



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
INST FÖR KOST- OCH IDROTTSVETENSKAP

How children in Cape Verde experience school meals:

- An ethnographic study

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Report number:	VT13-71
Examination paper:	15 hp
Programme:	Food service management
Degree:	Bachelor
Semester:	Spring 2013
Supervisor:	Natalie Barker-Ruchti
Examiner:	Dean Barker



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Number of pages: 33
Semester : Spring 2013
Keywords: children, experience, school meals, Cape Verde, social constructionism

Sammanfattning

Ett skolmatsprojekt startades 1979 i Kap Verde, med finansiering och stöd från Förenade Nationerna. I dag har Kap Verde fullt ansvar för hanteringen och implementeringen av skolmatsprojektet. Den här studien har tittat på barns upplevelser och betydelser knutna till skolmaten. Uppsatsen syftar till att få insikt och djupare förståelse om vad skolmåltiden betyder för barnen på en grundskola i Kap Verde. För att undersöka detta har en fallstudie genomförts med etnografiska inslag och data insamlingsmetoder. En intervju med rektorn på en grundskola har gjorts. En klass i årskurs 2 har fått måla på ett A4 ark om vad skolmåltiden betyder för dem och en 6:e klassare har fått skriva en kort text om vad skolmåltiden betyder. Dessutom har observationer utförts i anslutning till metoderna. Resultatet visar att barnen anser att skolmåltiden är mycket viktigt för dem, då de flesta barnen inte har möjlighet att äta hemma. Barnen anser även att maten är hälsosam och den ger dem energi, därmed kan de fokusera bättre på lektionerna och lära sig mer. Barnen uttrycker även en oro kring att de inte har tillgång till tillräckligt med mat. Slutsatsen är att skolmåltiden har en annan funktion än att bara vara näringsrik. Ur barnens perspektiv betyder skolmåltiden omsorg, omtanke och empati. Skolmåltiden anses som viktig eftersom det betyder att skolan tar hand om dem. Det är också ett sätt att visa medkänsla och omsorg för sina klasskamrater.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the foundation, *Praktiska Hushållskolans Donationsfond*, for supporting students to spread knowledge about food and for their scholarship that made this project possible.

Secondly, I want to thank FICASE and João da Luz Sanches Semedo for helping me with contacts in Praia and introducing me to the field.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everybody at *Escola Ponta d'Agua*, especially to the lovely children who have opened up their hearts and shared personal experiences from their reality. Also, the headmaster Filomena Voz for welcoming me to the school and for sharing her knowledge and experience.

For insights in the culture and practical advice, I want to thank Enes Fernandes Ferreira, and thank him for taking his time to drive me back and forth to *Escola Ponta d'Agua*.

As well, my thanks go to my supervisor, Natalie Barker- Ruchti, for inspiring me, for introducing me to different, creative research methods and her ability to highlight things from different point of views.

I am grateful for my beloved, Vadini Fernandes Ferreira, who was of major importance for conducting this thesis. Also, I am very thankful for my family who always encourage and support me to follow my dreams.

The opportunity of living and working in a different culture has been of great value to me. It has been an educative experience, both as a food service manager and privately. One of the most important things, which I have learnt is that, the function of a meal has a significance far greater than may at first be thought and performs functions over and above the one of replenishing energy stores.

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Introduction

The school meal programme in Cape Verde has been announced as a national success through United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), a project Cape Verde took on over 30 years ago. In Cape Verde, the programme began 1979 with a initiative from WFP. In the commence, WFP was contributing with finance, yet also functional and systematic reinforcement.

The conversion of the school meal programme began in 2007. With time, the country started establishing and managing the programme by their self and 2010 the Government of Cape Verde was fully responsible for it (WFP, 2010). In Central and West Africa, Cape Verde was the first country to succeed with taking full control of owning their national school meal programme. By taking full ownership of its national school meal programme, the government of Cape Verde sets an example for many other developing countries (UN, 2012).

The school meal programme in Cape Verde covers all primary public schools. The programme is supporting the food security and nutrition of pupils, as well as, providing social protection of those families that are economically vulnerable (WFP, 2011). Approximately, there are 86 000 children in Cape Verde provided with a hot meal, covered by the school meal programme. Furthermore, Cape Verde is succeeding in accomplishing many of their Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that is set for 2015¹ (UN, 2012).

The Prime Minister of Cape Verde, José Maria Neves, states that the WFP had an major impact on the improvement and development of the Cape Verdean education system. By offering a hot meal in school, it has contributed with more children attending school. The enrolment percentage for primary school is 82.6 percent and 63.3 percent for secondary school (WFP,2011). The school meal programme has also favoured the combat against poverty (WFP, 2010).

By offering school meals on a daily basis, is an efficient means to help children to develop in a healthy way. Adequate nutrition, that cover the individual energy need, is a crucial factor for human beings physical and intellectual development. In addition to nutritional benefits, a nourishing meal at school can be looked upon as a tool to better the presence in the classroom and it enables children to concentrate in school(UN, 2012).

World Food Programme (2010) states that school meals are a platform not just for improving children's nutrition, as well as developing the education system, but that they also fight poverty, promote social inclusion and gender equality.

Not much research has been conducted on the benefits of school meals in developing countries, and as far as I know, none in Cape Verde. Yet, it is important and needed from societal perspective, to investigate the perceived benefits school meals in a broader aspect have and to describe it from the children's point of view. A deeper knowledge and understanding of the benefits of school meals can further and encourage developing the school meal programme.

¹ The school meal programme is created to fight poverty, diminish hunger, generate education possibilities and gender equality, which are the MDG's for 2015 <http://www.wfp.org/school-meals> Accessed 2013-03-15

Previous studies have focused on the history and politics of the school meal, meal patterns, obesity, interventions and the nutritional view with a focus on bodily functioning and state of health (Lupton, 1996). However, only a few studies have looked at the social meaning of food from the children's perspective (Ludvigsen & Scott, 2009).

For this study, I have used an ethnographic approach. The purpose of ethnography is to describe the culture and social interactions of a particular group of people in their natural setting (Lichtman, 2010). To gain a broader and holistic understanding of school meals, an ethnography allows for insight on the experiences and meanings children associate to school meals to be gained.

By linking the thesis to social constructionism the study can theorize how children produce meaning and knowledge from their everyday world. This study will give understanding on the meanings and experiences related to school meals, which has not been explored in any research yet (Ludvigsen & Scott, 2009). The focus of this study is school aged children.

Purpose and objectives of the study

This study aims to explore children's experiences of and the meanings they attach to school meals. The purpose has been broken down into two objectives:

1. How do school children in Cape Verde experience school meals?
2. What meanings do the school children associate with school meals?

Significance of research

To have knowledge about meal patterns, nutrition and how food is put together is essential for a food service manager. However, the school meal is far more complex than that. Furthermore, I believe that it is also important to look at the outcome and impact of meals in my profession and what role school meal has in the society. The results of this study will contribute with new knowledge within the field, that may be a platform for further progresses in Cape Verde and other developing countries.

Background

This section will begin with an introduction to Cape Verde. Then, follows a description of living conditions, trade and industry and the education system in Cape Verde. This is to give the reader information about the country.

An introduction to Cape Verde

Cape Verde consists of ten islands, of which nine are inhabited. The archipelago is located in the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 600 kilometers west of Senegal. The islands, cover, a combined area of 4000 square kilometers and are of volcanic origin. The country has a population of around 510 000 (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Half of the inhabitants of Cape Verde gather on the largest of its islands, Santiago, in the capital Praia, with a population of 134 900. Praia has an important port and is a big producer of export goods like banana, coffee and sugarcane. Santiago's North and South extremes span 75 kilometers and Praia is situated in the Southern part of Santiago. The second most populated city is Mindelo on Sao Vicente with 72 000 inhabitants (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

The archipelago is divided into two groups Barlavento in the North and Sotavento in the South. Barlavento consists of the islands Santo Antão, São Vicente, São Nicolau, Sal and Boa Vista. Sotavento consists of Santiago, Maio, Fogo and Brava (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Being surrounded by ocean, Cape Verde has a climate with adequate heat. February is the coolest month with a medium temperature of 22 °C, while September is the warmest with 27 °C. The rain period is irregular and usually between August and October. Consequently, one of the major issues in Cape Verde is the climate. In the past, the islands have been hit by prolonged drought and famine (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 2012).

Geographically, Sal, Boa Vista and Maio are quite flat, sandy and dry. The remaining islands are more mountainous and usually have more rainfall, therefore they have greater vegetation. (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

The official language in Cape Verde is Portuguese. However, the population also speaks their own native language, Creole, which is spoken in the everyday life. The Creole language has subgroups and is spoken with different accents in the various islands (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 2012).

When Cape Verde was discovered by the Portuguese in 1460, the islands were deserted. The Portuguese settled down and became residents in Santiago, which is the birthplace of Cape Verde with the country's first city Ribeira Grande, presently known as Cidade Velha. Since then, the country has been Catholic. For a long time, Cape Verde was colonized by the Portuguese, who brought African slaves to the islands. With time, Portuguese and African

inhabitants started to blend with each other and the population of Cape Verde is now mostly Creole, a mix of European and African origin (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 2012).

The country gained its independence on 5th July 1975, with Aristides Pereira as the country's first president, who operated until 1991. Cape Verde has been ruled by the social democrat consignment, PAICV (Cape Verdean independence party), since the election victory in January 2001 (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 2011a). Subsequently, the consignment has been elected in further election: 2006 and 2011. Today Cape Verde is a democratically governed republic with president Jorge Carlos Fonesca, former foreign minister, having been elected as president 2011 (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Living conditions

The population of Cape Verde, in comparison with the African mainland, has a relatively high standard of living. This has been possible through foreign aid and incomes from tourism and fishing. Nevertheless, over half of Cape Verdeans live abroad. In 2008, the UN ceased counting Cape Verde to be one of the least developed countries in the world. Cape Verde is today considered as a low medium- income country (Utrikes politiska institutet, 2012).

Despite good economic growth since the country gained independence, 25 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line. Further, Cape Verde has strong regional differences. The cities Praia and Mindelo are relatively wealthy, while rural areas have been neglected. In 2011, Cape Verde had a population density of 129 inhabitants per square kilometer and 62 percent of the population was living in cities (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013). Compared with other countries in the region, the health care system is well developed and most people have access to care. In four out of five births, qualified personnel is available and approximately two percent of children born dies during their first year of life, which is a low percentage in comparison with other countries in the African region (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Water supply has become an issue for many people, with 15 % of the population lacking access to clean water. Life expectancy at birth is 74 years. The most common causes of death are different cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes. Cape Verde is one of the African countries with lowest HIV/aids infected population, with an estimated 0,2 percent of the population between the ages 15-49 being infected (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Trade and industry

The economy is dominated by the service sector, which stands for 75 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). In 2010, agriculture represented 9 percent of the GDP, while industry represented 16 percent. Around 25 percent of the Cape Verdeans work with agriculture, however, this accounts for only about 15 percent of total food needs. The main crops are corn, beans, cassava and sweet potato. Less than 10 percent of Cape Verdean soil is cultivable and half of the agricultural area is on Santiago (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Because of the lack of cultivable soil and unpredictable rainfall, this leads to a very restricted production. As consequence, Cape Verde is highly depending on the food that the country needs to import. Approximately, 80 percent of the food is imported (FAO, 2010).

As many other countries, Cape Verde is also affected by the financial crisis. The most affected are, the Cape Verdean families who are dependent of other family members that are living and working overseas. Restrained food aid to the country and increasing staple food prices, is complicating the access of food among the local people, especially those who are poor (FAO, 2010).

The Atlantic Ocean surrounding Cape Verde is rich in seafood, especially tuna and lobster, which is a substantial natural resource. Tuna and lobster is economically most important and stands for 50 percent of the export income in Cape Verde (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 2012)

Education

In Cape Verde, primary schooling is obligatory and comprises the ages from seven to 13. The education on this level is divided into two stages: *Instrução Primária* which applies for the ages seven to 11 and *Escola Preparatória*, which is from 11 to 13. Afterwards in the supplementary training, youths can choose between four *liceus*, which is three years of common education or a two year preparatory education for university.

It is common for almost all children who begin primary school to complete education. The proportion of girls is somewhat lower than the share of boys. Nevertheless, in secondary school, which 2/3 of the students complete, the girls are a majority. In contrast, only over half of the country's women have professional occupation.

There is one public and one private university in Cape Verde. The level of education among the Cape Verdeans has gradually increased since the 1970s. Enrolment rates in primary schools was 92 percent for the 2007/2008 school year. (WFP, 2011). From just a third of the population in 1970, literacy among the population (over 15 years old) was estimated 2009 to 85 percent and the same year 16 percent of the state expenses went to education. However, illiteracy is more common among women than men (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013).

Literature Review

This section overview the topics: the effect of lack of food, school as an important setting and the importance of school meals.

The effect of lack of food

Due to limited agricultural productions and draught, an issue in developing countries is lack of food, as similar to the situation in Cape Verde. Consequently, among the rural areas, especially in developing countries, there is often not enough food at home.

The experience of hunger, an empty stomach, is the same for everyone. However, hunger can manifest itself in different ways. Severe food shortage threatens the nutritional status of children and when the body does not have adequate nutrients, the immune system is worsened and the risk of infectious diseases increases. Further, it can cause malnutrition among an affected population, including micronutrient deficiencies. Such deficiencies can hamper intellectual and physical potential and cause lifelong disabilities (WHO, 2006).

WFP (2013) states that no child should attend school hungry. Improving the nutritional status of school-age children is considered an effective investment for the future generation. The childhood and adolescent years are formative when it comes to physical and intellectual development. These years are particularly formative because of the growth-related nutritional needs children have (Brug & Klepp, 2007). A satisfactory diet, with sufficient nutrients is necessary for good health. Complete nutrition, however, occurs only when individuals actually receive the food they need (Palojoki, 2003).

Studies have shown that it is more difficult for children to learn without adequate food and that a lack of nutrients can affect the physical and intellectual development of children. Deficiencies of iodine, iron, and folate may affect the development of the brain and the emergent cognitive functions negatively, and there is some evidence to suggest that zinc, vitamin B12, and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids may also be important (Bryan, Osendarp, Hughes, Calvaresi, Baghurts, van Klinken, 2004).

School as an important setting

The school has been recognized as an important setting because of its possibility to reach children and adolescents on equal terms and when they are particularly predisposed (WHO, 2009). In this case, equal terms means that the school is a neutral setting where the children are gathered under the same circumstances and have access to equal possibilities. Within the school meal context, the childhood and adolescence are important. During these years, children evolve and establish their eating habits (e.g. Kelder, Perry, Klepp, & Lythle, 1994; Nader, et al., 1999). Therefore, school is an important setting in relation to food and nutrition.

There are health issues that are connected to socioeconomic background. School is a neutral setting that is available for the children under the same circumstances. Therefore, the school could play an important role in eliminating the different health outcomes related to the socioeconomic situation the children have (WHO, 2009). Findings from a study made in Brazil, show that families with higher income, education and better living conditions can

provide a high quality diet for their children (Reis, 2012). Which low socio-economic households cannot guarantee. Prell (2010) points out that school meals can provide a platform for directly addressing child health and nutrition. It is seen as an important part of health interventions and local public health work.

In many communities, schools are often situated in the center. Therefore the school meal context is working as a bridge to connect teachers, parents, cooks, children, farmers and the local market. Promotion of traditional foods, better food and nutrition education can improve diets and help mitigate the impact of increased international food prices (WFP, 2013).

The importance of school meals

If school meals are not provided, poor households must often choose between sending their children to school or to a work, as well as caring for siblings. This is common in many developing countries, as well as in Cape Verde, especially in the countryside where poverty is still high (WFP, 2011).

This way, school meals act as a safety net for underprivileged families (WFP, 2013). Due to their economic situation, these families are usually unable to provide the household with requisite food. Knowing that the children are provided with food, it can encourage poor families to send their children to school and enabling them to gain education. Therefore, school meals could contribute to reduce differences in educational outcomes (WHO,2009).

Usually, girls are significant recipients of the school meal programme in developing countries (WFP, 2013). A study made in a rural area in India on the effects of free cooked meals to school children, shows that the promise of a nutritious meal each day increases enrolment in primary school and promotes regular attendance (Afridi, 2011). Further, an average monthly attendance rate of girls increased with 12 percentage points (Afridi, 2011). Being served the same food in a school, without any relation to children's socioeconomic background, school meals can promote social equality (WHO, 2009).

Over the long term, school meals aim to combat poverty and school feeding programs are designed to improve school attendance, educational achievement, physical growth and other health benefits. School meals can be used to effectively tackle hunger, nutrition, education, gender inequality and broader development issues (WFP, 2013).

Theoretical framework

To explain how children in Cape Verde experience school meals and what meanings they associate with them, this thesis employs the theory of social constructionism, developed by Peter Ludwig Berger and Thomas Luckmann.

The two sociologists, introduced the term social construction in 1966 with their book *The Social Construction of Reality*. The central concept of this thesis is that human reality is socially constructed. Social constructionist work deals with both *what* is being constructed and *how* it is being constructed (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). In this thesis, I am looking at *how* and *what* is being constructed within the school meal context in Cape Verde.

Social constructionism

Social constructionism focuses on understanding how people come to define reality in their everyday life and the ways in which they participate in the construction of their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, known, and made into habits by humans. The social construction of reality is an ongoing, dynamic process that is developed, transmitted and maintained by individuals acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of their reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Constructionists argue that social reality is not grounded in facts and conditions that are independent of human interaction. Social reality is not an immutable and independent order, it emerges in social interaction. Constructionist thinking is therefore critical of portraying social reality as independent of time and space, local conditions, beliefs and practices (Styhre, 2008).

Institutionalization

As explained by Berger and Luckmann (1966), human beings are living and interacting in a social system. By living and interacting together, humans produce various ideas and images of each other. These images are reflections of humans actions. With time, the ideas and images evolve and become embodied and established in society. Furthermore, they become accessible for other individuals in the social system. This process is called institutionalization, which means that ideas and knowledge is embodied and established in society (Styhre, 2008).

Berger and Luckmann (1966), claims that without the embedded meaning (institutionalization) no society could exist. Therefore, individual's conceptions, knowledge and beliefs of what reality is becomes embedded in society. What Berger and Luckmann (1966) states with this concept, is that reality is created by social interaction and the beliefs we have about reality.

Socialization

Socialization occurs when the individual participates in the institutional structure, in its objective reality. By this participation, individuals are given their subjective inputs, which implies that there is also a subjective reality. Birx (2007) refers to socialization as the process of learning, which all people go through. By socialization, the individual becomes a fully active a member of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). During socialization we learn the language, we pattern behavior and adapt to society's norms, rules, values, and structures for playing specific social roles (Seymour, 1983).

Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by human beings and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), society possesses objective institutionalization, at the same time it is built up by activities that express subjective meaning.

Children's meanings and experiences

Individuals construct their world, experiences and meanings through interactions. With this theory and terms, Berger and Luckmann (1966), aimed to explain how people make meaning from their experiences in their socially constructed reality. By employing social constructionism to this thesis, it might give an understanding about children's meanings and experiences related to school meals and where they arise from. It is thus important for my research to take into account how children produce meaning and knowledge from their everyday world in order to explain experiences and meanings attached to school meals.

The sociology of childhood, as it has developed over the last twenty years, has been concerned with understanding children as social actors and as active creators of meaning, rather than as merely passive recipients (James & Prout 1989). This study follows this by recognizing that children are a part of constructing their own knowledge and meaning out of their experiences.

Method

This section aim to present the research design, research approach and the data collection methods used to conduct this study.

Research design

This study aims to explore and describe the experiences and meanings children create in relation to school meals. A qualitative approach has been chosen to achieve this. The purpose of this thesis is to gain insight and describe experiences and meanings related to school meals from a child's perspective. Therefore, a descriptive research design was chosen.

It is appropriate to use a qualitative approach when the researcher is entering a different culture and environment (Lichtman, 2010). When engaging in a subject, that has not much recognition, as in this case, a qualitative research approach is further fruitful.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative research approach emanating from anthropology and focusing on the study of culture and social interactions of a particular group in their natural setting (Lichtman, 2010). Ethnographers seek for a holistic view of reality and understanding of human experience. It is also a way of collecting qualitative data.

Denscombe (2010) states that being objective is difficult when using the researcher as a tool, as is done in ethnography. However, Lichtman (2010), points out that a researcher should accept that there is no single objective reality to strive for. The researcher, serves as the filter through which information is gathered, processed and organized.

To develop an understanding of the environment that is studied and to collect in-depth descriptions, an ethnography requires the researcher to stay in the actual environment for a considerable amount of period (Denscombe, 2010).

This was not possible because of the short timeframe of the thesis. Nevertheless, I adhered to ethnographic principles of research and employed data production methods usually adopted in ethnographic research. According to Mattiasson and Ottoson (2012), when taking into consideration that a case study was made and studied in its own natural setting, the study is seen as an ethnography.

Gatekeeper

My gatekeeper in Praia was the Cape Verdean School Social Action Foundation (FICASE), a institution who is taking care of the management of the school meal programme on a national level in Cape Verde. I contacted FICASE on my own initiative when arriving in Praia. Then, the gatekeeper was then informed about the study.

To find a school that was willing to participate, personal contacts from FICASE were used. Ethnographers must often obtain information from any source that are available (Lichtman, 2010). Therefore, one sampling technique that is often used in qualitative approach, is called snowball sampling, which means to identify additional participants by asking those already contacted to name others with similar characteristic.

As it was tough to get in contact with the informants on my own, and also because of limited time, having a gatekeeper gave me the opportunity to reach out to relevant participants and collect data for the study (Denscombe, 2010).

Sample

Case studies involve the study of single cases, such as an organization or a group of individuals. The purpose of the case studies is to highlight the important key aspects, gain a deeper understanding and a multidimensional image. It also provides the opportunity to combine methods with different characteristics, in order to provide the most complete picture of the case as possible (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

The population chosen for this case study was a public primary school, *Escola Ponta d'Àgua*, located in a municipality in Praia called Ponta d'Àgua . The school had 872 children between ages six to 12. Since there are children from different municipalities attending this school, there were children that were very poor, yet, also children that came from lower middle class families, with somewhat better standards of living. Ponta d'Àgua was not classified as a rural municipality, however it was in the periphery of the city. To collect data, one 2nd grade class and four 6th grade classes participated. Also, an interview with the headmaster and observations were made.

Translator

Due to the language barrier, a translator helped me with communication. The translator was a familiar contact from Cape Verde and spoke Creole, Portuguese, English and Swedish. Before visiting the school, me and a translator had a meeting about the study and the different parts that will be conducted. This was to give information about the study and ensure that we understand each other.

Data collection

This study had a timeframe that consisted of 10 weeks. The time I spent in Cape Verde was from 20 March until 10 May. The actual data collection was conducted during three of the days I was staying in Ponta d'Àgua . The main data was collected from, children's drawings, written compositions, observations of the school meal served to the children of the school and an interview with the headmaster.

Children's drawings

A 2nd grade class with 36 seven- year old children, were asked during class time by their teacher to draw a picture of what they associated with school meals. The students were each given a blank A4 sheet of paper and could decide on the use of coloured pens and pencils, which I provided. The drawings were done in 45 minutes. However, the children had no time limit to draw.

By using drawings as a data collecting method, children can freely choose what they want to include and not being prompted by adult's or a researcher's frame of reference. Furthermore, allowing those unwilling, unable or too upset to express themselves verbally, or through literacy skills, drawing is an opportunity to express their opinion in a fun and creative way. The children may also be more accurate and report more information than they may do verbally (MacPhail & Kinchin , 2004).

MacPhail and Kinchin (2004), encourage those working with young children, to use drawings as a child-centered procedure and evaluation tool. A visual perspective offers a complementary viewpoint to word-based research and provides another way of communicating research findings (Prosser, 2002).

Compositions

To complement these drawings, eight children were selected from four different classes, (age 11, 6th grade), by the headmaster, to write a composition about their experiences and meanings attached to school meals. 11- year old children were chosen for this task, since it was difficult for seven years old to write about their experiences and associations to school meals.

The headmaster selected two children from each class to receive a variety of different individual perspectives. Provided by me, the children were each given a blank A4 sheet to write on. Before beginning, the children were told that there was no time limit and no pressure on the length and grammatical correctness of the composition. The students were sitting separately from each other, with one chair apart, to ensure that they are writing their own individual experiences without influencing each other. All eight children completed their assignment in approximately 60 minutes. The children wrote their compositions in Portuguese.

Observations

The observations were carried out before the interview. Bryman (2008) points out that it is good to become familiar with the environment in which the interviews should be carried out before performing them. It is then easier to interpret and understand what is being told. Also, an observation one hour before, during and one hour after the meal time was done.

The observations that were made were non-participating observation, that according to Lichtman (2010), is a procedure through which no interaction with the people in the setting occurs.

For the observations that was performed within the school meal context, an observations scheme was elaborated (see Appendix 2). As Lichtman (2010) states, it is impossible to notice everything in the natural setting. Therefore, the observation scheme was designed by writing down two themes with subthemes. Yet, I remained open for other sighting. It is advisable to determine three to five themes before doing an observation (Lichtman, 2010). Notes were taken down in English with approval from the participants.

Observations in natural settings assists the understanding of the complexity of human behavior and interrelationships. Natural settings are also desirable when collecting other types of data, such as photographs and pictures created by the informants or of the environment in which the informants live (Lichtman, 2010).

Interview

An interview with the headmaster was held in Creole, the native language. To secure the data, an audio-recorder was used. Also, I took notes during the interview. Denscombe (2012), advice to use audio-recordings and notes to strengthen the received data.

The interview lasted for 30 minutes and was conducted in a semi-structured way. It is common that semi structured interviews are framed around a few topics (Lichtman, 2010). An interview guide was elaborated (see Appendix 1) and it included two topics and 10 open questions. According to Bryman (2008), there are advantages with open questions. The purpose is to talk freely and open where you have the questions as a support.

The translator, conducting the interview by following the interview guide, aimed to build a relationship with the interviewee. This was initiated by making conversation about a general topic that was not connected to the research. Denscombe (2010) suggest that it is beneficial to begin an interview with an easy question. This way the informant feels confident and more comfortable during the interview. To be able to gather data of value , it is important to generate comfort and trust with the participants. Furthermore, Lichtman (2010), points out that this is a process that takes time.

To guarantee that the answers from the headmaster have been accurately understood, the translator repeated them. Denscombe (2011) points out that is can be an advantage to repeat the answers.

As the interview was coming to an end, the headmaster was asked if she would like to add any comments or insights concerning the subject. This type of ending question is preferable when ending interviews, because it can generate new interesting material (Denscombe, 2011).

Casual conversation took place in the classroom with the teacher. It is common to have casual conversations in the field while conducting a case study or ethnography. Opportunities arises for the researcher to talk to participants and the data are often useful (Lichtman, 2010).

Journal

Except for notes taken at the interview and observations, I kept a journal, where I wrote down my impressions. These field notes were reflections on the natural setting, environment, people, expressions, interviews and observations. In addition, I took photos in the classroom, during lunch time and in the kitchen with permission from the headmaster, teacher and cook. These photos were only used for myself, and served to capture and remember specific moments and the surroundings.

Analysis of data

In order to treat the results of this case study, a qualitative content analysis was chosen. Meaning that, the raw data is coded and then put into themes (Lichtman, 2010).

All empirical material were transcribed on the computer. The interview with the headmaster was first transcribed in Creole, translated and transcribed to English. Then, followed the coding process by reading the transcript a few times. Meanwhile, new codes were found and some codes were deleted. This process was made for the different data.

The children's compositions were first orally translated to English by the translator and in the same time directly transcribed by me on the computer. This was to exactly capture the children's way of expressing themselves.

After the coding process, one ultimate review of the transcripts were done. This was to see if the codes were consistent throughout the interview, observation, drawings and compositions. After further analysis, these codes were made into themes. To find these themes, I read through the transcript of the interview, compositions, drawings and observations and could see clear themes that were recurrent.

Narrative

When presenting the results, I have contextualized the chosen themes with short narrative stories about what I have seen and heard in the field. Narrative writing means writing a story about people's lives and it is common to use this type of writing when highlighting people's experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

The aim of this study is to gain insight about the children's experiences and meanings associated with school meals. Also, to present the experiences from the informants point of view, rather than the researcher's perspective. Therefore, this style of writing and presenting is suitable. This thesis aims to present the data from the informants point of view.

A narrative writing style was chosen due to the fact that it put the reader into the context (Denison & Markula, 2003). The aim for choosing the narrative writing style in this thesis, was to involve the reader and to mediate an understanding about the reality that these children have, yet also to show the experience they have. No fictitious data has been used, only data collected from the different methods. The names given in the stories are pseudonyms, this was to achieve as much anonymity as possible.

Ethical considerations

There are four ethical principles that a researcher should take into account: voluntariness, integrity, confidentiality and anonymity (Bryman, 2008). These ethical principles have been followed when collecting the data.

The participants were informed about the aim of the study and the fact that it was voluntary to participate. According to Vetenskapsrådet (2011), the informants should be informed that participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time. Furthermore, the participants were ensured that the information they contribute with would only be used for this particular study and not anything else.

Then, the informants gave their oral consent. Before the interview and observation took place, I asked for approval to audio-record and to take notes. All communication with the school was verbal and made in place to avoid being misunderstood.

If there are under aged children involved in the study, there must be parental consent for participation (Bryman, 2008). Due to the difficulties of reaching and getting in contact with the children's parents, this important ethical principle was not applied. However, the headmaster was informed of the situation and gave her oral consent to continue the study.

It was important as a researcher when meeting the informants, to keep in mind that I was in an unfamiliar environment, such as a different culture and society. It was also important for me to genuinely understand the informants reality and situation.

To ensure personal integrity, all information obtained has been handled confidentially. Meaning that personal information and opinions should be stored in a way that outsiders cannot access them (Bryman, 2008).

Results

In this section, I present the materials produced in this study: compositions, drawings observations, and the interview with the headmaster. I will present the four themes that have been developed through analytic procedure and contextualize them with short narrative stories and representative quotes. These themes are: School as an important platform, Importance of the school meal for children, Concern for others, Social and emotional meanings.

The following results are representative examples of how the children of my study experience and what meanings they associate within the school meal context. The data from the compositions, drawings, observations and interview have been aggregated and put into short narrative stories. To distinguish the narrative descriptions, they are written in another font.

- Times New Roman: compositions, drawings
- Arial Narrow: observation, interview, drawings, compositions

School as an important platform

The school takes advantage of the fact that the children are looking for food in the school, and it is a place that gathers the children under the same roof, teaching them and giving them content in the everyday life. Thus, the school is seen as an important setting.

The education of children has improved a lot in the last years due to the school feeding programme, which has resulted in greater understanding of the importance of education in the society. However, if food is not provided, the children stop coming to school. This following short narrative exemplifies the importance of such a platform in Cape Verde:

Some of the parents may take their children out from school. "This is a Cape Verdean reality", the headmaster says. She shakes her head, leans forward and says: "I think the life situation of these families doesn't allow it for them to have the children here and not having food"..... " The parents see the school as a way of survival, sending their children to eat here". Then she leans back again saying: "In my community, I have seen a mother telling her son: Are you not going to school today? and the son answering: No, I'm not going today. Then the mother says: Then you will have no food today, because we have nothing at home.

With sadness, but passion, the headmaster points out that "If you take away the food from the schools in Cape Verde, the children will not learn, the educational system will stop. So we need to find resources and bring it to Cape Verde, to reinsure that we can provide our school children with food."

This story clarifies the importance of the school setting and that it is a safety net for many families. The school feeding programme is not only of great value for the children as individual beings, but also the society as a whole. The school feeding is seen as a benefit for educating the Cape Verdean population and improving these children's lives. It also shows the consequences if no school meals are served in school.

Importance of the school meal for children

What the children define as important with having school meals are related to the fact that they experience a lack of food. The school meal for them means that they have access to a hot meal, therefore it has a significance for their health and concentration which enables them to focus and learn in class. This theme will present the three most important meanings the children related to school meals.

Sitting on a bench in the school yard, the headmaster is saying that it is particularly the schools in the periphery that have a necessity of the school meals. In the periphery the children comes to school not just for learning but to have a hot meal. The headmaster explains that, for Cape Verde, the school meal is an advantage for the process of teaching and learning. "Cape Verde is a medium developing country, but we still have characteristics of sub developing countries." We have parents that get out of home early without feeding the child and the child comes to school without eating anything, thinking about and waiting for the food. "In my opinion, the school meal programme is something we need to hold on to, it should never stop."

Standing in the middle of their reality, time is now 9.40 am. In the classroom, some of the children cannot sit still on their chairs, some are standing, waiving with their arms and others are looking around and out from the window. Those sitting down are drawing lines in their notebooks, that were used 30 minutes ago for writing the alphabet. "At this time", the teacher says: "There is a lack of motivations and concentration among the class, the children are too excited and it is difficult to teach."

This narrative story is showing the reality that exists in Cape Verde and the necessity the country have for the school feeding programme. The bottom paragraph shows that when it is time for the hot meal in school, the children become restless. Not only because their energy levels may be low which causes difficulties in concentration, but also because they are excited and indeed anxious to have their meal. It is their highlight of the day.

The children clarified that the school meal is something very positive and important for them. Some of the children point out that it is not only important for them as an individual, but also important for their classmates. The children exemplified that as follows:

For me, the school meal is very important because sometimes other students come from far away and sometimes they don't eat at home. (Edmisa, age 11)

It is good to have food at school because sometimes the students don't have lunch at home because the parents are not home and don't have money to buy food. (Erickson, age 12)

These two quotes also clarify that the children are conscious of each other's life situation.

The school meals have several meanings. The three most important meanings the children have are interlinked with each other. First, the children expressed that school meals are healthy to eat, which is shown by the following quote:

For me the school meal is very important because it has a lot of vitamins. (Edmisa, age 11)

Secondly, the school meal also gives the children energy. Thirdly, this enables them to focus and learn in the class room. The children clarified that with the following quotes:

The school meal for me and my mates means more strength to study. If we don't eat anything at school, we pay no attention in class. (Erickson, age 12)

With food we will have good health, strength to study and we will study easier. (Diana, age 11)

The school food is always good because it makes the students have more attention in the classroom. (Ines, age 11)

As shown in the quotes above, the children expressed the fact that school meals give them energy, by directly relating food with replenished energy levels, which is directly connected with being able to focus better and easier.

One of the main reasons why school meals are of great importance is because some of the children experience a lack of food at home. Similarly, the children expressed this with writing that they attend school without eating at home:

The school food is very important for me because sometimes I don't have lunch at home and I eat at school. (Edmisa, age 11)

Due to the fact that some of the children do not eat before coming to school, there is an expressed gratitude for being provided with school meals at school. The school meal gives the children an opportunity to eat. The quotes below demonstrate that the children appreciated that they have school meals:

It is thanks to the school that students can feed themselves. (Edmisa, age 11)

Thanks to God, they give food at school. I'm very grateful for the school meal and everything. Thank you cooks and headmaster. Thanks to all the teacher. Thanks to all the employees of this beautiful school. (Mara, age 12)

In addition, a majority of the children interlinked the gratitude with tastiness:

Our cooks cook very well. I thank them. They have a good hand for the kitchen². (Erickson, age 12)

I love the food because it is well done and very tasteful. The school meal is very rich. I like the food we get very much. (Vanice, age 11)

Concern for others

The children express a concern and worry, due to the lack of food in their home and the lack of food that occasionally occurs in their school. Moreover, they relate the concern of lack of food with staying hungry and not being able to learn. For this reason, there is a concern expressed by the headmaster and teachers which is exemplified with the narrative story below:

² A Cape Verdean expression for saying that someone is talented in cooking and a way of thanking for the food.

Some days, for various reasons, the school doesn't have food. Worried, with a frown on her face, the headmaster says: "Then it is impossible to have classes, the children become impatient and they don't have the will to learn, no motivation or energy". These days, school ends at 10 am when the hot meal is served, because it is not possible to continue.

A reality, from my experience as a teacher, when it's time for lunch time, if the school cannot provide food that day, the teacher, many times is forced to take money from his own pocket to buy food for some students. Some of them would faint in the class room, because they didn't eat anything at home.

The food is brought to the classroom at 10 am, by Madalena, one of the cooks. With a big blue plastic bowl on her head, she first brings aluminum plates and cutlery. The second round she brings a bucket with fish soup. You can see in the children's faces that they are excited. Every day there are three children that are responsible for serving their classmates. The teacher starts putting food up on the plates and the children responsible are gathered by the teacher's front desk. One by one they take plates with food and serve their classmates. After half of the class has a plate in front of them, the bucket with food is empty. One of the responsible children runs to the kitchen to refill it. When he/she is back, the serving continues. When all children, have a full plate of food in front of them, some of them pray and everybody starts eating together.



A silence has reached the classroom, the children are busy eating their meal. With her smile, the teacher reveals her white teeth and asks: Do you like the food? and the children answers with enthusiasm: Yes!

One of the children says: "If you don't have food it is very dangerous because the stomach stays empty". The teacher comes up close to me and points out that: "Some of the children come to school without eating breakfast, the school meal may be the only hot meal they eat, maybe the children that come from better conditions will have something to eat at home late in the evening".

There is a small amount of food left in the bucket. Only a few of the children, those that come from poor conditions, are served another plate. "It is certainly not enough for all of them" the teacher says. Those who have the possibility, provide their children a juice, yoghurt, fruit or crackers to eat with the meal. After eating her hot meal, Liliana takes out a muffin from her backpack. Generously, she rips of a piece of the muffin and shares it with her classmate.

When they finish with their hot meal, the children put their plates and cutlery back in the blue bucket and the responsible children carries it back to the kitchen.

Occasionally, the school struggles with food supply, which affects the quantity of cooked food. The children were aware of this struggle and they attached it with sadness. They clarified their concern regarding the lack of food in school as follows:

They do not always cook food, because there is no rice or gas. If one day there is no more food, I will be very sad because the other students don't eat before coming to school, me neither. (Maliki, age 12)

The food is enough for everybody, but just sometimes.. Sometimes I think about what we would do if we didn't have food in the school. We would stay hungry, we would not have strength to play, to learn, we would be sad.(Ines, age 11)

A consequence of not always having enough food, means that the cooks need to do the best of the situation and cook with what they have in storage. What the school usually has in storage is basic products like rice, vegetables and potatoes. These are provided and distributed once a month from an organization. The school needs to complement the basic products through their own economy, which can sometimes be a struggle.



This lack of food in school is shown by the children expressing their thoughts about what they are served and the variety of food in school:

It is always soup and soup and I don't like it, neither do the other ones. If we have rice one day, the other day we should have something else. (Ines, age 11)

Here in the school, they give us healthy food, but sometimes you have real food today and soup tomorrow and sometimes rice today and rice tomorrow. (Eliane, age 11)

For example, when we had soup every day the boys used to say that they were fed up with only eating soup everyday and even sad that the food had to little salt. I think they should give soup, but they should also give other things. They can give soup but not every day. (Edmisa, age 12)

Social and emotional meanings

The children's concern is not only related to being hungry and being unable to learn, which is a consequence of not having enough access to food. Rather, there are social and emotional meanings associated with food, especially with the lack of food and the correlation of that food symbolizes caring. The children exemplified this with the following quotes:

This food that they give me, helps me understand the teaching in the class-room. Every day they give us this meal and they know they can help us with learning. (Eliane, age 11)

Also the school food shows that they care about us. (Maliki, 12)

The comments show that school meals are seen to be a way of showing compassion and caring for their classmates. Mealtimes are not only simply occasions for the ingestion of food but that they perform other crucial social functions for the participants.

Due to showing and being conscious of one another, the lack of food is related with being concerned not only for themselves, but also for their classmates who are in need of the school meal. This is clarified as follows:

I think that if we didn't have lunch at school I would stay sad and worried with everybody because they would stay hungry. For me, the school food is very important because it makes us strong, to be able to study more focused, with more joy and it help us think and to feel better. (Mara, age 12)

If the government would help our school with the food the students that lives far away, if they don't eat at home they will eat at school and I'm sure that they will be satisfied with the school food. (Erickson, age, 12)

The concern the children have with the scenario that if the school no longer can provide with school meals, shows another dimension of why the school meal is important for them. The school meal has another function than just being nutritious. Being provided with school meals means for the children that the school is caring for them.

Children's drawings

Out of 36 drawings, I have chosen two that are representative for what a majority of the children drew. An overall comment for the drawings is that, the children seemed to draw what lunchtime looked like, not really what school meal means to them. However, what is emphasized in all of the 36 drawings is the cook. The cook is a significant figure within the school meal context.



This drawing, shows the cook who is bringing the aluminum cutlery and food everyday in to the children's classroom. It also illustrates two classmates eating together.



This drawing is an illustration of the school meal process. First there is food and a cook. The cook brings the food to the classroom. Then the responsible children serve a plate to their classmates. Finally, they have a hot meal to eat.

Discussion

This section begins with a discussion of results, where the theory of social constructionism has been applied. After that, a conclusion follows, implications are formulated and finally a discussion of the data collecting methods.

Discussion of results

Escola Ponta d'Água- where institutionalization takes place

Through Berger's and Luckman's (1966) theory of social constructionism, the school can be seen as an institution. The school is an important part of the children's reality. The school is a child's second major life world after the family context which is associated with home. School is a place where children's different worlds meet (Palojoki, 2003). As in *Escola Ponta d'Água*, there are children from different neighborhoods, which means that there are children with both different and similar backgrounds, life situations and realities attending.

It is also a setting where social interaction takes place. By interacting in school, the children create concepts and representations of each other. Eventually, a particular value and mode of behaviour or a social role becomes habituated. These representations become available for other children in the school setting and then institutionalized. This way the children create a reality that is socially constructed. Which means that individuals conceptions, knowledge and beliefs of what reality is become embedded and established within the school.

It is the interaction within the context that constitutes the meanings (Berger & Luckmann 1966) . To explain how people make meaning from their experiences we need to take into account that the children construct their world, experiences and meanings through interaction in school and society. With that said, *Escola Ponta d'Água* is an important field for understanding where the children's meanings related to food and school meal arise from.

The lack of food- a part of the children's reality

The lack of food is a phenomenon both experienced at home and occasionally in the school setting, therefore it could be said that it exists in their reality. The reality of not having sufficient access to food determines how the children experience school meals and their meanings associated with it. The findings from this study show that the children experience school meals to be very important, due to the lack of food they experience at home. They also experience a concern about the lack of food and their meaning about this concern is related with staying hungry and not being able to learn.

This is an important aspect to take into account, since the children's life situations shapes their view on food. The results show that school meals mean more than just being a nutritious meal that enables the children to focus and learn in school. Instead, food is symbolized as caring. Being served a hot meal means that the school cares for them. It is also a way of

showing compassion for their classmates, the findings show that the children are not only concerned for themselves, but for one another.

Further, meanings and experiences have a social dimension, as it can never be separated from its social context. Social constructionist thinking, is critical of portraying reality as dependent of time and space, local conditions, beliefs and practices (Styhre, 2008). Meaning is constructed within the reality by the experiences and meanings can be seen as products of the culture and reality (Lupton, 1994). In other words, the children's meanings and experiences can be looked upon as a reflection of their reality they are living in.

The empathy the children have developed through their experiences of hardship can be explained as a product of the Cape Verdean culture. There is a word in Creole, *morabeza*, which is a word that characterizes being Cape Verdean, namely open spirit, welcoming, hospitable and caring. Caring for each other seems to be something that is ordinary in their culture.

Social and emotional meaning- an outcome of socialization

The socialization process equip the children with abilities that are essential to be able to take part of their social realities and to perform as a functioning member (Seymour, 1983). This process is a way of becoming integrated with social norms, values and structure. This happens when we are participating in the institutional structure. By participating, individuals are given their own subjective meanings and learn how to adapt to the society. Seymour (1983) states that the most important socialization is thought to be the period of primary socialization which happens when we are children.

By attending school, which consists of the years that are very formative both when it comes to physical and intellectual development and where behaviour can be influenced. Having a presence in the school meal context, children participate in the institutional structure and they are in a context, from which they can make their own subjective meaning and reflections.

In the findings, the children express a concern both for themselves and for one another. This admission suggests that the children have a sense of that there are children in the school who come from poorer conditions and that they may be in more need of the school feeding. This consciousness for one another's life situation can be explained by, the meal time playing a crucial part in the socialization process (Seymour, 1983).

During mealtimes, the children learn what kind of food is available to whom and how to evaluate food. Mealtimes provide occasions, within which children interact one another and make their own meanings and reflections within the context. Eating food together brings with it a social map of roles, reference groups, status and social networks (Osowski, 2012).

Further, meals have different symbolic meanings. Douglas (1972) states that being served a hot meal indicates intimacy and caring, which is also noted in the findings of this case study. The social and emotional meanings the children associate with school meals can be explained by the fact that they experience food to be more than the function to refuel their energy stores.

The social and emotional meaning that the children expressed, can be looked upon as something that arises from the children's own subjective meaning making from their everyday world. Individual subjective views on certain issues are an outcome of socialization and it has a significant impact on actions and understanding of each other (Birx, 2007).

As Berger and Luckmann (1966) state, the subjective meaning making is the interpreted reality and it is subjectively meaningful to the individual. Society possesses objective institutionalization, at the same time it is built up by activities that express subjective meaning.

Conclusion

This thesis has looked at children's experiences and the meanings attached to school meals. To conclude, the three most important meanings the children have associated with school meals are related to that it is (1) good health that, (2) enables them to learn better and (3) that it is important due to the lack of food they experience.

However, there is a concern about the fact that there is a lack of food that the children experience at home and sometimes in school. They relate the concern of lack of food with staying hungry and being unable to learn. This concern is mutually shared by the teachers and headmaster.

Further, the children are not only worried for themselves, also for one another. This way, the children express that the school meal has another function than only being nutritious and enabling them to go to school. Moreover, the children have social and emotional meanings attached to the school meal.

What is also worth mentioning is that food is symbolized as caring by the children. From the children's perspective, being provided with school meals is seen as important because it means that the school is caring for them. It is also a way of showing compassion and caring for their classmates.

There are three key findings in this study that needs to be highlighted:

- That the children have developed empathy through a concern for others through having experienced hardship.
- From the children's perspective, the school meal means that the school is caring for them.
- Pupil's attendance, concentration level and academic achievements would be much lower if there was no school meal provided.

Implications

The findings from this study contribute with new knowledge about the importance of the school feeding programme in Cape Verde. Gaining deeper knowledge and understanding of the significance of school meals can further develop the school meal programme.

This thesis has looked upon the significance of school meals from the actual recipient's point of view in a broader perspective. I believe that this study shows that the school feeding programme is a necessity in Cape Verde and that it is of great importance.

However, there is a need to improve school feeding programmes, especially the access of food and the distribution of food to the schools. Cape Verde is a geographically isolated area and this fact can be a contribution for the lack of food.

Regarding the gap in research on this particular subject, more research is needed. A suggestion for further research is to do a more thorough study over a period of time on how the distribution of food is taking place.

Discussion of methods

Drawings

There are other methods, which could have been used in this project. The drawings could be complemented with group discussions where the children talk about their drawings. Due to the language barrier and difficulties of communication, this method was excluded.

There can be possible weaknesses with using drawings, such as, it is limited by the drawing skills of the individual and it might only reflect values that can be presented graphically. Therefore, the purpose with the composition was to aid the understanding of the children's drawings. Having the same children both drawing and writing might facilitate the analyzing process which could have another affect on the conclusions.

When arriving to the school, the only class who had possibilities to contribute with drawings was a 2th grade class and they were not willing to write a composition. Decisions had to be made according to the present situation. The 2th grade class was asked to draw what school meal means to them and it might be a tough question for a seven year old to answer.

However, drawings made from the children in their natural setting may have seemingly objective explanatory power that masks the subjectivity implicit in their making (Prosser, 2002)

Observations

It would have been an advantage to have a partner while conducting the observations, to be able to gather more data and to capture different perspectives. If two people are making the same observation, they will undoubtedly notice dissimilar things. This is because we have our individual cognition. I believe this is positive, since it can make the data richer.

To not inform the participants that I was observing, can be problematic ethically (Patel & Davidson, 2003). Although, the headmaster was informed about the observations, she did not inform anyone else. Nevertheless, the children could see my presence. Knowing that you are observed can make the informants feel uncomfortable and therefore act in a way that is not representative. In this case, it was not something that I felt.

Besides this, the observations that were made complemented the data from the interview, drawings and written compositions.

Interview

The support from the translator was necessary, since different cultures and languages were involved. It made it possible for me to communicate with the participants in both Creole and Portuguese, where my language knowledge was limited. In addition, the translator spoke Swedish and English, which was an advantage. By speaking the same languages, the risk of being misunderstood was reduced. The interview guide was followed and the translator never interfered with own, thus to not affect the relation and atmosphere between the headmaster and us. This was also to create a comfortable atmosphere to be able to receive valuable data. Being synchronized with the translator was of great importance, knowing that it can affect the received information, which then can influence the conclusions.

Yet, there could still be a risk that the translator might have explained some things to me in his own interpretation. However, the fact that I understood Creole and Portuguese, made it possible for me to follow what the headmaster was telling in the interview.

Own reflections

The experience of doing research in *Escola Ponta d'Água* has been of great value to me. Having access to food is a basic human right. Seeing the headmaster and teachers passionately involved in the children's reality and to see how they take own initiatives to enrich the school, puts perspective on the reality we have in Sweden. The overall conclusion from this journey is that school meals are of great importance for the children as individuals yet also from a societal perspective.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide with the headmaster

School setting

Can you give a general view of your school and the children attending?

What do you think school meals mean to children?

What conditions and possibilities do the school have in providing school meals?

What are the consequences if the school would not provide school meals?

What role do the school have in providing and serving school meals?

School feeding

Can you talk about the benefits of the school feeding in general?

What are your experiences from it?

How many times do you serve food to the children?

Do you see a correlation between food service and children's attendance in your school?

Why are school meals necessary?

Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience on the topic?

Appendix 2

Observation scheme

School meal

Kitchen

Setting

One hour before, during and after the meal

Amount

Proportion

Ingredients

Processes

Classroom

Climate

Teaching

Concentration

Activities

Energy levels

Attendance

Children