Education in Juticalpa, Honduras: analyzing nonprofit education's impact on socio-cultural reproduction

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EDUCATION IN JUTICALPA, HONDURAS: ANALYZING NONPROFIT EDUCATION’S IMPACT ON SOCIO-CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

by

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Abstract

This Master’s project explores education’s impact on socio-cultural and economic reproduction in Juticalpa, Honduras. Utilizing comparative analysis, I investigate the education system in Juticalpa employing a public, private, and a nonprofit school as analytical lenses to illustrate how schools reproduce certain existing inequalities and create new ones in this city. The purpose in the following pages is three-fold. First, I conceptualize and explain the neoliberal education discourses on the need to create alternatives to public education, such as private and nonprofit education institutions. Secondly, after contextualizing these education discourses, I use social reproduction theory to investigate how schools reproduce existing linguistic and cultural inequality based on the students’ socio-economic background; how the private and nonprofit school reproduce discriminatory racial tendencies; how all three schools studied reproduce feminine gender identity as inferior, subjugated, and oppressed; and finally, how education has an impact on economic reproduction based on the students socio-economic and family background, linguistic reproduction, and gender identity. Third, this thesis contributes a new framework to analyze education’s socio-cultural reproduction by studying more than just one kind of educational institution. Instead of only analyzing public schools, which are mainly studied by social reproductionists, I also study a private and a nonprofit school. Since the nonprofit institution was the latest school to surface as a ‘real alternative’ to the divisions created by the public and private school, I focus on highlighting nonprofits education’s socio-cultural and economic reproduction. This thesis’ initial hypothesis assumed that the nonprofit institution was an alternative to the inequality gap produced by private and public education. However, the data collected
negates such a hypothesis and illustrates how the nonprofit school also reproduces inequality in Juticalpa, Honduras.
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Abbreviations

OAF: Olancho Aid Foundation
CESC: Centro Escolar Santa Clara
IBSC: Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara
EMB: Escuela Manuel Bonilla

Map of Juticalpa, Honduras. Source: Google Map 2012
According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This, again, is of a twofold character. On the one side, the production of the means of existence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings, and of the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand and of the family on the other (Engels 1884: The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State).

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The educational system, perhaps more than any other contemporary social institution, has become the laboratory in which competing solutions to the problems of personal liberation and social equality are tested and the arena in which social struggles are fought out. The school system is a monument to the capacity of the advanced corporate economy to accommodate and deflect thrusts away from its foundations. Yet at the same time, the educational system mirrors the growing contradictions of the larger society, most dramatically in the disappointing results of reform efforts (Bowles and Gintis 1976:5; emphasis added).

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“We see schools as a mirror of society, especially in the school’s hidden curriculum. A ‘society’ needs docile workers; schools, through their social relations and covert teaching, roughly guarantee the [re]production of such docility.” (Apple 1982:62
Introduction: The Myth of Education as a Socio-Economic Panacea

While reading *Class Dismissed* (Marsh 2011) on a very hot bus ride from Tegucigalpa to Juticalpa, Honduras where I did fieldwork about education’s social, cultural, and economic impacts, a young woman sitting next to me tapped my arm and asked, “you’re not Honduran, right?” I noticed she thought that because I was reading a book in English. Nonetheless, Carmen1 looked and sounded interested enough and I engaged in conversation. I told her I was in fact Colombian, but lived most of my life in the United States. Once the United States was mentioned, it kept us in conversation majority of the three-hour trip. At one point she asked, “So, what is a Colombian from the United States doing here in Honduras? Does it have to do with drugs?” After politely telling her that most Colombians do not fit the stereotype of ‘Colombians are drug dealers’, I proudly told her I was a graduate student doing research on the topic of education and its socio-cultural and economic impacts. She smiled at me and said, “you’ll see how messy [education] is. Many opinions on it, and yours will be yours.” I told her I was more interested in the opinion of others before my own. Engaged, she asked why. Attempting to keep my response short to keep from disinteresting her out of my first research related conversation; I told her I would first rather find out whether Hondurans believe in education as a way to improve their lives. Carmen sarcastically responded, “Nos dicen que se notará cuando maduremos, pero aquí maduramos y nos

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1 Most names in this work are pseudonyms to keep from revealing real identities of focus group participants, interviewees, and other informants.
podrímos y no vemos nada.”² This was the beginning of three weeks worth of interesting findings about the topic of education in Juticapa: an analysis of nonprofit education and its socio-cultural impacts.

Education in Honduras, as in many countries, is often presented as a panacea to solve pressing social and economic issues. In the United States, for example, President Obama has viewed education as a solution to our society’s socio-economic disparities (Marsh 2011: 69). Similarly, in Visión del país 2010-2038, the Honduran government presents education as the “means for social emancipation” (2010:58; my translation). Education as “means for social emancipation”, in the case of Honduras, is what I consider a mythic euphemism for upward socio-economic mobility in a very unequal country.

Even though Honduras focused on reducing poverty and extreme poverty in the 1990s, 71.6 percent of the population lived in poverty and 53.0 in extreme poverty by 2002 (Estado de la Nación 1998: 52-53). With a GINI index of 55.3, Honduras is the fifth most unequal country in Latin America and the Caribbean (PNUD 2010:38). This economic inequality is also connected to social inequality in Honduras causing a deepening of poverty and widening poverty gaps in general. For instance, those in the wealthiest 10 percent are able to afford social necessities that most in the impoverished sector cannot, causing the inequality gap to widen.

The myth of education as a social panacea is illustrated by Carmen’s insight of “it will be noticeable” in the future. The education discourse, as it has been presented to Carmen and millions of Honduras, offers hope for people to overcome the socio-economic inequality and poverty that exists in the country. However, the socio-economic

² Translation: “we are told that it [education’s impact] will be noticeable when we mature, but here we mature and rot and we don’t see anything.” In Spanish, “madurar” means to mature, but it is also used to describe a ripened fruit. A ripened fruit in time rots. Hence, why she said, “we mature and rot”.

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inequality or disparity is too wide to be narrowed by education alone. My intent here is to show how education falls short in accomplishing what governments, politicians, and policy makers suggest.

This thesis argues that the education system as a whole reproduces the socio-cultural and economic inequalities that Honduras has continually faced. I first must clarify that this study analyzes the whole education system in Juticalpa through the lens of three schools: Escuela Manuel Bonilla, a public school; Day Star School, a bilingual private school; and the Santa Clara Bilingual schools, a nonprofit bilingual education institution. I argue that with the emergence of neoliberalism in Honduras in the early 1980s, there have been two discourses as alternatives to the “failing” public education system: private and nonprofit education. Private education, as the first alternative, isolated many from impoverished sectors that could not afford the cost of what was considered better education. This only continued to widen inequality gap. Consequently, in 2002 Olancho Aid Foundation (OAF) proposed a nonprofit education alternative aiming to reach many impoverished students, while simultaneously accepting students from wealthier families in their new institution. Through this nonprofit alternative OAF’s strives to supply poor students a better education than provided by the public school, “to empower [impoverished] Honduran youth to transform themselves, their communities and their country through education” (Olancho Aid Foundation). Mainly focusing on the nonprofit school’s impacts on socio-cultural reproduction, I contend that the nonprofit school reproduces similar socio-cultural inequalities as the private school.

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3 It is important for the reader to know that I use “inequality” and “disparity” interchangeably throughout the thesis.

4 501(c)(3) nonprofit Catholic organization in charged of overseen three schools in Juticalpa, Honduras, including the bilingual institution studied in this thesis.
With the idea that it can combine the best of the public and private education, nonprofit education has been presented as a “real” alternative to both public and private education. Moreover, I suggest it is not a positive alternative to public or private education and it cannot make real the myth of education as a social panacea for those in the impoverished sectors of Juticalpan society, but rather continues to reproduce the same existing inequalities that Juticalpa has faced for many years.

The three schools that help me develop this thesis are located in Juticalpa, Honduras. Juticalpa is the capital of the department of Olancho, populated by nearly thirty-five thousand people. It is approximately a two-square mile semi-rural town in the center of Olancho (See map 2); mainly known as a half-way point between ranchers, agricultural producers, and bigger markets. I decided to study these three schools because they are geographically available for a comparative analysis. Also, they all have similar number of students, and two of these schools are bilingual institutions. Lastly, they are located in an area that I came to know while serving as a bilingual teacher in the nonprofit bilingual school.

The Schools

Escuela Manuel Bonilla (EMB) is a public school located in the center of Juticalpa. It is one of two public schools in town. The school hosts first to eleventh grade students during a morning and an afternoon shift, totaling near nine hundred students. Based on conversations with several teachers and the principal of the school, nearly all of the students who attend EMB come from working-class and very

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5 This information was provided by the principal of the school and written in my field notes on 2/16/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
impoverished sectors of Juticalpa. Structurally, EMB is similar to the colonial houses in downtown Juticalpa, structured around a middle courtyard. At the center of the courtyard in colonial buildings there is usually a garden or a fountain, but at EMB there is a basketball/volleyball court with a broken rim and two small moveable soccer goals. All the classrooms are open with big-gated windows and all facing the *cancha*. The classrooms are decorated with national symbols and historic figures of the country, such as Manuel Morazán and the famous Lempira indigenous that appears on the Honduran currency.

Five blocks west of EMB, in a complex twice the size of EMB, one can find Day Star School. Mark and Betty Skallman founded this bilingual private school in 1988 after working in another bilingual school in a different part of the country. Day Star now hosts approximately six hundred students offering classes from first to eleventh grade (Day Star School). Unlike the EMB, most students at Day Star mainly come from wealthy, upper-middle class, or families that heavily rely on remittances from family members abroad. However, a small number of students from very impoverished sectors attend Day Star through the school’s scholarship program. According to Mrs. Skallman, there are less than twenty students on scholarships attending Day Star annually.

Day Star School has a large green area with soccer field on one side and a small playground on the other. Closer to the classrooms, there are two basketball/volleyball courts. The rest of the school is comprised of three long two-storied buildings where classrooms and offices are located. Unlike EMB, most classrooms have small windows and lack natural light. However, classrooms have sufficient desks for students and

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6 Field notes taken on 2/16/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
7 *La cancha* refers to the basketball/volleyball/soccer court in the middle ground of the school.
8 Interview with Mrs. Skallman on 2/29/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
educational technology available. These classrooms are decorated mainly with academic symbols depending on the subject taught in the classroom. For example, one classroom may have mathematical equations as decorations and others may have English vocabulary. Not one of the classrooms I observed, however, had national symbols as the classrooms in the public school.

The nonprofit school that will be analyzed in this study has two sites. Both sites are located just outside of Juticalpa. Centro Escolar Santa Clara (CESC) is an elementary bilingual school. Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara (IBSC) is its sister high school. The elementary school was founded in 2002 on the grounds of the Catholic University of Honduras Juticalpa Campus because women college students needed a place to leave their children while attending classes\(^9\). With land donated by Porfirio Lobo\(^10\), current President of Honduras, a school was built several years later to host approximately 300 students. The school now has three buildings with spacious classrooms and plenty of natural light. The school has a large green area in front where students play soccer. Behind the school there is a roofed cancha where students also play different sports during physical education class or recess.

In 2011 Olancho Aid Foundation, the Catholic organization in charge of the Santa Clara schools, built a high school as a result of CESC’s growth. Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara was built on the grounds of the Catholic University of Honduras Juticalpa Campus. It consists of two buildings that host 150 to 200 students. One building has four main classrooms for seventh to tenth grade, the oldest group of students of the Santa Clara schools. The classrooms are very spacious with big windows, plenty of desks, and

\(^9\) Information gathered from Fr. Richard Donahue, president of Olancho Aid Foundation and President of Catholic University in Juticalpa on an interview on 2/21/2012.

\(^10\) Information provided by Fr. Donahue 2/21/2012.
available technology for educational purposes. The classrooms are decorated similarly to the classrooms at Day Star: with educational science, mathematics, and English symbols, but rarely illustrating any national symbols like in the public school.

Mainly students from upper-middle class and the wealthy class attend the Santa Clara schools (CESC and IBSC). However, Olancho Aid Foundation, has created and developed a scholarship program based on finding sponsors in the United States for students from impoverished sectors of Juticalpa (Olancho Aid Foundation). This allows for students from very impoverished sectors of society to gain a better education free of cost at one of the Santa Clara schools. Currently, around twenty-five percent of the student body attending the Santa Claras is on scholarships, but the organization’s ultimate goal is to reach forty to fifty percent of the student body.\(^\text{11}\)

\textit{Theory and Methodology}

A comparative analysis between these three sites allows me to evaluate the impacts of socio-cultural reproduction in these schools and the effect it ultimately has in Juticalpan society. I utilized a social reproduction theoretical framework to develop this research project. James Collins illustrates well the social reproduction theory argument in connection with education stating that, “schools [are] not exceptional institutions promoting equality of opportunity; instead they reinforce the inequalities of social structure and cultural order found in a given country” (Collins 2009:34). This theoretical framework will allow me to analyze linguistic, cultural, and economic inequality reproduction as proposed by social reproductionist such as Michael Apple, Pierre

\(^{11}\) Information provided by Carlos Nejera, Director of Olancho Aid Foundation, during an interview in Juticalpa, Honduras on 3/2/2012.
Bourdieu, Samuel Bowels and Herbert Gintis, and Annet Lareau. However, I faced some of the theoretical limitations mentioned by James Collins (2009) during my fieldwork. Collins claims social reproduction theory has not often been utilized since the 1990s because it does not incorporate topics of gender, race and ethnic identity. On the second day of fieldwork I did observations in the nonprofit school, CESC, where I had worked between 2008 and 2009 as a fourth grade teacher. I was welcomed on that day by Doña Dilia telling me, “Mr. Macias, you look more handsome now because you’re whiter.”

Not being tanned enough triggered her reaction. Nevertheless, from that interaction I was conscious that James Collins was correct in his convictions and I needed to incorporate race and ethnicity, as well as gender identity, in this research project. Focusing only on economic, cultural, and linguistic reproduction, in my opinion, would have excluded important aspects of socio-cultural reproduction.

This work is based on ethnographic research in 2012 and exploratory research, based on two prior trips in 2008 and 2010. My findings are based on three weeks of fieldwork from February 15 to March 5, 2012. During this period, I observed students’ interaction with teachers and their peers at Escuela Manuel Bonilla, Centro Escolar and Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara, and Day Star School. I also conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers, school principals, an informant from the Education Department of Olancho, and recent graduates from two of the schools. Further, I led three focus groups with Honduran teachers and volunteer-teachers from the United States that work at the Santa Clara schools. The topics of the focus groups ranged from the nature of wealthy students interactions with impoverished students in the nonprofit schools, to whether the Santa Clara schools were really nonprofit or not; to education’s

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12 Original: “se mira más bonito porque está más blanquito.” Fieldnotes from 2/16/2012
impact on social-economic mobility. With volunteer-teachers from the United States we discussed the importance of English education and of its influence on Honduran and Juticalpan culture.

The exploratory research is based on my experience living in Honduras from August 2008 to July 2009 and a two-week trip in January 2010. During the two initial trips, I kept a journal about my experience in Juticalpa. The notes written during these initial trips were nothing more than personal reflections and were not intended to be part of an academic research project. However, these notes help me remember and compare my experience as a volunteer-teacher while living Juticalpa to my fieldwork in February 2012.

I needed to approach this project ethnographically for two reasons. First, institutions such as the World Bank (2005; 2006), The Inter-American Development Bank (2011; 2011a), and the International Monetary Fund have published the very limited academic work that exists on education in Honduras in recent years. These institutions’ positivist methodological approach lack human contact and reflect their political and economic interests. Second, the academic work about education in Honduras either focuses on policy, private education, or public education separately. My ethnographic approach, on the contrary, allowed me to be on the ground in Juticalpa and analyze the object of study in site and not from an office in Washington D.C. Further, it allowed me to analyze a public, a private, and a nonprofit educational institution simultaneously with the purpose of identifying their impacts on socio-cultural reproduction more holistically.
I want my writing to mirror the ethnographic approach used. Accordingly, in parts of this thesis I present narratives that exemplify a point or an argument of the thesis. I then analyze the narratives and develop the arguments coherently to try to connect the reader with Juticalpa, the schools, the people, and the inequality problem addressed throughout this project.

The main ideas and arguments of the thesis are presented in four main chapters. I have structured the thesis in four chapters based on the themes of social reproduction theory: linguistic, cultural, economic reproduction. Furthermore, I incorporate the themes of race and gender identity. The first chapter will further explain the material socio-economic inequality in Juticalpa, Honduras. After contextualizing the socio-economic disparities in Juticalpa, I analyze the discourses offered by different actors, on alternatives to the failing public education system. This analysis will explain why there are private and nonprofit schools in Juticalpa and why many Juticalpans tend to find these attractive enough to be part of them.

Using Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) “cultural capital” and Annete Lareau’s (2003) “concerted cultivation” and “natural growth”, Chapter 2 analyses unequal linguistic and cultural reproduction in the three educational institutions studied. In this chapter, I argue that an existing linguistic inequality continues to be reproduced through the schools. Furthermore, I suggest that as a result of bilingual education, two of these schools add a layer of linguistic inequality. Moreover, this chapter also analyzes cultural reproduction in the bilingual schools and highlights how students from lower socio-economic sectors of Juticalpa that attend the bilingual schools end up alienated within the school and their community.
Chapter 3 analyzes how race and gender identity are reproduced in different educational institutions. This chapter especially focuses on the nonprofit institution’s reproduction of race compared to the public school. I also explore how all three institutions, EMB, Day Star, and the Santa Claras, promote three different images of femininity, but how in reality all three schools reproduce a subjugated and oppressed feminine identity. Chapter 4 analyzes education’s impact on economic reproduction. However, by connecting some of the findings suggested in the previous two chapters, the analysis moves beyond the scope offered by Samuel Bowles and Herber Gintis (1976 [2002]) and Michael Apple (1982). Chapter 5, the conclusion, will group and summarize the findings offered throughout the thesis. In this last chapter I also suggest further research that could emerge from this project.

Limitations

It is important to note three limitations to this project. The first limitation I would like to mention is about race. I must clarify that I did not gathered sufficient data that would allow me to conclude that race identity reproduction has an impact on economic returns to education. I truly believe it does, but I do not have empirical evidence to support such a statement. The second limitation is about students’ agency and resistance. I do not analyze how certain agents and actors in the schools resist the unequal reproduction mentioned. In my opinion, overcoming these limitations would have helped me developed different conclusions than the ones offered in this thesis. Lastly, I do not propose an alternative (a real alternative) to the inequality reproduced
through and by education in Juticalpa, Honduras. These are important limitations worth studying in the future.
Chapter 1: Socio-Economic Inequality and Education Discourses.

My intent in this chapter is twofold. First, I want to paint an image of the fifth most unequal country in Latin America and the Caribbean (PNUD 2010:38). I create this image describing what I observed for a whole year (2008-2009) and what seemed to be the same inequality in 2012 when I was doing fieldwork. This image will not highlight how much families make a day. Rather, it tries to show the quality of their living conditions focusing on houses, neighborhoods, and physical objects that I could see from a distance. The following two descriptive narratives will contrast and simultaneously illustrate the socio-economic inequality in Honduras. Secondly, I draw on another set of narratives to analyze the discourses on private and nonprofit education and how the latter are interconnected because of neoliberalism.

Inequality in Juticalpa

I walked down El Bulevar, the main Juticalpa road that crosses the whole town, towards its intersection with the Tegucigalpa-Catacamas highway—the major highway that travels to neighboring towns and the capital of the country. Crossing the intersection led me to a dirt-road hill. I walked the fifty or sixty yards uphill and found myself in a completely different Juticalpa. The unpaved roads are the only similarity between this and more impoverished areas in town. The first house I saw shocked me. It was a three-story peach-colored house gated by a six or seven feet tall wall, protected by three feet of electric fences with signs that could scare the most experienced burglar stating, “PELIGRO 10.000 VOLTIOS”. The same house had two golden garage gates and big

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13 Warning 10.000 volts.
tinted windows with golden color metal strips to protect it from being entered. I walked around the block and noticed major similarities with other houses: bright colors, gated houses, protected by electric fences with expensive cars park in or just outside the garage gates. As I made my way around to my starting point, I noticed armed guards had stepped outside the gates because I had been walking around looking at the houses. I decided it was time for to move on and decided to walk to a more popular area ten minutes away on the Tegucigalpa-Catacamas highway.

Unlike the rich area I had just visited, barrio La Hoya was more welcoming. People saw me as a stranger, but approached me nicely wanting to know who I was or if I was lost. In fact I was. I could not remember where my friend Carlos’ shop was located. I asked an older woman sitting in front of her pulpería—a type of corner store—if she could direct me to Carlos’ carpentry shop. She told me Carlos had moved the shop to his house and directed me towards it. The difference was noticeable from what I had seen less than an hour before around the rich people’s houses. Carlos’ house was small and humble. A tree gave shade to the front of the pale-green house and this was where Carlos did some of his work. The windows in his house were not tinted or had bars to protect it. Rather, they were wooden planks instead of a glass and a simple white mesh textile curtain decorated them. There were no guards and instead of lonely streets protected by armed men, these were filled with children playing. Some children were barefooted and in underwear and some still wearing their school uniforms of the day.

The remarkable differences in the living conditions of people in Juticalpa are not limited to the quality of the residence. It is also exemplified by the education provided to the children living in most of those houses, and by the education bestowed in the schools

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14 *Popular* in Latin American refers to the working class and/or impoverished sectors of society.
they attend. In *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol (1992) argues that the racial and economic segregation between rich and poor school districts can only be fixed if more money is spent on education. However, Kozol’s contribution is in part short-sided because he only focuses on public schools. Private institutions as an additional analytical layer in his work would show how the privileged, those able to afford private education for their children, impact the education system and society as a whole. Literature in the case of Honduran education is very limited; and if available, it offers a constraint in its analysis because it mainly focuses on the public system, similar to Kozol’s work in the United States. Some present a perspective on private education, but never together to offer an overall class analysis of educational segregation in Honduras.

Here I offer a background to the education discourses as deployed in Juticalpa. However, my study of these discourses will move beyond Kozol’s analysis to explore the rationale for private and nonprofit education in Juticalpa. Based on my fieldwork, I have collected narratives that are presented, which highlight the rationale behind the private and nonprofit education discourses and how these discourses together play a major role in reproducing inequality through education in Juticalpa.

¡Faltan Sillas!

I knocked on the main gate of the public school, Escuela Manuel Bonilla, three minutes after the bell rang to begin classes. I heard the loud bell as I walked to the school, but I did not think it would be a problem to enter. Yet, I knocked on the door for ten minutes, along side students who had arrived late due to their long commute. After
convincing a *niñera*\(^\text{15}\) that I had permission from the principal to come in and do observations, the woman let me in apologizing for not opening the door sooner. The students with the long commute who were standing with me outside were not given a chance. They were sent home for not arriving on time at seven in the morning. I did not agree with this treatment and I asked the *niñera* why they were not allowed in. She replied, “They need to learn to follow the rules. If they really want to be here they will get here. We don’t have enough seats for everyone here, those who want to come and have a seat can arrive early, right?”\(^\text{16}\)

While observing an eighth grade class, on the west side of the cancha, closer to the side where there is a broken basketball rim, an older student came and asked the teacher for permission to talk to her. His inquiry was based on his need for a chair to be able to sit in his classroom. Fortunately for him two students in the eighth grade were absent. I wondered if any of the students unfortunate enough to be rejected from school for their late arrival were in eighth grade. During the first to fourth grade recess at nine in the morning, an older student went into a third grade classroom next to the computer room to grab a chair to use in her computer class. Later that same day, in a fifth grade class, another student came to ask for a chair. This time it was a younger student, from third or fourth grade.

The switching around desks and chairs in the school illustrates how overcrowded Escuela Manuel Bonilla is daily. During the two shifts (morning and afternoon), the

\(^{15}\) *Niñeras* are women that work mainly by helping students during lunch and recess, by heating up food, or watching them to make sure they are safe and well behaved. They also work in the school buildings as janitor or cleaner of the facility.

\(^{16}\) Fieldnotes from 2/20/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
school holds nearly nine hundred students, according to its principal\(^{17}\). The student-teacher ratio is about forty-to-one. Overcrowded classrooms do not only mean less available desks where students can sit, but also pedagogical difficulties that lead to a lack of quality education.

\textit{Why not want what’s better for my children?}

On a hot afternoon in Juticalpa I visited the nonprofit school, CESC, to lead a focus group I had planned earlier with several Honduran teachers in the institution. I wanted to hear the teachers’ perspectives on the issue of inequality reproduction through education and whether their school was actually a nonprofit school. After the end-of-the-day bell rang and students ran wildly to secure a seat in their respective buses, six teachers who had agreed to participate met me in the computer room. The teachers proposed the computer room because it is the only air-conditioned room in the school and because it was enclosed and “nobody would hear what we had to say”\(^{18}\) as Carla commented. Some of their nervousness eased when I assured them that the conversation was to be confidential. Our conversations reached a high point of interest when I asked why teacher in public schools send their children to private schools. I asked this question because I knew most of the participants had experienced working for the public sector before working at CESC and some sent their children to the best known private school in town. Camila, the sixth grade Spanish teacher claimed, “I don’t talk from experience because I don’t have children, right? But if I did have children, I would send them to a private school. I want what is best for my children and sadly I know that is not what the

\(^{17}\) Filednotes from 2/28/12 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
\(^{18}\) Focus group: 2/28/12 in Centro Escolar Santa Clara in Juticalpa, Honduras.
public sector offers, right? Why would I want to send my child to a place I know he’s not going to get anything? Why would I make him do that, if I can choose from other schools that offer better education?”^19 Before Camila was finished, Mario interrupted her with his opinion, “Listen, it is not a problem of teachers. If we look at where the son or daughter of the Minister of Education goes to school…the system is broken from up there. If the minister is hypocritical, teachers are going to be also…”^20 Camila finished his sentence saying, “for the betterment of our children, who are the future of the country.”^21

Shifting topics, I asked about their perspectives on the nonprofit schools (CESC and IBSC) and was shocked by the participants’ responses. Most of them doubted whether these institutions were real alternatives to the differences between private and public. I tried to push without forcing them and Carla spoke her mind, “I think we have only sold the image that this institution is nonprofit, but it’s really a private institution because here everybody pays; including the children of the compañeros [teachers].”^22 All the teachers agreed that the only difference between the nonprofit Santa Clara schools and Day Star School, the biggest private school in town, is their volunteer program where volunteer-teachers from the United Sates work in the institutions for a year or two. Having been such a volunteer, I wondered if they realized that, for the first time, they had allowed me to see how the volunteer program had been used to portray and enhance the school’s nonprofit façade. After an hour and twenty minutes we were finished just on time to catch the bus that comes to pick up the teachers and staff.
Discourses on Education

According to Alcides Hernandez (1983) and Rodil Rivera (1993), neoliberal policies in Honduras were implemented with the return to democracy and the election of U.S.-backed Roberto Suazo Cordova in 1982. This new economic model, according to Hernandez, impacted the population negatively due to the government’s reduction on social spending. The neoliberal model, with its motivation for privatization, deregulation, and liberalization, reigned Honduras until Manuel Zelaya came to power in 2006 and aligned with center-left governments interested in challenging the neoliberal status quo in the region. Even though the public education system continued to work (weakly) through neoliberalism, wealthy elites promoted private education as a result of the public education’s poor performance. Years later, recognizing that private education’s better academic performance was unreachable by majority of the population, nonprofit organizations, mainly sponsored by the Catholic Church, proposed nonprofit educational institutions as a hybrid of public and private schools.

These two discourses on education need to be analyzed here. The discourses are different, but in my opinion, connect to one another via the socio-economic reforms in Honduras. The first discourse is one in favor of private and the second in favor of nonprofit education.

Privatization of education or schools is partly influenced by the prevalence of neoliberalism and its articulation of the notion of freedom. An individual is a protagonist in society because he or she is free to choose in the free-market, and not forced to accept what the government provides (Friedman 1979; Hernandez 1983:16). Christopher Colclough (1996:601) provides a different perspective on the discourse in favor of
privatization claiming some “encourage the private sector as means of meeting unsatisfied social demand for schooling.” Fernando Pavón, also in favor of privatization, suggests that privatizing schools allows the Honduran government to reduce public expenditure and utilize its surplus for other social needs (Pavón 2008:195). “Freedom” and the State’s supposed inability to provide quality education persuade people that privatizing schools is attractive. This mentality is exemplified by Carla’s comment during the focus group where she said, “I can choose from other schools that offer better education.” For Carla, she is “free” to choose from an education institution that is perceived as offering better education compared to a public institution. However, what is more interesting is the lack of questions on why the public education system is weaker or does not offer good quality of education as the private schools. Instead, questioning the immediate response has been based on the free-market-led discussions and the need for offers “alternatives” to the public sectors and suggesting private education as a necessity.

The second discourse supports nonprofit education. The main argument is that nonprofit institutions satisfy social needs given the government’s inability to do so. Cyril Chang and Howard Tuckman (1996:26), for example, assert that “nonprofits have been suggested as a substitute for the government in the provision of social services.” Paulo Freire (1972), on the same wave of “weak state” argument, points to another promoter of the nonprofit discourse: the Catholic Church. Freire claims there are two groups within the church that promote education. The fist group Freire mentions supports an alternative to state education in favor of “the ideology of the dominant social classes” (Freire 1972:12). Illustrating this Althusserian idea of one sector of society reproducing its powerful ideology through education, Freire advocates instead for the second group of

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23 Focus group: 2/28/12 in Centro Escolar Santa Clara in Juticalpa, Honduras.
the church as a promoter of education in Latin America based on popular education and liberation theological practices as a nonprofit alternative to the private and State sponsored elitist education.

In a progressive perception, these discourses on education are often presented opposite to each other. However, these discourses can be said to be two branches from the same neoliberal tree. “Faltal sillas”, for example, highlights the State’s inability to offer quality education to the society because of the lack of equipment to accommodate students, the badly proportion of teacher-student ratio, and the lack of educational material. These three examples show how government’s low social expenditure affects academic achievements in Honduras. The lowering of social spending is rooted to the neoliberal policies implemented in the country (Hernandez 1983:94). Low academic achievements, consequently, also provides ammunition to support the alternative discourses to that of public education. Why not want what’s better for my children? highlights how teachers, as parents, are “free” to choose a better school for their children because of the public sector’s poor quality and because parents have learned that they can choose what they think is better for them and their family as long as it is a choice provided by the free-market and not a ‘controlling’ government. The second narrative also illustrates the myth of the nonprofit education as an alternative to the private and public systems. Nonprofit institutions as providers of social needs because the state inability to do so, as Cyril Chang and Howard Tuckman (1996:26) suggest, is only a provocative-sounding discourse that epitomizes the state’s inability to provide for its people without offering reasons why the state is ‘unable’ to provide social needs. More important in this analysis is that the nonprofit alternative, no matter how provocative
sounding it is, is not able to solve the inequality of the education system because their
discourse and policies are based on neoliberalism. As mentioned by James Petras (1997:16), nonprofit and Non-Governmental Organizations “coincide with increase funding under neoliberalism and the deepening of poverty everywhere.” Most nonprofit institutions take advantage of the neoliberal social shortages to create a masked private institution that preserves the inequality and poverty in given societies.

I argue that neoliberal reforms in Honduras, as elsewhere, cause the “weak state” by decentralizing, marketizing, and forcing the State to spend less on social services (Hernandez 1983; Rivera Rodil 1993). The forced “weakening” caused by vertically imposed policies from infamous institutions such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also aid the creation of the weak state and the need for alternatives to the public institutions. For example, Jonathan Joseph (2010) suggests that powerful institutions, such as the WB, IDB or IMF, propose “poverty reduction programs”, but in reality impose a global governmentality, where these institutions acquire immense political and economic influence through the policies and loans they offer the so-called underdeveloped countries. Further, these institutions promote the myth of freedom of the market for the betterment of impoverished countries. However, the outcomes of implemented policies have mainly been negative.

Neoliberalism offers a narrative of freedom, while defunding and gutting the public sector. This notion of freedom allows people to find privatization and “nonprofit” discourses attractive. Mitchel Dean (1999) suggests that neoliberalism has moved beyond economics to being able to control citizens with the myth of freedom. He

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24 I use quotation marks (“ “) on the word nonprofit from this point forward to mean that the education institution studied it is not really nonprofit or an alternative to public versus private, but rather a masked privatized institution.
states that, “in order to act freely, the subject must first be shaped and moulded into one capable of responsibly exercising that freedom” (Dean 1999:165; emphasis added). The molding and creating of “free” citizens takes place in the education system as a whole where an ideology of a consumer-citizen is created. That consumer-citizen, based on the free market, will find private and nonprofit schools more appealing because they are not government administered.

To summarize, I argue that neoliberalism has created an environment that supports the discourses in favor of private and nonprofit education. However, neither of these discourses-turned-realities have addressed inequality, especially in education, but rather continue creating more of it. Furthermore, I suggest that the nonprofit discourse, tied to neoliberal reforms, continues the reproduction of the disparities created by neoliberalism, but does it with a “human face”. This, in my opinion, covers up the negative impacts neoliberal “nonprofits” have on society.

These discourses influence the few who are able to “choose”. Those from the rich and wealthy sectors of Juticalpa, with the beautiful and expensive three-story houses with armed guards, are able to choose. The upper-middle class is also able to choose to send their children to private or “nonprofit” schools. However, the children from those in barrios, such as where my friend Carlos lives, are limited in their “choice” for better education. Those in the lower sectors, like Carlos, do not have multiple options when it comes to their children’s education. It is the popular sectors that are affected the most by the discourses-turned-realities created by the local and foreign promoters of neoliberalism and neoliberal socio-economic policies. The practices of these discourses play a major role in the reproduction of inequality because they mainly target a selected
few while limiting the majority. Carlos, for example, cannot send his children to private school because of his unstable economic life. His only option is public education, where his children will have to experience poor quality of education, resulting in a lower economic return to education in the future than those who are able to send their children to private schools, like children in the rich barrio of Juticalpa.

The education system, as it has been shaped by neoliberal reforms, does not address the inequalities of society. The Honduran government claims that education is the “means for emancipation” (República de Honduras 2010:58), but the way the system works has not achieved that and is unlikely to do so in the future.
Chapter 2: Unequal Linguistic and Cultural Reproduction

Linguistic reproduction theory argues that students from higher socio-economic status have greater linguistic and socialization skills, than those from lower socio-economic sectors who are “linguistically deprived” (Collins 2009:39). In this chapter I briefly suggest how Collins’ claims applies fully to the case in Juticalpa. Further, I argue that the two bilingual schools create a new layer of unequal linguistic reproduction. Moreover, I argue that the two bilingual schools alienate students from lower socio-economic sectors because of these students’ “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1986: 47).

Annette Lareau (2003) analyzes unequal linguistic reproduction by suggesting that upper-class students tend to have more prosperous futures since they perform better academically due to the language and socialization skills taught by their professional parents, which contrasts with the experience of working-class families. Lareau (2003:2-3) suggests the acquisition of language and socialization skills from parents takes place through “concerted cultivation” and “natural growth”. On the former, Lareau claims, professional parents cultivate language skills through scheduled and organized activities involving both parents. In contrast, in the case of “natural growth”, children do not have organized activities by parents, but rather children themselves control their own activities and language learning. The differentiation between concerted cultivation and natural growth is exemplified in Juticalpan students. For instance, students in the public school tend to talk using street jargon or colloquial language in school settings. Wealthier students, on the other hand, tend not to use street jargon, and if they do they are quickly reprimanded for doing so.
Street jargon, slang, or colloquial language is especially noticeable in older students from the public school. During an observation at the public school, EMB, I overheard two older boys talking about their plans after school. One said, “no, maje allá andan muchos a pijá.” Their plans to go “hang-out” at a local gas station was not encouraged by one of them because “there were too many drunks” at the gas station. The students’ plan is not important here. In this example, however, we can see how students from the public school use colloquial language that is often looked down upon from wealthier families and students from the private school Day Star. This is often the case in working-class families I have met. They, almost naturally, talk colloquially and even if encountering someone not used to such terms, they expect them to understand. This practice exemplifies well how students from lower socio-economic classes tend to construct their own activities and their language learning. From my observations, students tend to talk freely in slang or street jargon in the public school and are not corrected. Public school children often pass their time after school by loitering around town for hours with friends from the same socio-economic class. It is during this pastime where children from lower socio-economic sectors, as Lareau suggests, control the creating of linguistic abilities.

Unlike those from the public school, students from wealthy families tend to speak elegantly and clearly articulate their words. From what I have experienced, they tend not to use colloquial words in their vocabulary. Often this is due to the immediate corrections provided by parents or family members. For instance, on one occasion in

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25 Maje is a colloquially used word in Honduras meaning “friend”, “my buddy”, or “dude”.
26 Pija is a colloquially used word in Honduras meaning “to be drunk”.
27 Field notes taken on 2/28/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras. Translation: “no, dude. There are too many drunks over there.”
2008, a student from the sixth grade ran into one of the monthly scheduled parent-teacher meetings I was attending at CESC. The student alarmingly told his mother, “mami, mami, allá [en la cancha] hay un chiguín llorando.” The older woman, however, did not immediately check on the crying child. Instead, she corrected the student’s vocabulary and said those words should not be used. At the time, I did not know the meaning of the word “chiguín”, but I learned what it meant because the mom replied to the student, “se dice ‘niño’, eso de chiguín no se usa ni en la calle.” The mother’s correction allowed me to learn another Honduran slang word. More importantly, it taught the student that chiguín is a colloquial term and should not be used.

The two examples above, in my opinion, illustrate well Annette Lareau’s notion of children acquiring language and socialization skills through “concerted cultivation” and “natural growth”. However, there is a problem in this analysis: how can one measure what it means to be “linguistically deprived” or not? Is there one way of talking or speaking in the school setting and outside of the school? Do children from wealthy families use street jargon outside of the school setting to be able to integrate with others in the community from different socio-economic sectors? In my opinion, these linguistic problems are extremely difficult to measure and I cannot analyze them here. However, these problems help us understand that language is important to analyze on a different scale. Therefore, instead of measuring how students acquire language skills from their parents according to family’s socio-economic background, I propose analyzing how the schools utilize “concerted cultivation” and “natural growth” (Lareau 2003:2-3) as

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28 Chiguín is a colloquially used word in Honduras meaning “kid or child”.
29 Experience written in my journal on September 2008 while living in Juticalpa, Honduras. Translation: “mom, mom, there is a kid crying over there [on the cancha].”
30 Translation: “we say ‘kid’, chiguín is not even used on the streets.” These notes were written on my journal on September 2008 while living in Juticalpa, Honduras.
pedagogical methods to reproduce linguistic inequality within the education system as a whole in Juticalpa.

In the bilingual schools of Juticalpa, Day Star School, Centro Escolar Santa Clara and Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara, “concerted cultivation” is employed to aid students obtain ‘better’ linguistic skills. Annette Lareau (2003:110) suggests concerted cultivation help students “shape the use of language” because adults allow students to enter in conversation with them. Lareau states, “talking fosters the development of children’s knowledge and opinions…. [And students] learn to articulate their own views” (Lareau 2003:110). The pedagogical methodology utilized in the bilingual institutions, especially among older class levels, is that of conversations and constant teacher-students and student-student interaction and discussion. For instance, while observing a Social Studies class at the “nonprofit” IBSC, students sat in a circle and the teacher guided a discussion on North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Most students participated explaining what they understood of NAFTA. Some students explained to others what NAFTA means for the Mexican people. According to a teacher I interviewed from Day Star School, they also employ the same pedagogical method of conversation and discussion. These teacher-students and student-student conversations during classes exemplify the way Lareau characterizes concerted cultivation as an activity that “shapes the use of language” and how students benefit from it.

On the other hand, I suggest that “natural growth” is utilized in the public school in Juticalpa. In contrast to the private and “nonprofit” institutions, the public school does not practice the conversation and discussion method used by the other two schools.

31 Field notes from 2/21/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
Instead, they use a very antiquated pedagogical methodology, involving mainly dictation by the teacher and students copying text from the book or blackboard onto their notebooks. For example, students were writing down the Honduran National Anthem’s seven verses in a ninth grade Civics or Social Studies class I observed. The teacher told me it was a good way for students to learn about the main symbol of their country.\footnote{Field notes from 2/24/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.} There was no discussion about the music or the lyrics of the Anthem. Rather, throughout the whole class, students wrote the anthem, making sure it was elegant and eye catching on their notebooks. Due to the pedagogical methodology used by public school teachers, “natural growth” language acquisition or the shaping of language does not allow for reasoning or argumentation by students to develop better socialization skills. Unlike the private and “nonprofit” school’s concerted cultivation where students engage in fruitful conversations, in the public schools students are told what to do by the adults in the room.

My argument here partially differs from Lareau’s. I agree with Lareau that students may acquire their language skills from their parents or on their own, but I contend that education also plays a major role in shaping students’ language. The linguistic skills attained in the classroom of public, private, and “nonprofit” schools makes a difference in students’ future. I argue that the methodology employed in the bilingual schools give those students better and more useful linguistic skills than those obtained by the students in the public school, due to the pedagogical methodology used by their teachers.

Furthermore, Day Star School, CESC and IBSC, as bilingual educational institutions, offer an extra layer of unequal linguistic reproduction that is worth.
analyzing. The following two narratives will give the reader a background on why I consider these bilingual institutions as major contributors to the linguistic inequality reproduced through education in Juticalpa.

An interview with Padre Ricardo:

The Catholic University-Juticalpa Campus is located on the outskirts of Juticalpa, in Barrio La Concepción. I had arranged a meeting with Father Richard Donaheu, the president of the Catholic University in Juticalpa and the president and founder of OAF, the nonprofit organization in charge of the bilingual schools, CESC and IBSC. I decided to take one of the old U.S. school buses converted into a transportation vehicle in Honduras to “La Conce” to meet “Padre Ricardo”, as he is popularly known in town. After greetings outside of his office, he invited me in to his desk where the interview would be held. Approaching the black semi-cluttered desk, I noticed a New York Times clip under the protective glass of the desk. The clip was a picture of a man in a farming field pulling a farming-hoe while holding a book and it read, “TO BUILD A COUNTRY, BUILD A SCHOOLHOUSE.” I had been to his office while living in Honduras in 2008-2009 and I had never noticed the clip, but this time it helped me begin the interview. Pointing at the clip I said, “Padre, is this your philosophy about Olancho Aid?” He said he had seen the clip years back and decided to keep it as a reminder of what he stood for and the need to change the education system in Honduras because of how backwards it is. I followed with, “Why bilingual education, then?” He responded, “Eric, why bilingual? I want to answer that with a question: Why aren’t we trilingual? Why aren’t we…you
know, we live in a multilingual world….So if we are really going to treat people and prepare people for the world that exists, then yeah [students must be bilinguals].”  

For Padre Ricardo, the English learned in the institutions he founded is not as fluent as he would like it to be. From my experience teaching in Juticalpa in 2008-2009 and my observations during my fieldwork, however, I though the English learned by students was fine. But, he would like to see complete fluency in the student body. He claimed, “one of our weaknesses is…we brought the model of fifty-fifty (fifty percent English and fifty percent Spanish), with the philosophy that says children must be comfortable in both languages so students don’t lose their mother language. That is a lot of baloney, all right. They are not going to lose the language of the house and so what we need to do, and this is on the director’s table for next year, is to change the fifty-fifty to eighty-twenty (eighty percent English and twenty percent Spanish).”  

Father Donaheu sounded confident in knowing that changing to deeper English immersion in the Santa Clara schools would play an integral role in improving students’ future.

To understand Padre Ricardo’s convictions, after interviewing him, I walked to IBSC located inside the Catholic University facility. I walked into the red-brick building and was welcomed by one of the volunteer-teachers from the United States. After briefly explaining my project, she invited me to observe her seventh grade Social Studies class. I sat in the rear of the class while the students and teacher engaged in a discussion about the homework, in which students had to write two paragraphs about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The discussion, which mainly highlighted the positive aspects of NAFTA, was all in English and I clearly understood the students’ arguments.

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33 Interview with Fr. Richard Donaheu in Juticalpa, Honduras on 2/21/2012.
34 Interview with Fr. Richard Donaheu in Juticalpa, Honduras on 2/21/2012.
and articulations on why they believed NAFTA is good for Mexico. One of the students said in perfect English, “Honduras needs something like this [NAFTA] to be more connected to the United States.”

From the abovementioned experience at IBSC, I do not understand the notion of changing the school policy to teach the students eighty percent of the time in English and twenty percent in Spanish. With the fifty-fifty strategy, students in the seventh grade are able to communicate in English effectively without complications; what is the need for the change? It is understandable that bilingualism has positive impacts, but it is questionable that bilingualism needs to be a priority in semi-rural town Juticalpa where there are few things to do with an English speaking background. Being bilingual in Juticalpa means one can find jobs such as teaching English at one of the bilingual schools, but not many other options. Nonetheless, parents, English teachers, and the bilingual schools continue to think, and force children to think, that the only way to have a better future is by learning English. For instance, in an interview with a parent from IBSC she claimed bilingual education “opens new economic opportunities for the students…here [in Juticalpa] we say that if a person can speak English, he or she are valued as two.” As discussed in a later chapter, the unrealistic expectations of a better future through the acquisition of English, could contribute to inequality by making bilingual students superficially more marketable for future employers than students in public schools, where English learning level is much more basic. The following narrative will highlight the deficiency of English education in the public school, EMB.

35 Field notes from 2/21/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
36 Interview with parent from IBSC on 2/23/2012. Spanish translation: “Lo veo bueno porque estamos abriendo nuevas oportunidades económicas al alumno…Aquí [en Juticalpa] decimos que una persona que hable ingles, vale por dos.”
**Naranja-Orange:**

On one of my visits to Escuela Manuel Bonilla, I observed a tenth-grade English class. Since there were no available seats, I observed the class from the big window ledge that faces the *cancha*. I wrote on my notes about the observation, “it was a weak English class and it was all vocabulary based. By vocabulary based I mean, the teacher says a word in Spanish and the students answer the word in English, if they can. For example, if the teacher said ‘naranja’, those students who could, replied ‘orange’, or if the teacher said ‘drink’ and students would reply, ‘tomar’. I can tell the teacher is not well trained pedagogically or in English.”

The teacher, an older woman, sat on her desk while reading out loud the vocabulary words from her book. After reading ten or fifteen words, she stood up and wrote those same words on the blackboard. A student asked the teacher in Spanish, “profe, ¿lo copiamos?” (Do we copy it?) The teacher replied to the student, in Spanish, clarifying why it was important for the students to write or “copy” it down, “if you don’t write it down, how else are you going to study if you don’t have a book?”

The students wrote in their notebooks the words the teacher had written on the blackboard. Minutes later, the teacher moved to “teaching” sentences that used the copied vocabulary. Students made sentences, such as, “my book is orange” or “I drink soda orange”. After practicing these sentences out loud, the students wrote them down.

In my notes I wrote, “I wonder if students are taught to write these sentences or if they

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37 Field notes from 2/22/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras
38 Field notes from 2/22/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras. Spanish translation: “si no tienes libro, ¿cómo vas a estudiar si no lo copias?”
are writing them as they hear it in Spanish. For example, are they writing, ‘ay drin soda oranch’?’

Bilingual schools attract many people because of English learning, and the public school, Escuela Manuel Bonilla, is forced to compete in the market that has been created where bilingual education is deemed important in Juticalpa. In this new education market, schools have to teach English, however poor the quality of that English education is. The case in point is the public school, EMB, where English learning is not very productive. The neoliberal education discourse, especially the discourse in favor of private education, proposes that schools and education as a whole should be modernized (Sinagatullin 2006). By implementing intensive English learning, such as Padre Ricardo’s eighty-twenty proposal, these two schools in Juticalpa have ‘modernized’ the education system in that city. The idea, in my opinion, is to try to match with what is going on in the world. In the words of Catherine Prendergast (2008:8), “because English has become so central to participation in the global marketplace, people in newly capitalist countries have had little choice but to throw themselves into learning it.” The “opening up” of Honduras with the emergence of neoliberalism has created an overwhelming logic that generates the need to be able to participate in a global market. And because English is the capitalist language, many assume that learning English will make them more competitive and marketable to succeed. Neoliberalism, in other words, has created a logic that forces people to want to learn English. I think this may make sense in big capitalist centers, but not necessarily in Juticalpa, Honduras.

I highlight here is that an existing linguistic inequality in Juticalpa, based on the linguistic acquisition students have from their family relationships, as suggested by

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39 Field notes from 2/22/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
Annette Lareau, continues to be reproduced through education because all three institutions reinforce either “natural growth” and “concerted cultivation” through their pedagogical methodology. Furthermore, these three education sites also create a new linguistic inequality as a result of qualitatively disproportional bilingual education in Juticalpa. Not only do students from the private and “nonprofit” school tend to obtain ‘better’ linguistic skills than students from the public school because of the pedagogical methods employed in these two schools, but they also obtained more linguistic skill by learning English as a second language. Deficiencies in the pedagogy of bilingual and general education in public schools are a direct result of the gutting neoliberal education policies. Public education under neoliberalism has limited resources available for improving pedagogical deficiencies. The private and “nonprofit” schools do not face these problems because they can ask parents and sponsors to pay more to cover all the necessary costs. Public school parents, however, cannot afford any extra spending for their children’s education because they have also been disproportionately impacted negatively by the national neoliberal project.

Unequal Cultural Reproduction

Pierre Bourdieu (1986:47) claims that “cultural capital” can help “explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes.” Based on Bourdieu’s notion of “cultural capital”, I argue that such is the case for students within the two bilingual schools in Juticalpa. Here, I analyze and exemplify the way in which students from lower socio-economic classes have lower academic achievements in the bilingual schools. Further, I contend that as a result of students’ difference in cultural
capital, the bilingual schools create an inner cultural tension and friction that ultimately alienates students from lower socio-economic status within these schools and in their community outside of the schools.

Several teachers from IBSC, participants on a focus group on students’ academic achievement and students’ interaction within the school, claimed that students in the “nonprofit” IBSC tend to be very productive when it comes to their academic work. However, most of these teachers quickly pointed to the problems faced by several of their students. When I asked what are some of the difficulties their students faced, they all shook their heads in agreement with Joana who claimed, “they are still kids, sometimes they don’t want to do their homework or sometimes they just don’t want to finish it…even if it is almost done!”

Another teacher said his biggest problem was that some students tended to miss classes. Based on this last statement, I questioned the participants on the student absenteeism and if it was an important issue to address as a focus group. One of the participants said, “Unfortunately, some of the students on scholarship can’t make it [arrive at school] because they have no way to get here [to IBSC]. They need to provide for their own transportation, but ten Lempiras [50 cents of a dollar] a day is a lot of money for some of them.”

Absenteeism or low school attendance is one of the main causes of academic underachievement in Honduras (Bedi and Marshall 1999). However, it is not the only one. I suggest students’ cultural capital also plays a role. Wealthier students in the “nonprofit” institution tend to have better academic achievement than those students on scholarship, according to one of the focus group participants. When

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40 Focus group held on the grounds of Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara on 2/22/2012.
41 Focus group held on the grounds of Instituto Bilingüe Santa Clara on 2/22/2012.
asked why, almost all the participants agreed that students on scholarship usually do not understand the material and when they go home, there is no one that can help them.

Students from low socio-economic sectors attending Day Star on scholarships face similar issues, according to two teachers I interviewed. Stephanie, a North American Science teacher at Day Star, told me, “When I want to do certain projects that would involve some money, these students can’t afford it…. It is kind of difficult because you don’t want to be obvious of the situation, but it ends up hurting them [academically].”

In both of these examples, we can see how poorer students are affected academically because of their families’ socio-economic background. Additionally, these students’ low academic achievement is also connected to their parents’ academic upbringing. The parents of many of the students on scholarship at both of the bilingual schools have hardly any academic attainment. Doña Dilia, a mother of a sixth grade student at CESC told me she only finished the second grade. Don José, the legal guardian of a fourth grade student at CESC, told me he has never attended school. Both of these students, according to their respective teachers, are at risk of failing. I am not attempting to argue that because one’s family is not educated that one is bound to fail academically. I am not making that generalization. Rather, I argue that students cannot receive the academic guidance from their family members at home causing them to struggle in the school setting, and ultimately affecting their academic achievement.

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42 Interview with Day Star School teacher on 2/28/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
43 Interview with Centro Escolar Santa Clara parent-child on scholarship program, 2/23/2012.
44 Interview with Centro Escolar Santa Clara family member-child on scholarship program 2/17/2012.
There is also a tension among students created in the bilingual schools as a result of students’ different cultural capital. Cultural capital, as proposed by Bourdieu, depends on family background. I employ Bourdieu’s notion of “cultural capital” and define it as the symbolic goods inherited from family. This, in hand, helps students create their social identity, manners, ideas, and culture. Therefore, scholarship students, mainly from working class families or very impoverished sectors, tend to have different culture, identity, and manners than those from wealthier sectors that attend the same school. The difference between these two cultures within an institution creates a friction between students, mainly instigated by wealthier students.

When I asked the participants of the focus group at IBSC if they thought wealthier students treated students on scholarships badly due to their socio-economic status, most of them smiled and claimed it happened almost daily. At Day Star, according to one North American teacher, wealthy students also treat others as inferior because they come from poor families. Doña Dilia also told me her daughter sometimes felt inferior because of comments made by wealthier students at CESC. Doña Dilia stated, “Yes, sometimes I hear them say why she’s from poor parents…I see, then, how they see her as more inferior” she continued, “But I just continue to tell her that we have to keep going forward. It bothers her, but she’ll be okay.”

The antagonism by wealthy students to students in scholarship programs, I argue, alienates the students from lower socio-economic sectors that attend the bilingual schools on scholarships in two ways. First, these students do not have enough cultural capital to

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45 Interview with Centro Escolar Santa Clara parent - child on scholarship program, 2/23/2012. Translation: “Si, a veces yo miro que dicen que porque son hijos de papás muy pobres…entonces allí los miro como que la ven de mas baja categoría. Pero yo le digo [a ella] que hay que seguir a delante. Y le molesta, pero esta bien.”
allow them to “fit in” with majority of students in school, who mainly come from wealthier families. Instead, students on scholarship programs are perceived as “inferior”, similar to the way Doña Dilia’s daughter was treated. Second, these students are alienated from their own neighborhood, community, and immediate social group because they are seen in a “superior” light than those in their community. For example, Doña Dilia claimed her daughter “tries to have friends by the house, but they make fun of her and call her ‘gringa’! She tries to teach them some words in English and sometimes they are nice because of that.”

Doña Dilia’s daughter exemplifies how students from impoverished sectors are not welcomed in the school setting for being ‘inferior’, while simultaneously being unwelcomed in her community for attending a bilingual school with rich students.

This cultural inequality and alienation ultimately plays a role in the economic returns students have to education. This will be analyzed further in a later chapter. My intent here has been to illustrate how education plays a major role in unequal linguistic and cultural reproduction in Juticalpa.

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46 Interview with Centro Escolar Santa Clara parent - child on scholarship program, 2/23/2012. Translation: “[ella] trata de tener amigitos por la casa pero ellos se burlan de ella [pore star en esta escuela] y hasta le dicen ‘gringa’. Ella lets trata de enseñar ingles y a veces se portan bien con ella.”
Chapter 3: Race and Gender Identity Reproduction

In this chapter I will analyze how certain race and gender identities are reproduced through education. Further, I will highlight the connections between race, gender, and power. Since social reproduction theorists often ignore the importance of gender and race in the reproduction of inequality (See Giroux 1983; Bettie 2003), I will shed some light how these issues also play a major role in the continuation of inequality in Juticalpa.

The following stories, which took place in all three schools observed in Juticalpa, allow us to understand issues of race and gender. First, the concept of race is analyzed through the stories “keep your shirt on!” and “keep your shirt clean”, which reinforces the “valorization of whiteness” (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996:35) in the schools and how such valorization as a social construction (Wade 1994; 1997; 2000) plays a role in inequality reproduction. Subsequently, I will shed some light on gender identity reproduction based on the imaginary that female identity is constructed differently in different sites, as suggested by Leslie Salzinger (2003). Salzinger demonstrate how three different types of “femininity” are constructed in three different factories in Mexico. My intention is to take the notion of creating images of femininity in different sites and analyze how the three educational institutions in Juticalpa create femininity. Salzinger shows how different images of femininity are produced for a purpose; the purpose of these educational institutions is to create an image of women that resembles their philosophy. Later in the chapter, however, I highlight the contradictions of such
purposes. Moreover, I will highlight how different agents in these schools reproduce an antiquated mentality and imaginary of what women’s role and identity is in Juticalpa.

_Keep your shirt on!_  

The bell rang while observing a sixth grade Mathematics class at CESC. Some students quickly gathered their lunch bags and headed to the lunchroom. Others, instead, gathered shirts and shoes and headed to the soccer field located by the main entrance of the school. I walked past the main office behind the students heading towards the field and one of the administrators told the children, “slow down! Put your shirts on.” I continued to follow the students to see how students interact with each other during the recess. On the field, the students, all boys, divided themselves into two teams and began to play soccer under the hot midday sun. The sun and the above ninety degrees heat persuade me to sit and watch the soccer game under the palm tree hut next to the field. In the hut, one of the niñeras sat to watch over the students to make sure they were “well behaved”. Gabriela, the niñera, and I talked while the students played. In mid conversation, she stood up and screamed, “Manuel, keep your hat on!” followed by “Luis, don’t take your shirt off. Your mom will yell at me if you do.” Since it was over ninety degrees, I did not understand why Gabriela obliged students to keep their extra long sleeve shirts on. Thinking about Gabriela’s statement to Luis and Manuel, I noticed many students wearing long sleeve shirts over of their daily uniform and others wearing hats, which is not part of the school uniform. I went back to Gabriela and asked, “Why should the students keep their long sleeve shirts on? It is super hot, why not just take it

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47 This narrative is based on notes taken from observations on 2/22/2012 at Centro Escolar Santa Clara in Juticalpa, Honduras.
off?” Gabriela, a twenty-three year old darker skinned woman, replied, “so they don’t get dark like me, we can’t let them take their long shirts off because they will get burned and their parents won’t like it.” It was no coincidence that most of the students who wore long sleeve in CESC were lighter skinned. This experience was shocking, and completely contrasted a situation I observed in the public school, Escuela Manuel Bonilla.

*Keep your shirt clean*

At Escuela Manuel Bonilla students wear two type uniforms: blue pants for boys and blue skirts for girls and both wear the same button-up white shirt with the school emblem on the right short-sleeve. This uniform is worn most days as their regular “formal” uniform. The second is the physical education uniform. It consists of a blue windbreaker pants with the initials of the school, EMB, on the left side of the pants and a white t-shirt with bigger school emblem on the chest. This uniform is worn one day of the week when the students have physical education. During lunch, I sat on one of the four benches at the cafeteria hut on one side of the cancha with the principal of the school. Sometime during our conversation, he said to a young boy, “eat [your food] well so it does not stain your shirt.” The student carefully ate his fried taco as he walked away from our bench. This little experience led me to ask the principal, “do they [the students] go through a lot of school uniforms?” I asked this question thinking the state provided for the uniforms. He told me the students could go through a lot of uniforms, but the parents did not like that because it is the parents who have to pay for the uniforms. He

48 This narrative is based on notes taken from observations at Escuela Manuel Bonilla on 2/20/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
told me most parents purchase one uniform set per year costing them a total of 550 Lempiras (26 U.S Dollars). With that information in mind, it made sense what students on the cancha were doing: taking their shirts off to play.

Like students at the other schools, lunch and recess is really their time to play sports with their friends, mainly soccer. Girls usually do not play soccer, and if they try, they are quickly forced out of the cancha. The boys that play on the cancha at Manuel Bonilla, usually darker skinned students, take their button-down shirts off and set them outside of the boundary lines keeping only their sleeveless undershirts on. Unlike the “nonprofit” school where students add layers to maintain a lighter skin color, students at Escuela Manuel Bonilla take off shirts to keep their shirts clean and safe from accidental ripping because it would cost their parents more money. The “saving” of the uniform shirt by the public school students also allows them to get sunburned because they are playing on the open cancha in the midday sun and heat. However, the students or their parents do not have problems with them “getting darker” as the parents of the students at CESC would.

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These two stories are connected to school-based dynamics that contribute to the reproduction of inequality in Juticalpa and especially in CESC, which through its “nonprofit” rhetoric, places itself outside of the public lens as a contributor of that inequality. First, I argue the students in the public school that took their shirts off to stop them from getting dirty or to stop their parents from spending more money by buying new uniform shirts, are comfortable with the color of their skin and that such comfort is
maintained in the setting of the public school. For instance, during my visits to EMB, I did not hear or see a teacher approaching a student to tell them to keep their shirt on because of the effect it would have on their skin color. It is not that the students are comfortable with their skin color because all the students in the public school have the same skin color; that is far from it. There are many light-skin students in the public schools, but the lighter skin students and their parents do not see the necessity of maintaining whiteness as a tool for progress or privilege. On the other hand, the parents of students at CESC think whiteness will have a positive impact in their children’s future. When the administrator told the students to put shirts on because it was too sunny, I did not make much of it. But Gabriela made clear the reasoning behind it: parents do not want their children to “become dark.” Parents from the CESC, similar to those in Day Star School, desire their children to be lighter-skinned because of the “valorization of whiteness” (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996:35), which is explained by these authors as a “color hierarchy founded upon the negative evaluation of blackness” (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996:35). Blackness or being “dark” is perceived negatively for issues traced back to colonization and the building of nations, as argued by these authors. There is a “symbolic power of blanqueamiento” (Wade 1994:341) parallel to the negative evaluation of blackness, which contributes to these racist tendencies constructed in schools. For Wade the symbolic power of whiteness is based on race as a social construction by ruling classes, “in order to (a) better dominate a particular fraction of the workforce, who are categorized as naturally inferior and only for manual work, and (b) divide the workers into antagonistic racial categories and thus rule them more effectively” (Wade 1997:22). By not wanting their children to become darker, CESC
parents promote and reinforce racial division based on an antiquated social construction, afraid their children will be perceived as inferior to others if they are naturally tanned. Whiteness, as a superior racialized category, is reproduced in the setting of CESC and its counterpart, IBSC, where students are encouraged to remain lighter by wearing shirts to protect them from accidental or even natural sun tanning. An additional argument is that whiteness as “superior” is also being reproduced by the symbolic cultural goods consumed by students at CESC, IBSC and Day Star School. Mainly white teachers from the United States, who teach in these schools, produce these symbolic cultural goods and the students consume it.

Because of the social construction of race and its reinforcement in bilingual institutions, students generate discriminatory tendencies towards people of darker color and create misconceptions about them as uneducated and inferior workers or classmates. A teacher from Day Star School claimed students, especially rich and lighter skin, would often treat niñeras as personal maids because these students see themselves as superior to them. Gabriela and other niñeras at the “nonprofit” schools, CESC and IBSC, are treated similarly. Thus, CESC and IBSC do not offer an alternative to the racial difference reproduced between the public school, Escuela Manuel Bonilla and the private school, Day Star School; rather, both contribute to racial discrimination in Juticalpa, which in my opinion ultimately causes inequality.
Gender Identity in Schools

Leslie Salzinger discusses the existence of three different types of femininity constructed in three factories in Mexico: a “nontraditional woman” in one factory; a “masculinized producer” in a second factory; and an “embattled, would-be men” on a third factory (2003:2). She also suggests that two agents participate in the creation of these identities: first, she suggest, “femininity of assembly worker is produced on the shop floor”(2003:16) through selfhood; and, managers and supervisors as the second agent, stating, “supervision always involves shaping others—providing a hands-on (if not necessarily self-conscious) experience of malleability of worker selfhood for managers themselves” (2003:16). The notion of different places shaping femininity is a great platform to analyze how three different education institutions in Juticalpa reproduce femininity. Second, the idea of different agents creating such identities helps us understand who are the participants in the construction process of gender identity in these three different educational institutions in Juticalpa.

I propose that the public, private, and the “nonprofit” schools in Juticalpa construct an image of feminine identity that concurs with each institution’s philosophy and rhetoric. For example, the public school reproduces a traditional image where women are seen as morally correct compared to men based on “marianismo” (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996:141). This traditionalism of feminine identity is exemplified in the public schools in three different ways: through clothing, by having women wear skirts to differentiate them from boys who wear long pants; by being the more educated and with better manners than boys—I suggest this because a majority of the students in this institution are girls; and by becoming what Radcliffe and Westwood (1996:140) consider
“reproducers of national citizens” due to the household chores girls are taught in school, such as cooking and sewing to “prepare them to raise families”\footnote{Field notes from observations and conversations with teachers at Escuela Manuel Bonilla on 2/20/2012.}, as a male teacher from this institution mentioned. On the other hand, the bilingual private school, Day Star School, constructs a nontraditional femininity image similar to the description of “nontraditional woman” described by Salzinger (2003:75), as one that contradicts the traditional image of what a women is. This nontraditional image can be exemplified with the clothing girls wear to school, where girls wear long pants similar to the boys; the girls are also seen as “modern” girls because of their technological education and infatuation of popular culture; and because they are English speakers. Lastly, the “nonprofit” bilingual institution, CESC and IBSC, construct what I consider a hybrid image of femininity because they combine certain aspects from the traditional and nontraditional images of femininity into one. For instance, it combines the “modern”, the English language and the clothing aspects from the nontraditional, and the mentality of reproducers of national citizens because of the religious background of the school.

This imaginary of what femininity should be is supported by the policies and traditions of each of these institutions. It may be seen as progressive, especially the nontraditional and hybrid images. Nonetheless, I argue that students interaction with each other and with different teachers create feminine gender identity differently than the image sponsored by the institutions. I contend that even though these institutions create a decent feminine image, the real gender identity created is one that subjugates feminine identity as inferior to masculine in different aspects.
Girls are treated differently in all three schools, and that treatment reproduces the machista and marianista differences between males and females. As Salzinger (2003:23) suggests, “femininity and masculinity are relational categories which operate fundamentally through the contrast with each other.” Even though schools’ policies on gender may seem fine and equal, the way students and teachers treat women plays a more important role in the construction of gendered identities; where masculinity is perceived as superior to femininity. These contrasts create inequalities at different levels. For example, boys physically treat girls harshly in the public school, even though girls are the majority in that school. In the bilingual schools, IBSC and Day Star School, boys emotionally and physically mistreat girls also. In my opinion, these are little examples that give us insight of what the treatment of women by men will be in the future when these students reach adulthood. The following are some examples of how student interaction creates gender identities.

In the public school, Escuela Manuel Bonilla, boys do not allow girls to play on the cancha during recess. The boys always play soccer, and for them, girls cannot and should not play soccer. Girls, instead, sit down and watch the soccer game or they play tag games with boys who are also kicked out of the soccer game for being too young. The tagging game consists of girls running away from the younger boys, while the boys, quite literally, try to grab a hold of the girls. Attempting not to get “tagged”, girls run behind the big tree at the rear of the cancha that gives shade to the cafeteria. On more than one occasion I saw boys “tag” girls harshly. In one occasion, I saw a girl chased by a boy and the boy reached for her, but he could only reach her long dark hair. The boy ruthlessly pulled her hair and kept hold of it, not allowing her to get away. Similar
scenes were seen daily. However, not one teacher said anything about these frequently played games, even though many teachers were sitting nearby. In his mind, the boy had won the game, but in my view he was abusive and subjugating the girl is often seen in adults in Juticalpa. This could be interpreted as an example of flirting or childish games between two students, but this occurred many times and involved many students, not just the two students from the above example. I asked the second grade teacher about it and her response was short and sincere, “that’s how boys always are.”

At the private bilingual school, Day Star, boys did not allow the girls to shoot the basketball. The boys often pushed the girls who attempted to get the basketball from them and told them to go play at the swings “with the rest of the girls.” The male students also mistreat the girls emotionally in Day Star School. In an interview, a teacher from this institution told me,

A huge problem here in Juticalpa is that men are not faithful to the women and you can see that starting in middle school. I talk to my students all the time about it and even the boys now [in middle and high school] have one girlfriend and the next day he’s kissing another girl at school…so his girlfriend is upset and they break-up and he has a new girlfriend every week, so it is starting now and when I hear my students talk about their parents it’s like, “oh my mom has three children, but if you count all my dad’s children I have seven brothers and sisters.” That is a reoccurring theme with majority of my students.

In the “nonprofit” school, CESC, similar to Day Star School, girls who attempt to play soccer are physically pushed behind the soccer field. Even though the girls are encouraged to play with the boys in all athletic activities during physical education class, the boys only allow boys to play on the soccer field during recess. Girls that want to play soccer are told by niñeras and administrators to use the grassy slanted area behind the

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50 Field notes taken on 2/28/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
51 Field notes taken on 2/27/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
52 Interview with U.S. Teacher from Day Star School on 3/1/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
soccer field with goals made of two small branches stuck in the ground. At the high school counterpart, IBSC, female teachers tell girls they should not play during recess because they would get sweaty and dirty and, according to the Art teacher\textsuperscript{53}, that is not “lady like”. The Art teacher, an older lady, often sits on a bench under trees in front of the school and tells girl students to join her doing “manualidades”\textsuperscript{54} instead of playing with the boys. The physical removal of girls from playing on the real soccer field or the suggestions of the Art teacher creates an identity that portrays girls as physically inferior to boys.

Even though the policies of the schools create a positive image of what femininity should be, the interactions between students create the same \textit{machista} mentality that has existed in Juticalpa and in Honduras as a whole (see Centro de Derechos de Mujeres 2005). There exists a constant practice of boys physically and emotionally hurting girls because they believe such is the norm. Also, school personnel, such as \textit{niñeras} and the Art teacher at the “nonprofit” school, or the second grade teacher in the public school, play a major role in reproducing a subjugated feminine identity by telling girls to play soccer in a different area because the boys are using it, that playing athletic games with boys is not lady like, or by not doing anything when boys are physically mistreating girls in the public school.

As referenced by Radcliffe and Westwood (1996) this view is part of women’s role as reproducers of national citizens. Women are subjected to become mothers; and by accepting this role, women continue to reproduce the same divisions and relations between men and women. In addition, I argue this role for women is reproduced through

\textsuperscript{53} Field notes from 2/24/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
\textsuperscript{54} Translation: Handcrafts or artsy things. i.e. Necklaces, drawings, bracelets, and knitting.
education. The *machista* tradition is epitomized by male students’ actions inside the. The physical and emotional abuse of girls in schools, and no attempt to remedy the behavior of the bullies, continues to reproduce the *machista* male tradition in Juticalpa. Men treating women as inferior is a cultural phenomena that is reproduced through education and religious culture in Juticalpa. Although only one of the three institutions analyzed is a Catholic institution, they all reproduce inequality in gender identity, making gender identity reproduction an important aspect of social reproduction that Escuela Manuel Bonilla, Day Star School, CESC and IBSC all share.
Chapter 4: Education’s Impact on Economic Reproduction.

Louis Althusser’s (1971; 2008) work on ideology creates a platform to analyze economic reproduction through education (Collins 2009:35; Giroux 1983:264). Althusser conceptualizes schools as promoters of domination by stating that education reproduces, “a massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class that the relations of production in a capitalist social formation, i.e. the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploiters to exploited, are largely reproduced” (Althusser 1971; 2008:30; Italics in original). Starting from this conceptualization, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976; [2002]) and Michael Apple (1982) have made specific arguments on economic reproduction through education. For instance, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) suggest schools promote two types of knowledge: one targeting lower class students to be trained for blue-collar jobs; and more critical and analytical knowledge targeting upper class students. Similarly, Michael Apple (1982) suggests education provides certain knowledge to a privileged selected few through a “hidden curriculum that prepares them [students] simply to fit into and accept their place on the lower rungs of the ‘economic ladder’” (Apple 1982:61). In this chapter I connect the idea of providing students with a certain knowledge based on their socio-economic background with Apple’s notion of hidden curriculum. Moreover, other factors not mentioned by these authors are also important for analyzing unequal economic reproduction: gender and culture through “social capital” (Bourdieu 1986), analyzed in previous chapters.

Taking Bowles and Gintis notion of education as a promoter of two types of knowledge: one for blue-collar jobs and the other targeted to teach students critical and analytical thinking to upper class students, I will show how in Juticalpa education (not
just a single school but the public and the private combined) makes this happen. First, I argue that the public schools, Escuela Manuel Bonilla, trains students for blue-collar jobs, while students from the private school are taught critical thinking and managerial skills. The public education system in Honduras offers the last two years of secondary education as “vocational schooling” (Secretaría de Educación 2008:5) where students choose a vocation in which they are trained for a career. Most students choose vocational schooling in electric engineering, teaching (which is all that is needed to teach in Honduras schools), plumbing, carpentry, or computer and technology. My friend Carlos, the carpenter mentioned in an earlier chapter, is an example of how public education teaches students for blue-collar jobs. In his public school days, he chose carpentry because he thought it would be a job he could do for a long time. Like Carlos, there are others who have graduated from public schools only to work in the field that schools trained them in. For instance, Juan Carlos, the handy-man that works for OAF (the organization that sees over the “nonprofit” school), studied plumbing in his last two years of high school, and works a blue-collar job, similar to the one he was trained by the public school.

Some students do not practice the job they were trained to do in public school, but instead decide to go to college. However, many do not feel prepared for college courses. During my fieldwork I walked around the Catholic University in Juticalpa asking students what school they had graduated from and if they felt that high school education had prepared them for college level classes. Of the nine people I quickly surveyed at the University, two males attended the public school and felt the educational experience

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55 These were informal surveys based on three questions: 1) Did you attend public or private school?; 2) Did your education (private or public) prepare you for college courses?; 3) Why? Why not?
had not prepared them for college. Only one person surveyed, a female, claimed the public school had prepared her for college. Four out of the other six students, graduated from Day Star School and all felt prepared to take college courses. According to the students who did not feel prepared for college courses, one of the reasons behind it was because they were taught manual labor but not how to think critically or read enough. These examples suggest that public education does two things: on the one hand, it trains students for blue-collar jobs; and on the other, it does not sufficiently prepare students to continue their studies at the college level.

Day Star School, the private bilingual school in Juticalpa, not only prepares their students academically for college by providing critical and analytical knowledge, it also offer classes like microeconomics and business management that prepare students to have managerial jobs or higher paying jobs than their public school counterparts. Wealthier students that graduate from Day Star tend to have jobs at banks, working for the government, in corporations, or local business. Fany, for instance, graduated from Day Star School in 2008 and has worked at the local branch of World Relief Honduras since. Similarly, Lizeth found a job in accounting for the Honduran Forest Development Corporation or COHDEFOR. These are two of many other examples on private school education helping higher-class students get managerial jobs or, at least, higher paying jobs in comparison to lower class students from the public school that obtain blue collar jobs and low economic return to their education.

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56 Surveys were orally done on two days: 2/29/2012 and 3/1/2012 at the Universidad Católica de Honduras Campus Juticalpa in Juticalpa, Honduras.
There could be some resistance to the above-mentioned argument, but the fact is that there is not. The reason, I suggest, is because schools train students to be part of the economic ladder, some higher than others, through a “hidden curriculum” (Apple 1982).

According to the Secretaría de Educación (2008) and an informant from the Department of Education in Olancho, all schools, whether public, “nonprofit”, or private, are to follow the national curriculum. The public school teaches the curriculum as proposed by the government, which as I have mentioned, is academically weaker than the other institutions. Utilizing the same curriculum, the bilingual “nonprofit” and private school offers courses such as philosophy, business management, and microeconomics, even though they are not proposed by the national curriculum. The “nonprofit” and private school offer these courses under subjects such as Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. These classes, which are always taught in English, are part of a hidden curriculum. Better yet, the bilingual schools utilize the curriculum to hide the courses they offer that, as I mentioned, continue to keep students from upper socio-economic status in that status.

This hidden curriculum, in my opinion, is the discourse taken by the institutions about the types of classes they offer and the reason why they offer them. For instance, the public institution offers a discourse that by teaching “vocational” classes, it provides students marketable skills in addition to basic education: Math, reading, and writing. It also promotes the notion that students will be ‘more complete’ and able to accomplish simple labor tasks on their own. These sound like good reasons why the public school

57 Interview with an informant from the Department of Education of Olancho on 2/18/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
would offer these “vocations”. However, I think that such discourse only covers up what the curriculum actually does, which is to train students for blue-collar jobs.

In my opinion, Bowles and Gintis and Apple’s analytical lens only scratches the surface: there are other factors that play a role in the economic reproduction through education. Arjun Bedi and Neol Gaston (1997), suggest in their study about education’s economic return in Honduras, that aside from the “quality of schooling” (Bedi 1997:431), families’ socio-economic background play an important role in education’s economic return (Bedi and Gaston 1997:526). Bedi and Gaston’s argument is important because it highlights how wealthy students that graduate from the private school attain better jobs than those students from impoverished sectors. I argue that family socio-economic background plays a major role in economic reproduction in two ways. First, wealthier families and parents have more connections and are willing to help their children get better jobs than lower class children. This is connected to clientelism, where families with power and connected to corrupt officials obtain jobs for their family members and close friends from the same socio-economic class (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002:2). Clientelism in Honduras (like in many countries in Latin America) is very common, and especially connected to wealthier families. Second, students from wealthy families usually tend to have big businesses in Juticalpa and continue in the family business, giving them enough economic standing to maintain them in the upper socio-economic class.

I witnessed two such cases in while living in Juticalpa. Ana, my friend Sergio’s wife, is one of these examples. When I met her in 2008, she managed her family’s well-known business in town. Because of family contacts, according to Sergio, his wife took a
job working for the government in the Department of Agriculture in 2011, without a background in agriculture.

An example of wealthy children staying in the family business is that of the son of Porfirio Lobo, current Honduran President. Mr. Lobo’s son graduated from Day Star School and continues to run family ranches in Juticalpa. I met Mr. Lobo’s son on different occasions. Interested in getting to know all the North Americans in Juticalpa, especially the women, he invited me and other volunteer-teachers to one of his father’s ranches. Even though he received a private school education, in reality it was his family’s business, not his education that allowed him to continue belonging to the wealthiest socio-economic class. These two examples illustrate Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of “social capital”. For Bourdieu (1986:51) social capital means the networks or “relationships of mutual acquaintance” and in Juticalpa such relationships are based on the clientelism that wealthy families maintain with either other elites or corrupt officials.

It is also important to think about what happens to those students from lower socio-economic sectors of society that, through scholarships, attend and graduate from the private school, Day Star, to further this analysis. It is not simply because one graduates from this institution that one’s economic future is secured. During 2008 and 2009, I met several alumni from this institution. Three of them found jobs teaching English in the “nonprofit” bilingual school after several years of job searching. Another four continued their studies at the Catholic University of Honduras-Juticalpa Campus. Tim, Iliana, Jesica, and Daniel continued their studies on scholarships at the University. However, when I visited them during my fieldwork in 2012, three of the four were unemployed and one was underemployed. I first met Tim, Iliana, Jesica, and Daniel
after Padre Ricardo, president of the Catholic University in Juticalpa and president of OAF, asked a few of the volunteer-teachers if we were willing to tutor some university students in English. I had the pleasure of working with these four students who were the most fluent of a larger group. They wanted to practice conversational English to make themselves more marketable for different job opportunities. I met with them three times per week to discuss different social and political issues in English. They were great. They knew English; they just wanted to practice so as to not forget it, because outside of the bilingual schools, there was no reason why one would speak English in Juticalpa. Nonetheless, they thought that being bilingual and college educated would easily land them well-paying jobs in Juticalpa.

On the third day of my fieldwork I contacted Tim. It was three o’clock in the afternoon and I had just finished observations at IBSC on the Catholic University grounds and called him from the school. I was ready to only leave a message thinking he would be busy at work, but he picked up and did not sound busy. I said, “Hey, Tim. I’m in town doing some research, but I would love to get together with the class.” Tim replied, “where are you right now?” I told him where I was and he said, “I’ll come to get you with my friend.” He showed up ten minutes later and we went to get a drink and ‘catch up’. Tim told me he had been unemployed since he graduated. “Eric, there are no jobs at all. It’s a bad situation here. You either have to know someone [important] to get a job or sell things at the market. If there is nothing to do, what can I do?⁵⁸” A couple of days before my departure from Honduras, Tim, Iliana, Jesica, and Daniel—all the students I tutored in English—came by where I was staying in. All, but Daniel’s story, matched Tim’s. Daniel had found a job working for Hondutel, the Honduran national

⁵⁸ Conversation with “Tim” on 2/17/2012 in Juticalpa, Honduras.
telephone company. The job, as he described it, was nothing he was trained to do, but it was an income.

These friends did not have the “social capital” of people from higher socio-economic background. People from upper class can cash in their social capital and get well paying jobs. Lower class students, on the other hand, cannot because their social capital involves people from in same background, who most likely have blue-collar jobs or no jobs at all.

These examples may suggest that I am over generalizing. That is not my intent, however. I am sure these are not the only cases. There are people from well-off economic backgrounds who continue to obtain jobs that allow them to remain in high socio-economic status today because of their family’s culture and socio-economic background. But, simultaneously, there are people who have worked hard academically, but cannot get a job because of their family’s socio-economic background and lower cultural capital. My main argument is that if this has been the case for Day Star graduates and those students from lower classes that have attended that school on scholarships, the same will happen to students from the “nonprofit” school when they try to get jobs after they graduate. Their family background is more important than the education they obtained. As a result, we can deduce that the “nonprofit” alternative rhetoric and philosophy becomes nothing more than a myth.

Moreover, with these examples I argue that gender identity reproduction is also an important factor in the economic reproduction through education. Notice in the example of the students I tutored in 2008-2009, only Daniel, a male from lower socio-economic

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59 The “nonprofit” school has not yet had a graduating class from high school due its relatively short ten-year existence in Juticalpa.
sectors found work. The women, Jesica and Iliana, have not found jobs. Even though the bilingual institution promotes a “nontraditional” image of women, where feminine identity is treated as equal as male, it is nothing but a myth. Women are treated as inferior in society, and sometimes they are not given job opportunities because they are women. This Latin American theme of thinking of women as inferior is exemplified through wages, where “women earn between 32 percent on the low end and 58 percent on the high end of what men earn in Latin American workplaces” (Davison-Harden and Schugurensky 2009:14). Arjun Bedi and Jason Born (1995), specifically about Honduras, mention the disadvantage women have in returns to education. These authors claim women need a secondary education diploma to match what men earn after only an elementary education (Bedi and Born 1995:155). Jesica and Iliana were both great students, smart, and bilingual. Yet, they still have not found jobs. If they do find jobs, however, they will most likely earn less than what a man with the same credentials would earn, consequently disadvantaging their economic returns to education.

In this chapter I have argued that education contributes to unequal economic reproduction in three ways. First, it reproduces the social relations, where poor students are trained for blue-collar jobs while upper class students are trained for managerial or higher positions jobs. This can be seen in the curriculum offered by the public school and the bilingual schools, as mentioned above. Second, it reproduces an elitist culture—one which students from lower sectors are excluded and alienated. Examples of this were Sergio’s wife, Ana, and President Lobos’ son who obtained jobs that, based on family connections, they were able to remain in the upper class. Third, I have argued that these education sites construct feminine identity as inferior, and that “inferiority” plays a major
role in the economic returns to education for women. Jesica and Iliana’s case exemplify Juticalpa’s economic inequality towards women, forcing them to be jobless or earn less than males.

Although this chapter focused mainly on examples and analysis from the private school, Day Star, it allows me to make a hypothesis about the “nonprofit” bilingual institution, CESC and IBSC. The hypothesis is that once CESC and IBSC have a graduating class it will show that education will not be able to change unequal economic reproduction. Rather, it will reproduce economic inequality similar to what Day Star School has contributed in Juticalpa for the last two decades.
Conclusion

Based on arguments that public education is of poor quality, or based on the idea that one is “free to choose” from different schools, neoliberalism creates an imaginary in the population urging the need to have an alternative to public education. In the case of Juticalpa, Honduras, that alternative was the creation of Day Star School, a private bilingual school in 1988. Years later, not only in Honduras, but also in many other places around the world, we discovered the negative impacts neoliberalism had on education due to privatization and deregulation of schools. Private schools had caused a disparity in the quality of education attracting only those who could afford these private institutions.

The neoliberal reforms in Honduras, as elsewhere, has benefited the wealthy while negatively affecting the poor. Educationally, neoliberalism has done the same: it has benefited private education for the wealthy while simultaneously affecting negatively public education for the poor. The private schools, which could only be afforded by the wealthy, offered good quality education, while public offers poor quality. The disparities between the two institutions reproduce or recycle a poor versus good quality education, which impacts socio-economic conditions in society. Accordingly, each institution continued to reproduce the lifestyle, culture, and economic realities of those who attend them. As a result of this inequality in Juticalpa, OAF promoted a “nonprofit” alternative in 2002. In this so-called alternative where, through scholarship programs students from impoverished sectors can attend a private school, the majority of the students are students from middle-upper and upper class. Since the majority are from wealthier socio-
economic sectors of Juticalpa, I have tried to argue that the nonprofit institution, CESC and IBSC, is not an alternative, but rather reproduce the same inequalities contributed by the private Day Star School.

I have tried to illustrate several things in this thesis. First, and foremost, I show as James Collins (2009:34) mentions, that schools do not promote equality, but rather reproduce inequality in a given country. Furthering the framework of reproduction theorists and in support of Collins’ argument, I argue for expanding the analysis of social reproduction through education based on empirical data from one institution. I believe a more holistic and comparative approach is necessary when the society being studied has different types of schools. Such is the case of Juticalpa. I have studied, not only the public education, which majority of social reproductionist have based their arguments and theories on, but also private and “nonprofit” institutions in Juticalpa. I argue that education, as a whole system, including other schools besides public, is a good lens to do a class analysis. This thesis strongly suggests how different institutions reproduce language, culture, race and gender identity, and economic returns, all the factors that come together to create inequality in Juticalpa. By doing so and comparing these three educational institutions, I show how the “nonprofit” institution reproduces similar language, culture, race and gender identity, and economic returns as the private institution and thus is not a real alternative. Further, I have shown the students from more impoverished sectors of society who attend the “nonprofit” school are alienated because they are not from the same socio-economic class as the majority of students in their school.
To expand on the main argument of this thesis, let me summarize the finding of my research based on the themes of social reproduction theory. I found that bilingualism creates a new type of linguistic inequality by giving an extra language tool to students that attend the bilingual schools, but this linguistic tool does not give students from lower socio-economic sectors an advantage because they tend to have lower social and cultural capital. Further, I have found that wealthier students in the bilingual schools, Day Star and the Santa Clara schools, create a friction with poor students who attend the institution on scholarship causing the latter to feel alienated in the school and in their community. Additionally, I have also concluded that the “nonprofit” institution, reproduce racial discriminatory tendencies because it reproduces a valorization of whiteness. The valorization of whiteness is showed by the way parents and staff wants students to protect themselves from “becoming dark” because of natural sun exposure. Moreover, even though all three institutions promote three different images of femininity, I have found that all institutions studied create the same gender identity: one that oppresses or treats females as inferior to males. Finally, I have found that economic reproduction through education is based on other factors beyond the quality of education. It is also based on society wide dynamics of socio-cultural reproduction and gender identity reproduction.

At the beginning of this project, the initial hypothesis was that with the emergence of the “nonprofit” schools, impoverished sectors had found an alternative to the disparities created by private and public school dichotomy. In short, my thought was that the “nonprofit” school was a real alternative that could help break the dynamics inequality in Juticalpa. However, as I have shown, my findings suggest such is not the case. The “nonprofit” institution, on the contrary, is a masked private institution that
contributes to reproduce inequality of Juticalpa even though it claims to do something different.
Bibliography


