

SIT Graduate Institute/SIT Study Abroad SIT Digital Collections

Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection

SIT Study Abroad


Spring 2016

Cultural Capital: An Investigation in Community Sustainability

Harrison Luft

SIT Graduate Institute - Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), and the [Sociology of Culture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Luft, Harrison, "Cultural Capital: An Investigation in Community Sustainability" (2016). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 2298.

https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2298

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Cultural Capital: An Investigation in Community Sustainability

Luft, Harrison

Academic Director: Ventura, Gabriela

Project Advisor: Cruz, Luciene, President of Grãos de Luz e Griô

Brazil, Lençóis

Occidental College

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Brazil: Public Health, Race,
and Human Rights, SIT Study Abroad, Spring 2016

Abstract

This study analyzed the place and role of cultural capital within the existing community sustainability framework. The purpose of the study was to look at the organization Graos de Luz e Griô and analyze their strategies in education, dialogue, culture, empowerment, and sustainability with young people and with the community. It was built upon a review of the literature, which found that although culture is included in the current sustainability framework, it is not given the necessary credit it deserves in shaping populations. The study was conducted over four weeks in the city of Lençóis, located in the interior of Bahia, Brazil. My methodology included 8 interviews with individuals in the organization, three young adults, three employees, the president of the organization, and an elder. Participant observation was conducted over a three-week period in the organization. The study found that identity and ancestral awareness were the primary forms of cultural capital used to enhance community sustainability. This study also shed light on the necessity of an opportunistic mentality in historically marginalized communities.

Resumo

Este estudo analisou o lugar e o papel do capital cultural no âmbito da sustentabilidade comunitária existente. O objetivo do estudo foi olhar para a organização Grãos de Luz e Griô e analisar suas estratégias em matéria de educação, diálogo, cultura, capacitação e sustentabilidade com os jovens e com a comunidade. Foi construído em cima de uma revisão da literatura, que constatou que embora a cultura esteja incluída no quadro da sustentabilidade atual, não é dado o crédito necessário que merece na formação de populações. O estudo foi realizado durante quatro semanas na cidade de Lençóis, localizada no interior da Bahia, Brasil. Minha metodologia incluiu oito entrevistas com os indivíduos na organização, três jovens adultos, três funcionários, o presidente da organização, e um velho griô. A observação participante foi realizada durante um período de três semanas na organização. O estudo descobriu que a identidade e a consciência ancestral foram as principais formas de capital cultural usados para melhorar a sustentabilidade da comunidade. Este estudo também lança luz sobre a necessidade de uma mentalidade oportunista em comunidades historicamente marginalizadas

Key Words: Identity, opportunity, cultural sustainability, cultural capital, ancestry

Table of Contents

Abstract and Key Words	1
Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
<i>Social and Personal Relevance</i>	4
<i>Problem Statement</i>	6
Literature Review	7
<i>Sustainability</i>	7
<i>Community Development</i>	7
<i>Triple Bottom Line vs. The Four Pillars Model</i>	8
<i>Cultural Sustainability</i>	10
Methodology	13
<i>Research Location</i>	13
<i>Data Collection</i>	13
<i>Limitations</i>	15
<i>Ethics and Ethical Responsibilities</i>	16
Results and Discussion	17
<i>Preface</i>	17
<i>Perceptions of Opportunity</i>	18
<i>Personal Identity</i>	20
<i>Ancestral Identity</i>	23
Conclusion	27
References	28
Appendices	30
<i>SIT Questions</i>	30
<i>Informed Consent Form</i>	33
<i>Interview Model</i>	34

Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to thank my Project Advisor Luciene Cruz. Her help with coordinating my interviews, her support, and her willingness to help me in any way possible made this research possible. Additionally, I'd like to thank her for her super fast talking. I'm convinced it has helped me learn Portuguese exponentially quicker.

Thank you to my Academic Director, Gabriela Ventura, who aided me in crafting my initial question and helped me to pursue my CSP at the amazing organization of Grãos de Luz e Griô.

Many thanks to Rafaela Loureiro, SIT Salvador's Program Assistant, who was always there to talk when I needed to. Thank you for putting up with my venting and my absurd sense of humor.

This project would not have been possible without my nine interviewees. Thank you all so much for your willingness to participate and your excellent answers. I can only hope to have done justice to them.

I am grateful to my host families in both Lençóis and Salvador. Thank you for feeding me, and making sure I was healthy enough to participate in this project. To Jacy and Antonio, I hope this is just the beginning!

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you goes out to my friends and family for the emotional support and regular comic relief. I appreciate each and every text and phone call.

Introduction

Social and Personal Relevance

Traditionally, the word sustainability has largely been applied at the national or global level, usually talking about ecologic, or political forms sustainability. Recently though, it has applied at the micro level, to cities, and even smaller, communities within a city. Community sustainability works outside the countries of focused economic growth or cleaner environmental practices; it focuses on creating a more just and equitable space through encouraging social and cultural diversity. Most importantly it requires the community to define sustainability for itself, from its own values and perspective. To make this happen the entire collective of the community must participate in a collective decision-making process that meets their social, cultural, environmental and economic needs.

An emerging community development technique, usually overlooked by societies because of its non-scientific foundation, is community cultural development. This addition to the traditional sustainability framework brings together individuals expressing their own stories, engaging in skill building, and actively developing their cultures. Seen as a grass roots strategy by most sustainability advocates, cultural sustainability is slowly being absorbed into current development models (Duxburry & Gilette, 2007). It engages artists and cultural organizations in the development and revitalization processes in cities and communities. It helps sustainability practices by supporting community culture, empowering residents, and strengthening infrastructure. This type of cultural development has also been linked to “initiatives such as health, affordable housing, education, youth, poverty, policy, and planning”(Creative City

News; 2007). To summarize, community cultural development acts as a tool to empower, encourage public participation, and promote a sense of place among the inhabitants of the community.

This topic holds strong personal relevance for me living in Los Angeles, a city of about 3 million people in the United States. There has been increasing distress in communities because individuals are feeling disconnected and disengaged from their societies. I've noticed that people have only begin to get involved in society when it seems they have the opportunity to make a difference. Communities have a right, as well as a responsibility, to engage with the values that determine the future of the society that they are apart of. While some communities enjoy quite considerable influence, often over more than they have the right to, other yield to their own powerlessness. I hope to illuminate new aspects of the community sustainability to assist in re-engaging individuals in their right connect with their community.

Project Problem Statement

To investigate strategies employed by Graos de Luz e Griô relevant to enhancing community sustainability giving particular attention to cultural capital, indigenous knowledge, and traditional practices. It is my belief that these practices are often overlooked in favor of the contemporary economic and environmental sustainability campaigns. This suggests important implications in terms of policy action by city governments in addition to improving the well being of the individuals within the community.

Literature Review

Sustainability

Sustainability, at its core, is about adapting into a new “ethic” of living, by creating more equitable and just societies by equal distribution of goods and services. (Darlow, 1996). Sustainability practices call into question the consumption-based life style the world has become accustomed to and goes beyond processes based solely in economic efficiency. “It is a holistic and creative process that we must, as culture constantly strive towards” (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999; Duxbury & Gillette 2007). This is complicated by the fact that this discourse is based upon societal factors, which are constantly changing.

Community Development

Community development strives to strengthen “the economy and the social ties within a community through locally based initiatives” (Duxbury & Gillette 2007). This process of community development is often summarized by the “Triple Bottom Line”, a summation of social, economic, and environmental factors into one statistic of development. Culture has been left out, but it slowly making its way into the picture. Duxbury & Gillete continue to argue, “The central goals of community development rely on residents having the ability to express their values, be self-reliant, satisfy basic human needs, and have greater participation and accountability in their community. This goal is accomplished by education, citizen participation, consensus building, and access to information. “Creating a sense of place in the community is central as it empowers residents to become decision-makers over their own environment, resources, and future”(Duxbury et al. 2007).

Triple Bottom line vs. The Four Pillars Model

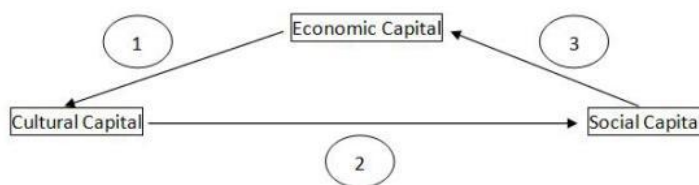
Traditionally, literature surrounding the subject of community sustainability converges on the idea of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) in community sustainability, consisting of social, environmental, and economic factors. The term, coined by John Elkington in the mid-1990s, was created in order to have some metric to measure sustainability. This could be sustainability of companies, governments, non-profits, and other looking to calculate their own sustainability statistic. Calculation then, is the main goal of the TBL. Some advocates suggest monetizing all dimensions of the TBL, while other find this method ludicrous, because of the high level of subjectivity involved; for example, having the monetize the loss of an endangered species would come up differently every time depending on who the researcher asks (Fell, 2008). The advantage of this system is that it is quantifiable; additionally, it allows organization to “evaluate the ramifications of their decisions from a truly long-run perspective” (Elkington, 1994).

The researcher John Hawkes challenged this notion with his Four Pillar Model of Sustainability. The main argument he says rests in accepting the definition of cultures as “the expression and manifestation of what it means to be human”(Hawkes, 2001). The model recognizes that a community’s vitality and quality of life is closely linked to the quality of a communities “cultural engagement, expression, dialogue, and celebration”(Hawkes, 2001). Once the definition is widely accepted, he argues, it then becomes obvious that cultural implications must be taken into account during each and every long-term decision impacting a community. To do this a “Cultural Framework” must be

developed in order to avoid the possible negative impacts of a Cultural Policy. For example, with a cultural policy, marginalization is a threat, boiling down culture to mere arts and heritage. This gross over simplification, he argues, is what we have come to expect when in fact culture is the key to implementing many of the sustainability proposals already in effect today. Additionally, he suggest that a “whole society” approach would need to be taken, because a program, policy, or other entity’s impact cannot be adequately assessed without taking into account each and every person involved (Hawkes, 2001).

Proponents of the Triple Bottom Line model posit that social capital and cultural capital are essentially the same concept. This is a common confusion throughout the literature that should be cleared up.

Cultural Capital, conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu, includes “non-economic resources that promote social mobility”(Bourdieu, 1977). Examples of this include style of speech, intellect, dress, or physical appearance. It is, however, a necessary contributing factor to community sustainability. The following is an example of the interplay between the traditional factors of community sustainability:



(LanguageCapital, 2013)

“Economic capital can be transferred into cultural capital in relation 1. Your parents financially supported you to acquire more skills or knowledge, which helps you to boost your cultural capital. In return, you are able to get a well-paid

job that brings you power, status and a higher salary i.e. increase in economic capital. While in relation 2, by displaying cultural capital, it is more likely for us to gain acceptance and status in society, therefore acquiring social capital. As in relation 3, the social network can provide more opportunities and therefore obtain economic capital, which can be re-invested in cultural capital. This is to illustrate that it is a cycle, which affects social relationship and interaction” (Bourdieu 1986 , Grenfell 2008, 2011).

Theoretically, there exists much work and analysis to discern the place of cultural capital in relation to community sustainability. My research fits in at the micro level. I hope to contribute by identifying specific activities, programs, and strategies that are effective in creating a space for cultural capital within the community sustainability framework.

Cultural Sustainability

Above I have given background on the existing community sustainability framework and below I will lay out the existing framework for cultural sustainability.

Throughout the literature the word “culture” has several different meaning and layers. I was confronted by this abundance of information researching my own definition. As an example of this lack of a clear definition for culture, anthropologists Adreatta and Ferraro make note of a publication that stated “more than 160 different definitions of culture could be identified” (Anreatta et al. 2009). After noting this, they added their own definition of

culture stating, “Everything that people have refers to material possessions; everything that people think refers to the things they carry around in their heads, such as ideas, values, and attitudes; and everything that people do refers to behavior patterns” (Anreatta et al. 2009). Other existing definitions of culture provide alternative views about material possessions, ideas, arts, values, and attitudes. They also included activities that further explain the meaning of the culture. Cultural sustainability is shaped by these same forms of awareness individuals have towards economic, social, and environmental dimensions and also explores ways to improve their lives as well as preserve a viable inheritance for future generations. Reading further into the literature the inclusion of culture in to the pillars of sustainability is not a heavily debated topic, but only recently has the field seen culture been added to the discussion about sustainability based on its own merits and not as part of one of the three other pillars, most commonly social sustainability.

Cultural dimensions of society inform environmental, economic, and social discussions. In these discussion researchers find links between “culture and the economy through income generation and employment; culture is linked to social programs that deal with poverty, equal rights, and civic engagement; and culture linked to the environment through the use of cultural capital to raise environmental awareness and responsibility” (Scammon, 2012). In a diagram published by Adam Werbach, and environmental activist, titled “The Living Principles of Design,” he gives an example of how all principles of sustainability work symbiotically, giving credit to cultural as an autonomous pillar. He notes economic sustainability is concerned with “actions and issues that affect how people and organizations meet their basic needs evolve and define economic

success and growth.” (Webach, 2012). Environmental sustainability as attempting to minimize usage of nonrenewable resources by utilizing “actions and issues that affect natural systems, including climate change, preservation, carbon footprint, and restoration of natural resources.” (Webach, 2012). As Scammons notes, social sustainability focuses on “meeting all or as many of a community’s needs as possible, such as appropriate facilities for the elderly, children and cultural groups” (Scammons, 2012). Webach adds to this saying social sustainability is concerned with “actions and issues that affect all aspects of society, including poverty, violence, injustice, education, healthcare, safe housing, labor, and human rights” (Webach, 2012). He approaches cultural sustainability by saying it is involved in “actions and issues that affect how communities manifest identity, preserve and cultivate traditions, and develop belief systems and commonly accept values” (Webach, 2012). Cultural Identity is dynamic and constantly evolving to the world around it. Identity therefore arises from self-knowledge and acknowledgement of both inclusion and difference between cultural groups, which gives one a framework for one’s place in society.

The literature relates the inheritance of cultural capital to the inheritance of natural capital as both representations of intergenerational equity. David Throsby, author of “A Handbook of Cultural Economics”, posits that, “Both [natural and cultural capital] have been inherited from the distant past, the former provided as a gift of nature, the latter deriving from human creativity. Both impose a duty of care on the present generation, the essence of sustainability.” (Throsby, 2003)

Methodology

Research Location

The research for this project was conducted at the organization Grãos de Luz e Griô in the city of Lençóis, Bahia, Brazil. Historically, Lençóis was heavily populated by diamond miners, working the mines in the nearby area; although, since the prohibition of diamond mining in the region the city has switch to tourism its main economy. This switch to a tourism-centered economy has created social, economic, and cultural issues for the region. Race and class dynamics between the tourist and locals compound these disparities. Grãos de Luz e Griô works with the youth in the city to counter act these sentiments through its Griô Pedagogy philosophy. This organization's location and culturally based philosophy present a unique opportunity for research in community sustainability.

Data Collection

I collected my data through 8 semi-structured interviews over the course of the month long study period. I interviewed 3 different factions of the organization. The first group was the leaders of Grãos. Through interviewing the President of the organization and 2 founders I was able to get the big picture goal of the organization and their perspective of Grãos in the community. The second group consisted of 3 of the adult employees that had participated in Grãos when they were youths. The third group of interviewees was current participants in Graos. These three groups were selected because of the varying perspectives they would be able to provide to Graos's activities and contributions to the community.

I conducted a private one on one meeting with each of my interviewees at Grãos. I crafted a different set of questions for each group, geared to gather data on their varying perspectives. Examples of these questions can be found the Appendix. The pre-prepared questions served as the foundation of the interview though many times follow up questions were asked for clarification or asked to encourage the interviewee to continue elaborating.

At the start of each interview I had the participant read (or I read for them) some statements about their right to skip any questions or stop the interview at any time. Additionally, each individual was asked to sign an informed consent form (found in the Appendix) and verbally agreed to have their interviews recorded for later transcription. All interviews were preformed in Portuguese.

During the interviews I took detailed notes to the best of my ability while engaging in the conversation. After the conclusion of the interviews I took a moment to write up a detailed summary of the conversation using as many exact quotes as I could. Later, I went back and analyzed the interview in full using the transcription. As I interviewed more people I categorized themes I saw in a master document that help my analysis in the final monograph.

My interview pool was construction through advice from my Project Advisor. Due to time constraints I was unable to develop my own pool of contacts, but I believe my project advisors recommendations are very strong. I chose to conduct my interviews through the semi-structured style because of the personal nature of my project question. I believe each interviewee's personal perspective was very important in answering my research question, so the level

of detail I would be able to achieve through another method, such as a survey, would not suffice. The semi structured interview allowed me to ask pointed personal questions and follow up if necessary.

Limitations

My most significant limitation was I was unable to interview individuals below the age of 18 due to restrictions on our informed consent policy. This factor limited my research because I was unable to gather data on the expectations they had of their participation in activities at Graos de Luz e Griô. Another significant limitation on my research was the language barrier. The flow of conversation was not as fluid as it could have been and I missed some opportunities to ask potential questions. Although I understood the vast majority of what was being said it would take me a few more seconds than normal to process the information, unfortunately, that was enough time for me to miss some important moments.

As with any study, sample size is always a concern in obtaining statistically relevant and accurate data. More perspectives are always helpful in validating trends and themes in the data. I focused on the main themes I found between the individuals I interviewed and validated them through inter group comparison. The themes I selected seem to be well supported by each other, though a larger sample size and an additional organizational comparison would be ideal. This multi organizational approach would be ideal, however due to time and area constraints this was impossible.

Ethics and Ethical Responsibility

My primary ethical issues will be conducting responsible interviews. Before beginning the interviews I explained the purpose of the interview in context of the project and the intentions I had behind pursuing this research. I obtained the legal consent of the participant through having the interviewee sign the SIT Study Abroad Terms of Free and Informed Consent form. Also I assured the participants that their identities would remain confidential and their information anonymous. During the interview I kept the questions within the confines of my study and did my best to respect individual boundaries and gauge their comfort level throughout.

In addition to the ethical responsibility in the interview process, some of my other concerns relate to my analysis. It is not a goal of mine to over-generalize, under complicate, or stereotype any behavior, belief, or group of people. This was difficult to do because of the limited sample size and the shared opinions between the participants. That being said, I have done my best to give appropriate context and set my analysis within the over arching framework of my research.

Results and Discussion

Preface

At the beginning of my research my objective was to observe the way in which cultural capital, non-economic resources that promote social mobility, supports community sustainability. I assumed that this would be difficult to do, primarily due to the abstract nature of the topic. I found difficulty placing my study within the broader framework of existing research; while there exists many studies looking at the macro city level, focused on economic indicators, there lacks much in the way of micro research, examining the primary sources of the data. This could be for a few reasons, the reliability of large data sets, and the quantitative conclusiveness of big data; however, I felt it was imperative to look deeper at the personal level to see what the factors were in motivating and maintaining this community. That being said, I was apprehensive about what I would find, if I would be able to draw any conclusion out of my qualitative data.

It came as a welcome surprise, then, as I had my first interview and was blown away by the detail responses and concrete themes.

In my head I had been approaching my research from an ignorant perspective, assuming everyone had appropriate expectations about what's possible in their lifetime, knew the history of their people, and were accepting of their own identity within their society. I came to learn that these were important if the most important facets in these individual's lives, and therefore extremely important when it came to sustaining their community.

My research aims to identify the way cultural capital, contributes to existing the community sustainability framework.

Perception of Opportunity

Lençóis is a historically colonial city, and that means it contains historically marginalized populations. For a long time, there has been a great divide between the rich white inhabitants of the city and the poorer Afro-Descendant population. Marina Carvaleo, the President of Graos de Luz e Griô elaborated on this fact. She emphasized the oppressed opportunity. She said that to even think of going to college 20 years ago was an impossible dream to have. This was mainly because of stagnating social mobility for Afro-Descendant populations in the city. In many families it was an expectation that the children would grow up working in their own houses, then their options for adult employment were either a teacher in a rural community, or a housekeeper for a hotel in the city (M. Carvaleo, personal communication, May 14, 2016).

This is the mentality Grãos aims to dilute and erase in the community. They provide various oficinas, or workshops, to a group of children and young adults in the community. The workshops include theatre, music, audiovisual, administration, and an education class in preparation for the ENEM, a national college entrance exam. Participants in the workshops are free to choose which they want to participate in and switch between them if they don't find interest in the one that they have chosen. In an interview with Carlos Santos, 19, the current leader of the audiovisual workshop, he stressed that the free choice aspect of organization is extremely liberating for the young people. He explained that being exposed to these different activities opens up a new space in the minds of young people to explore their desires and their passions. In doing this it cultivates interest in the future and allows them to at least consider the possibility of pursuing one of these activities later in life (C. Santos, personal communication, May 13, 2016). Within a few months of arriving at Graos, Marina

said, the young people automatically think of going to college it doesn't even come across as a second thought. Vinnie, a 19 year old new comer to the organization, hadn't really considered a future in anything non-traditional. He assumed he would work at a hotel like a few people in his family. After coming to Grãos though, and exploring his passion for singing, he can see a future for himself in the music industry. He knows it is a long shot, but he says it is liberating to him to know it is an option (V. Ferriera, personal communication, May 17, 2016).

In an empirical study conducted by researchers Kim and Kim, they look at the subject of perception and mentality and note that:

“Cultural capital is closely connected not only with objective change in social structure and class at the macro level, but also with subjective change in individual well-being at micro-level factors. To reproduce a society it is not simply required to reproduce the structure, but to reproduce the mentality, such as false consciousness and subjective well-being” (Kim et al. 2008).

This mentality of opportunity is an integral piece of a sustainable community. Without it, no progress can be made towards enhanced cultural awareness and allowance of personal valorization.

In order to be able to explore my research question in full it was necessary that I throw out all my expectations and pre conceived notions of what these individuals had or had not been exposed to. I had several misguided beliefs about this population's perception of opportunity. These beliefs were not so much learned from readings or course work, but assumed because of a privileged upbringing and a hugely supportive family. In reality these individuals are not exposed to support systems automatically. Society is oppressive and disadvantages these communities. It

is therefore integral that they form supportive communities that expose the young people to opportunity outside of the oppressive narrative.

Personal Identity

Identity is a deeply personal and very often interwoven with everything an individual does in life. For many of the young and older member of Grãos that were interviewed, creation or realization of one's identity served as a springboard for future endeavors. For Carlos Santos, Grãos has helped him grapple with his people's complex and tumultuous history. He says that although it is a sad and painful story Grãos has helped him be happy and come to terms with it. Now he says, when he thinks about his own happiness, he thinks about it in the context of the Grió Pedagogy, his ancestry, and the affirmation of his identity. He expressed a sentiment I heard from many of my interviewees, that the importance of identity in life couldn't be overstated. He said the without discovering who he was, what his ancestors story is, it would be impossible for him to stay happy; perhaps it would be possible at the superficial level, but not in life as he tries to decide what he wants to pursue. He emphasized that identity is so integral in the decision of a career, and without it, he would be lost (C. Santos, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

Darlan Vito, a founder of the philosophy of the Grió Pedagogy and leader of cultural programs at Graos, echoed this sentiment. He validated group support as being invaluable to a community's sustainability, though knowing these oppressive narratives and personal ancestry are equally important for an individual's life. He encourages learning from them, specifically learning how to accept and adapt them into one's identity and modern times (D. Vitor, personal communication, May 17, 2016).

Junisa Oliviera, a former student at Graos and now Grãos's Accounting Management Coordinator, believes when somebody has a strong personal identity, they can take that emotional energy and invest it into other things. In addition to being able to invest that extra energy they are able to fully express themselves in an open and honest manner (J. Oliveria, personal communication, May 10, 2016).

Below is an excerpt of my experience as a participant observer during a regular activity at Graos called BioDanca, Life Dance. This activity happens every 2 weeks at Graos and its purpose is to engage individuals with their own internal dialogue and encourage confidence in self expression.

The session started and the woman began her approximately 30 minute talk on BioDanca, what it means to her and what she hopes the group will gain out of these classes. She emphasized the freedom, and self-improvement aspects of the dance. She believes that if we give ourselves up to the dance and experience it without inhibitions then we will gain the most out of the class. She stressed allowing our bodies to feel everything and be at peace with the feelings, letting them come and then pass through. I could feel everyone's tension begin to leave the room as she spoke for longer and longer. It was very soothing to listen to her; she spoke in soft angelic tones. After a while we stood up and began the dance portion of the class. The first section was done individually to music playing very loud. It was as if she was trying to drown out the insecurities of people with the music. It was upbeat and fun to move to. For the first little bit everyone was dancing fairly lively. Nobody was taking himself or herself too seriously and looking around I could see many people smiling. She then had us moves to do in a circle, the first instructed dance was skipping, next came free dancing in a circle followed by a horseback-riding dance. A small group began to form on the wall of people who were tired of dancing. I was starting to become out of breathe, so I

assume they stopped because they were tired, and not because they didn't like the dancing. My only evidence of this is that they remained smiling and continued clapping along. The final, and most important dance in my opinion wasn't really a dance at all. We gathered in groups of 4 and formed a small circle. One at a time, a person would step to the center of the small circle and the others would surround them. Everybody was to be totally silent and the individual in the middle would start to sing/hum their name, the others would join in and that would go on for about a minute. After which, the people in the circle would embrace the person in the middle, it was a love circle. We finished the session in a circle wrapped arm in arm listening to the last song with our eyes closed swaying back and fourth.

This is an example of just one in a set of very regular activities these individual's do on a Monday through Friday basis.

Looking at the literature, identity is an integral piece of in the Four Pillars Model proposed by John Hawkes. He recognizes an individual's obvious link into the community seeing "engagement, expression, and dialogue" as necessary facets of a sustainable community (Hawkes, 2001). I believe I am observing a special case of community sustainability, where individuals in this situation are almost exclusively relying on cultural and social influence in their society. In every interview, when asked if and why they believe Grãos contributes to sustainability in the community, self-identity and ancestry were their primary answers. I believe this could be for a few reasons; the first is that many of these individuals are very poor. During an activity on government social programs Jenna, Creator of the Grió Pedagogy and Director at Graos, asked how many of the students were receiving Bolsa Família, Brazil's primary assistance program, and about 12 people out of the 30 person group raised their hands. This community does not have the means to support one another

financially, so they rely on their cultural practices and strong social ties to hold their community together. Second, it is very effective at keeping communities together. These individuals feel a responsibility to keep cultural activities alive that benefited them so much in the past and continue to do so. Giving up on the activities would be giving up on who they are and giving up on the entire community. That isn't an option for them, so they have to find a way to incorporate these activities into a successful and sustainable model.

Ancestral Identity

As many noted in their interviews their ancestral identity was an integral piece of their life and in their community philosophy. In an interview with Darlan, a Vehllo Griot, who is responsible for leading many of the classes on ancestry, he elaborated on this philosophy and how it connects to the community:

“When we look at identity and ancestry, when we put identity and ancestry in the center of our growth, our relationships are connected to our growth, our conscience is connected to all of our memories and ancestry. Throughout our lives we encounter memories and stories, our histories, that are transmitted through us, genetically, orally, through shared experience. In becoming familiar with this, we can construct our place in the world. When the young people elaborate on the stories of their ancestry, it is not written down, it is a lived story, this is the question of the Pedagogy how this affects us, how does it affect our body and our place in the world?”

We have a story of our country, a colonial history, which possesses our stories, it works against the races here, the indigenous

racism, our African races, When the story was originally written down it was written by the elite, the colonizers. This is how it is today. Today Brazil is a racist, sexist country, it is because we have an elite controlling social organization with the ability to manipulate, because they control all of the instruments, education, government, communication. If somebody is able to control all of these mechanisms then they are able to control the country. We must have a critical conscience to combat this form of education, this system that has been thrust upon us” (Darlan Vito, Personal Communication, May 20, 2016).

Cultural heritage connects people to a place that symbolizes identity and values that provide a sense of belonging on a personal and community level. The continuance of this cultural heritage is the essence of cultural sustainability. As individuals strive to maintain their sense of self and place within a community decisions and actions related to sustainability need to be taken to account for a community's cultural capital. Grãos sees this as an obvious point to their philosophy. In engaging in activities with the group I found elements of theme of heritage woven throughout.

In interviewing the Grãos participants who now work in the organization, when asked about their reason for staying, identity and ancestry came to the forefront of their responses. Anatolia Santos, who works in administration and accounting at Graos, experienced, in what she called, the “perfect cycle of sustainability” as a result of participation at Graos (Anatolia Santos, personal communication, May 15, 2016). Coming into the organization she had very little knowledge of her heritage and her family background. Through participating in the workshops and thinking about her

own identity she said she was able to become apart of a functional social network, eventually contributing to her pursuing a career in accounting at Grãos. When asked about why she never left Graãos to pursue a career outside of the city, she said, “I grew up here, found my identity here. Graos is a very large part of my life. This place is who I am, and where my people are. I don’t want to leave my people” (Anatolia Santos, personal communication, May 15, 2016).

Looking at the literature on heritage and its role in cultural community sustainability, identity preservation is shown to support the other pillars of sustainability. Powter and Ross state that “[L]ike environmental sustainability, heritage conservation promotes the use of existing resources; that is, resources that have previously received an investment in extraction, energy, and land.” (Powter et al. 2012). Through analyzing the data and secondary sources together, culture seems to contribute to community sustainability initially a micro level, within an individual, and extends out to the macro community. There is no “one size fits all” solution for sustainability. This research has shown that each community is best left to create its own model, which suits its own needs. Culture and values are clearly extremely important components of communities, and each culture’s values are not static; they evolve over time, and must adjust their methodology of sustainability. Talking to Tais Alvez, previous participant in Graos, and current director of the Trilhas Griôs, a branch of Graos dedicated to directing guided tours through rural communities in Chapada Diamantina, she expressed the necessity for evolving methods of sustainability. The goal of the Trihlas Griô is to combine a sustainable model of ecotourism, while at the same time adding a cultural dimension. She noted that in order to change the perception of places like rural communities it is necessary to make them visible to outsiders. Merely being cognizant of one’s existence can be a

powerful paradigm shift. Tais and Graos hope that through providing environmentally sustainable tourism, the cultural capital of the area, mainly traditional skills and practices, will be brought out of the darkness and rediscovered as valuable skills worth preserving (T. Alvez, personal communication, May 18, 2016).

Through working with the Griô Pedagogy, Graos helps individuals become aware of their own ancestry, the skills, arts, myths, heroes, and symbols from their past. This is all formed into the workshops, and using the interviews as evidence, eventually finds its way in to the identities of the individual. Becoming self-aware about one's own history informs one's own life path while continually supporting the community.

The results have shown that Grãos incorporated a system of self identity and ancestral awareness into a program to benefit young people in the modern world. They utilize their cultural capital to enhance social ties, promote economically opportunity (such as college, or a music education), and work with the natural resources, in the case of Trihlas Griô, to produce an equitable and sustainable position in their community.

Conclusion

As the concept of sustainability evolves, cultural capital should give be given a greater presence and value in the existing community sustainability framework. Analyzing strategies employed by the organization Graos de Luz e Griô it became evident that valorization of ancestral awareness and personal identity were the most important contributors to this community's sustainability.

This study was successful at identifying activities such as the Vivencias and BioDanca that continually helped individuals come to terms with their own identities, while contributing socially to comfortable and well-intentioned environment. Additionally, the individual perception of opportunity was discovered to be the critical element of sustainability for this community. Without it, all else would not have been possible. For marginalized populations, like the ones at Graos, it is imperative for them to understand they are not stuck in a cycle of cultural oppression and have value in their communities outside of the subordinate roles.

Finally, identity was found to be the mechanism through which Graos has achieved sustainability. Utilizing the Griô Pedagogy they encourage ancestral awareness and self-confidence in their heritage. This philosophy, in combination with elements from the other 4 pillars of sustainability, such as a strong social network, provides resiliency and stability for the community.

I believe further study should be undertaken in this topic on a larger scale. The identity aspect of the study has huge implications for application on other marginalized societies. I recommend focusing on a larger population because using small populations, as in this study, can skew results, sometimes making results look simpler than they actually are. I think it would be valuable to look at sectors of the population from a different angle, such as gender rather than heritage.

References

- Anatolia Santos, personal communication, May 15, 2016
- Andreatta, Susan, and Ferraro, Gary. "The Concept of Culture." *Elements of Culture: An Applied Perspective*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2009.
- Bridger, Jeffery C. & Luloff, A.E. (2001, Fall). Building sustainable community: Is social capital the answer? *Sociological Inquiry*, 71(4), 458-472.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2001). *Masculine Domination*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986) The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood), 241-258.
- Darlow, Allison. (1996) Cultural policy and urban sustainability: Making a missing link?, *Planning Practice and Research*, 11(3),
- Doubleday, Nancy, Mackenzie, Fiona, & Dalby, Simon. (2004, Winter). Reimagining sustainable cultures: Constitutions, land and art. *The Canadian Geographer*, 48(40), 389-402.
- Duxbury, Nancy. Eileen Gilette. (2007) *Culture as a Key Dimension of Sustainability: Exploring Concepts, Themes, and Models*, February.
- Ferrera, Vinnie, personal communication, May 17, 2016
- Grenfell, M. J. (2014). *Pierre Bourdieu: key concepts*. Routledge.
- J. Oliveria, personal communication, May 10, 2016
- Jon Hawkes, (2001) *The fourth pillar of sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning*,

- John Elkington, "Towards the Sustainable Corporation: Win-Win-Win Business Strategies for Sustainable Development," *California Management Review* 36, no. 2 (1994): 90–100.
- Kim, Seoyong, and Kim, Hyesun. "Does Cultural Capital Matter?: Cultural Divide and Quality of Life." *Social Indicators Research* 93.2 (2008) : 295-313.
- Marina Carvaleo, Personal communication, May 14, 2016.
- Mark Roseland et al., *Towards sustainable communities: Resources for citizens and their governments*, 2005
- Nancy Fell, (2008)"Triple Bottom Line Approach Growing in Nonprofit Sector,"*Causeplanet*, January 21, 2007, and Peter Senge, et al., *The Necessary Revolution* (New York: Doubleday).
- Newman, Peter & Kenworthy, Jeffrey. (1999). *Sustainability and cities: Overcoming automobile dependence*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, *Cultural well-being and local government*, Report 1, 2006
- Powter, Andrew and Ross, Susan. "Integrating Environmental and Cultural Sustainability for Heritage Properties." *Association for Preservation Technology International*. 36.4. (2005):5-11. Web. 2 april 2012
- Santos, Carlos, personal communication, May 13, 2016
- Scammon, Denise. "Sustainability and Culture: How do they work together?" 2012.
- Throsby, David. *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*. Ed. Ruth Towse. Northampton, MA:Edward Elgar Publishing Inc., 2003
- T. Alvez, personal communication, May 18, 2016
- Vitor D, personal communication, May 17, 2016

Werbach, Adam. "The Living Principles for Design." Core77, Inc., 2012. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

Appendix

SIT Questions

I believe I could have done this project in the US. It, of course, would have to have been with a different population, but I believe the same style of issues are present there as in Brazil. The organization I worked with was extremely unique. If I had done this project in the US my question would have been the same, but my data, I'm sure, would look much different. The strategy that Graos uses in its approach to community sustainability is very unique.

I don't believe doing the process of the CSP modified my learning style. It was a type of research that I was previously unfamiliar with, but my learning style was unchanged.

My monograph is composed of a majority of primary source data. I believe this is appropriate given the lack of literature on the subject and the unique approach Graos takes to sustainability and cultural vitality. In evaluation of the data, if I saw something as redundant or irrelevant I left it out of the final paper. I always tried to find a theoretical framework behind all the data I included to give it some credibility. Sometimes the ideas proposed were so new, and to the interviewee very important, that I included them as well.

The community projects aided me the interview process, approaching people and asking for their consent in Portuguese.

The FME course was helpful in establishing what it means to be ethical in a sensitive situation.

My principle problem during the CSP period was access to a functioning internet connection. This was a problem for multiple reasons, but with respect to the CSP, I needed access to many of my secondary sources and was unable to

gain access to them for a long time during the CSP period. This problem continued to fester throughout my time in Lencois. I did not experience time constraints.

My topic changed throughout the semester as I discovered resources that were unavailable and available to me. Initially I was focused on the economic aspect of cultural sustainability, but that was not going to be feasible. My Academic Director found the institution Graos de Luz e Griô and then we decided to look more at the cultural aspect of sustainability as opposed to the economic one. Luckily for me once I arrived at the institution the resources for interviews and observation were all readily available.

During the CSP I used participant observation and semi-structured interviews as the main methodology. See the methodology section of the paper for further detail.

If I were to sum up the relationship to my advisor in a few words it would be very helpful and supportive. She was there when I needed advice or help on crafting my question. She helped arrange the interviews and allowed me to occupy some work space in the office. She was very supportive in giving me free time to do participant observation. She understood the process I was attempting and gave me pointers on how I might be able to engage with the students more fully. My project would not have been nearly what it is without her.

I wouldn't say I reached any dead ends. I had a few interviews that did not go as smoothly as I had planned. They unfortunately gave very quick and guarded answers. The majority of my interviews were very complete though.

During this period I gained insights into this populations struggle to preserve and succeed with their marginalized history. I learned how these

individuals see themselves in today's Brazilian society and how the society around them does not see them in the same way. I saw first hand the desire of these people to succeed in life, and the barriers put before them. It was an invaluable experience.

The CSP experience helped me understand the culture much more fully, but integration, no. Due to my lacking language skills and appearance it was very hard for me to integrate into their society.

I learned about the value of keeping an open mind. I was skeptical at some points participating in some of the activities they had planned, but once I stopped thinking about it I found I learned so much more. I also learned about the value of presence in a space. I feel like being at the center every day gave me a great rapport with many of the individuals when it came time for the interviews.

I would recommend finding an organization such as this one. Having Graos de Luz e Grio behind my research was extremely helpful. I felt like they were supporting me the whole way. Additionally it made finding interviews very easy and comfortable.

I would not undertake this kind of project again. I would love to come to back and work with this organization because I believe what they are doing in the community is phenomenal and adds great value to lives of the people. I wouldn't undertake it again because of the qualitative nature of the research. I'm very interesting in doing research on organization such as this but I would prefer to do it in a much more quantitative manner.

SIT Informed Consent Form

SIT Study Abroad

School for International Training



Rua dias D'Ávila, 109, - Barra, CEP: 40.140-270 Salvador, Bahia, Brasil
Tel / Fax: (71) 3032-6009 www.sit.edu/studyabroad / www.worldlearning.org

Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Prezado(a) Senhor(a)

Gostaríamos de convidá-lo(a) a participar de nosso estudo: **Capital Cultural: Uma investigação em Sustentabilidade Comunitária**, que tem como objetivo: **Investigar como o capital cultural contribui para a sustentabilidade da comunidade através de um quadro econômico e social.**

O estudo, consistirá na realização de entrevistas, observações e/ou participações junto aos participantes do estudo e posteriormente haverá a análise do conteúdo destas entrevistas e/ou observações. Será conduzida dessa forma, pois pretendemos trabalhar com a experiência de vida dos(as) participantes do estudo.

Trata-se de um estudo, desenvolvido por **Harrison James Luft** orientado pela **historiadora Luciene Cruz**.

Garantimos que, a qualquer momento da realização desse estudo, qualquer participante e/ou estabelecimento envolvido, poderá receber esclarecimentos adicionais que julgar necessários. Qualquer participante selecionado(a) tem o direito de recusar-se a participar ou retirar-se do estudo em qualquer fase do mesmo, sem nenhum tipo de penalidade, constrangimento ou prejuízo. O sigilo das informações pessoais dos participantes será preservado, especificamente, quanto ao nome, à identificação de pessoas ou de locais. Todos os registros efetuados no decorrer desta investigação científica serão usados para fins acadêmicos e serão inutilizados após a fase de análise dos dados e de apresentação dos resultados finais na forma de monografia ou artigo científico.

Em caso de concordância com as considerações expostas, solicitamos que assine este "Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido" no local indicado abaixo. Desde já agradecemos sua colaboração e fica aqui o compromisso de notificação do andamento e envio dos resultados deste estudo.

Qualquer dúvida ou maiores esclarecimentos, entrar em contato com a responsável pelo estudo: **e-mail:** gabriela.ventura@sit.edu **Telefone:** (71) 99719.6010 (do SIT Study Abroad: Brasil-Saúde Pública, Raça e Direitos Humanos).

Aluno:

Orientador(a) : Gabriela Ventura

Estudante no Programa do SIT Study Abroad:
Brasil-Saúde Pública, Raça e Direitos Humanos

_____, ____ de _____ de
2016.
(cidade)

Orientador(a): Luciene Cruz

Eu, _____, assino o termo de consentimento, após o esclarecimento e da concordância com os objetivos e condições da realização do estudo "**Capital Cultural: Uma investigação em Sustentabilidade Comunitária**", permitindo, também, que os resultados gerais deste estudo sejam divulgados sem a menção dos nomes dos pesquisados.

_____, ____ de _____ de 2016.
(cidade)

Assinatura do Pesquisado(a)

Sample Questions

Quanto tempo você tem vindo a Grãos de Luz e Griô?
How long have you been coming to Graos de Luz e Griô?

Qual é a sua motivação em vir aqui todos os dias?
What is your motivation in coming here?

Em que áreas de sua vida tem esta organização ajudado você? E voce contribuir ajuda na sua comunidade, família, grupo de amigos?
In what areas of your life does this organization help you? As a result do you contribute to your community, family, or peer group?

Você acredita que essas atividades culturais te ajuda a definir e encontrar sua própria identidade? Como?
Do you think the cultural activites help you to define your identity?

Você tem sido capaz de capacitar, ajudar, incentivar outras pessoas, a partir do que você aprende aqui no Grãos de Luz e Griô?
Do you have the ability to help others with what you have learned here at Graos?

De que forma as arte, conteúdos e atividades culturais que aprende no Grãos de Luz e Griô te ajudam a entender e compreender a situação do Brasil e do Mundo em relação aos temas tratados e debatidos, como racismo, preconceitos, situação política, organização social, direitos e deveres, entre outros?
In what way do these activities you participate in at Graos help you understand Brazil's place in today's world in relation to racism, politics, human rights, and social organizations?

Como você ajuda, incentiva, ensina a sua família ou comunidade, como resultado de sua participação em Grãos?

Por que você acredita Grãos é tão importante para a comunidade?
Why do you think Graos is important for the community?

Você acha que o Grãos de Luz e Griô ajuda você economicamente e socialmente? Explique como
Do you believe Graos helps you economically? Socially? How so?

Como você tem visto os jovens mudar como resultado de vir aqui?
How have you seen the young people change as a result of participation here?