

Homework and Relationship with Families in Full-Time School

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ABSTRACT – Homework and Relationship with Families in Full-Time School¹. This article discusses different concepts and practices about homework in schools that develop full-time education projects and analyzes the relationship between school and families in this new context. Questionnaires were sent to project coordinators and to class coordinators of 6- to 9-year-old students from 173 elementary schools in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte. Besides, case studies were performed in eight institutions. The results indicate the intensification of conflicts around homework and the division of educational work between family and school. They also signal the possibility of creating new agreements on this issue.
Keywords: Homework. Full-Time School. Extended School Day. Family. School.

RESUMO – Dever de Casa e Relação com as Famílias na Escola de Tempo Integral. Este artigo busca discutir diferentes concepções e práticas em torno dos deveres de casa em escolas que desenvolvem projetos de ampliação da jornada escolar e, a partir dessa reflexão, analisar a relação entre a escola e as famílias nessa nova conjuntura. Foram aplicados questionários aos coordenadores dos projetos e aos coordenadores das turmas de 1º ao 3º ano do ensino fundamental de 173 escolas da Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte. Realizaram-se, ainda, estudos de caso em oito instituições. Os resultados indicam o acirramento dos conflitos em torno dos deveres de casa e da divisão do trabalho educacional entre família e escola, mas também sinalizam a possibilidade de construção de novos acordos em torno desse tema.

Palavras-chave: Dever de Casa. Escola de Tempo Integral. Ampliação da Jornada Escolar. Família. Escola.

Introduction

This article aims to discuss some results of a research developed in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte which identified different concepts and practices around homework, in public elementary schools that develop projects to increase the number of hours in the school. Further, we want to analyze aspects on the relation school-families in this new educational context, the *full-time school*.

In the recent years, the increase of school hours in elementary school has been an important tendency in Brazilian educational scenery, advocated by the legislation and stimulated by public policies. The *National Education Guidelines* and *Bases Law* (Law N. 9394/96) provides the progressive extension of school hours, aiming a full-time school (Brasil, 1996). The National Educational Plan approved in 2014 establishes the goal, to be reached within ten years, to “[...] offer full-time school in, at least 50% of all public schools, as to attend, at least, 25% of all K-12 students” (Brasil, 2014, goal 6). The *Programa Mais Educação* – PME [More Education Program] from the federal government aims to induce full-time education in the public system, by offering financial resources for those who participate in the program, so that they can increase school time to reach a minimum of 7 daily hours². It was implemented in 2008, with 1,380 participating schools, attending 386,000 students. In 2014, PME had 58,651 schools with 7,080,579 K-12 students enrolled in programs and projects of full-time education³.

Several factors motivated the expansion of school hours in the country. Some are more specific of the educational field, such as the quest for better school results, through the increase of content exposition time, or changes in the concept of school education, by broadening the school role in the education of subjects (Cavaliere, 2007). Other factors are connected to broader social changes and needs, mainly those related to families. In fact, families have been going through transformations that complexify their roles in the social reproduction and protection of their members (Carvalho; Almeida, 2003): a greater presence of women in the job market; parents’ long work hours; an expressive increase of single-parent families headed by women; urban life conditions, marked by violence, uprooting, lack of structural public services such as transport, leisure, culture, and sports. In this scenery, full-time school starts to be demanded not only as a way to attend children’s rights, but also family and workers’ rights – specially working women, once household chores, including childcare, are still, in our society, mostly female tasks, as highlighted by Bruschini and Ricoldi (2009). These authors, in a study with low-income women workers with children up to 14 years old, in the greater São Paulo, report that the interviewed mothers regard kindergarten not only as a children’s right but also their right. These mothers resent the lack of public policies in education, culture and/or leisure that could attend their children older than 7, in the times when they were not at school, suggesting full-time school as an alternative.

However, considering the strong Brazilian tradition of two or more daily shifts of around 4 hours, the increase of school hours is not simply an extension of time. It is a complex process that demands redefining several aspects of the school operation – ranging from students' food and hygiene to school curriculum – and, even more, the understanding of what is school and what are its social functions (Cavaliere, 2007). In this sense, such extension is not always seen by school professionals in the perspective of rights assurance, as mentioned above. It impacts on the division of educational labor between family and school, which has throughout the years ignited conflicts and tensions (Faria Filho, 2000; Nogueira, 2006). As pointed out by Cavaliere, Coelho and Maurício (2013), the mutual distrust between parents and teachers is a phenomenon that surpasses countries and social classes. It is frequent to see a negative and deficient view of school professionals about families. In a research done in eight Brazilian cities mapping the experiences of school hours extension, the authors identified, among the educators involved, the continuation of this *deficient* view of families highlighting their poverty and iniquity and/or negligence which, according to the professionals, would lead parents to renounce their responsibilities and transfer them to the school. In this context, the increase of school hours is understood by the professionals in a paternalistic perspective and not one that could be considered more *democratic*, based on the constitutional right of co-responsibility of State, family, and society to guarantee the rights of children and youngsters. It is plausible to suppose that extending school hours in one concept or another will lead to different family-school relationships in all their dimensions. Besides, full-time school, by redefining the division of labor between family and school, provokes changes, tensions, and adaptations regarding their mutual expectations and interactions.

In this context, a pedagogical practice, that was already polemic in part-time schools, have raised new debates: the homework. Understood as pedagogical activities assigned by teachers to be done by students outside the period of classes, normally at home, *homework* or *assignments* are a traditional practice even naturalized in the school context (Paula, 2000). Commonly considered a very specific pedagogical tool, thus not normally the focus of research, homework has been recently the object of study in Sociology of Education, be it as a window to the analysis of family-school relations and/or school curriculum, or as a possible impact factor in academic performance, which has consequences in educational inequalities (Carvalho, 2004; Rayou, 2009; Deslandes, 2009; Resende, 2013).

It is, as pointed by Carvalho (2004), a cultural practice that integrates the relationship family-school and the division of educational labor between those two institutions. It touches students' lives outside the school and their family routine, articulating an interaction web between teachers and parents making it one of the main, if not the main, "way of interaction" (Carvalho, 2004, p. 95) or "collaboration interface" (Symeou, 2009, p. 82) between family and school. One can also affirm

that, when dealing with family and school, homework gathers, at the same time, the complementary and the conflictual dimensions that take place between the two of them. This is revealed in several studies, according to which there is, by families, a *critical compliance* to homework, in a consensus or agreement to its importance, sided by a strong critic on the tensions involved in its fulfillment (Caillet; Sembel, 2009; Symeou, 2009; Resende, 2013).

When full-time school is implemented, there are new questions related to homework. In this new context, is it pertinent to continue to assign homework? Or are the objectives previously accomplished by homework guaranteed during school hours, allowing the suppression of extra-class assignments? If kept, what would be their aims? Should they continue to be done at home? Or should school allot a time for it? What time should it be? How should it be organized? Should students be supervised? By whom? What are the roles of family and school and how do they interact in this new context?

In the current scenery of school hours extension in Brazil, such questions have been faced by the programs, which have different formats and adopt different curriculum perspectives regarding full-time education (Brasil, 2010). In this context, the solutions built regarding homework are also varied and researching them is interesting, from a scientific point of view, because they reveal various forms of conceiving full-time education, curriculum, relationship with families, and the division of educational labor between them and the school.

Regarding the two last aspects, the arguments presented in the following excerpts illustrate some of the tensions connected to this discussion⁴:

A. The idea of full-time education is not to do homework. It is not to embrace parental responsibility, to play the role of a baby-sitter. By showing our work, we have been earning recognition, little by little. The choir of the full-time program sang in the recess, everyone was delighted. Our role is to work with students' other potentials (Community Teacher 1, 2009).

B. Should the student do the homework at school? In these cases, in what moment will the family follow the child? We have kids whose backpack is taken for the weekend and is the same on Monday, the parents don't even check it. There are backpacks that look like a garbage can, so disorganized! If they don't check the homework, what will they check? (Community Teacher 2, 2009).

In both excerpts we observe questions about homework in full-time projects (in this case, the *Programa Escola Integrada* – PEI [Integrated School Program] from the municipal system). In the first excerpt, the discussion relates to the functions of school hours extension, a discussion which is relevant, but not the main focus of this work. We are especially interested that in both excerpts there is the idea of homework follow-up as a *parental responsibility*⁵, which would be assumed by the school when homework is done during school hours. In the second ex-

cerpt, we can observe a discourse that accentuates families' omission facing their children's school life, revealing the fear of an even bigger unaccountability if the role of homework follow-up was transferred to school. Therefore, the homework to be done at home, under parental supervision, is seen as a way to guarantee a certain participation of parents in their children's schooling.

Such arguments are significant to the discussion proposed in this text because they are not isolated positions. The discourse of parental omission, strongly questioned in the literature⁶, is still very present among education professionals. Cavaliere, Coelho and Maurício (2013) identify it among the educators involved in the programs of school hours extension, showing that it is very common the criticism to the *transfer of responsibility* to school and the *substitutive role* assumed by schools in relation to families. According to the authors, "[...] the extension of school hours in low-income contexts aggravates a school posture of parental blame" (Cavaliere; Coelho; Maurício, 2013, p. 267). The perspective of excerpt B on homework accentuates its function as one of the *social technologies* to promote the involvement of parents in their children's schooling (Kryger; Ravn, 2009) – a view that is still widely spread, even though several studies have pointed out the possibility of effects contrary to those expected considering the unequal conditions of families to follow the homework (Carvalho, 2004; Deslandes, 2009; Rayou, 2009).

This text aims to contribute to this debate, discussing different concepts, perspectives, and practices around homework and family-school relationship, revealed by school professionals in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte who develop full-time school projects in elementary school. Homework was considered as a practice that, although apparently in the border of what could be considered as the core of the pedagogical process, can reveal important dimensions of this process, as it is in "[...] the crossroads of numerous phenomena that constitute the world of school and its relation with the rest of the society" (Rayou, 2009, p. 10). In this text, we intend to discuss the issues of homework in the context of school hours extension, focusing especially on the phenomenon of family-school relationships in this new context. This approach will be based on data collected during a research that will be explained in the next item.

The Research Path

The field work of the research was done in 2014 in all cities of Belo Horizonte metropolitan region (BHMA) which, according to the School Census of 2012, had full-time projects developed in at least ten schools of the municipal system and had authorized the study: Belo Horizonte, Contagem, Ribeirão das Neves, Lagoa Santa, Ibirité, and Sabará⁷. Furthermore, it also researched the state schools in the city of Belo Horizonte that participated in the *Projeto Escola de Tempo Integral* - PROETI [Full-time School Project].

In the exploratory phase, we raised information on full-time programs developed in these systems. We have found that, generally, the programs worked in a model of *shift* and *counter shift*. In this model, the school maintains a four-hour *shift* of regular school with the same organization as before the program implementation, but broadens the educational opportunities, for at least a part of students, by offering diversified activities in the other shift (*counter shift*, lasting four hours or more).

Considering this format, we elaborated three questionnaires: (1) for those responsible for the program of school hours extension in each school (teachers, counter shift coordinators); (2) for the pedagogical coordinators (or similar position) responsible for the regular shift of the students who also attended full-time (in our case, 1st to 3rd grade students of elementary school⁸); (3) for professionals who accumulated both functions in the school.

The three types of questionnaires aimed to diagnose, in general terms, how the issue of homework has been dealt with in the researched schools, identifying the challenges found and the solutions already built by the school teams, as well as trying to find elements on the views of educators, confronting the perspectives of those responsible for the school hours extension program and the educators of the so-called regular school. The questionnaires were developed digitally, using the software *SurveyMonkey*⁹.

In order to apply the questionnaires, we have sent an email to those responsible for the shift and the counter shift of all schools involved in the programs of school hours extension in the educational systems researched. The message presented the research and had a *link* to the digital questionnaire. We sent it to 734 professionals of 356 schools¹⁰ between March and September 2014. 206 professionals from 173 schools answered the questionnaire, as shown in Table 1. The city of Belo Horizonte was the most represented, in number of schools and professionals, as well as the number of replies (Table 1). Amongst the professionals who answered the questionnaire, 109 (52.9%) were responsible for the full-time program in the school, 69 (33.5%) were coordinators or pedagogical supervisors, and 28 (13.6%) worked in both functions.

Table 1 – Number of Schools and Professional that Received and Answered the Questionnaire, by City and School System. BHMA – 2014

City School System	Schools that RECEIVED the questionnaire	Schools that RESPONDED the questionnaire	Professionals that RECEIVED the questionnaire	Professionals that RESPONDED the questionnaire
Belo Horizonte Municipal System	163	89	348	103
Belo Horizonte State System	72	40	150	51
Contagem Municipal System	45	18	80	20
Ibirité Municipal System	13	5	24	11
Lagoa Santa Municipal System	15	7	32	8
Ribeirão das Neves Municipal System	32	10	66	8
Sabará Municipal System	16	4	34	5
Total	356	173	734	206

Source: Research data.

In the second phase of the research, we selected some schools for a case study. Based on the answers of the questionnaire, we tried to reach schools with different realities that had diverse ways to solve problems related to homework and/or communication within staff, and/or articulation between family and school. We visited eight institutions, all in Belo Horizonte, being four municipal schools and four state ones¹¹. We did 11 interviews – shift coordinators, counter shift ones, and other educators (teachers, principal). Besides that, we analyzed documents, made observations, had informal contacts with workshop tutors and other school professionals. This phase of the field research took place between September and December 2014.

On Table 2 we can see some information on the schools selected for the case studies and their neighborhoods. This information is presented as a way to give the general context. It is not possible, in this article, to establish more specific relations between the characteristics of each school and the data collected in them.

Table 2 – Characteristics of the Schools Selected to Participate in the Case Study

School	System	School BEDI (2013) ¹²	School SEL (2013) ¹³	Neighborhood MHDH (2010) ¹⁴	% of people vulnerable to poverty in the neighborhood (2010) ¹⁵	% of children in households where nobody has graduated in elementary school (2010) ¹⁶
A	Municipal	3.8	4.6 (average-low)	0.637 (average)	34.3	31.7
B	Municipal	5.6	5.2 (average)	0.681 (average)	32.5	33.5
C	State	5.9	5.1 (average)	0.748 (high)	18.9	19.8
D	State	6.0	5.4 (average-high)	0.851 (very high)	5.4	8.4
E	State	6.6	5.8 (average-high)	0.830 (very high)	7.5	15.1
F	State	6.8	5.3 (average)	0.764 (high)	17.6	19.0
G	Municipal	7.1	6.1 (average-high)	0.882 (very high)	4.8	9.7
H	State	*	*	0.851 (very high)	5.4	8.4

Sources: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of the data: QEdU (2013) and Atlas de Desenvolvimento Humano no Brasil (2010).

Notes: * BEDI and SEL depends on the information of the exam *Prova Brasil*, only applied, during K-12 education, for the 5th and 9th grade students. For this reason, schools that have less than 20 students enrolled in these grades do not have these indexes calculated.

We can see a great variability in the schools' BEDI (from 3.8 to 7.1 in a scale from 0 to 10), and a smaller variation in the socioeconomic level of their students (from average-low to average-high, according to the SEL calculated by GAME/UFMG). The schools' surroundings also have different socioeconomic realities (with MHDH varying from average to very high), thus there are schools in neighborhoods where approximately 1/3 of the population are vulnerable to poverty, whereas in others less than 5% are in this situation. There are schools in areas where 1/3 of children live in houses in which nobody is graduated in elementary school, while in others only 8.4% of children are in the same situation.

The Treatment Given to Homework and the Relation Schools-Families in the Full-Time Programs Researched

Among the schools that answered the questionnaires, the great majority develops projects of school hours extension in which the chil-

dren stay 7 hours or more daily in school activities, sometimes reaching 9 hours¹⁷. In this context, we observe different situations regarding students' homework, as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – Situation of Children from the 1st to the 3rd Grade of Elementary School Who Attend the School's Full-Time Program Regarding Homework, According to the Professionals. BHMA – 2014*

Homework situation	Number of answers	%
Children do not have homework.	1	0.5
Children do the homework at home.	10	7.5
Children do the homework in the counter shift.	43	31.5
Children do part of homework at home and part in the counter shift.	37	27.0
Some children and/or classes do the homework in the counter shift.	31	22.5
No child does the homework in the counter shift, but I do not know if children have homework or not.	6	4.5
Did not answer question or annulled answer.	9	6.5
Total	137	100.0

Source: Research data.

*In this Table, we joined the questionnaire data (1) and (3), that is, counter shift coordinators and professionals who accumulated this position with the work as coordinators of regular school.

We can see that only one school has suppressed homework. Generally, the others assign it, and, in most cases, there are moments to do it during the counter shift, be it by all the students who participate in the school hours extension program (31.5%), by some of them (22.5%), or yet by alternating with home (27%). The number of answers according to which homework is always done at home is reduced (7.5%). This situation indicates, in the schools researched, a certain reconfiguration in the educational labor division between family and school regarding homework and family support. We were interested to study the perception of school educators about these changes.

Some questionnaire items aimed to check these perceptions, making some statements that signalized different perspectives towards homework in full-time school¹⁸. The responders had to say if they agreed or not with each statement. The results, shown in Table 4 (which aggregates the response percentage of the three questionnaires)¹⁹, indicate that the great majority agrees only with the items that affirms the importance of homework and its completion at home, even when the child stays in school for a longer period (items A, B and C, in all of them the percentage of answers that share this perspective was higher than 80%). So, there is a consensus or agreement on the importance of homework, that had already been mentioned in the literature about families

(Caillet; Sembel, 2009; Symeou, 2009; Resende, 2013), also among school professionals, even in a full-time context. On the other items, many of which involve conceptions on the relation with families, opinions are more divergent. If in the replies of items D and E the highest percentage is of professionals in favor of homework in the counter shift (47% and 43%, respectively), such position is not the majority, as there are significant groups that are against or *neither agree nor disagree*. In this case, we observe a difference of concept on the counter shift functions, among those who see in it as a possibility to reinforce the content of the regular shift, including through homework (a position defended by half of the respondents), and those who believe that the counter shift should prioritize languages and activities different from those already seen in regular school. Therefore, there is no space for homework completion in this context. In this aspect, the polemic on homework contributes to signalize a central question in the process of school hours extension, that are the objectives and functions of this increase, which, although not the aim of this work, has been discussed by various authors (Cavaliere, 2007; Coelho; Portilho, 2009; Miranda; Santos, 2012). It also points to the question of division and/or sharing of tasks and responsibilities between shift and counter shift, as well as the frequently deficient articulation between them (Felício, 2011; Matos, 2014; Braga, 2015). Thus, we confirmed, as previously defended, that the issues related to homework do not finish in themselves; in this case, they end up denouncing the conditions under which several of the school hours extension projects have been implanted, which go beyond the difficulties related to homework.

Table 4 – Professionals’ Opinions Regarding Homework in Full-Time School BHMA – 2014

Statements	Opinion of answerers* (in % of answers)		
	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
A. If the child stays in school activities full-time, then homework is not necessary.	89.3	5.9	4.8
B. The school activities during the full-time period do NOT substitute the homework.	10.7	7.0	82.4
C. The assignments to be done at home are essential to develop students’ autonomy and study habits.	7.5	5.9	86.7
D. One of the functions of counter shift is to reinforce the content of regular school, including through homework.	37.4	15.5	47.0
E. Homework is not a task of counter shift, because it should prioritize different languages and activities to fully form the child and youngster.	43.3	23.5	33.1

F. To do the homework in the counter shift is a valid strategy to face the inequalities in students/families' conditions	19.8	12.3	68.0
G. We cannot demand families to follow the homework when they have no conditions to do so.	54.6	15.5	29.9
H. To do the homework in the school is to substitute the role of families.	37.5	23.5	39.0
I. To do the homework in school harms the family support of their children's school life.	46.0	21.4	32.6

Source: Research data.

* Coordinators of regular school, coordinators of full-time programs and professionals that accumulate both functions (total of 187 answers).

Obs.: The original scale of five points – totally disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree – was rearranged to only three points to facilitate visualization.

Regarding families, the only statement with an expressive majority of agreement (68%) is the one which affirms that doing homework during the counter shift is a valid strategy to face the unequal conditions among students/families. Although with a higher variability, the answers of item G point that responders do not seem to relativize the family role in following homework, as most (55%) disagree with the statement that one should not demand families to do this when they have no means to do so. The responders are even more divided regarding statements H and I.

Above all, the set of results evidences the polemic surrounding the discussion presented. In general terms, it seems to indicate that, in the minds of the professionals researched, doing the homework at school, when taken as a counter shift task, is seen more as a necessity derived from family conditions and, therefore, as a way to *compensate* its difficulties, than a resignification of this activity facing the increase of hours the child has in school. The general tendency is still to reaffirm the importance of homework and the role of families towards it.

The questionnaire offered the respondents the possibility to comment and many of them detailed their opinions, clarifying some of their points of view. This was also possible during the interviews in the case studies. Although there were some nuances, which would be impossible to report here, it was possible to identify some recurrent positions.

One of those positions echoes the arguments of the teachers presented in the introduction (excerpts A and B), as well as the findings of Cavaliere, Coelho, and Maurício (2013) in their research. It is a perspective that questions the completion of homework in school, claiming that this is not a function of the school-day extension and that it would mean substituting the role of the family, whose *omission* and *negligence* is emphasized:

I think it is necessary that the parents follow the homework. The child spends nine hours in the school and this is the moment that parents have to become involved in their kids' learning. The aim of Full-time School Project is not to continue the teaching process of regular school, but to give the student new perspectives of learning regarding their complete education as a human being and a citizen (Counter shift coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

Homework draws near the family to the school and is a possibility for parents to support and act together with the school in the cognitive development of the student. To transfer this responsibility to the school and the programs distances the family from the school and their obligations towards their children's school life. There are some regions in which families' configuration is a modern one – a mosaic family, but, even so, there is someone responsible for that child. We need to think of a way to form or approximate negligent parents to their children's school life: how can we do it? (Counter shift coordinator, municipal system, Contagem, 2014).

Families need to assume their responsibilities and to organize themselves to prioritize their children's education. This discourse that full-time projects should assume families' responsibilities preposterous (Coordinator of regular school, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

However, a second position is of professionals who, although reaffirming the responsibility of parents in following their children school life, emphasize the difficulties of those families, particularly the poor ones, to do so in our contemporary society. Faced by this context, they defend the completion of homework in school. In these cases, there is no blaming of families, but recognition of their social realities. There seems to be an inclination for a more flexible sharing of responsibilities:

Homework should be a family obligation, but there are cases in which the family doesn't have the capacity to teach their children, because they didn't study. Also, often, when they arrive at home, the child is already sleeping and when they leave the child hasn't woken up yet. Because of it, and other reasons, the Homework Workshop in the Full-time Project is valid (Counter shift coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

We agreed that the homework done at home with the family support and help would be the ideal, not only to improve learning, creating study habits, but also as a moment to create bonds with the children and an involvement with school life. But the reality we live in is very different. Most families have no conditions to help the children, for various reasons, and they let all responsibilities to school. So, we understand that, even when done at school, the homework has an important role of creating a study habit and this homework workshop helps us to give them a support. So, we consider it positive, even with all the difficulties to put it into practice (Regular school coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

Some professionals argue that parents have other ways to support their children's schooling that do not involve a direct supervision of homework:

Homework is an opportunity for the child to improve their knowledge and practice what they learnt in class. One of the advantages I notice is that, when the child does the homework in the counter shift, they have the possibility to mediate it with their peers and to have a second opinion, in this case, with the tutor. The family is not forbidden to follow their child's school life, this follow-up is done by showing the family what and how they [children] are doing. The child doesn't have to do everything at home, they can finish the homework or just start it during the full-time program and finish it at home or show it for their parents to check, to compliment, to suggest, to improve it at a better time etc. (Counter shift coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

Doing the homework in the PEI [*Programa Escola Integrada*] is important because many kids can't do it when they arrive home (reasons: tiredness, adult arrives late etc.). This does not remove the family responsibility in checking if the student has done the complete homework and has done it well. Family follow-up should be daily. The child should receive attention and feel that the family is interested in his/her education and, if necessary, intervene. The parents/tutors should keep the material organized for the homework (Counter shift coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

One responder showed an approach that has been defended in the literature on family-school relationship, that is, to know the family reality and establish viable agreements into this reality, valuing the support parents can offer (Castro; Regattieri, 2009):

Regarding the role of families, I believe that the school should present them work proposals and possible tools that will allow the students the learning conditions that can guarantee one of the school functions, that is, acquiring systematized knowledge. We need to understand the profile of the families attended in the school and recognize their support possibilities, then work within these possibilities. If the mother or the person responsible assumes the commitment to check the notebook or the agenda and we understand that this is the support we have, and this contributes for the student to have the study habit and routine, so we will use it, as the possible sanctions will be shared with the family (Regular school coordinator, municipal system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

It is important to highlight that some schools, in which students do the homework in the counter shift, mention alternatives to stimulate parental participation: monthly research assignment to be done with the family; asking for a weekly check of children's notebook; more frequent PTA meetings (the respondents of two schools mentioned monthly meetings); making it easier the contact with children when they are in full-time school (phone calls, no bureaucracy to visit etc.), among others. According to 73.8% of counter shift coordinators who answered the questionnaires, the actions to approximate schools and families were intensified after the extension of school hours, highlighting the meetings and conversations with parents. Two coordinators stressed that they invite mothers that do a good job accompanying their children to be volunteers or even to be hired by the school to do this type of work with the other students.

As shown in Table 3, presented previously, in many schools the children alternate where they do their homework, in school or at home. Open answers showed that, in some cases, the completion of homework is optional to students and families, some professionals mention families which insist that children have to do the homework at home, after the extra hours in school.

Finally, one school does not assign homework, suppressed after implementing the extension program. This school was included in the case study and, in an interview, one of the teachers justified this measure. On one hand, she pointed to a resignification of school activities to serve the purpose of *reinforcement* expected of homework and, on the other – as in the previous testimony – to a construction of new agreements with families and their participation on their children's schooling:

So, I would assign homework. Sometimes we, from the regular shift, we extrapolate a lot in this homework. You know? These tasks, I think that... they overtire the child. I think that as the child is all the time here in the school, we can do a nice work with them, removing this pressure of homework, because I think that homework in many families is a synonym of conflict. Today, the system demands a lot from us, a looooooot. And they demand a deep knowledge from the kids, you know? [...] the parents who don't study, who didn't have an academic life, they can't teach this homework to their children. They want six-year-old children to know what an intermediate syllable is. Will the parent out there knows that? No. You know? [...] parents don't have time, they will teach the homework for the children at night, and then there is a family conflict. You know? So, we abolished this homework, we do give a continuity to what is being done in the regular shift, but in a more ludic way, more pleasantly. [...] We ended the homework, in the afternoons they do learn... You know, they know how to enter in a *Google* nowadays and research a tale, they can research a simple calculation and they solve everything... all online. You know? They have fun when they click and solve the calculations, they form a word and a little clown appears and gives them a smile when they get everything right. So, like, the best thing we did in the school was to abolish the homework, you know? [...] It is not like we are slackers, we send the notebook every weekend so that parents can follow it, and the responsible parent can follow what the child is doing during the day (Teacher in regular school and in full-time program, state system, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

Final Remarks

Nogueira (2006) highlights three processes that mark the transformations in the relationship between families and schools in contemporary times: the approximation of the two spheres with the multiplication of formal and informal contacts between them; the individualization in the relationship, with an increase in the personal interactions; the redefinition of roles or division of the educational work between both actors, as schools extended their actions into material, emotional, and moral aspects of the students' development and the family claiming its right to interfere in pedagogical and disciplinary

issues within the school. However, the author points that those processes do not take place without difficulties, tensions, and contradictions, constantly verified in the sociological literature, even though there is a discourse of partnership. Observing through the *window* of homework, one can affirm that these three processes tend to be intensified with the extension of school hours, also with conflicts and resistances, or, in the words of Silva (2003), not without *traps*.

According to Silva (2003), the relationships between schools and families are complex, multilayered, and entrapped, in the sense that they have potential perverse effects. In the author's opinion, one of these relationship traps would be trying to change what goes inside the schools without altering their relation with the families and the community. Another would be trying to build a closer relationship with families without changing the inner works of the school.

This approach can lead to some reflections based on what was discussed in this text about the way homework is dealt with in schools with full-time projects and on the different concepts that permeate such process, especially those connected to the relationship of schools with families.

Thus, the implementation of full-time programs in the public system, considering families' social reality as one of their motivations, can end up as a *trap* that reaffirms or even intensifies the contemptuous opinion about those same families. This trap can be seen when one argues against doing the homework at school based on the idea of family omission, but also when one argues in favor of it as a way to *compensate* the family difficulties. In both cases, the increase of school hours can be characterized as a *school change* (at least in one of its dimensions: time) in a relationship with families that has not changed, because it is still based in an authoritarian perspective towards these families and their needs and not in the processes that transform them in valid interlocutors, capable of exerting their co-responsibility for the educational process, in their own way and within their own realities.

Another *trap* is that the attempts to build a closer relationship with the families starting from the implementation of full-time programs – reported by most respondents – will not be accompanied by effective changes in school practices beyond the extension of hours and activities. The issue of homework seems to be a symptom of this, as, in most cases, we cannot observe a reflection about it – and on the possibilities of re-signifying it – in a broader context of a discussion on full-time school curriculum.

Evidently, as also affirmed by Silva (2003, p. 378), the traps *are not a fatality*, they can be avoided “[...] if there is good information on the dangers that pry”. In this research, this could be observed in the contact with some schools that seemed to progress to a more democratic dialogue and establish a more fruitful interaction with families, understanding their realities without blaming them and aiming to create with them new agreements on the sharing of children's education responsibilities.

These schools signal a more promising way to re-signify the relation with families in general and, more specifically, in the context of school hours extension.

Finally, it should be noted that even the schools with professionals who seem to have a more understanding perspective – in a sociological sense – on the reality of families, the interviews mentioned parental omission, such as the testimony below:

Nowadays, everything is solved inside the school. Everything is solved in the school. [Emphasized] The school is assuming a role that is not the school's, it is not from it. I don't even know what is the future of school from now on, because the academic part, the pedagogical part, the part... this part of teaching, culture, the experiences themselves of world-student. I'll tell you the truth, school is losing that, because it has to take care of so many things. It has to care of the child's emotional side, to care if the child can't see, to care of the dental area, the child arrives here with a massive toothache, the mother doesn't... you know. So, the school today... we have to deal with *Bolsa-Familia* [government social program] so the mother can go there and receive it. So, you know, I think school today lives many things that are not its own, and... but the school has to solve them. School today is a mini society, all that we see out there, that is not nice, is inside the school. And I say *guys, the children here, they are just like us* because, you see, they stay here from Monday to Friday, the whole day. We hand the boy to the mother on Friday and he is very nice, she returns him on Monday and he is impossible. So, Monday here, you can't imagine, it is chaos. He didn't sleep because he stayed... the mother didn't control his schedule, then Monday he is very sleepy, he has a stomachache because he ate all this junk, he arrives sad because the mother argued with the father, argued with the grandma, the father drank. So, our Monday is different here [emphasized] it is different, you know? (State school principal, Belo Horizonte, 2014).

Such observation seems to alert us to a *trap* in the scientific production on the relations family-school: to deconstruct the *myth of parental omission* (Lahire, 1997), we risk, in the specialized discourse, to construct another possible myth: that no family is omissive, simply disqualifying as a *stereotype* this discourse of school professionals that are so insistent and generalized that may deserve more attention in studies.

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Notes

1 This work derives from a research financed by an agreement between CAPES-FAPEMIG (Edital 13/2012 FAPEMIG) and OBEDUC/CAPES, through Observatório da Educação (Edital CAPES OBEDUC 2012).

2 Available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16690&Itemid=1115>. Access on: 17 Nov. 2015.

3 Available at: <<http://pgi.gov.br/pgi/indicador/pesquisar/filtrar?textoLivre=&numeroPaginaCorrente=1&campoOrdenacao=&abaSelecionada=0&hi>>

ddenTematica=4&hiddenClassificacao=204794&esconderIndicadores=false&esconderPaineis=false&enableColArvoreFiltros=&enableColCesto=&dat_indicador_ultimaatualizacao=&dsc_indicador_primeirareferencia=#>. Access on: 23 Mar. 2015.

- 4 The excerpts were registered during a Full-time School Seminar promoted by Belo Horizonte City Government in 2009. They reproduce the talk of two *community teachers* – professionals who coordinated in schools the activities of school day extension in the city (*Programa Escola Integrada*) – during a round table on *school support*.
- 5 In Portuguese, the term *pais* refers to the plural of the word *father* as well as *parents*. Although school workers use generic terms such as *pai* (meaning both mother and father), *pais* (parents), and family, the responsibility and demand for school support is still mainly – when not exclusive – on the shoulder of mothers. Santos e Carvalho (2010) suggest that the use of the generic masculine term (*pai*) in schools' communications ends up disguising or making invisible the informal daily demands done by schools to mothers.
- 6 According to Lahire (1997), the discourse that low-income families are omissive is, in fact, a myth. In his opinion, teachers deduce this omission based on the absence or invisibility of those parents in school spaces and their children's behavior and performance. However, the author argues that those families do worry about their children's schooling, but from a different logic from the school, what results in specific ways to participate in their children's school life.
- 7 Even though we counted the city of Betim, we did not include it in the research because the authorization was not given in due time by the Municipal Secretary of Education.
- 8 The focus on classes from the 1st to the 3rd grade of elementary school (children ranging from 6 to 9 years old) was defined because it is a time in which, in general, homework is systematically assigned, and, at the same time, children still tend to have little autonomy to do them, needing adult supervision.
- 9 Available at: <<https://pt.surveymonkey.com>>. Access on: 17 Nov. 2015.
- 10 There were schools with more than one pedagogical coordinator for the 1st cycle – which comprises 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades – (this work division can happen by area, shift, classes etc.) and schools in which the same person accumulated the position of pedagogical coordinator and full-time school coordinator.
- 11 The delimitation to the city of Belo Horizonte resulted from the criteria mentioned for the selection of schools, as well as operational issues (school acceptance, schedule compatibility, transport etc.).
- 12 The K-12 Education Development Index (*Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica* – IDEB) tries to measure the quality of K-12 education in Brazil through the use of information on students' approval rate and learning on Portuguese and Mathematics. This index varies from 0 to 10; values closer to zero indicate low quality and those close to ten indicate an excellent quality of education. IDEB's goals are different to each school and system, but the objective as a country is to reach an average of 6 points until 2022, a score that corresponds to those in developed countries. More information available at: <<http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/portal-ideb>>. Access on: 17 Nov. 2015.
- 13 The socioeconomic level index (SEL) synthesizes information on schooling, occupation, and income of students' families. The index varies from 0 to 10;

the closer to 0, the lower is the socioeconomic level of the school attendees, and the closer to 10, the higher it is. More information available at: <<http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/biblioteca/1468/o-nivel-socioeconomico-das-escolas-de-educacao-basica-brasileiras/>>. Access on: 17 Nov. 2015.

- 14 The municipal human development index (MHDI) assembles three dimensions – life expectancy, education, and income – as a measurement of human development in the city and, in the case of Brazilian metropolitan areas, its regions and neighborhoods. MHDI varies from 0 to 1: the closer to 0, the less developed is the region; the closer to 1, the higher. More information available at: <http://www.atlasbrasil.org.br/2013/pt/o_atlas/desenvolvimento_humano/>. Access on: 17 Nov. 2015.
- 15 Proportion of individuals with a household income per capita equal or inferior to ½ minimum wage. In June 2016, the minimum monthly wage was R\$880.
- 16 Proportion of children up to 14 years old who live in a household in which none of the inhabitants have finished elementary school.
- 17 Considering the schools whose professional answered the questions on the duration of school hours, 97% have school days with 7 hours or more daily, every day of the week, 23.5% of those have 9 hours or more per day.
- 18 The statements were created to summarize perspectives already identified amongst educators in previous contacts (during research projects and university outreach programs) and/or pertinent literature.
- 19 A comparison on the answers of the three questionnaires to this question will not be developed here for reasons of space and work scope.

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