006). There is no fixed time structure, neither instances when the whole educational community gets together. Under these circumstances, community building is a challenging task, and the sense of belonging is limited to very few closed groups. Nevertheless, despite all these contradictions and even more observed, there are essential aspects worth to be stressed, such as the effort for an inclusive school that welcomes non-normative kids often marginalized in the conventional school system.

THIRD PART: COMPARATIVE RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

8. Comparative Results

Based on our conclusions from the ethnographic parts we saw, we may now detect a few similarities and differences among the three schools studied. The first set is related to the criteria of their choice; all follow alternative pedagogies, but their institutional nature differs as they are private, public, and self-organized.

To facilitate the reading of the rest discussed, I have divided them into smaller sections based on our categories of comparative analysis: a) the pedagogical proposal, b) power relations, c) belongingness and d) transmission and learning. Therefore, I will first start with the intentions before I reveal aspects of both intentional and incidental nature that will help us reflect over the research questions and reach our objectives. Then, a concluding section will follow that attempts to explore elements with transformative potentials.

Since this chapter aims to discuss aspects already discussed previously but this time through a comparative lens, I will not refer to details or specific examples. I will instead use the theoretical framework to explore each section, keeping in mind that they are all interconnected. More specifically, we will look at the perceptions over education with the help of Velasco and Díaz de Rada (2006) and Soto (2021), before we look at power relations. Horizontality and hierarchy will be examined mainly based on Brint's (1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006) arguments regarding the organization of time and space, cultural compression (Spindler, 1987 [1967] as cited in Soto, 2021) and strategies developed by students to weaken control (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]).

Then, we will focus on material dimensions; space and school cultures as revealed through the hidden curriculum (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). In terms of this attempt, I will pay attention to processes of both intentional and incidental cultural transmission with the help of Spindler (1987 [1967]), Wolcott (1982), and Soto (2021). For the following section regarding belongingness we will return to the organization of time and space (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006), and focus on the role of rituals based on Brint (1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006) and Bernstein (2003 [1975]). We will also explore community building and the creation of affinity groups in school contexts

considering the pupil's role involvement (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). But I will also attempt to expand such aspects on a family level, stressing school choice, parental involvement, and the differences between those choosing the schools because of their pedagogical proposals and LSCD families (Doucat, 2011; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bernstein, 2003 [1975]).

After that, we will stress some important aspects regarding transmission and learning (Spindler, 1987 [1967]); Wolcott, 1982; Soto, 2021), using Bernstein's (2003 [1975]) concepts of framing and classification, keeping in mind resistance (Willis, 1981; Wolcott, 1981) and connecting our observations to the broader social context. Finally, I will conclude with a reflection upon transformative potentials and, more specifically, the concept of commons (Pechtelidis and Kioupkiolis, 2020), autonomy and direct democracy (Castoriadis, 1978; Giroux and Penna, 1979).

8.1 Pedagogical Proposal

Shared aspects

- All three educational proposals apply various alternative pedagogies, although two out of three have Reggio Emilia and Montessori as primary inspirations.

- Due to the alternative proposals to conventional schooling, they all face challenges. One of them is the extra working hours the teaching staff needs out of their daily shift.

- They focus on the child and view it as an integral human being and an active agent.

- They encourage the presence of families.

- Individual learning paces are respected.

- Learning is holistic and experiential.

- Contact with nature is essential and much time is spent outdoors.

- There is a focus on learning instead of teaching. The teacher is not expected to transmit knowledge but instead accompanies children on their learning journeys, providing the tools needed and supporting them emotionally.

- Educational responsibility is shared between parents and the pedagogical team, while most of the agents holding it are females.

- Intentional transmission still happens indirectly through learning spaces that are carefully prepared.

- There is specific curricular learning expected to be obtained by kids, especially maths, reading, and writing, and an imposition to work on it if kids do not do so by themselves. Such imposition is mainly connected to families' fears and insecurities regarding kids' adaptation to the official school system developed as years go by. Therefore, while the outdoors is considered a learning space and kids are responsible for their learning, learning expectations still exist and are similar to 'conventional' schools.

Table 18: Similarities regarding the pedagogical proposal

Syncretism of alternative pedagogies
Challenges, linked to (anti) institutional nature
Focus on children as integral beings and active agents
Encouragement of parental presence
Respect for learning paces
Holistic, experiential learning
Contact with nature
Teacher as a companion
Educational responsibility shared among teachers and parents, mostly females
Learning spaces and material as vehicles for cultural transmission
Learning results expected

Source: Own elaboration

Differential aspects

- Pardal and Petxina provide official education as the first one is public and the second homologated, whereas Trèvol is not considered a school, and families attending the project practice unschooling, an ilegal choice in Catalonia.

- Every educational project has a different history. While Petxina was born out of a wealthy family who used to attend Pardal, Pardal is a school created by nine female teachers and Trèvol a various families' initiative.

- Challenges faced and strategies developed to overcome them are different in each educational project and directly connected to their institutional nature.

- Although there are slight changes in the pedagogical project of Pardal and Trèvol, changes in Petxina are constant and significant.

- The number of families in Trèvol is low, higher in Petxina and even higher in Pardal.

- The teacher-student ratio in Trèvol is low, higher in Petxina and even higher in Pardal.

- Teachers in Trèvol are committed to the project and apply the pedagogical proposal in similar ways, especially regarding setting limits and conflict resolution. The relations between them are friendly, and there is much communication. This is something it shares partially with Pardal, and a clear difference with Petxina, where how the pedagogical proposal is applied depends on each teacher, many of whom are not committed to it and among whom relations are not always friendly, and communication is limited.

- Trèvol is the only project among the three that perceives education as a vehicle for social transformation and acompas transmit political messages and anarchist values daily. Critical to hegemonic learning that is constantly transmitted incidentally out of school, they aim to intentionally unlearn this that goes against the project's values to facilitate learning of what is

intentionally transmitted. Petxina, on the other hand, allows the transmission of political messages, but that depends upon each member of the pedagogical team, while Pardal is considered to be neutral on a political level.

Table 19: Differences regarding the pedagogical proposal

	Trèvol	**Pardal**	**Petxina**
Official recognized school	No	Yes	Yes
Founders	Group of families	Group of teachers	Rich family
Challenges faced by	Pedagogical team, families and kids	Pedagogical team and families	Management team
Changes	Slight, slow	Slight, slow	Constant, significant
Number of families	Low	High	Medium
Teacher-student ratio	Low	High	Medium
Pedagogical team's commitment	High	Medium	Low
Political character	Critical	Neutral	Open

Source: Own elaboration

8.2 Power relations

Shared aspects

- Architecture and circular formulations facilitate both horizontality and vigilance in school's daily life.

- Educational responsibility is shared between the pedagogical team and parents. It is claimed when conflicts between home and school culture arise and assigned when something does not function well by both the pedagogical team and parents.

- There are power relations among teachers, between teachers and families, between teachers and kids, families and kids, among families and among kids.

- Limits, authority, and (dis) obedience are present in all schools, although in different degrees and differently expressed.

Table 20: Similarities regarding power relations

Horizontality and vigilance facilitated through space
Shared educational responsibility and negotiations
Power relations
Limits, authority, (dis) obedience

Source: Own elaboration

Differential aspects

There are essential differences among the educational projects regarding attempts for horizontality. We may look upon this question in schools' daily life on various levels.

- Trèvol, as a project aiming at social transformation, attempts horizontality through a hyper-organization with lots of assemblies and commissions. This way, power is distributed, and decision-making is collective on all levels. Pardal has a defined structure marked by the Catalan government, but there is still an attempt to include the whole educational community in decision-making through parental commitees and frequent meetings. In this sense, parents in the two educational projects educate themselves in collective self-organization processes. However, not all families participate in the same degree, for various reasons, thus creating hierarchies. This is evident in the case of Pardal and less frequent in Trèvol. Last, in Petxina, although there are meetings taking place, the management team has the last word about decisions.

- In Trèvol, there are weekly assemblies, and kids are allowed to influence decisions and learn how to make collective decisions. Pardal also holds meetings where kids may express themselves, but despite the freedom of choice and collective space given, they are not educated in assemblearian processes. Petxina's similar processes are almost absent on a collective level, with few exceptions that consist of assemblearian attempts with no success.

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- Parental involvement is also different among them. In Trèvol, the parental involvement is constant and expected. In Pardal, parents are welcome at school and encouraged to implicate themselves through a series of strategies like the possibility to enter, documentation, and meetings. Nevertheless, the educational responsibility inside the school walls falls on teachers; parents may only participate under certain circumstances; otherwise, their involvement gets limited. Petxina is where the parental involvement is relatively low and not encouraged either.

- In Trèvol and Pardal, there are many and specific limits and unwritten rules often reminded, which kids are expected to embody in time and which are thought to lead to a state of responsible freedom. In Trèvol, they are imposed by acompas, although some change through a slow process. Most have a non-negotiable character, but their necessity is explained whenever needed, whereas, in Pardal, they are usually reminded without explanation. In Petxina, limits are unclear to kids and the pedagogical team; they are instead changing and depend on the management team.

- There is a high directivity, control, and cultural compression by teachers, peers, and the space in Trèvol and Pardal to learn the school culture and proposed values. To impose limits, interventions in Trèvol frequently happen if attitudes appear that do not correspond to what is expected to be learned. Acompas all intervene similarly, expressing their feelings, asking questions, and avoiding judgments. Repeated expressions facilitate gradual obedience. In Pardal, this depends on the teacher and the period spent in the school combined with commitment. In Petxina, the pedagogical team intervenes in various, inconsistent ways, too, while the director's interventions are much more effective towards obedience.

- Despite the attempts for horizontality, adults' authority is still perceived by kids in school's daily life. Even though they are not figures of authority, kids perceive adults' control upon them due to the decisions they can make for them and the limits they set. While interventions in case limits are transgressed are used as a tool for dialogue, kids often perceive them as an exercise of authority. Authority is shared among all pedagogical team members in Trèvol, those committed in Pardal, while in Petxina, authority is concentrated in the management team.

- Not all kids and always respect the limits, learn the school's culture, obey the rules, accept control and perform their expected role. Instead, they develop resistance strategies to what is being transmitted, like performing their expected role when being watched or excluding themselves and going invisible. As Bernstein (2003 [1975]) would probably argue, kids in our cases -examples of invisible pedagogies- use exclusion to avoid the communication process and weaken control. Cases of disobedience exist in all three cases, with a higher frequency in Petxina where they are connected to a state of license, and a lower in Pardal and Trèvol where limits are more explicit and cultural compression is stronger. In all cases, students often get involved in processes of counter-school cultural production, both kids whose home culture matches the school culture and kids who experience a discontinuity.

- In both Trèvol and Pardal, there are 'alternative' evaluation methods and praise or rewards to kids who obey the rules and reproduce the school's culture, verbally and bodily. In Pardal, the evaluation also happens through documentation. At the same time, there are punishments called 'consequences' to those resisting. Consequences come after a few interventions and vary depending on the case. In Petxina, consequences are almost absent, which contributes to the state of license.

Table 21: Differences regarding power relations

	Trèvol	**Pardal**	**Petxina**
Parental participation in decision-making	High	Medium	Low
Kids' participation in decision-making	High	Medium	Low
Parental involvement	High	Medium	Low
Limits and rules	Clear, may change slowly	Clear, hard to change	Unclear, changing
Directivity, control, cultural compression	High	Medium	Low
Figures of authority	Pedagogical team	Pedagogical team	Management team
Disobedience and resistance	Medium	Medium	High
Evaluation: praise, rewards, and punishment	Common	Common	Uncommon

Source: Own elaboration

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8.3 Belongingness

Shared aspects

- Peer relations are promoted through spaces, architecture, and learning activities.

- Affinity groups are created among parents, often connected to those created among kids.

- Affinity groups define kids' motivation and interests.

- Sense of belonging is the most defining regarding how kids make meaning of their schooling experiences.

Table 22: Similarities regarding belongingness

Peer relations promoted through space and activities
Affinity groups of mutual aid among parents and kids
Affinity groups define kids' motivation to learn and interests
Belongingness defines schooling experiences

Source: Own elaboration

Differential aspects

- The daily incorporating rituals, language, shared symbols, and challenges faced in Trèvol strengthen the sense of belonging and community building. Similarly, in Pardal, they are strengthened through the daily ritualized practices, shared symbols, and challenges the educational community faced. On the other hand, Petxina's lack of rituals or symbolic elements, and challenges faced by the management team only, weakens the sense of belonging and community building.

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- Almost all families in Trèvol share a common culture. Their lifestyles, worldviews, and perceptions over upbringing, childhood, and education are similar and different from the hegemonic ones. This is also true for Pardal and Petxina families who have chosen the school due to its pedagogical proposal. For them, upbringing and education are not separated. School is sometimes viewed as an expansion of the home, and members of the educational community as an expanded family. Besides, birth-giving brings not only children to life but also the mother as motherhood is often lived as a profoundly life-changing learning experience.

However, there are some who have not chosen the schools for their pedagogical proposals. In Petxina, what brings these families to the school are their previous negative experiences in the conventional schooling system and, of course, their ability to cope with the financial requirements. In Pardal, on the other hand, the proximity is what brings these families to the school. In both cases, schools are not affinity places for these families who are either excluded, resisting their integration, or both.

- In Trèvol, a closed, culturally similar social network of mutual aid is created, divided into smaller affinity groups. In Pardal, culturally similar and closed parental mutual aid networks are also created, divided into small affinity groups based on shared cultures. In Petxina, parental networking is limited, and few culturally similar affinity groups are created.

Table 23: Differences regarding belongingness

	Trèvol	**Pardal**	**Petxina**
Daily incorporating rituals	Yes	Yes	No
Shared symbols	Yes	Yes	No
Community building language	'trèvolis'	'comunitats'	No
Challenges faced by	Educational community	Educational community	Management team
Parental cultural similarity	High	Medium	Medium
Belongingness	High	Medium	Low
Mutual aid among all	Yes	No	No

Source: Own elaboration

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8.4 Transmission and learning

Such alternative educational proposals face many challenges, but we shall focus on a major one: the discontinuity between school and home cultures and the broader dominant culture. As they try to educate children -in some cases adults too- in values that are not hegemonic in our western societies, they have to face a series of contradictions as conflicts arise between what is being transmitted in daily school life and out of it.

The educational community of Trèvol is aware of such challenges regarding both incidental cultural transmission and acquisition. With society bombing with capitalist, neoliberal values based on patriarchy, individualism, competitivity, and consumerism, the project offers a space of counter-manipulation that, according to Diaz (1978), is essential for developing a critical spirit. Examining the project's hidden curriculum, we observe that framing is strong in order for this to happen (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). Interventions frequently occur in specific ways that derive after collective self-reflection and stand against the transmission of incidental learning acquired in other societal contexts.

Trèvol is a space for unlearning for adults as they fight against the embodied learnings they might incidentally transmit. It is also a space for learning. Learning to live in a community, with alternative values. In this attempt, despite the focus on learning instead of teaching, there is a constant intentional transmission, coming both from acompas´ interventions and the controlled environment and pedagogical material that becomes another teacher, directing 'self-directed' activities.

I referred to Trèvol only, because this process happens in such a degree, coherency, and commitment by most adult educational community members. This attempt is also met in the other projects, although to a lesser degree, partly because of the large number of implicated agents and more differences among them that cause discontinuity between some family contexts and the school culture.

	Trèvol	**Pardal**	**Petxina**
Continuity between school and dominant culture	No	No	No
Continuity between school and home culture	Most	Some	Some
Framing	Strong	Medium	Weak
Parents as learners	Yes	Sometimes	No
Adults as (un) learners	Yes	Sometimes	No

Source: Own elaboration

8.5 Final thoughts, or on transformative potentials

In this section, I shall try to summarize some of the critical comparative results mentioned before that I consider essential for transformative potentials to exist and develop. For this reason, I will create two final comparative tables that will help us share some last thoughts. The first refers to transformative potentials found in all schools, while the second focuses on the differences. First, I will stress the educational projects' daily life with children and the pedagogical team as protagonists, and the wider educational community afterward when referring to all adults and children involved. Moreover, I will underline the cases where, according to my judgment, transformative potentials are found. After each table, I shall devote a few lines to discuss such transformative potentials.

Table 25: Similarities regarding transformative potentials

Focus on children as integral beings and active agents
Holistic, experiential learning
Discontinuity between school and dominant culture
Contact with nature
Learning spaces and material as vehicles for cultural transmission

Source: Own elaboration

All three projects stand against adultism. According to Bell (1995), adultism refers to "behaviors and attitudes based on the assumption that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon young people without their agreement" (p. 1). In our cases, in Korczak's words, kids are

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seen as beings instead of becomings to be recognized as beings once they are adults (Korczak 2011, as cited in Mikros Dounias, 2018). Although there is authority, there is no abuse of such based on age, kids are not treated as inferior, and their needs and interests are respected. Learning is holistic and experiential, and there is an attempt that it is not defined by adults' expectations only. This is especially important if we consider that adultism is the first discrimination we experience in our lives (Mikros Dounias, 2018). Therefore, and despite the challenges set as children may sometimes abuse the lack of adultism and become 'the oppressor', adultism is essential to be overcome if we want to build a society where horizontal relations prevail, and this is where alternative schools may contribute the most.

Another aspect I would like to stress is the discontinuity between school culture and dominant culture in our societies. Despite the challenges and contradictions already discussed in the ethnographic sections, alternative cultures emerge built on values like cooperation and gender equity that, at least to a degree, reject those that uphold capitalism and patriarchy.

Also, there is frequent contact with nature, which is central in many parental worldviews. Through excursions and time spent outside, children explore the natural world, and this is highly important not only for their development. There is another essential political element among the reasons. In a world where exploitation of natural resources for economic benefit is constant and damaging for all species, reconnection to (our) nature and learning to respect it is a profoundly political and necessary decision.

Last, as there is a transition of focus from teaching to learning, carefully prepared learning spaces become the teacher and their preparation a technique of cultural transmission. Therefore, children learn how to explore them and learn on their own, with many possibilities for collective exploration and peer learning. Being active agents for their learning holds transformative potentials. Despite the disguised directivity already discussed regarding what is transmitted, children learn to participate in what affects them instead of others making decisions for them. And this direct involvement transforms schools into instances of commoning education in Pechtelidis' and Kioupkiolis' words (2020); a precondition for a democratic society that needs a direct involvement in collective life.

Table 26: Differences regarding transformative potentials

	Trèvol	**Pardal**	**Petxina**
Political character	Critical	Neutral	Open
Kids' participation in decision-making	High	Medium	Low
Limits and rules	Clear, may change slowly	Clear, hard to change	Unclear, changing
Framing	Strong	Medium	Weak
Pedagogical team's commitment	High	Medium	Low
Daily incorporating rituals	Yes	Yes	No
Community building language	'trèvolis'	'comunitats'	No
Number of families	Low	High	Medium
Reasons for school choice	Pedagogical proposal	Mixed	Mixed
Parental participation in decision-making	High	Medium	Low
Parental involvement	High	Medium	Low
Challenges faced by	Educational community	Educational community	Management team
Shared symbols	Yes	Yes	No
Continuity between school and home culture	All	Some	Some
Parents as learners	Yes	Sometimes	No
Adults as (un) learners	Yes	Sometimes	No
Mutual aid among affinity groups	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mutual aid among all	Yes	No	No
Belongingness	High	Medium	Low
Inclusive character	Low	Medium	Medium

Source: Own elaboration

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The first differences we may detect and reflect on each educational project's transformative potentials are in the pedagogical proposal and its realization in the school context. First of all, only Trèvol is critical both in theory and in practice. Its non-homologated, alegal character, and choice of a squatted social center as the building to host it is a clear political positioning to start with and a significant differentiating factor with the other schools. The educational project resists the very essence of schooling, and this resistance is a source of both risks for the educational community members, and coherency as the commitment is major. Just like Snyder's (1971) proposal, the pedagogical team does not disconnect education from politics. Acompas bring and take advantage of opportunities brought to school's daily life to stress social aspects. They constantly transmit values necessary for a feminist, horizontal, emancipated, autonomous, and free society, and, in case the educational community is affected, they all take part in social mobilizations.

On the other hand, Petxina has an open political character. While it is true that discussions and activities take place and both the management team and most tutors have critical points of view, it is not something at the core of the pedagogical proposal. Last, Pardal is considered to be a politically neutral school and kids disconnected from the political sphere. I argue that not only should we view kids as active cultural agents, but also political, who have the right to understand the social context they find themselves in. However, what all projects fail to bring into the discussion is historical memory. Almost absent from schools' daily life, history is a necessary tool, according to my opinion, to reflect upon the present, and inform the social imaginary with other possible realities.

Kids' participation in decision-making is another important aspect. Participating in the commons and learning to make collective decisions is a process in which we educate ourselves, and there is no reason to wait for it in adult life. Therefore, Trèvol's weekly assemblies are a proposal that best promotes direct democracy and autonomy (Castoriadis, 1987). This is connected to limits, rules, and framing.

While rules are sometimes associated with oppression, they are, in fact, necessary for any community to exist and to reach a state of collective responsible freedom. But living in the

representative government system, we are disconnected from them, as those making decisions for us set the rules by which we may live too. Therefore, it is vital that in school settings, rules match the needs of the educational community and children are aware of the reasons that justify their existence, that they can imagine that making our own rules to manage our co-living is possible. A clear set of rules that are reminded whenever needed, explained to kids, and open to changes after the community's decision is what Trèvol proposes and best fits what a transformative pedagogical project would do. This does not mean that kids always follow the rules. As we saw in all three cases, kids show resistance to them, as they also show to the values transmitted and school cultures, reaffirming Wolcott's (1981) argument that 'we should not equate what cultural transmitters attempt to transmit with what cultural acquirers are acquiring' (p. 104). And this is also important, despite the challenges it brings; as for a free society, collective disobedience and resistance are necessary.

In addition, although in the free and autonomous society we aim to framing should be weak as in Petxina, Trèvol's strong framing is essential to fight hegemonic incidental learning and transmission under the current circumstances. While Bernstein (2003 [1975]) proposed that an empirical study of invisible pedagogies would reveal a strong classification within relatively weak frames, we came upon strong classification and framing. But in our case, framing is not related to hierarchical educational relations and adultist behaviors; it is instead a technique of counter-transmission. Obedience, from this perspective, loses its negative connotations to become another precondition for social transformation. The comparative research of Barry, Bacon, and Child (1993 [1957] as cited in Soto, 2021) is interesting to reflect upon this topic. After studying the socialization of boys and girls in seventy different cultural contexts focusing on what adults defined as fundamental values, the authors argued that about 90% shared a preference for obedience, regardless of the learner's sex. This is the case in both permissive and authoritarian environments, including schools, homes, and leisure time. We agree with Soto (2021) that it is necessary to be cautious so that we do not establish a direct connection between obedience and fear and between critical, reflective educational practices and freedom. For all the above to happen, the pedagogical team's commitment, higher in Trèvol as expected, is crucial; only through collective reflection over practices, and communication among those who hold

educational responsibility, are they possible. This way, teaching may transform from a mere job to part of one's activism.

Another set of differences in school settings are related to community building and belongingness, a vital feeling for kids' experiences, as we already saw. Both in Trèvol and Pardal and contrary to Petxina, daily incorporating rituals develop a sense of belonging (Brint, 1998 as cited in Fischer, 2006; Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). These rituals are created by and for the educational community. Participation in them offers members a shared identity that is strengthened by the particular language code used, such as 'communities' in Pardal when referring to age groups or 'trèvolis' in Trèvol when referring to kids. Therefore, along with the previous aspects discussed related to participation, there are higher chances that kids feel part of a community and committed involvement occurs instead of alienation (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]). Learning to live in a community is essential and a realistic alternative to the contemporary individualistic way of life. In the words of a graffiti on a squatted social center's walls in Barcelona, "Making the struggle a continuous rupture with others is not radical. What is radical and subversive is to build something collective in a world specifically designed for isolation, loneliness, and disenchantment".

Figure 34: Graffiti on a squatted social center's walls in Barcelona

Source: Personal photographic collection

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Now let's turn to the second set of differences that refers to both school and non-school settings. Before we start, I should mention two defining differences that deeply affect them; the number of families and school choice. While the number in Trèvol is relatively low, it is higher in Petxina and even higher in Pardal. I mention this because instances of direct democracy and participation are easier to be reached in small communities, as the more the people, the more the opinions. Of course, this does not mean that it is impossible in bigger ones, fortunately; it instead may be achieved through different techniques and much more effort. School choice is another key aspect that we should keep in mind. Although all families in Trèvol choose the educational project due to its pedagogical proposal or, in other words, due to cultural affinity, some families in Pardal choose the school for its proposal and others because they live in the neighborhood. Similarly, some families in Petxina choose it because of the pedagogical proposal and others due to problems faced in conventional schools. I first refer to these two aspects as they influence the rest that follows.

Parental participation in decision-making and parental involvement in the project is high in Trèvol, promoting horizontality, autonomy, and direct democracy based on assemblearian processes. Responsibility is collective, and everybody's word counts. In Pardal, participation and involvement of families are medium, mainly realized through their organization in associations and committees, normally consisted of committed families who have chosen the school for its pedagogical proposal. It is promoted to the degree that it benefits the school and is limited by the pedagogical team as years go by and conflicts occur. Last, families in Petxina have both low involvement and low participation in decision-making. This is partly a result of the fact that not all parents are committed to the pedagogical proposal and the limitations set by the management team. I should also mention that challenges often occur in alternative educational projects, mainly due to their institutional or anti-institutional character. While in Pardal and Trèvol, they are faced by the whole educational community, in Petxina, this is done by the management team exclusively.

Facing challenges is essential not only because of the potentials it holds regarding participation in the commons but also because difficulties contribute to reinforcing communities, as we were able to observe. Community cohesion and belongingness are important for a society based on

mutual aid and smashing individualism. In these terms, shared symbols, present in Pardal and Trèvol and absent from Petxina, are also important, offering the communities a shared identity. Community building is easier to be achieved in Trèvol partly due to the shared culture families have and the continuity between home and school culture. Parents and the pedagogical team perceive themselves as learners who have to unlearn what the social context teaches and educate themselves in alternative values and ways of living. This is especially important as a conscious change of mentality is a precondition for every transformative, revolutionary project. Such perceptions and shared culture are also observed in Pardal, although less frequently, and are almost absent in Petxina. This may be again related to the reasons behind school choice, the political character of the schools, but also parental involvement and community cohesion that are weaker there.

All the above are related to creating parental mutual aid affinity groups based on a shared culture that happens in all cases. However, only in Trèvol is there a broader network of mutual aid created among all educational community members, directly connected to the small number of families and their shared culture. Belongingness is, therefore, higher there, medium in Pardal and low in Petxina. What differentiates these two are the shared symbols and space for the parental involvement that Petxina does not have, opposite to Pardal. This sense of responsibility and belonging seem to mark how kids and families (the committed ones at least) perceive their schooling experiences. In other words, what everybody looks for and what results in positive experiences is belongingness to an affinity group of mutual aid.

However, the communities created, either small affinity groups or including all members of the educational project, are based on similarities. Inclusiveness is limited in all three cases, despite the value given and effort to be inclusive regarding learning paces. On the one hand, demands in Petxina and Trèvol exclude a big part of the population who cannot afford their participation in terms of money in the first case and both money and time in the second. In Petxina, however, there is an effort to welcome non-normative kids often marginalized in the conventional school system. On the other hand, socio-economic diversity is more present in Pardal but somehow ignored. Despite a few attempts, there is no systematic cultural understanding and exchange so that mutual aid and belongingness can expand beyond one's affinity group. As a result, LSCD

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families often exclude themselves and get excluded from the affinity groups created by the committed families. We could, therefore, observe what Doucat (2011) also did in another context; that parental involvement creates a group identity among some parents with similar profiles, while marginalizing LSCD families. At the same time, cultural superiority is sometimes expressed by the latter, who differentiate themselves from the rest of society.

In the light of the social realities that surround the educational centers, non-directivity and respect of learning paces set important limits regading inclusion. Contrary to what Giroux and Penna (1979) propose, modified self-pacing does not facilitate participation and democratic processes in the classrooms, as such perception ignores the fact that children may access different socio-cultural resources. Focusing on the individual, this way, perpetuates social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) by the simple act of ignoring them.

At this point, it is interesting to reflect upon Spindler (1987 [1967]) and the second type of discontinuity he mentions, when different cultural systems than the established are introduced, and the aim is not to recruit new members in the current system, but into a system that does not yet exist. This, according to the author, is a process that produces conflicts as what is taught at school is irrelevant to home and community contexts. This is is the case for the families who do not agree with the schools' pedagogical proposals. But for those committed to them, the same school functions in the opposite way; it aims to reproduce the cultural system of their small 'alternative' communities (already different than the established), strengthen its cohesion, and recruit new members into it. Alternative schools might often stand against the dominant culture, but the culture they produce becomes dominant in school contexts, thus contradicting intentions for inclusiveness. However, such processes should not be equated to mere processes of dominant social reproduction, as members of the educational communities also show resistance through subordinate action and cultural production (Willis, 1981).

Nevertheless, while perceptions and shared cultures tend to form closed homogeneous social groups of mutual aid that could be described as 'urban tribes', the non-inclusive character we discussed and limited attempts to overcome it sets significant challenges regarding

transformative potentials. It is not a casualty that agents implicated in different alternative educational projects know each other.

I argue that for the social transformation we examine in this section, we need to explore the collective dimensions of existence. Ways of learning from each other and growing together in a community. But we also need to break the limits of the tribe, find ways of embracing and bridging our differences, fight inequalities and expand our mutual aid towards all. In other words, mutual aid is a precondition for social transformation but not enough. When asked about Kropotkin's contribution in an interview, Renaud Garcia (2021) answers that Kropotkin shows that mutual aid is not a real factor of evolution unless it is generalized beyond group boundaries, through the 'exchange of ideas between groups, the ability to draw inspiration from institutions created by other peoples, and the ability to modify and adjust the social and environmental conditions in which human groups live'. For the above to happen, I think that we must first broaden and politicize the concepts of education and culture. Only then will we be able to emancipate ourselves, inform our social imaginaries with another possible society that benefits both us and the other species, become autonomous and free.

9. Conclusions

This chapter presents the study's conclusions, mainly based on the previous comparative results, which are now selected and organized according to the research objectives and hypotheses. Then, I will briefly refer to the contributions of this thesis and some proposals for future work on the topic.

Regarding the **general objective** of this research, "*To make a descriptive, critical, empirical and comparative analysis of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia through an ethnographic approach to school and non-school settings*", I think it was done satisfactorily. I described the educational projects' pedagogical proposals and daily life and mentioned critical aspects of their history and internal organization. We saw how alternative relations are constructed and alternative values are transmitted and learned, while hierarchical relations and hegemonic capitalist values are also reproduced.

To understand such processes of cultural (re) production, I tried to take into account the various instances of resistance to what is being transmitted taken place and see the agents as active cultural producers. I also reflected upon the importance of the continuity between home and school culture and the social context's limitations that strengthen social reproduction, a fact best examined upon the light that our interest in families and non-school settings gave us. I also identified significant similarities and differences between the educational projects and schools regarding two broad key categories: power relations and belongingness, both important for social transformation and reproduction as they are connected to direct democracy, and autonomy, preconditions to reach an emancipated, free society.

The **specific objectives** that focus on certain aspects of the educational projects helped a deeper understanding and facilitated the comparative analysis.

The first general specific objective, "*To understand perspectives on education in the educational centers, document the formulation of their pedagogical proposals, and know the daily reality and educational practices where they occur,*" was examined in detail. Regarding the first part of the objective, we saw how education is perceived broadly by the pedagogical team and parents who have chosen the centers due to their pedagogical proposals. It is therefore not restricted to schooling. Instead, it is inextricably linked to upbringing. Such conception is also connected to the home-inspired

character of schools achieved through spaces and daily practices. I also referred in detail to the pedagogical proposals which are all a syncretism of alternative pedagogies, although with a focus on Montessori and Reggio Emilia two of them, and saw how they are applied -and not applied- daily. A key element that appeared in these terms is the pedagogical team's cohesion and commitment to the pedagogical proposal which facilitates the application of the proposal if existent and parental commitment that permits the continuation of it at home.

This first specific objective had two sub-objectives that will help stress some crucial aspects and answer it in more detail. The first specific sub-objective "*To document possible contradictions, in case they exist, between the pedagogical proposals and the real practices that put them into practice*" was challenging but fruitful regarding results as data was abundant. Although all schools are alternative to conventional methods, they host many elements of the latter. I will focus on some major detected in all schools.

The first is related to 'freedom'. On the one hand, all pedagogical proposals focus on students' freedom of choice and movement. All respect individual learning paces and attribute the same importance to all fields of knowledge, acknowledging play as a vital learning technique and outdoors as an essential learning space. However, especially in older ages, kids must attend some particular classes that offer official curricular learning; maths, writing and reading. Moreover, it is not accepted that kids do not participate in any workshops and spend the whole day outdoors.

Another element is authority. The projects stand against authoritative relations between teachers and students, but children perceive adults' authority and adapt their role – or not – in accordance to their presence. While in Trèvol and Pardal this authority is more or less shared among the members of the pedagogical team, in Petxina it is concentrated in the management team and especially in the director. However, it is not abused and instead used in cases of disobedience. Last, behaviors and values off (pedagogical) script are often transmitted in peer groups. Competitive behaviors are one example we met in all cases.

Both freedom and authority are connected to limits. In all cases there are limits, set by adults, and reminded by both the pedagogical team and peers in different ways. In Pardal and Trèvol they are

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relatively respected, and considered vital for each educational community's co-existence under responsible freedom. On the contrary, they are repeatedly transgressed in Petxina where cultural compression is weaker and a state of license is experienced by many.

We may explain such contradictions if we contextualize our data. To start with, families in Pardal and Trèvol know that, since secondary alternative educational projects are limited, kids will attend a conventional school when they grow. Fears and insecurities grow with them, caused by the discontinuity they are expected to face. But even in cases when this is not going to happen such as Petxina that offers secondary education too, families get worried when writing or reading skills, for example, have not been developed during the early years of primary education. Therefore, using their educational responsibility, they exercise compression on the pedagogical team who incorporate or increase the official curriculum's presence, sometimes transmitted by conventional methods, and develop strategies for its imposition when resistance is shown. On a second level, society does not only transmit learning expectations; it also transmits values. Therefore, despite some parents' social network cultural similarity, kids incidentally learn and transmit such values in school contexts, because they live in society and because adults do the same. The unlearning proposal that some projects consciously defend while others apply it with less awareness and commitment holds great potential as it is used as a strategy to oppose incidental learning.

The second specific sub-objective "*To take a close look at the inclusive role of the three educational centers concerning different social classes and cultural background*" was also complex and exciting to explore. In each educational reality, we came upon entirely different perspectives and answers regarding it. First of all, it would make no sense speaking of an inclusive role at Petxina and Trèvol access is a priori limited due to the economic contribution families are asked to make. No exceptions to this were met, despite some exchanges of work with fees that can by no means be considered as such. But even in Pardal that there are more socially and culturally diverse families, the pedagogical team does not work systematically towards their inclusion. Attempts of bridging cultural differences between home and school are few and the cultural backgrounds are more ignored than taken into account. This way, cultural superiority and injustices are normalized and reproduced. This objective brings us to the next, which may shed more light on it.

The second general specific objective "*To understand the profiles and symbolic worlds of families who choose an alternative educational center and know how they get involved in school settings*" was answered satisfactorily. We saw how families who choose alternative educational centers have similar profiles, share symbolic worlds, and tend to have high parental involvement in school settings. We were able to examine each of these aspects based on plenty of empirical data through our cases. This objective had four sub-objectives focusing on these realities that we will now discuss.

For the first specific sub-objective "*To shed light upon the profiles of the families who choose alternative schools or educational projects*" I focused on various aspects, from their social status to their lifestyles that allowed me to reflect more upon the centers' inclusive character.

In Trèvol and Petxina, the self-organized educational project and private school, there is an economic barrier that excludes a big part of population on the first hand. Then, since most families choose them due to cultural continuity, there is another level of exclusion that leads to cultural similarity. Many families are critical towards hegemonic habits and discourses and choose alternative ways to relate to one another. This is more limited in the case of Petxina, as many families reach the school after problems faced in previous educational experiences and whose home culture does not necessarily agree with the school culture. It is, therefore, a space that welcomes students with a range of difficulties and disorders as well. However, we could say that in both cases, access is limited to families with economic and cultural resources.

In Pardal, the reality we faced was even more complex. As a public school and despite the families' economic contribution for materials and excursions, the school is not limited to a specific social class, so social and cultural diversity is higher. Many families choose it by chance, because they live in the neighborhood, and whose home culture is different than the school culture. At the same time, the school's pedagogical proposal attracts many culturally compatible families who move to the municipality or develop alternative strategies to access Pardal, whose profiles match those of the previous centers.

Summarizing the above and keeping in mind the complexity mentioned, we could say that after a first level of segregation based on economic resources that divide families in Catalonia in public or private,

publicly-funded private and self-organized schools, a second level appears – cultural segregation – that is linked to the pedagogical proposal and similarly divides families according to cultural criteria. Apart from daily dynamics in school settings, school choice is also decisive in maintaining such segregation.

To answer the second specific sub-objective "*To know why families consciously choose the schools for their kids' schooling*" two approaches and interpretations were combined. From a first glance, school choice in our cases is linked to social reproduction, due to the shared social status and cultural resources among families. In pedagogical proposals and parental discourses what seems to matter most is the prevention of negative schooling experiences and kids' well-being. Social transformation was both present and absent in discourses and practices, with a higher frequency in Trèvol and a lower in Petxina.

But looking in-depth into the social realities, we may discover another important factor behind school choice: community. Families who choose alternative educational projects tend to create affinity groups of mutual aid that sometimes function as an expanded, 'alternative' family. Belongingness and support for parents are of the same importance – if not more – as kids' happiness and well-being.

The third specific sub-objective, "*To go in-depth in how families who have consciously chosen one of the schools for their kids' schooling make sense of upbringing and education*", invited us to explore parental perceptions over upbringing, childhood, and education to find that education and upbringing are not separated for them. School is viewed as home's expansion and the opposite, the same way some educational community members are considered family members. It is not a casualty that most families choose natural home-birth and birth-giving is a life-changing experience for mothers. It is when their journey of questioning begins, when they become (un) learners and start educating themselves to break with the hegemonic mother role and family forms. This usually leads them to join parenting groups and attend alternative schools afterward that makes learning a collective, shared experience. Such social networks inform their social imaginaries with shared symbols like nature.

Regarding the fourth specific sub-objective "*To look upon how families are expected to and get involved in school settings and the consequences of such parental involvement*", we saw that all pedagogical proposals set parental involvement at their core and families are welcome to participate in

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the school. However, only in Trèvol is such parental involvement fully applied as parents actively participate in both decision-making processes and the project's general functioning. In Petxina parental involvement and participation in decision-making is low, as space given both literally and metaphorically is limited by the management team.

In Pardal, parental presence and involvement get limited after the pedagogical team's interventions when conflicts occur. Observing parental involvement there may reveal interesting aspects regarding inclusion. Usually, families with a shared culture that agrees with school culture tend to have high parental involvement, opposite those whose worldviews, perceptions, and expectations from school are different. As more space is occupied by committed families, the rest are indirectly marginalized since they get excluded and self-exclude themselves. Therefore, despite the cultural diversity, the formation of social networks and affinity groups among the culturally similar families does not permit a proper intercultural exchange and attempts are somewhat sporadic and limited.

The differences discussed are related to many factors, some apparent like the number of families and others less obvious like the power relations and negotiations of educational responsibility between the pedagogical team or management team and families.

Regarding the **research hypotheses**, the study initially had two. The first one was that "*Pedagogical practices in alternative schools or educational projects do not always reflect the ideals that generate them due to the various agents' resistance to cultural transmission*". This hypothesis proved to be correct. Exploring the daily dynamics in school contexts, we saw how kids process what is transmitted, deciding whether to learn or not, and developing strategies of resistance.

At the same time, another important aspect was revealed regarding such processes that may complement the hypothesis. The pedagogical team is aware, to different degrees in every case, of the opposite values society transmits and the learnings they have acquired, embodied, and reproduce through incidental cultural transmission. Therefore, some propose to unlearn such learnings through collective self-reflection upon daily practices as a precondition for coherence between what is said and what is done. We saw that the more the pedagogical team is committed to the project, conscious about such aspects, and perceiving education as politics, the higher degree of coherence there is.

The second hypothesis, "*The choice of an alternative school or educational project is a strategy of cultural continuity between the education given at home and school*", was also correct. Thanks to the in-depth interviews and fieldwork in out-of-school contexts, including home settings, we could discover that, for a big part of families, cultural continuity is a major motivation behind their school choice. When a new member is expected, these families, mothers mostly, start questioning the established and perceiving themselves as unlearners and learners that need to re-educate themselves. They start informing their social imaginary with another way of living and relating to one another, both individually and collectively, through their participation in parenting groups for example.

Therefore, the choice of an alternative school or educational project is a process starting long before and a strategy to ensure that lifestyles and values transmitted at home will also be transmitted at school. In other words, it is a strategy with the intention to protect children from the broader societal cultural transmission and to find belongingness and community. For these families, teachers are not those who have the whole educational responsibility, which is rather shared between family and school. Of course, not all families perceive their choice as such; there are parents who choose alternative schools due to their proximity or because of negative schooling experiences their kids previously had, and for whom school choice, rather than a strategy of cultural continuity, consists a casualty or necessity. The diverse motivations, expectations, and perceptions have a series of consequences, among which we highlighted the diverse degrees of parental involvement and cultural segregation produced.

Upon the data analysis, the two initial hypotheses evolved and led to three final hypotheses that may serve for future work. These elaborated hypotheses that follow, attempt to look deeper into the complex dynamics we encountered, by stressing aspects that may allow us to further explore the numerous contradictions and to better understand the social realities.

The first one is that "*The choice of an alternative school or educational project is a strategy of social reproduction by middle-class families. This is the case not only in the private but also in the public sector, as families often move spatially or develop alternative strategies to get access to innovative public schools. This school choice may lead to different school cultures (Gintis, 1995) and second-level*

segregation, which goes beyond schools' institutional character to add pedagogy as a differentiating factor. This is fostered by the high parental involvement expected in these educational centers".

The second final hypothesis is that "*A few similarities may be detected among parents choosing alternative educational centers for their children. These include own negative schooling experiences, contact with philosophies like attachment parenting or New Age practices such as Gestalt psychology, and alternative lifestyles with practices varying from polyamory to veganism. Rather than ways of resistance to social norms, such choices seem to be aspects of ever-changing identities in liquid modernity that values difference instead of similarity and change instead of stability (Bauman, 2007). The particular culture they share is a key concept that leads both to the formation of solidarity networks among them that transforms members of the educational community into an extended family and the exclusion of those whose home culture does not match the school culture".*

The third and last final hypothesis is that "*The concepts of autonomy and freedom are abusively used in individualistic discourses among educators. At the same time, there is an absence of concepts like educational equity and equality of opportunities. This tendency partly reveals the depoliticization of the ongoing period of educational change in Catalonia that perceives renewal as a mere methodological question and focuses on psychological instead of socio-political aspects. In this context, anarchism's pedagogical proposal is appropriated by capitalism which dresses it up in its neo-liberal values and sells it as if it was something new".*

Regarding **new knowledge** that the thesis contributed with, I think there two major fields. First of all, it covered an important research gap on the description of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia. Ethnographic research methods allowed us to describe the studied realities and explore them in-depth. I managed to clarify a bit the terminological confusion in related literature, and highlight the importance of language. At the same time, the comparative character of the analysis offered varied data and helped us look at the phenomenon from a more complete perspective.

The second field is analysis. Apart from their limited number, the few related studies approach the phenomenon from a pedagogical or historical perspective and leave social and cultural aspects in the margins. On the other hand, our methods allowed us to explore the social realities in-depth, looking in

school and out-of-school practices and contextualizing with social and historical data. Besides, our analysis was optimistically critical. Social reproduction theories combined with those focused on cultural transmission, learning, acquisition, and resistance helped me satisfactorily analyze the abundant, complex data, attempt to explain and transform into words the many contradictions experienced in the studied realities, aiming to stress some significant challenges that put alternative pedagogies in danger of functioning as vehicles of social reproduction instead of social transformation.

Considering the vast research gap combined with the abundance of data and the expansion of alternative pedagogies, **recommendations for future work** are numerous and vital.

First of all, the comparative approach allowed us to have a general perspective of the phenomenon, but it was an obstacle for the detailed examination of each case. As every educational center was a whole different reality, a profound study of each based on systematic observation of transmission and learning processes occurring in school and out-of-school contexts would be fruitful. Besides, more data could be collected for the contextualization of each center, such as interviews with students, ex-students, educators, ex-educators, families, ex-families, neighbors, and agents of local authorities. Students' perceptions could also be studied by the analysis of their drawings or other work produced, and it would be fruitful to focus on the reasons some of them learn what is being transmitted while others don´t. At the same time, considering the changing nature of the schools, repeating the study in the same educational centers or focusing on students and families who have attended alternative schools in the past would reveal many important aspects.

In school contexts, ritualization opens new paths that I did not have the chance to explore as I would have wished to. We observed that ritualization is connected to community-building and belongingness, providing space for sharing. But is it always like this? Examining the daily life of conservative schools with no transformative intentions, but where rituals are a similarly central element of their practices and comparing it to alternative schools would be interesting. Also, considering the centrality of gender, a whole study focusing on it is highly recommended.

Moreover, as we saw, conflicts in schools frequently arise between those who share educational responsibility; the pedagogical team and the families. Thus it would be fruitful to investigate such

dynamics and power relations between adults more profoundly, but also between the members of the pedagogical team. Another set of dynamics it would be interesting to examine in more detail are the exclusion and self-exclusion processes that occur, better revealed in cases of public schools due to the higher degree of socio-cultural diversity in the educational community. Participant observation focusing on social networks and interviews with families who have not chosen alternative schools or educational projects because of their pedagogical proposals and who are not committed would certainly reveal interesting aspects that we did not have the chance to explore and that are essential for attempts of applying our findings by complementing them.

Therefore, another proposal for future work is to explore the possibilities of applied anthropology. As the schools and projects studied are oriented towards self-reflection, the tools of anthropology would benefit the pedagogical team's work. A more specific proposal in these terms is to focus on alternative pedagogies' effect on kids with disorders such as autism or psychosis. This is an aspect that appeared in Petxina mostly and an interesting potential proposal for an applied anthropology and interdisciplinary study in collaboration with educators and psychologists.

Conclusiones

Este capítulo presenta las conclusiones del estudio, principalmente basados en los resultados comparativos que vimos, ahora seleccionados y organizados de acuerdo con los objetivos e hipótesis de la investigación. A continuación, haré una breve referencia a las aportaciones de la tesis y algunas sugerencias para trabajos futuros sobre el tema.

En cuanto al **objetivo general** de esta investigación, "*Realizar un análisis descriptivo, crítico, empírico y comparativo de escuelas y proyectos educativos alternativos en Cataluña a través de un enfoque etnográfico de los entornos escolares y no escolares*", pienso que se ha resuelto satisfactoriamente. Describimos las propuestas pedagógicas y vida cotidianas de los proyectos educativos y mencionamos aspectos importantes de su historia y organización interna. Vimos cómo se construyen relaciones alternativas y valores alternativos están transmitidos y aprendidos, mientras que las relaciones jerárquicas y los valores capitalistas hegemónicos también se reproducen.

Para entender tales procesos, nosotros de (re) producción cultural, intenté tomar en cuenta las diversas instancias de resistencia a lo que se está transmitiendo y ver a los agentes como productores culturales activos. También reflexioné sobre la importancia de la continuidad entre la cultura del hogar y la escuela y las limitaciones del contexto social que fortalecen la reproducción social, hecho que se examina mejor a partir de la luz que nos brinda nuestro interés por las familias y los entornos no escolares. También identifiqué semejanzas y diferencias significativas entre los proyectos educativos y las escuelas con respecto a dos amplias categorías clave: relaciones de poder y pertenencia, ambas importantes para la transformación social y la reproducción, ya que están conectadas a la democracia directa, y la autonomía, condiciones previas para alcanzar una sociedad libre y emancipada.

Los **objetivos específicos** que se enfocan en ciertos aspectos de los proyectos educativos ayudaron a una comprensión más profunda y facilitaron el análisis comparativo.

Se examinó en detalle el primer objetivo general específico, "*Comprender las perspectivas sobre la educación en los centros educativos, documentar la formulación de sus propuestas pedagógicas, y conocer la realidad cotidiana y las prácticas educativas donde se dan*". En cuanto a la primera parte

del objetivo, vimos cómo la educación es percibida de manera amplia por el grupo docente y las madres y los padres que han elegido los centros por sus propuestas pedagógicas. Por tanto, no se limita a la escolarización. En cambio, está indisolublemente ligado a la crianza. Tal concepción también está relacionada con el carácter hogareño de las escuelas logrado a través de espacios y prácticas diarias. También me referí en detalle a las propuestas pedagógicas que son todas un sincretismo de pedagogías alternativas, aunque con un enfoque en Montessori y Reggio Emilia dos de ellas, y vi cómo se aplican - y no se aplican- a nivel diario. Un elemento clave que apareció en estos términos es la cohesión y el compromiso del grupo docente con la propuesta pedagógica que facilita la aplicación de la propuesta, si es que existe, y el compromiso de las madres y los padres que permite su continuación en el hogar.

Este primer objetivo específico tenía dos sub-objetivos que ayudarán a enfatizar algunos aspectos cruciales y darles respuesta con más detalle. El primer sub-objetivo específico *"Documentar las posibles contradicciones, en caso de que existan, entre las propuestas pedagógicas y las prácticas reales que las ponen en práctica"* fue desafiante pero fructífero en cuanto a resultados ya que abundaban los datos. Aunque todas las escuelas son alternativas a los métodos convencionales, se encuentran muchos elementos de estos últimos. Nos centraremos en algunos importantes detectados en todas las escuelas.

El primero está relacionado con la "libertad". Por un lado, todas las propuestas pedagógicas se centran en la libertad de elección y movimiento de las y los estudiantes. Todas respetan los ritmos de aprendizaje individuales y atribuyen la misma importancia a todos los campos del conocimiento, reconociendo el juego como una técnica de aprendizaje vital y el aire libre como espacio de aprendizaje esencial. Sin embargo, especialmente en edades más avanzadas, las niñas y los niños deben asistir a algunas clases particulares que ofrecen aprendizaje curricular oficial; matemáticas, escritura y lectura. Además, no se acepta que no participen en ningún taller y pasen todo el día al aire libre.

Otro elemento es la autoridad. Los proyectos se oponen a las relaciones de autoridad entre profesores y estudiantes, pero las niñas y los niños perciben la autoridad de las adultas y los adultos y adaptan su papel, o no, de acuerdo con su presencia. Mientras que en Trèvol y Pardal esta autoridad está más o menos compartida entre los miembros del grupo docente, en Petxina se concentra en el equipo directivo y especialmente en el director. Sin embargo, la autoridad no se abusa, y, en cambio, se usa en casos de

desobediencia. Por último, los comportamientos y valores fuera del guión (pedagógico) a menudo se transmiten en grupos de pares. Los comportamientos competitivos son un ejemplo que encontramos en todos los casos.

Tanto la libertad como la autoridad están conectadas a los límites. En todos los casos existen límites, establecidos por adultos y recordados tanto por el equipo docente como por las y los pares de diferentes maneras. En Pardal y Trèvol son relativamente respetados y considerados vitales para la convivencia de cada comunidad educativa bajo una libertad responsable. Por el contrario, son transgredidas repetidamente en Petxina donde la compresión cultural es más débil y muchos experimentan un estado de licencia.

Podemos explicar tales contradicciones si contextualizamos nuestros datos. Para empezar, las familias de Pardal y Trèvol saben que, dado que los proyectos de educación secundaria alternativa son limitados, las niñas y los niños asistirán a una escuela convencional cuando crezcan. Los miedos y las inseguridades crecen con ellos, provocados por la discontinuidad que se espera que enfrenten. Pero incluso en casos en los que esto no va a suceder como Petxina que también ofrece educación secundaria, las familias se preocupan cuando las habilidades de escritura o lectura, por ejemplo, no se han desarrollado durante los primeros años de educación primaria. Por tanto, utilizando su responsabilidad educativa, ejercen presión sobre el equipo docente que incorpora o incrementa la presencia del currículo oficial, a veces transmitido por métodos convencionales, y desarrolla estrategias para su imposición cuando se manifiesta resistencia. En un segundo nivel, la sociedad no solo transmite expectativas de aprendizaje; también transmite valores. Por tanto, a pesar de la semejanza cultural de la red social de algunas madres y algunos padres, las y los estudiantes aprenden y transmiten dichos valores de forma incidental en los contextos escolares, porque viven en la sociedad y porque las adultas y los adultos hacen lo mismo. La propuesta de desaprendizaje que algunos proyectos defienden conscientemente mientras que otros la aplican con menos conciencia y compromiso tiene un gran potencial ya que se utiliza como estrategia para oponerse al aprendizaje incidental.

El segundo sub-objetivo específico *"Investigar el papel inclusivo de los tres centros educativos en relación con las diferentes clases sociales y perfiles culturales"* también fue complejo y fascinante de explorar. En cada realidad educativa, nos encontramos con perspectivas y respuestas completamente

diferentes al respecto. En primer lugar, no tendría sentido hablar de un papel inclusivo en Petxina y Trèvol. El acceso es a priori limitado por la aportación económica que se les pide a las familias. No se cumplieron excepciones a esto, a pesar de algunos intercambios de trabajo con las cuotas, que de ninguna manera pueden considerarse como tales. Pero incluso en Pardal que hay familias más diversas a nivel social y cultural, el equipo docente no trabaja de manera sistemática por su inclusión. Los intentos de tender un puente sobre las diferencias culturales entre el hogar y la escuela son pocos y los antecedentes culturales se ignoran más que se toman en cuenta. De esta forma se normalizan y reproducen las injusticias y superioridad cultural. Este objetivo nos lleva al siguiente, que puede arrojar más luz sobre él.

El segundo objetivo específico general *"Comprender los perfiles y mundos simbólicos de las familias que eligen un centro educativo alternativo y saber cómo se involucran en los entornos escolares"* fue respondido satisfactoriamente. Vimos cómo las familias que eligen centros educativos alternativos tienen perfiles similares, comparten mundos simbólicos y tienden a tener una alta participación parental en los entornos escolares. Pudimos examinar cada uno de estos aspectos basándonos en una gran cantidad de datos empíricos a través de nuestros casos. Este objetivo tenía cuatro sub-objetivos centrados en estas realidades que ahora discutiremos.

Para el primer sub-objetivo específico *"Arrojar luz sobre los perfiles de las familias que eligen escuelas o proyectos educativos alternativos"* nos enfocamos en diversos aspectos, desde su estatus social hasta sus estilos de vida, que nos permitieron reflexionar más sobre el carácter inclusivo de los centros.

En Trèvol y Petxina, el proyecto educativo autogestionado y la escuela privada, existe una barrera económica que excluye de primera mano a una gran parte de la población. Dado que la mayoría de las familias los eligen por continuidad cultural, existe otro nivel de exclusión que conduce a la semejanza cultural. Muchas familias son críticas con los hábitos y discursos hegemónicos y eligen alternativas maneras de relacionarse entre sí. Esto es más limitado en el caso de Petxina, ya que muchas familias llegan a la escuela después de problemas enfrentados en experiencias educativas anteriores y cuya cultura del hogar no necesariamente concuerda con la cultura escolar. Se trata, por tanto, de un espacio que acoge también a estudiantes con diversas dificultades y trastornos. Sin embargo, podríamos decir que en ambos casos el acceso está limitado a familias con recursos económicos y culturales.

En Pardal, la realidad a la que nos enfrentamos fue aún más compleja. Como escuela pública y a pesar de la contribución económica de las familias en materiales y excursiones, la escuela no se limita a una clase social específica, por lo que la diversidad social y cultural es mayor. Muchas familias eligen la escuela por casualidad, porque viven en el barrio, y su cultura del hogar es diferente a la cultura escolar. Al mismo tiempo, la propuesta pedagógica de la escuela atrae a muchas familias culturalmente compatibles que se trasladan al municipio o desarrollan estrategias alternativas para acceder a Pardal, cuyos perfiles coinciden con los de los centros anteriores.

Resumiendo lo anterior y teniendo en cuenta la complejidad mencionada, podríamos decir que tras un primer nivel de segregación basado en los recursos económicos que dividen a las familias en Cataluña en escuelas públicas o privadas, concertadas y autogestionadas, aparece un segundo nivel: - la segregación cultural - que se vincule a la propuesta pedagógica y de igual manera divida a las familias según criterios culturales. Aparte de la dinámica diaria en los entornos escolares, la elección escolar también es decisiva para mantener dicha segregación.

Para responder al segundo sub-objetivo específico *"Saber por qué las familias eligen conscientemente las escuelas para la escolarización de sus hijos"* se combinaron dos enfoques e interpretaciones. A primera vista, la elección de escuela en nuestros casos está vinculada a la reproducción social, debido al estatus social y los recursos culturales compartidos entre las familias. En las propuestas pedagógicas y los discursos de las madres y los padres lo que parece más importante es la prevención de las experiencias escolares negativas y el bienestar de las niñas y los niños. La transformación social estuvo presente y ausente en los discursos y las prácticas, con mayor frecuencia en Trèvol y menor en Petxina.

Pero al mirar en profundidad las realidades sociales, podemos descubrir otro factor importante detrás de la elección de la escuela: la comunidad. Las familias que eligen proyectos educativos alternativos tienden a crear grupos de afinidad basados en el apoyo mutuo que a veces funcionan como una familia "alternativa" ampliada. La pertenencia y el apoyo que reciben las madres y los padres son de la misma importancia, si no más, que la felicidad y el bienestar de las y los estudiantes.

El tercer sub-objetivo específico, *"Profundizar en cómo las familias que han elegido conscientemente una de las escuelas para la escolarización de sus hijas e hijos dan sentido a la crianza y la educación"*, nos invitó a explorar las percepciones de los familias sobre la crianza, la infancia y la educación para descubrir que la educación y la crianza no están separadas para ellas. La escuela se ve como la expansión del hogar y lo contrario, de la misma manera que algunos miembros de la comunidad educativa se consideran miembros de la familia. No es una casualidad que la mayoría elijan el parto natural en el hogar y que el parto sea una experiencia que cambie la vida de las madres. Es cuando comienza su camino de cuestionamiento, cuando se vuelven (des) aprendices y comienzan a educarse para romper con el rol materno y formas familiares hegemónicas. Esto los lleva a unirse a menudo a grupos de padres y luego a asistir a escuelas alternativas, lo que hace que el aprendizaje sea una experiencia colectiva y compartida. Tales redes sociales informan sus imaginarios sociales con símbolos compartidos como la naturaleza.

Con respecto al cuarto sub-objetivo específico, *"Analizar cómo se espera que las familias se involucren en el entorno escolar y las consecuencias de dicha participación parental"*, vimos que todas las propuestas pedagógicas dan importancia a la participación de las familias en la escuela. Sin embargo, solo en Trèvol se aplica plenamente la participación de las madres y los padres, ya que participan activamente tanto en los procesos de toma de decisiones como en el funcionamiento general del proyecto. En Petxina, la participación parental en la toma de decisiones es baja, porque el espacio otorgado tanto literal como metafóricamente está limitado por el equipo directivo.

En Pardal, la presencia y participación parental se limita después de las intervenciones del equipo de docentes cuando ocurren conflictos. Observar la participación de las madres y los padres allí puede revelar aspectos interesantes sobre la inclusión. Por lo general, las familias con una cultura compartida que está de acuerdo con la cultura escolar tienden a tener una alta participación parental, frente a aquellas cuyas visiones del mundo, percepciones y expectativas de la escuela son diferentes. A medida que las familias comprometidas ocupan más espacio, el resto queda marginado indirectamente, ya que se excluyen y se auto-excluyen. Por tanto, a pesar de la diversidad cultural, la formación de redes sociales y grupos de afinidad entre las familias culturalmente similares no permite un adecuado intercambio intercultural y los intentos son algo esporádicos y limitados.

Las diferencias discutidas están relacionadas con muchos factores, algunos aparentes como el número de familias y otros menos evidentes como las relaciones de poder y negociaciones de responsabilidad educativa entre el grupo docente o equipo directivo y las familias.

En cuanto a las **hipótesis de investigación**, el estudio inicialmente contaba con dos. La primera fue que *"Las prácticas pedagógicas en escuelas o proyectos educativos alternativos no siempre reflejan los ideales que las generan debido a la resistencia de los distintos agentes a la transmisión cultural"*. Esta hipótesis se ha relevado como certera. Explorando las dinámicas diarias en los contextos escolares, vimos cómo las niñas y los niños procesan lo que se transmite, deciden si aprender o no y desarrollan estrategias de resistencia.

Al mismo tiempo, se reveló otro aspecto importante sobre estos procesos que pueden complementar la hipótesis. El equipo pedagógico es consciente, en distintos grados en cada caso, tanto de los valores opuestos que transmite la sociedad como de los aprendizajes que ha adquirido e interiorizado y reproduce a través de la transmisión cultural incidental. Por tanto, algunas y algunos proponen el desaprendizaje de esos aprendizajes mediante la autorreflexión colectiva sobre las prácticas cotidianas como condición previa para la coherencia entre lo que se dice y lo que se hace. Vimos que el grado de coherencia es mayor cuando el equipo pedagógico es más comprometido con el proyecto, consciente de tales aspectos y percibiendo la educación como política.

La segunda hipótesis, *"La elección de una escuela o proyecto educativo alternativo es una estrategia de continuidad cultural entre la educación que se imparte en el hogar y la escuela",* se ha relevado también como certera. Gracias a las entrevistas a profundidad y el trabajo de campo en contextos extraescolares, incluido el hogar, pudimos descubrir que, para una gran parte de las familias, la continuidad cultural es uno de los principales motivos detrás de su elección escolar. Cuando se espera un nuevo miembro, estas familias, madres en su mayoría, comienzan a cuestionar lo establecido y a percibirse a sí mismas como desaprendices y aprendices que necesitan reeducarse. Empiezan a informar su imaginario social con otra forma de vivir y de relacionarse, tanto individual como colectivamente, a través de su participación en grupos de crianza, por ejemplo.

Por tanto, la elección de una escuela o proyecto educativo alternativo es un proceso que se inicia mucho antes y una estrategia para conseguir que los estilos de vida y los valores transmitidos en el hogar también se transmitan en la escuela. Dicho de otro modo, es una estrategia con la intención de proteger a las niñas y los niños de la transmisión cultural social más amplia y encontrar pertenencia y comunidad. Para estas familias, el equipo pedagógico no son las y los que tienen toda la responsabilidad educativa, la cual se comparte entre la familia y la escuela. Evidentemente, no todas las familias perciben su elección como tal; hay madres y padres que eligen escuelas alternativas por su proximidad o por experiencias escolares negativas que sus hijas e hijos tuvieron anteriormente, y para quienes la elección de escuela es casualidad o necesidad más que estrategia de continuidad cultural. Las diversas motivaciones, expectativas y percepciones tienen una serie de consecuencias, entre las que destacamos los diversos grados de participación parental y la segregación cultural que se produce.

Tras el análisis de los datos, las dos hipótesis iniciales evolucionaron y condujeron a tres hipótesis finales que pueden servir para trabajos futuros. Estas hipótesis elaboradas que siguen, intentan profundizar en las complejas dinámicas que encontramos, enfatizando aspectos que pueden permitirnos explorar más a fondo las numerosas contradicciones y comprender mejor las realidades sociales.

La primera es que *"La elección de una escuela o proyecto educativo alternativo es una estrategia de reproducción social de las familias de clase media. Este es el caso no solo en el sector privado sino también en el público, ya que las familias a menudo se mueven en el espacio o desarrollan estrategias alternativas para acceder a escuelas públicas innovadoras. Aquella elección escolar puede conducir a diferentes culturas escolares (Gintis, 1995) y segregación de segundo nivel, que va más allá del carácter institucional de las escuelas para agregar la pedagogía como factor diferenciador. Esto se ve favorecido por la alta implicación de los padres que se espera en estos centros educativos"*.

La segunda hipótesis final es que *"Se pueden detectar algunas semejanzas entre las madres y los padres que eligen centros educativos alternativos para sus hijas e hijos. Estas incluyen experiencias escolares negativas propias, contacto con filosofías como la crianza con apego o prácticas New Age como la psicología Gestalt, y estilos de vida alternativos con prácticas que varían desde el poliamor hasta el veganismo. Más que formas de resistencia a las normas sociales, tales elecciones parecen ser aspectos de identidades en constante cambio en la modernidad líquida que valora la diferencia en*

lugar de la semejanza y el cambio en lugar de la estabilidad (Bauman, 2007). La cultura particular que comparten es un concepto clave que lleva tanto a la formación de redes de solidaridad entre ellas y ellos que transforman a los miembros de la comunidad educativa en una familia extensa como a la exclusión de aquellas y aquellos cuya cultura de hogar no coincide con la cultura escolar".

La tercera y última hipótesis final es que *"Los conceptos de autonomía y libertad se utilizan abusivamente en discursos individualistas entre docentes. Al mismo tiempo, faltan conceptos como equidad educativa e igualdad de oportunidades. Esta tendencia revela en parte la despolitización del actual período de cambio educativo en Cataluña que percibe la renovación como una mera cuestión metodológica y se centra en aspectos psicológicos en lugar de socio-políticos. En este contexto, la propuesta pedagógica del anarquismo es apropiada por el capitalismo que lo viste de sus valores neoliberales y lo vende como si fuera algo nuevo".*

En cuanto a las **aportaciones** de la tesis, pienso que hay dos campos principales. En primer lugar, cubrió un importante vacío de investigación sobre la descripción de escuelas y proyectos educativos alternativos en Cataluña. Los métodos de investigación etnográfica nos permitieron describir las realidades estudiadas y explorarlas en profundidad. Logramos aclarar un poco algunas confusiones terminológicas en la literatura relacionada, y resaltar la importancia del lenguaje. Al mismo tiempo, el carácter comparativo del análisis ofreció datos variados y nos ayudó a mirar el fenómeno desde una perspectiva más completa.

El segundo campo es el análisis. Aparte de su escaso número, los pocos estudios relacionados abordan el fenómeno desde una perspectiva pedagógica o histórica dejando al margen los aspectos sociales y culturales. Por otro lado, nuestros métodos nos permitieron explorar en profundidad las realidades sociales, mirando en las prácticas escolares y extraescolares y contextualizándolas con datos sociales e históricos. Además, nuestro análisis fue optimista y crítico. Las teorías de reproducción social combinadas con aquellas enfocadas en la transmisión cultural, el aprendizaje, la adquisición y la resistencia me ayudaron a analizar satisfactoriamente los abundantes y complejos datos, intentar explicar y transformar en palabras las múltiples contradicciones vividas en las realidades estudiadas, con el objetivo de enfatizar algunos desafíos significativos que ponen las pedagogías alternativas en peligro de funcionar como vehículos de reproducción social en lugar de transformación social.

Teniendo en cuenta el gran vacío de investigación combinado con la abundancia de datos y la expansión de las pedagogías alternativas, las posibles **continuidades** son numerosas y vitales.

En primer lugar, el enfoque comparativo me permitió tener una perspectiva general del fenómeno, pero fue un obstáculo para el examen detallado de cada realidad. Como cada centro educativo es una realidad completamente diferente, sería fructífero un estudio profundo de cada uno basado en la observación sistemática de los procesos de transmisión y aprendizaje que ocurren en contextos escolares y extraescolares. Asimismo, se podrían recolectar más datos para la contextualización de cada centro, como entrevistas a estudiantes, ex-alumnos, docentes, ex-docentes, familias, ex-familias, vecindario y agentes de las autoridades locales. Las percepciones de las y los estudiantes también podrían ser estudiadas mediante el análisis de sus dibujos u otros trabajos realizados, y sería fructífero centrarse en las razones por las que algunas aprenden lo que se transmite y otros no. Al mismo tiempo, considerando el carácter cambiante de las escuelas y proyectos educativos, repetir el estudio en los mismos centros educativos o enfocarse en estudiantes y familias que han asistido a escuelas alternativas en el pasado, revelaría muchos aspectos importantes.

En contextos escolares, la ritualización abre nuevos caminos que no tuve la oportunidad de explorar como hubiéra querido. Observamos que la ritualización está relacionada con la pertenencia, proporcionando espacios y tiempos para compartir. ¿Pero es siempre así? Sería interesante examinar la vida cotidiana de escuelas conservadoras sin intenciones transformadoras, pero donde los rituales son un elemento igualmente central de sus prácticas y compararlo con las escuelas alternativas. Asimismo, teniendo en cuenta la centralidad del género, es muy recomendable un estudio completo centrado en él.

Además, como vimos, conflictos en las escuelas surgen con frecuencia entre quienes comparten la responsabilidad educativa; el equipo pedagógico y las familias. Por tanto, sería beneficioso investigar más a fondo estas dinámicas y relaciones de poder entre adultos, pero también entre los miembros del equipo pedagógico. Otro conjunto de dinámicas que sería interesante examinar con más detalle son los procesos de exclusión y autoexclusión que se dan, mejor revelados en casos de escuelas públicas debido al mayor grado de diversidad sociocultural en la comunidad educativa. La observación participante centrada en las redes sociales y las entrevistas con familias que no han optado por escuelas

o proyectos educativos alternativos por sus propuestas pedagógicas y que no están comprometidas, revelaría ciertamente aspectos interesantes que no tuvimos la oportunidad de explorar y que son fundamentales para cualquier intento de aplicar nuestros hallazgos completándolos.

Por lo tanto, otra propuesta de trabajo futuro es explorar las posibilidades de la antropología aplicada. Dado que las escuelas y proyectos estudiados están orientados a la auto-reflexión, las herramientas antropológicas beneficiarían el trabajo del equipo pedagógico. Una propuesta más específica en estos términos es centrarse en el efecto de las pedagogías alternativas en las y los niños con trastornos como autismo o psicosis. Este es un aspecto que apareció mayoritariamente en Petxina y que sería una propuesta potencial interesante de antropología aplicada y estudio interdisciplinario en colaboración con docentes y psicólogas y psicólogos.

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Appendix I: Interview Guide for Families

<u>Entrevistas Familias</u>

1. Presentación de la familia: ¿Nombres? ¿Edades? ¿Lugar de nacimiento y crecimiento de la madre y del padre? ¿De lxs niñxs? ¿Profesiones? ¿Nivel de estudio de la madre y del padre? ¿Ideas políticas de la madre y del padre? ¿Ideas religiosas de la madre y del padre? ¿A qué tipo de escuelas fueron los padres? (públicas o privadas/concertadas, estilos…) ¿Ingresos mensuales familiares?: (500-1000, 1000-1500, 1500-2000, 2000-2500, 2500-3000, más de 3000 euros al mes). Vivienda: ¿metros cuadrados? es de alquiler o propiedad? ¿Barrio o zona de residencia en el municipio? ¿Las amistades piensan igual en educación? Hasta qué punto os han influido lxs amigxs en vuestra decisión?

2. ¿Hijxs y edades? ¿Actividades que hacen fuera del centro educativo? ¿Idiomas?

3. Cómo fue la crianza en los primeros años? (muy pautada y consciente, siguiendo pautas de amigxs y familiares, siguiendo bibliografía específica...)

4. Desde cuando viene al cole? Tenía anteriores experiencias escolares/educativas? Cómo fueron esas experiencias, ¿Qué destacarías?

5. En que sitio te informaste para decidir qué sistema educativo sigue el niño/la niña? ¿Quiénes te aconsejaron? ¿Cómo tomaste la decisión?

6. ¿Por qué Petxina en el lugar del sistema educativo habitual? ¿Esperanzas?

7. ¿Cómo llamarías el ccentro educativo? Cómo caracterizarías el estilo de enseñanza y aprendizaje, ¿cuáles serían los elementos clave que destacarías?

8. Cuéntame sobre el primer día que llegaste al cole. ¿Quién te lo presento y que te dijo? ¿Era al fin como te conto?

9. Cómo ha vivido el niño su trayectoria en la escuela hasta el momento:

-A nivel de aprendizajes (actividades lectivas)

-A nivel de vida social en el cole (¿tiene amistades? ¿la amistad con los compañeros y compañeras perdura fuera de la escuela? ¿hay conflictos? ¿se ven diferencias o grupos diferentes entre los niños? etc.)

10. ¿Dificultades que encontraste? ¿Recuerdas ejemplos específicos?

11. ¿Qué es lo que te gusta más sobre el cole y lo que te gusta menos? ¿Al niñx?

12. ¿Qué esperas que puede traer la educación esta que no existe en el sistema actual?

13. ¿Algo que quieres añadir?

Appendix II: Interview Guide for pedagogical team

<u>Entrevistas con Acompañantes</u>

1. Presentación: ¿Nombre? ¿Edad? ¿Estado civil? ¿Lugar de nacimiento y crecimiento? ¿Profesión? ¿Estudios? ¿Ideas políticas y religiosas? ¿A qué tipo de escuelas fue? (públicas o privadas / concertadas, estilos…) ¿Ingresos mensuales?: (500-1000, 1000-1500, 1500-2000, 2000-2500, 2500-3000, más de 3000 euros al mes) Vivienda: ¿vive solx, con familias, con compañerxs de piso ¿metros cuadrados? es de alquiler o propiedad? ¿Barrio o zona de residencia en el municipio ¿Aficiones?

2. ¿Desde cuándo trabaja al cole? ¿Tenía experiencias laborales en ambientes escolares (y otros) antes? Cómo fueron esas experiencias

3. Cómo fue el proceso de la decisión para trabajar aquí?

4. ¿Cómo fue el proceso de la elección? (quienes le entrevistaron y que preguntaron)

5. ¿Había hecho algo relacionado con educación alternativa antes o después de su elección?

6. ¿Cómo llamaría el cole? Cómo caracterizaría el estilo de enseñanza y aprendizaje, ¿cuáles serían los elementos clave que destacaría?

7. ¿Cómo fue el primer día que llegó al cole?

8. ¿Sigue alguna metodología pedagógica concreta? ¿Quién lo decidió?

9. ¿Le ayudó su formación en su trabajo actual? ¿En qué sentido?

10. ¿Cuál es su rol en la toma de las decisiones?

11. ¿Cómo son sus relaciones con lxs demás acompañantes y el equipo directivo? ¿Quedan fuera del cole?

12. ¿Qué tipo de familias vienen al cole? ¿Cómo son sus relaciones con ellas? ¿Qué le suelen decir y preguntar?

13. ¿Dificultades que encontró?

14. ¿Qué es lo que le gusta más sobre el cole y lo que le gusta menos?

15. ¿Qué opina sobre los cambios recientes?

16. ¿Qué cree que puede traer la educación esta que no existe en el sistema actual?

17. ¿Algo que quiere añadir?

Appendix III: Consent Form for Educational Centers

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL PROYECTO
'THE MOVEMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN CATALONIA[286]'

He sido informada/o de un proyecto de investigación de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, titulado ´The Movement for Educational Change in Catalonia´, y se me ha preguntado si se me ha solicitado autorización para que la investigadora Maria Menegaki del programa de doctorado en antropología social y cultural pueda realizar observación participante en la escuela/proyecto educativo: _____.

Concretamente se me ha informado sobre lo siguiente:

1) Que el objetivo general de este proyecto es investigar el movimiento del cambio educativo en Cataluña y está enfocado en conocer las experiencias de las familias que eligen otros tipos de educación para sus hijas e hijos.

2) Que parte de este proyecto supone realizar trabajo de campo etnográfico en tres escuelas o proyectos educativos libres, alternativos o innovadores en Cataluña. Además se establecerá contacto con educadores y familias de los centros educativos para entrevistar.

3) Que toda la información que se produzca es absolutamente confidencial y anónima y que se utilizarán seudónimos para todas las escuelas, los lugares y las personas que van a aparecer en los productos finales (tesis doctoral, comunicaciones y artículos) y que cualquier información personal no será revelada en ningún otro sitio.

4) Que puedo ponerme en contacto con la investigadora del proyecto para cualquier duda que tenga al respecto a través de la siguiente dirección de e-mail: maria.menegaki@e-campus.uab.cat

Entiendo bien toda la información y acepto participar en este estudio. Y para ello firmo este documento de consentimiento

Fecha y Lugar
Nombre y Apellidos

Firma del **Participante**   Firma de la **Entrevistadora**

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[286]This was the thesis' title at the moment that later changed.

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL PROYECTO
'THE MOVEMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN CATALONIA´

He sido informada/o de un proyecto de investigación de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, titulado ´The Movement for Educational Change in Catalonia´, y se me ha preguntado si se me ha solicitado autorización para contribuir en la investigación de Maria Menegaki del programa de doctorado en antropología social y cultural.

Concretamente se me ha informado sobre lo siguiente:

1) Que el objetivo general de este proyecto es investigar el movimiento del cambio educativo en Cataluña y está enfocado en conocer las experiencias de las familias que eligen otros tipos de educación para sus hijas e hijos.

2) Que parte de este proyecto supone realizar trabajo de campo etnográfico dentro de espacios domésticos de familias que eligen otros tipos de educación y que la información relevante a los objetivos de la investigación será registrada en el diario de campo.

3) Que toda la información que se produzca es absolutamente confidencial y anónima y que se utilizarán seudónimos para todas las escuelas, los lugares y las personas que van a aparecer en los productos finales (tesis doctoral, comunicaciones y artículos) y que cualquier información personal no será revelada en ningún otro sitio.

4) Que puedo ponerme en contacto con la investigadora del proyecto para cualquier duda que tenga al respecto a través de la siguiente dirección de e-mail: maria.menegaki@e-campus.uab.cat

Entiendo bien toda la información y acepto participar en este estudio. Y para ello firmo este documento de consentimiento

Fecha y Lugar
Nombre y Apellidos

Firma del **Participante**   Firma de la **Entrevistadora**

Appendix V: Documents

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