

# **Building Participative, Empowering & Diverse Communities**

Visioning Community Psychology  
in a worldwide perspective

Lisboa, 4<sup>TH</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup> June 2008



## Note from Editors

The II International Conference on Community Psychology in 2008 has had as main aim to contribute towards the advancement of an international movement inspired in the principles and values of community psychology.

The presence of delegates from 36 different countries and the support of international organizations such as SCRA (Society for the Community Research and Action), ECPA (European Community Psychology Association), and the Community Psychology Colleges of the Ibero-american and Australian Psychology Association, was for us an honor, and also we have had representatives from national associations from New Zealand, Japan, Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, and Portugal, providing to this event a globalized dimension.

Community Psychology is a field for research and practice for over 40 years, but it is still possible to observe some theoretical, geographical and ideological group separations, which may have worked as catalysts towards a strengthened episteme with implications in community practice, but it is now time to focus our investments in the consolidation of a common ground. The challenge is to transform the incommensurable number of ideas, studies and practices and enhance the connections and partnerships of Universities, Communities and international platforms.

The volume now finally presented is composed of 79 contributions representing different geographic areas around the globe, and myriad of topics, on research results and practice or project reports, focusing on themes related with interventions, migrants and multicultural issues, children, youth and families, alternative health and care providing, specific groups with increased vulnerabilities.

The papers presented are also related with key-concepts for community psychology like empowerment, sense of community, social and community participation, mutual help, and enhance methods such as action or collaborative research and as well as studies combining multi-method approaches. Some contributions are narrative and theoretical insights on the role of community psychology towards human and context development.

A word of appreciation is due to Vicent Francisco Editor of the Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice for his patience, persistence and support to make public these contributions. To the contributors who waited a time beyond what would be expected to see their efforts to write and document their research and practice visible.

José Ornelas & Maria Vargas-Moniz

# Contents

Note from Editors	1
Patients' expectations and satisfaction with their health providers <i>A. Afkhambrahimi, M. Nasr Esfehani</i>	9
Empowerment – a relational challenge <i>João Aguiar</i>	12
O sonho – a comprehensive intervention building on poverty fighting <i>J. Aguiar, F. Cardoso, P. Paz, A. Martins, B. Lopes</i>	17
Migration and situated contexts: natives and Maghrebian habitants of San Marcellino (South Italy) <i>Caterina Arcidiacono, Fortuna Procentese, Immacolata di Napoli</i>	20
El trabajo multidisciplinario para el estudio de la vejez en el medio rural <i>MaríaVirginia Mateu Armand, Catalina Cervantes Ortega, Marcela Rosas Nexticapa, Idalia Illescas Nájera</i>	31
Youth in a multicultural setting <i>Tomas Bons</i>	43
Making the psychological political – challenges for community psychology <i>Mark Burton, Carolyn Kagan, Paul Duckett</i>	50
Engaging Community Leadership: The Intersecting of Global Dialogue and Systems Change (Adaptive and Engaging Leadership with a Purpose in a Shifting World) <i>James R. Calvin</i>	64
Nuevas metodologías en investigación y prevención de la violencia en la pareja <i>Leonor Cantera, Vanesa Gamero</i>	76
Safety Planning for Abused Children; Using a Multidisciplinary Approach <i>Thomas F. Carr</i>	87
The experience of overcoming the stigma associated to HIV/AIDS: a call for collaboration with community Psychology. <i>Carlos Roberto de Castro-Silva</i>	96
Risky behaviors and substance use in youth leisure time <i>P. Meringolo, M. Chiodini, E. Moscardi, A. Morandi</i>	106
Risk Behaviours in Adolescence: Risk and Protective Factors <i>Valentina C. Chitas</i>	112

<b>Sense of community in adolescence</b> <i>Elvira Cicognani, Bruna Zani, Cinzia Albanesi</i>	127
<b>Community Critical Psychologies: Ideological Convergence Despite Geographical Dispersion</b> <i>Joaquim Coimbra, Paul Duckett, David Fryer, Ibrahim Makkawi, Isabel Menezes, Ilana Mountian, Mohamed Seedat, Carl Walker,</i>	137
<b>There's foreigner and foreigner: xenophobic reasoning and anti-immigrant discourse</b> <i>Monica Colombo, Paolo Cherubini, Lorenzo Montali, Laura Marando</i>	143
<b>The Bio-psychosocial impact of forced migration: a participatory approach amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Malta</b> <i>Marika Podda Connor</i>	155
<b>Parent Education Programs: (Co)construction with Parents</b> <i>Anabela Duarte Costa, Ana Cabrita, Luana Cunha Ferreira, Paula Encarnação, Patrícia Navalho, Isabel Narciso, Guida Mendes, Nelson Agapito, João Nogueira</i>	170
<b>Standing against the coloniality of power: Claiming the right to democratic participation in the globalized neoliberal state</b> <i>Mariolga Reyes Cruz</i>	180
<b>Compreendendo os Processos de Risco e Resiliência em Adolescentes que Vivem em Situações de Vulnerabilidade Social no Brasil</b> <i>Débora Dalbosco Dell'Aglio</i>	192
<b>Simbolismo do corpo e intervenção comunitária: contribuições feministas para a investigação-ação participativa.</b> <i>Aline Domicia, Conceição Nogueira</i>	202
<b>El uso de la imagen en el trabajo comunitario.</b> <i>Leonor M. Cantera Espinosa, Carmen Rodrigues Tatsch</i>	210
<b>Community-Based Fire Preparedness Practice in High Density Area</b> <i>Husnul Fitri, Istiqomah Wibowo</i>	213
<b>Program of Support and Attention to Families who live Socio Environmental Vulnerabilities in the South of Brazil</b> <i>Narjara Mendes Garcia, Adriana Matos de Carvalho Mendes, André Lemes da Silva, Camila Dorneles de Vargas, Angela Toma Pietro, Simone de Biazzi Ávila Batista da Silveira; Maria Angela Mattar Yunes</i>	223
<b>Social cohesion, perceived safety and immigration in a run-down district in Reggio Emilia</b> <i>Dino Giovannini, Barbara Ferrari, Andrea Pintus, Loris Vezzali</i>	234
<b>The role of leadership on Child Protective Services</b> <i>Ana Margarida Graça, Ana Passos</i>	244

Training service users to become community researchers for effective engagement within a Participatory action research framework <i>Jo Hobbs</i>	249
Parejas mixtas e inmigración: Análisis del apoyo social <i>M<sup>o</sup> Isabel Hombrados Mendieta, Gianluigi Mosca/o</i>	255
Espacio técnico de la Psicología Comunitaria en el contexto del Sistema de Servicios Sociales españoles: Sondeo exploratorio de tres Servicios Sociales Generales <i>Jaime Alfaro Inzunza</i>	265
Shifting borders - Exploring the relationship between women's mobility and place belonging <i>Barbara Iuliano</i>	277
Adaptive and Engaging Leadership With Purpose in a Shifting World <i>James R. Calvin, Ph.D.</i>	284
Games for participation and conscientisation <i>Carolyn Kagan and Karen Duggan</i>	286
Intergenerational work, social capital and wellbeing <i>Carolyn Kagan, Anne-Marie Micallef, Asiya Siddiquee, Iyabo Fatimilehin, Amira Hassan, Carla de Santis, Reheela Ali, Tunde Zack Williams, Geoff Bunn</i>	294
On the spirit of community psychology: One personal story <i>James G. Kelly</i>	308
Homeless and community-less: an action-research <i>Gioacchino Lavanco, Floriana Romano, Carolina Messina</i>	313
Experiencias colaborativas de movilización hacia la responsabilidad social universitaria <i>Teresita Castillo León, Rebellín Echeverría Echeverría, María Luisa Rojas Bolaños</i>	319
Análisis de competencias. Una propuesta metodológica de selección de promotores comunitarios <i>Teresita Castillo León, Irene Carolina Cauich Chávez, Nancy Marine Evia Alamilla</i>	328
Entre la felicidad y la disciplina: Dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar de personas con padecimientos crónicos <i>Teresa M. Torres López, Carolina Aranda Beltrán, Manuel Pando Moreno, José Gpe. Salazar Estrada</i>	336
La Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán como parte del motor de cambio de una zona con necesidades de transformación social <i>V. Martínez Lozano, A. Blázquez Muñoz, J. Blanco López</i>	347
Prevalência, significações e prevenção da violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade: um projecto integrado de investigação <i>Carla Machado, Cláudia Coelho, Rosa Saavedra, Sónia Caridade, Sónia Martins, Helena Grangeia &amp; Ana Rita Dias</i>	353

Empowerment as the determinants of citizen-participation for environmental management plan <i>Hiroe Maeda, Yukio Hirose</i>	362
Psychology of the Oppressed: Encounters with Community Psychology in Palestine <i>Ibrahim Makkawi</i>	368
The Psychology of Resilience among Palestinian Female Students <i>Ibrahim Makkawi</i>	372
Acculturation across life domains and perceived social support: a research in a suburban community of the city of Genova (Italy) <i>Mara Manetti, Laura Migliorini, Laura Frattini</i>	377
Psychological Sense of Community: Contributions Toward a New Understanding <i>Clelia Anna Mannino and Mark Snyder</i>	390
O Impacto de um programa de Prevenção dos Abusos Sexuais de Crianças em: Crianças, Pais e Professores <i>Susana Maria, José Ornelas</i>	396
Cambio organizacional para disminución del estrés en profesionales de enfermería hospitalaria <i>Albar Marín, M<sup>a</sup> Jesús y Morano Báez, Rocío.</i>	410
School climate perception and adolescent adjustment <i>Migliorini L., Manetti M., Rania N.</i>	418
Homelessness Lifetime Prevalence and Attitudes to Homeless in Portugal <i>Marta Miguel, José Ornelas, Maria Vargas-Moniz</i>	430
Community-Clinical Psychology in Venezuela: Looking ahead <i>Maritza Montero, Maribel Gonçalves de Freitas</i>	437
Refugee families in a multicultural setting <i>Eva Nyberg</i>	448
Enfoque Teórico Metodológico para el Estudio de la Vida Cotidiana <i>Maricela Perera</i>	460
Community and place identity in change: a discursive approach to local participation <i>Piccoli Norma, Rollero Chiara, Greganti Katiuscia</i>	466
Narratives and health: Fostering prosocial communities among recent immigrants to Toronto <i>Wade E. Pickren, Cynthia Shih, Nina Vitopoulos, Julia Stanislavskaia, Andrea Andreii</i>	478

Disclosure of sexual abuse in school environment: Intervention with teachers <i>Angela Torma Pietro, Maria Angela Mattar Yunes</i>	486
Competencias Profesionales en Estudiantes de Psicología <i>Susana Ruiz Pimentel, Sara E. Ruiz Vallejo, María José García Oramas</i>	497
Social exclusion paradox in Poland <i>Przemysław Piotrowski, Małgorzata Wysocka-Pleczyk, Piotr Passowicz</i>	510
Construction of a Portuguese Online Forum for Mutual Help <i>Marta Sofia Pita</i>	515
De la opresión al bienestar. Explorando Poder, Opresión y Bienestar entre Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España <i>Sonia Hernández-Plaza*, Manuel García-Ramírez, Isabel M. Herrera Sánchez, Violeta Luque-Ribelles, y Virginia Paloma.</i>	517
Places of fear and attachment. How Azoreans perceive seismic and volcanic risk. <i>Isabel Estrela Rego, Ana Moura Arroiz</i>	530
Disasters and social participation in a Nahuat Community from Mexico <i>Maria Eugenia Sánchez y Díaz de Rivera, F. H. Eduardo Almeida Acosta, Antonio Vázquez Carreón, Francisco Sánchez Conde, Beatriz Acevedo Calderón</i>	538
Discutindo o conceito de comunidade na psicologia para além da perspectiva identitária <i>Tatiana Gomes da Rocha</i>	550
¿Por dónde se asoma la comunidad? Un camino desde los adolescentes y la familia. Programa de atención integral para padres y adolescentes en dos comunidades urbano-marginales en el municipio de Durango <i>Rocío Guzmán Benavente, Rebeca Treviño Montemayor</i>	558
Marginalisation and Rurality <i>Dr Caroline Rouncefield</i>	577
Supportive Houses for persons diagnosed with serious mental disorders as sociocultural sceneries: A methodological and theoretical proposal from the sociocultural psychology. <i>Javier Saavedra</i>	586
Interactive Patterns between professional and Patient in supportive houses for serious mental ill <i>Javier Saavedra</i>	591

Does the “broken window” theory work? How incivilities affect sense of insecurity in Italian university students <i>Luca Scacchi, Mariagrazia Monaci, Ennio Cavedon</i>	596
Judicial environment and poor families: risk or protection for relationships? <i>Simone de Biazzì Ávila Batista Silveira &amp; Maria Angela Mattar Yunes</i>	602
Desenvolvimento local e processos de educação formal e não formal – relações realçadas pela avaliação de projectos <i>Manuela Terrasêca, Alexandra Sá Costa, João Caramelo</i>	615
Construyamos juntos una comunidad educativa libre de violencia <i>Sara E. Ruiz Vallejo, Susana Ruiz Pimentel, María José García Oramas</i>	625
Sesgo endogrupal, metaestereotipos y emociones hacia el exogrupo entre inmigrantes en España <i>Dr. José Juan Vázquez, Anabel Díaz Aberasturi, Dra. Sonia Panadero</i>	640
Prejuicio hacia los inmigrantes entre los jóvenes de Guadalajara (España) <i>Dr. José Juan Vázquez, Anabel Díaz Aberasturi, Dra. Sonia Panadero</i>	650
Sentido de comunidad y bienestar en usuarios de asociaciones sociales de salud <i>M<sup>a</sup> Teresa Vega, M<sup>a</sup> Augusta Pereira</i>	660
Leisure, information needs and social participation of outskirts young people in Murcia (Spain) <i>Juan J. Vera, Jose. A. Lopez-Pina &amp; Gabriel Navarro</i>	667
Hemophilia: Promoting health in children <i>María José Baqueiro Victorín &amp; Nancy Marine Evia Alamilla</i>	684
Strategies to promote resilience in families of low income exposed to social and environmental risks <i>Maria Angela Mattar Yunes</i>	694
Sense of community in the work context. A study on members of a co-operative enterprise <i>Bruna Zani, Elvira Cicognani</i>	708
Empowerment evaluation for the participation and leadership of people with experience of mental illness. <i>Maria Fátima Jorge-Monteiro, José Ornelas</i>	719







# Patients' expectations and satisfaction with their health providers

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The growing amount of research into patients' expectations of medical consultations reflects the view of the patient as an active consumer rather than a passive recipient of care. Patients' care often diverges from their expectations in important respects. Patients tend to receive more prescription and less information. The fulfillment of certain expectations has been related to satisfaction with the consultation that in turn would improve compliance. Patient satisfaction is also correlated with the patient's reported intention to change physician. The higher the perceived fulfillment of the expectation is, the higher the satisfaction is. When fulfillment is lower than the expectation, the greater the gap and the lower the satisfaction. Today patient satisfaction is considered a key measure of quality of care and patients reporting higher satisfaction were more likely to have a higher quality of life.

## Method

375 Patients ( 220 women and 155 men) who were attending various internal/surgery clinics(except for pediatrics clinic) at a large teaching hospital and consented to participate in the study, were selected. The patients aged 18 to 79 with a mean age of 42.5 years old. The patients filled the following questionnaires: A one page demographic information questionnaire, The 28-item Patients Requests Form which measures three forms of expectations: explanation and reassurance, emotional support and investigation and treatment. Each item was rated on a 3 point scale (agree, uncertain and disagree) for "how much it applies to your visit today", A satisfaction questionnaire which Measures the patients' satisfaction with their health providers on a three point scale of seven different aspects of satisfaction ( including overall satisfaction and intention to change physician). The data transferred to SPSS for further analysis.

## Results

Table 1, shows the comparison of the three expectations of the patients with ANOVA method. significant differences were found in "emotional support" and " investigation and treatment" expectations among patients. The post Hoc analysis of the *table 1* results showed that the patients of neurology and psychiatry clinics expected more emotional support from their treating physicians than the ophthalmology patients and the differences were significant. Also the patients of internal clinics expected more investigation and treatment than ophthalmology clinic patients, and the differences were significant.

Table 2, shows the correlation between patients' total satisfaction with adherence to therapeutic recommendations and intention to change doctor. There is a significant and positive correlation between patients' satisfaction and therapeutic adherence and a significant negative correlation between satisfaction and intention to change doctor.

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**Table 1 - The Comparison of patients' expectations in twelve clinics**

<b>V</b>	<b>SOS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MOS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Explanation</b>					
BG	55.28	11	5.02		
WG	1459.66	363	4.02	1.25	.25
<b>Emotional Support</b>					
BG	165.47	11	15.04		
WG	2625.47	363	7.02	2.08	.02*
<b>Investigation &amp; treatment</b>					
BG	100.94	11	9.17		
WG	1689.20	363	4.65	1.97	.03*

**Table 2 - Correlation of satisfaction with therapeutic adherence and intention to change doctor**

<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Adherence</b>	<b>Change</b>
Satisfaction	1	.216	.410
Adherence	.216	1	-.318
Change	-.410	-.318	1

### **Discussion**

This investigation expands our understanding of patients' unmet expectations for medical care. Patients with wide variety of medical complaints may have common and different expectations of their health care visits, and are less satisfied with their medical visits when they do not receive such care. The common and most immediate post visit expectation for care of all the patients studied, was " explanation and receiving information" which are consistent with other studies. Need for information should be added to the health belief model originally formulated to explain preventive health behavior. It is not always enough to order and prescribe. Diagnosis and treatments must be explained, options presented and management plans negotiated. Our study and other studies have demonstrated the importance of providing information to patients. Education may facilitate the technical aspects of the patients' care as well as enhance the patients' sense of personal control and social support.

The results of this study suggest that the influence of others, a neglected element of the health belief model is worth further investigation. Patients who desired and received certain elements of nontechnical care ( counseling and emotional support) had higher visit satisfaction.

Our study and a number of other studies have found a significant relationship between patient satisfaction and the socioemotional aspects of the physician's behavior, such as their ability to express caring and concern for their patients.

The significantly higher expectation for emotional support in patients of neurology and psychiatry clinics compared to other patients, reflects the affective nature of those conditions.

Patients' perceptions about receiving examinations, tests, medications or nondrug treatments were minimally associated with levels of satisfaction with physicians.

Patients of internal medicine clinic based their opinion about health providers on the technical rather than the nontechnical aspects of care, because they regarded the nontechnical types of intervention as more personal.

Dissatisfaction demands a change, such as a change of physician. Patients who had recently changed physicians because of dissatisfaction with their care, were most likely to complain that their physician was too busy to talk with them and didn't appear interested in them as people. Patients were less likely to leave their physician because of concerns about the technical quality of the care that they were receiving.

This study highlights the importance of teaching active-listening skills to general practice physicians. The doctors need to study and adjust their consultation styles to communicate better with their patients.

It is entirely plausible that the results of this study might have been different if the patients had more serious illness or different types of settings were selected.

Laboratory tests and medications might have a greater impact on patient satisfaction in more seriously ill patients.

This study emphasizes the potential importance of understanding patients' expectations for maintaining patient satisfaction and controlling health care costs.

False positivity and cost-effectiveness patients are demanding diagnostic tests and therapeutic interventions that may not always be in their own interests, and society's.

If supported by larger studies, these findings suggest that more training in the elicitation and negotiation of patients' expectations would be a worthwhile addition to the medical curriculum.

## Empowerment – a relational challenge

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### Abstract

*Empowerment promotion is a major challenge for community psychology. Practitioners' understanding of change processes and relationship building capacity are crucial elements for this.*

*We reflect on some methodological and theoretical frames. We consider that the naturalistic paradigm and method can be applied to empowerment promotion, particularly if it is focused on creating change based on people's voice, participation and actions (Aguiar & Moniz, 2006). Besides, it helps to understand elements, boundaries and timings of change process. So, it can be a very useful method for action research.*

*We believe that empowerment promotion is a relational challenge and that community development paths are based on relationship building, from the group to the community levels. It is a major challenge to promote empowerment, because to listen to voices of people, to understand their strengths, and to work with them in a cooperative way implies from the practitioners an understanding of empowering aspects of change processes and assuming a role of facilitator.*

*The challenge practitioners face of combining top-down and bottom-up approaches is also an important aspect that have impact on individual, relational, organizational and community levels of empowerment promotion, where creativity play a special role.*

**Key words:** Empowerment; community empowerment

This paper aims to bring together some basic and crucial elements for empowerment processes, linking individuals and groups towards community empowerment and community capacity. We discuss the relevance of relationships and the crucial role they play in integrative and empowerment promoting processes. This work is also a reflection of a community intervention on a small rural village that aimed to promote community change. We present some theoretical basis for the development of individual, group and community empowerment.

Empowerment promotion is a major challenge for community psychology. Practitioners' understanding of change processes and relationship building capacity are crucial elements for this.

This work is based on a community intervention on a small rural village that aimed to promote community change. This project was built to promote free time activities for the village children (top-down approach) and to bring together the children, parents, schools, local administration and local organization so that together they could find out what they wanted to do for the lack of free time activities in the local area (bottom-up approach).

We were able to conduct the research in such a way that we could deepen the understanding of community empowerment and its paradoxes and challenges and that empowerment promotion is a relational challenge and that community development paths are

based on relationship building, from the group to the community levels. We share some of our findings.

Zimmerman (2000a) refers to 3 basic aspects of empowerment: participation, control and critical awareness. Participation is the individual's actions that contribute to community contexts and processes; control is the effective or the perception of ability to influence decisions; and critical awareness is the ability to analyze and understand the social and political environment.

These three aspects are crucial to understand empowerment's theory and practice. Those who participate in decision making and meaningful activities are likely to be empowered (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Rappaport, 1981, 1987; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), although simple participation is not a condition to develop psychological empowerment. Edelstein e Wandersman (1987; *cit. in Rich et al., 1995*) stated that participation can promote empowerment, depending on the nature and the result of the experience. So, participation, according to Eklund (1999), can be "marginal" (when people have none or little influence in the process), "substantial" (when people are involved in defining priorities and activities execution) or structural (when it is a comprehensive component of the project and an ideological basis for all activities).

Control comes with participation in collective processes and is the effective or perception of the ability to influence decisions, mobilize resources and solve problems, building an effective personal and group participation. Control enables the participation process to be gradual and coherent to people's critical awareness. This implies a redistribution of power (cf. Riger, 1993), so the process can be meaningful and real, and participation can boost an empowerment process.

Critical awareness allows, trough participation and control, people to understand power structures, decision making processes, and how to influence decisions and mobilize resources (Zimmerman, 2000a).

These three aspects are crucial for constructive intern dialog and praxis, which are crucial elements for empowerment process (Kieffer, 1984). Constructive intern dialog means the internal contradictions that people should feel to respond, in their paradoxical learning process. Praxis is a dynamic cycle of practice and reflection, at the core of empowerment, through which people find new understandings and action, making empowerment a transformative process through action (Kieffer, 1984) – and an active process to structure identity.

So, social relationships and formal and informal social support can play a determinant role for social integration to be as collaborative as possible, building individual freedom for action coherent to meaningful social relation and bondings, and consequently opening people's minds to diversity.

Kieffer (1984) states that empowerment is a gradual process that takes different stages or "eras" towards participation and commitment, from entry – the initial exploration of authority and social norms; to progress – where peers and mentor support are important to develop critical awareness; incorporation – where organizational and political competencies and confrontation with activity takes place and where proactivity is developed; and commitment – where social action are brought to individual's daily life structure. This means that empowerment is a gradual process that goes from marginal, to substantial and structural participation. Therefore these stages are essential so that active participation can lead to continual community involvement and proactive leadership, building a future for them selves and to community.

During this process, skills and competencies are developed, so one's contribute can also be gradually more effective and structural. Kieffer (1984) stands that empowerment is not about competencies, but it is about participatory competencies, which are a convergence of the practice of all aspects of competence. That means that empowerment is about proactivity and adequate participatory practices in community, which represents a major relational challenge: social interactions through collaborative relationships.

Community psychologists have stated that community contexts should promote interdependence and diversity (Kelly, Azelton, Burzette & Mock, 1994) as well as empowerment (Maton e Salem, 1995). Maton and Salem found 4 aspects in community contexts that promote empowerment: (1) a belief system that promotes growth, based on strengths and focused in something beyond the individual; (2) an opportunity to play a structural role that can be integrative, accessible and multifunctional; (c) a support system that can be inclusive, peer-based and that allows sense of community; and (4) a leadership that is inspired, talented, shared and committed to the context and its members. Kelly, Azelton, Burzette & Mock (1994) consider other aspects like experience interdependence, informal interaction, keep communication channels open, and space to reflection and integration. These contexts should also include face-to-face interaction that promotes the context, opportunity to apply skills that promote cooperation, social norms where contribute is explicit (beyond he implicit), and valuing the group process.

This perspective on individual, relationships and contexts are crucial for community psychologists. Besides being facilitators for community change, community psychologists can be active players for relationships building – linking individuals and communities – and context building, promoting context's dynamics, functions and meanings. This way, community change can be a consequence of community building.

Empowerment can be viewed at individual, organizational and community level (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000a, 2000b). These levels are interdependent and in each one empowerment can be viewed as a process and as a result (Zimmerman, 2000a). Aguiar and Moniz (2006) state a paradox of empowerment, particularly at collective level. The emphasis on problem solving and action can lead to faster results, although it can imply marginal participation of members – the focus is on results and it can lead to small wins, which are important to mobilize people in the long run, but it can decrease the opportunities for process ownership by members. On the other hand, the emphasis on people's involvement can boost structural participation – the focus is on process, which can facilitate the ownership, although the risk can be the slower capacity to act, that can undermine involvement.

Empowerment interventions should embrace its paradoxical elements (Rappaport, 1981). So, the challenge is to act and involve people and that requires a relational perspective and continual attention. So, collectively, there should be two parallel and complementary tracks, combining top-down and bottom-up approaches Laverack & Labonte (2000). Maton (2000) states that these two approaches have advantages and disadvantages and that its combination allows long term change.

All these aspects should be considered along the community empowerment continuum (Rissel, 1994): from individuals, to small groups, community organizations, coalitions and political action – so that social movements can contribute to community empowerment and capacity, with the purpose of act collectively actions to address community issues and to build healthier



and more prosperous communities.

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# O sonho – a comprehensive intervention building on poverty fighting

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## Abstract

*“O Sonho” (The dream) is a Portuguese NGO that works in Setúbal – a city 45 Km from Lisbon.*

*Since 2005 “O Sonho” has been expanding its participation in community settings. In October 2007 “O Sonho” made a protocol with the Portuguese Social Security System, to work for a national poverty ending program – Rendimento Social de Inserção (Social Integration Income), aiming to promote labor, social and community integration of low income population.*

*This program intends to build with families new tracks for their development, on employment, education, housing, health and civil rights and duties. Intending to build a comprehensive intervention, we have been growing in the areas of microcrédit – building a coalition to give credit to promote self-employment; training – doing and promoting training on health promotion and prevention; food supplies and clothes – building coalitions in order to address serious hunger and poverty situations; and housing – promoting and developing mutualist solutions with families for access to houses.*

*We stand for the crucial proactive role of individuals, families and communities in their own development, so we assume as core principles for intervention the trust relationship building; and the family's capacity and autonomy in their integration process – promoting families' participation and empowerment –, we base our efforts on finding ways to support people on creating new opportunities for using their strengths to grow out of poverty.*

*We assume an active role on poverty ending and community development, focusing on social entrepreneurship and serving people in its most important development issues.*

*We believe that this way of creating new supporting structures for and with the community helps to promote community development and systems change.*

**Key words:** Empowerment; community empowerment;

This paper intends to describe the growing strategies and the work that a Portuguese Non Government Organization (NGO) – “O Sonho” (The dream) – has been doing in Setúbal, a city 28 miles (45 Km) from Lisbon.

Dedicated to children activities, particularly to pre-school and free-time activities for children, and inside poor neighbourhoods and close to rural communities in the boundaries of Setúbal, this local organization started an entrepreneurial process aiming to promote development.

We describe their community intervention growth process in this paper. Since 2005 “O Sonho” has been expanding its participation in community settings – it is representing part of the NGO's from Setúbal in the local council for social work (Rede Social), and also being part of its

executive group.

In October 2007 “O Sonho” signed a protocol with the Portuguese Social Security, to work for a national poverty ending program (“Social Integration Income”), aiming to satisfy basic needs and to promote labor, social and community integration of low income population. Its intervention was defined on a specific area, including urban area, social neighbourhoods, and rural area. They started with a (team with 10 members) 10 members team and with the responsibility for 230 families and 720 people (responsible for 230 families witch means 720 people).

This program intends to work with families helping them to build new tracks for their development, on employment, education, housing, health and civil rights and duties. The professional’s role is to negotiate integration process in these areas and to support and follow-up the families. That implies to do joint work with other community organizations, for instance schools, recreation activities organizations, RSI partners, educational system (like schools), health system, social security services, the employment and professional training local institute and local administration services.

That implies that professionals must be aware of empowerment processes so the opportunities created can be matched with people’s voice and integration process. In so, this program aims to promote family’s autonomy not only at social integration level but also at economic level.

“O sonho” stands for the crucial proactive role of individuals, families and communities in their own development, so assumes as core principles for intervention the trust relationship building; and the family’s capacity and autonomy in their integration process – promoting families’ participation and empowerment –, and bases efforts on finding ways to support people on creating new opportunities for using their strengths to grow out of poverty.

For these strategies to be effective, the join work must be oriented to a community approach. That means that the professional’s role must be focused on a deepen knowledge of the community, and the crossing of resources and integration opportunities with people’s qualifications, needs and voices.

Working closely to families made the professionals realize that there were fewer opportunities for integration that were suspected. That fact boosted the organization to start an entrepreneurial process aimed to bring development opportunities to local area residents.

The main difficulties found in facilitating integration processes were: lack of food supplies, personal belongings and assets (clothes, electric appliances, furniture, etc.), credit to start new businesses, educational opportunities.

The main strategy used to create opportunities for local people were based on the establishment of strategic partnerships, as partnerships as are a good strategy to (Berkowitz & Wolff; cit. in Wolff, 2001)

Partnerships were created to bring food supplies (with the “Programa Comunitário de Ajuda Alimentar a Carenciados”); personal belongings and assets (with Fundação Portuguesa “a comunidade contra a sida”); for micro credit (with ANDC – Associação Nacional de Direito ao Crédito); for entrepreneurship training, IT training, educational and Professional training and education programs (FDTI – Fundação para o Desenvolvimento das Tecnologias de Informação); and for basic literacy programs (Education System Services).

About the results of such initiatives, they are expected to be more concrete in the beginning

of next year. when the activities are expected to be in motion. Nevertheless, this is a new reality for the organization and for its community, since this kind of resources and opportunities usually are not available in this particular geographic area.

This local organization assumes an active role on poverty ending and community development, focusing on social entrepreneurship and serving people in its most important development issues. This model for intervention creates new opportunities at the local level, which is crucial to put in practice the social policies and social programs, and to allow new development perspectives for these communities. This is a vision for poverty alleviation through community development.

Nevertheless, resident involvement in agency is also important to create more lasting community change (Association for the Study and Community Development, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2006; Kubisch et al., 2002). Therefore, there must be a deeper relation to residents, which means that those activities have to take place and time, to sustain its capacity, as well as new strategies adopted to promote other groups initiatives to build a more capable community – building community capacity for change.

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# Migration and situated contexts: natives and Maghrebian habitants of San Marcellino (South Italy)

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## Abstract

*Literatures on ethnic identity and acculturation strategies - integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization (Berry,1997) - have shown how host populations perceive migrants and that migrant populations may be viewed very differently by the majority group or the larger society. We could understand the complex interaction between individual factors, the individual's belonging to a group, the intragroup and intergroup dynamics, while bearing in mind that at the same time the dimensions we have mentioned interact reciprocally within the group and with external groups.*

*For this reason, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with inhabitants – natives and Maghrebian – in an area in the territory surrounding Naples where there is a Mosque and which has a high density of various kinds of migrants. This self-descriptive tool of the interview aims at collecting information ranging from a description of oneself to a description of others and of the context.*

*With relation to the aforementioned objectives, the participants were selected on the basis of a theoretical sampling: natives and Maghrebian migrants with various characteristics and social roles, with and without reciprocal contacts.*

*The interviews and the textual materials gathered were audio-recorded. They were transcribed and underwent qualitative analysis by means of the methodology of grounded theory. This is a “substantive theory”, which is derived via an inductive method from the study of a phenomenon, an explanation, an interpretation of a specific phenomenon which is particular because it is built by means of a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).*

*This study thus intends to identify classification systems which support the representation of the self and of others in terms of belonging or extraneousness in relation to contexts which imply various levels of sharing, participation and trust in order to promote forms of interconnection and planning involving the different cultures simultaneously present in a given territorial community.*

*In this regard, recognising the reciprocal classifications enables us to investigate the elements which are supposed to be the basis of processes of integration.*

**Keywords:** Qualitative Research, acculturation, Contact hypothesis, Intergroup relations, social categorization.

Literature on ethnic identity and inter group relations focuses on integration as the best strategy of acculturation in terms of well-being in the process of migrants' adjustment to a new context. It increases social cohesion; avoids the development of racist attitudes in the receiving population; promotes symmetrical intergroup relationships (Berry, 1997). We have learned that the perception of acceptance that migrants have of the hosting community is among the factors that promote the processes of integration (Berry, 1997). A further factor consists in the

realistic expectations that favor integration, differently from excessive expectations, which generate an adaptation that is not adequate. Finally, the social support received is of fundamental importance.

The peculiarity of this approach is that it takes the hosting community into account in terms of reception and support, but it does not take into account the dimensions of reciprocity between natives and migrants and considers the latter to be figures who need help and not people able to offer knowledge and resources.

We could, in fact, understand the complex interaction among individual factors, the individual's belonging to a group and the intragroup and intergroup dynamics, while bearing in mind at the same time that these dimensions interact reciprocally within the group and with external groups. We have thus further developed Berry's acculturation model in the perspective of the mutual dynamic process between two groups, the foreigner and the host, considering the interpersonal and intergroup relations according to the model developed in the investigations by Bourhis R.Y., Moïse L.C., & Perrault S. (1997), Barrette & Bourhis, (2004).

The Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy presentation and discussion of investigations of the Common Ingroup Identity Model show us the evolving nature of intergroup bias, illustrating the complexity of "We" in social attitudes and social changes (2008).

Within this frame of reference, recognising the reciprocal classifications enables us to investigate the elements which are supposed to be the basis of integration and difference.

In these pathways the feeling of collective identity favors the building of a system of feelings of rapport which are functional in the sharing of a common situation and in a common opportunity for change.

Migration is conceptualized as an ecological transition that involves vast changes in contexts of interaction, in both values and social rules. This also has an effect on the status and social relations between natives and newcomers (Martinez, Garcia-Ramirez & Maya, 2002).

More recently, Mantovani has emphasized (2008) that the study of reciprocal representations within a context, if it is carried out while maintaining the differentiated perspective (the "we's" and the "they's") necessarily leads to bringing elements of differentiation into focus. The research must thus be rooted in a common dimension to which the interviewed subjects can make reference and in which they can recognize themselves. In this direction studying migrant and native experiences in a shared and situated context becomes relevant. Furthermore, within an ecological approach, we need to define research criteria and procedures which take into account the dimensions of relationship and of interaction among people who share the same community, and which consider the bureaucratic and material dimensions that have great relevance in the processes of acculturation.

In this sense the process of integration into the local community is also the result of the influence of the context, of the social networks and of personal and group characteristics, in addition to the real relational and material resources which can be utilized by people who are part of a community (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005).

Our research goals also included the exploration of the ways in which these dimensions influence the processes of acculturation in a specific context. In particular, attention was placed on communication interactions among various actors of the same context for a mutual recognition and to create common spaces in order to identify strategies of integration.

We then investigated intercultural experience in relation to Italian and migrant contexts at micro meso macro levels (Prilleltensky, 2008), namely:

- Context characteristics
- Interactions
- Neighborhooding
- Joint group
- Shared events
- Shared value actions

Using this perspective we have carried out a study directed towards understanding the dynamics of reciprocal recognition between residents and migrants on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, within a community in an area in which there is the presence of migrants and of associative contexts within which interaction is possible between natives and foreigners.

In order to understand the orientation towards reciprocal recognition and thus integrative action, this work has thus examined the aspects that contribute to perpetuating the difficulties and the dimensions that in specific contexts of social and political life are obstacles or resources in the process of interaction between Italians and migrants.

### **Objectives**

The project deals with the predictive factors of social cohesion in multicultural contexts and the factors that promote the integration of newcomers into the community.

This study thus intends to identify classification systems which support the representation of the self and of others in terms of belonging or extraneousness in relation to contexts which imply various levels of sharing, participation and trust, in order to single out forms of interconnection and planning involving the different cultures simultaneously present in the given territorial community.

In this regard, recognising the reciprocal classifications enables us to investigate the elements which are supposed to be the basis of pathways of integration and difference.

In these pathways the feeling of collective identity favors the building of a system of feelings of rapport which are functional in the sharing of a common situation and in a common opportunity for change.

### **Context: San Marcellino**

For the research we chose a context where we had previous significant contacts with people strongly involved in the local context and where there are associations that intend to use the results of our investigation. In San Marcellino the research team have contacts, connections and interaction with key people of the area, Associations, Schools, and the local Mosque active in the area. San Marcellino is a municipality of about 11,000 inhabitants situated in an area that was originally dedicated to agricultural activities (strawberry, peach, and tomato crops), and today it is engaged in expansion of its service industries and the development of small businesses, in a territory that is difficult because of the presence of organized crime in control of the markets of labor and of contracts, as local newspaper reports demonstrate. It is an area that has a low cost of living: rents and the prices of consumer goods are lower than in the neighboring towns (Errichiello, 2007).



## Participants

With relation to the aforementioned objectives, the participants were selected on the basis of a theoretical (intentional) sampling (Corbin, Strauss, 2008). As we were looking at an urban context, we followed Martini and Sequi's model (1988) to identify the key people to interview. In fact, we paid particular attention to the choice of people to involve in the research process and to the specific citizens to contact. Such criteria (Arcidiacono, Procentese 2008) allowed us to take into account the participation of citizens who, due to their variety of interests, were representative of the social actors in the local context. They were first of all chosen among the leaders of the so-called *in community*: politicians who manage power and representatives of social or cultural services, business and commerce; and from among the *out community*, such as powerless social minorities, people who offer assistance in informal ways, and minority or opposition politicians.

The issue is then to purposefully select information-rich participants (Patton, 2002).

The specific participants were the following:

13 key people in the context: 2 parish priests, the mayor, 2 key people in the Islamic community (the Imam and a labor consultant), 1 general practitioner, 2 school teachers, 1 psychologist from the social and health family center, 2 cultural mediators, 1 volunteer from the local parish and 2 volunteers from the associations.

9 Italian residents of the town and its surroundings with and without contact with migrants, aged between 23 and 57 years, differentiated with respect to educational level, profession, and political and social participation. Among those: 1 tobacconist, 2 shop assistants, 2 bartenders, and 4 people with no contact with migrants living in San Marcellino.

8 migrants, with and without stay permits, who have migrated recently and not recently (at least 5 years), males and females of various ages (range from 21-55), various conditions of marital status, of schooling and number of children; involved in associations, in Mosque activity, and with no social activity.

## Strategies of contact

The first phase of the participative research project was the contact between the researchers, natives and migrants, a significant opportunity for the establishment of the co-constructed research environment. Through listening and mutual knowledge, a relationship of mutual trust was built among the participants in the research project. In this sense, preliminary meetings took place through intermediary figures that enjoy the trust of the host community. These figures prepared the terrain for the preliminary meetings with other people known to be the most authoritative in the research context. The literature (Hanlin, Bess, Conway, Evans, Cown et al., 2008; Nelson & Prillientensky, 2005) shows the need for prolonged preliminary contact, but if strong contact already exists with the key people in the territory, it may not be necessary to spend long periods of time in the research context. In our experience, the presence of bridging figures between the group of researchers and the area or context investigated, was a preliminary aim, almost a pre-requisite. This was accompanied by the search for experts, scholars and researchers who in various capacities were familiar with the territory studied and with the topic being investigated. Thus, in building up the research team we preferred people involved in the local context, i.e., local researchers. In order to introduce the university team into San Marcellino we invited the Imam to the University and all the university researchers joined in the cultural parties

and training initiatives in the local context.

### **Instruments**

*A Socio demographic form and semi-structured interviews* (Legewie, 2006).

In that research, the narrators were invited to explicitly reconstruct the situation and the experience as they saw them in the moment. For Schütze (1983), the interview begins with narration as the starting point, and only following this are explanatory questions relating to that narrative asked. For Legewie, Schütze's contributions are important, but it is of greater necessity for the interview to respond to the criteria of the communicative act set out by Habermas (1981). The interview must be the expression of reciprocal consensus between the parties, and it must occur by virtue of an agreement of cooperation between the interviewer and the interviewee; for its success, the motivation and the cooperation of both are essential. Therefore, for the success of the interview, the structural and personal preconditions that make mutual understanding possible are important. This self-descriptive tool of the interview aims at collecting information ranging from a description of oneself to a description of others and of the context.

In order to learn about the different identities and the intergroup relations within a multicultural society, and in order to find out key factors of the process of integration of migrants and natives from a participative and situated perspective, the methodology of research explored the following particular processes:

For the Italians: the presence of migrants in the town (origin and characteristics), contact (occasional, cohabitation, work, school), the forms of interaction of the Italians with the migrants (laws, norms and local customs) and of the migrants with the Italians (adaptation, interaction, integration), reciprocal representations, common and/or shared experiences.

For the migrants: the process of migration: the arrival in Italy and the reason for coming, the processes and the experiences of arrival; the present situation; the contacts and the forms of interaction with the place, the institutions, the inhabitants; sharing of contexts and their perception; reciprocal representations, common and/or shared experiences in associations, with neighbours, in the workplace.

For both groups, in the interviews drafted after the discussion and coding of the first interviews gathered, the focus was placed on the characteristics and particularities of San Marcellino, on the modalities of life of its inhabitants and on the future prospects for individuals and for the community.

The interviews and the textual materials gathered were audio-recorded, transcribed and underwent a qualitative analysis by means of the methodology of grounded theory. This is a theory which is set up by the researchers in the course of field research and on the basis of elements emerging during the carrying out of qualitative analysis. When we talk about theory we do not intend formal theories but a "substantive theory", a theory which is derived via an inductive method from the study of a phenomenon, an explanation, an interpretation of a specific phenomenon which is particular because it is built by means of a theory.

### **Data analysis**

The process of codification, as defined by Grounded Theory, is a cyclical process, in that in the open, *axial codification phase* the researcher reverts from the raw data back to the concepts, to

return again to the data in the *selective codification phase*.

The coding is the core procedure of the group of researchers, who request discussion and share procedural decisions. As an example of a completed project, we cite the following procedural steps: first, three senior researchers and four junior researchers analyzed the textual material obtained from the individual interviews.

In this first phase of interpreting the textual material, after reading and codifying only a few interviews, every researcher formulated their own suggestion for codification in the form of a memo.

The first codifications thus obtained were discussed by the whole working group, which identified some shared codes to be attributed to all the textual material; the team then defined some theoretical macro-categories, concepts with which to analyze the general text.

## **Results**

In order to analyze the processes of inter-relationship between Italians and migrants and with the purpose of overcoming stereotypes and generalized representations, and of identifying shared processes and reciprocal inter-relationships, we chose as the context for inquiry a specific territory (the municipality of San Marcellino in the Agro Aversano area) and a community (the Maghreb Muslims) that has a Mosque in that territory. The Mosque is a center which delivers services (emergency reception at night, hairdresser/barber, sale of foodstuffs, labor consultant), a place for entertainment (hall with tables and a refrigerator for cold drinks; speaker systems for parties) and for study (classes with desks and blackboard). It thus constitutes a place of visibility, also for the hosting community, which has received the Mosque without any problems.

The whole research project, the modalities of construction of local relationships, the organization of the research and the description of the modalities of the work, as well as the vicissitudes that accompanied the activities have been described in conferences (Arcidiacono, Procentese, Bocchino 2008; Arcidiacono, Procentese Natale, Mahboubi, Canfora 2008) and are the object of an article that is in press (Arcidiacono, Procentese, 2009). In this paper we limit ourselves to the description of some initial considerations, beginning from the interviews and the contacts we initiated in order to make them.

### **Expectations about Italy: the opportunity to work**

From a first coding emerges, on the part of the migrants, a motivational dimension based on decisions that are not only individual but also family decisions, which induces one to think about the type of expectation of the migrants interviewed. In fact, they hope not only to be able to work and have better living conditions than those they had in their countries of origin, but they expect also to be able to support their families economically. As regards the territorial community in which they reside, the choice is linked to the presence of an informal organized network that favors the settling of new arrivals.

In the case of the town of San Marcellino, the community seems to have been chosen because it is perceived as being welcoming, similar to their culture, and because it offers opportunities to work. With regard to the ecological point of view, these expectations are a good beginning for assuming “non down” positions with respect to the local people. Even if there is a paradox given by the illegality in which the migrants live, since many do not have a stay permit,

and work without declaring it. This places them in a condition of asymmetry with respect to the local population and above all, they cannot make use of some rights, nor can they contribute to the improvement of social conditions.

*"It was a territory with almost no controls and with great tolerance and ignorance towards immigration, and then it became a place where it was easy to settle without any problems."* (the mayor of San Marcellino). In fact, the Imam states: *"with every legal directive for regulating the black market workers there is a turnover of the people present: many move towards the North of Italy, which offers opportunities for legal work and thus the conditions to improve earnings and be able to have family members come to Italy"*.

### **Attitude of the local people towards Maghrebian migrants**

From the interviews emerges a general negative stereotype of migrants, which is inserted in a double representation of them that alternates between seeing them as a danger (*they get drunk, they steal, they are in organized crime*) and as a resource (*they are good workers and do the jobs that Italians don't want to do any more*). The negative attributes refer mainly to migrants from Eastern Europe. In the descriptions the Maghreb people do not have any particular attributes, and in the interviews of Italians they are perceived as serious workers, even if socially it is as if they were invisible.

As for the Arab women who are housewives, but university graduates, a strong prejudice emerges about them: *"When I talked with my neighbours, they used to say, 'But did you go to school?' And I said, 'Excuse me, I'm a university graduate!' 'But why are you a university graduate? A graduate?' They don't believe it, they find it strange, but why?"*

In coding the texts, the creation of categories seems to turn on the dimension of clean/dirty: *"They come to your house and look at how clean it is, how orderly it is, they understand that we are people, too."* (Interview A 3a, a Muslim woman with a university degree in Italy for 9 years with three children).

*"There are so many differences: city, country, ... there is the difference between rich and poor ... if you put them together, they cannot get along ... they can never be friends ... They say that one is dirty, that other one steals, one of them says that the other one has 'got money'!"* ... The category of clean as social desirability and of dirty as a negative attribute is often mentioned in the interviews, and the cultural meanings attributed to this double characterization should be studied more in depth.

### **Conditions of life and relationships**

With respect to their cultures, both the migrants and the natives interviewed have strong cultural identities that are expressed through traditions and religion.

Certainly a characterizing aspect of the family organization, which becomes an indirectly relevant aspect in the modality with which the foreign women approach the natives, is the supremacy of male decision power.

With regard to the migrants, maintaining their culture of origin takes place through encounters with other fellow countrymen and above all through the mediation of the Mosque present in the town of San Marcellino.

Sometimes the Italians participate in the activities organized by the community of migrants, but they remain suspicious in the reception of food-related and other customs. Certainly the knowledge given by constant encounters with migrants favors a process of reciprocal knowledge and understanding even of respective customs.

#### *Isolation and closed minds*

In general the relationships are characterized by reciprocal isolation (*Along the main street of San Marcellino, on Saturday Italians and Arabs go walking but do not say hello to each other and almost do not see each other*) and distrust: *"I would like to know them. But I think that they, too, are really afraid of us."* (male, 35 years old, aeronautics company, volunteer with Caritas, interview 11).

For the most part *"the only contacts that exist are imposed by circumstances"* (woman, Italian, inhabitant of a neighboring town).

#### *The asymmetry of relationships*

From the interviews carried out with Italian social service workers emerges an attention on their part towards the migrants, oriented towards giving support in the areas of health, labor and bureaucracy. This on the one hand constitutes an important resource, but it seems to maintain a relationship of asymmetry between natives and migrants, as different groups in that no initiatives are thought of in which to favour reciprocal knowledge. As for the Italians, it is clear from the interviews that they have shown themselves to be receptive in a dimension of offering help to migrants, but they do not seem to be interested in their culture. A first way that the migrants interviewed approach the natives is through the request for help; over time, through continuous contacts with some local people, relationships of reciprocal knowledge are created, which allows the migrants to make their culture known, as well.

#### *Reciprocity*

In particular on the part of the migrant women, a meeting in the home is reported as the moment of reciprocal recognition.

For men, the bar is equally the place for meeting and the way of measuring interaction; being invited to drink coffee together is something which, when it occurs, is welcomed with great pleasure and which in the north happens much less often, and is given as an example of how relationships with local people are good and of why many migrants prefer to stay in San Marcellino rather than emigrate to northern Italy.

*"In this little town the relationship is one of esteem and respect. There is perfect integration, I repeat, also because the parish priest has known how to work with the Imam, establishing a relationship of perfect esteem. Just think, last year the priest had an accident and almost lost his life and the Imam together with a group of Muslim immigrants went to visit him. And they prayed for him on the day of Ramadan."* (int. 3, 1, woman who does volunteer work in the parish, member of the center-right wing party "polo della libertà")

#### *Insecurity, conflicts and negotiation*

In the face of the stereotyped vision of migrants as carriers of social insecurity, the migrants

describe their insecurity in the local situation, in particular when they go outside the circuits of separation and of work.

It emerges, for example, from the stories of Italians and migrants that it is dangerous to walk in the evening, because there is the risk of being beaten or hit by a car. One of our students explains, however, that walking is almost a factor which indicates social vulnerability; a person who can will use a car always and in any situation; for this reason the migrants on foot or on bicycles, risk being the object of “jokes” (of being bothered and/or beaten up).

A young man 18 years old who was used to spending time with the local young people tells why the territory is not safe for migrants: *“You can never know what will happen. For example, one evening, during a walk with friends they say for fun: ‘oh, shall we burn this one up?’ And then they go and beat him up. It has happened to me lots of times! I used to go out with Italians, they saw other Italians and said, ‘Let’s see if we can manage to beat them up.’”*

In another interview the Imam told about when the local boys used to throw rocks into the Mosque and the community photographed the guilty parties; later the parish priest contacted the families of the boys and without the intervention of the law (the police), the families of the local people went to the Mosque to apologize, thus putting into action inter-institutional strategies for overcoming local conflicts through the intervention of social mediation.

### **Final remarks**

The Muslim community presents itself as “low-key”. Social invisibility as a group seems to be a strategy pursued with the local population. This could be considered as a strategy of integration, a sort of decategorization strategy for the reduction of inter-group bias, as some authors suggest (Dovidio et al., 2000,2005; Miller 2002). Such a style of relationship is adapted, in any case, to the lifestyle of the local context, which is very closed in private life, characterized by the saying repeated again and again: *Fatti i fatti tuoi e campi cent’anni*, “Mind your own business and you will live a hundred years”.

For that matter, as has been asserted by Luque-Ribelles, Herrera, Garcia-Ramírez, Hernández-Plaza, Paloma et al, (2008), when migrants live in asymmetrical social conditions, separation is the acculturative strategy to achieve well-being. If separation is a defensive strategy in a territory that is considered hostile, in the Agro Aversano territory it could be said to be an element that migrants and natives have in common in their common perception of the local territory.

Finally, it is interesting to note that, when faced with the high level of interest of the national and local press in this time period in the events linked to crime in these territories because of the presence of groups involved in organized crime (the Casalesi clan), in our interviews of Italians and migrants, this subject is up to the present almost completely absent. Sometimes it is hinted at or referred to, because it is recognized as having a function in the supply of labor and in protection against petty crime. At the same time, the territory shows, instead, a strong social life: the mosque acts as a social center, there are volunteer associations with deep roots, and the inter-institutional relationships are very active. The Imam, the parish priest and the mayor act in synergy to solve problems; scholastic projects are realized within national projects that favor intercultural dialogue, the parish and the mosque co-operate with the municipal government for the realization of the *Festa della Repubblica* (Republic Day) in an inter-ethnic dimension. Some strategies for resolution of conflicts already mentioned are emblematic as strategies of reconciliation put into action on a

local level.

A common superordinated identity which could act as a unifying element, does not seem to emerge, and there is evidence of a common social context in which both migrants and local people interact, that is a social space in which the aggregations take place by virtue of shared values. The new parish priest asserts, *"I do not see racism towards the migrants, but I see instead forms of intolerance and lack of respect that are generalized in our context. The fact that San Marcellino is full of migrants means that the people are receptive and willing... in these three months that I have been here, I have noticed many problems, but certainly not because of the migrants or the Muslims!"*

From the analysis of the territory examined there seems to emerge in the context a multi-dimensional set of strategies for relating and acculturation: separation, social invisibility, mediation/negotiation, sharing of spaces and times (public holidays). From the interviews the activities of sharing are shown to be full of meaning in the politics of small daily events (coffee offered at the bar, the invitation to one's home, the common group of friends), more than in organized local events (encounters at school, public festivities). The strategies of social mediation show the immediate effects of inclusive policies put into action by the local key people; these seem to be the most fruitful in the creation of integration and good living conditions at a local level. To conclude with the words of the mayor: *"They tend to live all together. In this way they protect themselves from the outside world, which is us, because they have not been accepted yet. Thus, here it is: we have gone beyond tolerance, we are experiencing successful hosting; but integration is still to come. These are key passages in order to have what I believe to be the future which must inevitably belong to us."*

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# El trabajo multidisciplinario para el estudio de la vejez en el medio rural

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## Resumen

*El presente artículo describe el trabajo de un grupo de docentes e investigadores de diferentes áreas del conocimiento, que comparten el interés por estudiar la problemática de la vejez y el envejecimiento en las zonas rurales del Estado de Veracruz, México. El documento, reporta el proceso de conformación del equipo de trabajo denominado Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario (GOGM), así como las características que lo describen, el cual está basado en la teoría de grupos de Pichón Rivieré y el concepto multidisciplinariedad, grupo que se presenta como estrategia para el trabajo de campo. La investigación está basada en la Metodología Cualitativa, enlazada con la Investigación Acción Participativa y el Método Etnográfico.*

## Introducción

Actualmente por la manifiesta transición demográfica que vive México, presente en los ámbitos urbanos y rurales, los comportamientos sociales ante el envejecimiento poblacional, así como el de los individuos que protagonizan este proceso, requieren que los estudios sobre la vejez, se revitalicen y adquieran nuevos vínculos, en un contexto caracterizado por la imposición de modelos de desarrollo económico, que no toman en cuenta las particularidades y singularidades de los grupos sociales que tejen y construyen sus identidades.

El modelo económico neoliberal que el gobierno mexicano comenzó a adoptar en los ochentas, ha tenido un impacto negativo en la calidad de vida de los campesinos, ejidatarios y en la comercialización de los principales productos agrícolas que originaron la reducción de sus ingresos, lo que a la vez se expresa en una disminución del nivel de vida. Más del 75% de las familias campesinas carece de cualquier clase de prestaciones sociales. Las inversiones en infraestructura rural, disminuyeron en más del 80% entre los años 1982 a 1999, lo cual ha implicado mayor pobreza y menor producción agropecuaria y obviamente, mayor dependencia alimenticia. Como consecuencia, en los ejidos y comunidades agrarias, se observan bajos niveles de bienestar, de los 2.5 millones de viviendas particulares habitadas, apenas el 46% cuenta con agua entubada, 16.5% con drenaje, 65.9% con energía eléctrica, 17.6% con techos de lámina de cartón, de estas, más del 50% cuenta con piso de tierra y un 59% de las familias vive en dos cuartos o menos. (INEGI 2005)

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En México, la dispersión de la población rural continúa siendo una característica de su distribución territorial. En el año 2000, 1.4 millones de personas, que corresponde al 19.8% de la población, habitaban en 20,197 localidades con menos de 500 habitantes. La mayoría de los casos, se trata de asentamientos de difícil acceso que representan un desafío para la dotación de infraestructura, servicios y equipamiento básico. Según datos del INEGI, la población rural supera el millón de habitantes en sólo nueve entidades federativas, que en conjunto concentran el 63.0% de la población rural del país. Al estado de Veracruz, le corresponden 2.8 millones de habitantes o sea el 15.0% de la región del Golfo. Esto quiere decir que el 60 por ciento de la población rural, podría concentrarse en el año 2030 en tan sólo ocho entidades federativas, como son, Chiapas, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Puebla, Guanajuato, Estado de México, Guerrero y Michoacán.

Según Reyes G., (2006), el Estado de Veracruz, ocupa el tercer lugar en población envejecida en México, después de Chiapas y el Estado de México, ya que cuenta aproximadamente con 600 mil personas mayores de 60 años y como se señala anteriormente, el segundo lugar en población rural, con 4 de cada 10 veracruzanos que habitan en éstas zonas, en localidades con menos de 2,500 habitantes. Según las proyecciones del INEGI, para el año 2050, Veracruz verá incrementar su población anciana con más de dos millones, por lo tanto, se calcula que el porcentaje de ancianos será de 31%, es decir, uno de cada tres veracruzanos será anciano.

Los problemas asociados al proceso de envejecimiento en el medio rural y la percepción de apoyo y de bienestar por parte de los ancianos y ancianas, están relacionados con las condiciones de la pobreza, soledad y abandono que agudizan su estado de salud. Así tenemos, que al panorama demográfico y económico, se le agregan las condiciones de salud y de la calidad de vida de esta población. El concepto de calidad de vida, alude a un sentimiento de bienestar psicofísico y socioeconómico, y para su evaluación, deben tenerse en cuenta los factores personales como; satisfacción con la vida e independencia, factores socioambientales, redes de apoyo, participación social, servicios sociales y de salud. En relación a la salud, 40 de cada 100 veracruzanos son derechohabientes de servicios médicos otorgados por instituciones públicas o privadas. Así mismo, se reconoce que el 75% de los ancianos carece de pensión, 30% son analfabetos y una cuarta parte trabaja en la economía informal.

En el ámbito laboral, los ancianos que todavía trabajan obtienen ingresos menores a un salario mínimo. Sólo el 1.4% realiza trabajos o empleos de muy baja productividad, generalmente en la agricultura y dentro del sector terciario, se afirma que más de la mitad de los ejidatarios, el 59% supera los 50 años y un 28% tiene más de 65 años, entre los cuales hay una proporción mayor de mujeres, 61% de ellas rebasa los 50 años de edad y 27.7% tiene más de 65. Por otro lado, alrededor de un 45% de ejidatarios se ven en la necesidad de emigrar hacia las ciudades cercanas, al norte del país, a Estados Unidos y Canadá, conformando el sector de servicios y del ejército de jornaleros agrícolas, respectivamente. (Vázquez, F. 2003).

México como otros países en desarrollo que presentan cambios demográficos hacia el envejecimiento poblacional, se enfrenta a la problemática de la insolvencia e incapacidad dentro de sus sistemas sociales, económicos, de salud y seguridad social, para atender la creciente población de adultos mayores. Lo anterior, significa que estos sistemas tendrán un tiempo menor para la planeación de la construcción de los procesos, espacios e infraestructuras para hacer frente a una nueva realidad en las demandas sociales, que junto con los problemas no resueltos relacionados principalmente con el subdesarrollo, pueden llevar a nuestro país a una crisis

sociodemográfica.

Después de analizar el contexto que envuelve a la vejez y el envejecimiento, podemos vislumbrar que en México y particularmente en el Estado de Veracruz, se requiere de la participación de instituciones y organizaciones en los diferentes ámbitos sociales dedicados a la atención de este sector poblacional, ya que la complejidad de las contradicciones y problemas sociales, exige la búsqueda de otras alternativas donde las ciencias y disciplinas del conocimiento, de igual forma aporten sus enfoques para encontrar las soluciones.

Por lo anterior y para los fines de la investigación *“Calidad de vida de los adultos mayores en una zona rural del Estado de Veracruz”*, se propone la formación de un Grupo Multidisciplinario como una estrategia para el estudio de la vejez y el envejecimiento en el medio rural, que podrá resolver las problemáticas que resulten del diagnóstico participativo, así como conjuntar acciones, métodos y recursos en un tiempo y espacio determinados.

### **Metodología**

La presente investigación se propone de carácter cualitativo, apoyada en la Investigación Acción Participativa (IAP) y el Método Etnográfico. De hecho, esta concepción metodológica, no se trata de una opción epistemológica, una teoría, una metodología o una técnica particular. Empíricamente observamos que profesionales de ciencias y técnicas variadas, participan de forma habitual en el abordaje de problemáticas con un enfoque multidisciplinario, pero sus resultados son parciales, principalmente en la práctica profesional, esto hace que en la mayoría de las investigaciones no se logre el éxito propuesto.

La estrategia metodológica, será el Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario (GOGM en lo sucesivo), dado las características de sus integrantes, el cual se origina a partir de las particularidades del Grupo Operativo Gestor de Pichón Rivieré y de la Multidisciplinariedad. La característica de este, es el concepto *“multidisciplinariedad”*, que plantea una relación que puede estar dada por aportes o préstamos de métodos y conocimientos de una disciplina a otra, por la subordinación o por la suma de conocimientos enunciados a partir de una y otra disciplina (lo que algunos llaman relación de disciplinas). Cada especialista por separado, precisa sus áreas de estudio e intervención así como sus métodos de trabajo, atendiendo a criterios disciplinarios, posteriormente se comunican unos a otros sus avances y resultados. En el mejor de los casos, se definen en común metodologías generales para tratar un tema o problema y luego cada disciplina por separado, procede a precisar el momento de su intervención (Castro, M. 1999), así como la sistematización de cada una de las experiencias disciplinarias, que darán como resultado la formación de nuevas teorías y metodologías con el fin de beneficiar al grupo poblacional.

Precisamente y como han puesto de manifiesto los historiadores de la ciencia, una de las características de cada disciplina científica es su actitud imperialista, hegemónica y tradicional hacia otras disciplinas que surgen por necesidades o por carencias formativas y epistemológicas, lo cual conduce en último término a situaciones de conflicto interdisciplinar, antes que a la supuesta colaboración multidisciplinar. Es decir, no ha existido una interacción creativa entre las disciplinas, sino un intento desde cada una de ellas por separado, por abarcar todos aquéllos aspectos ajenos que pudieran parecer de interés, para ofrecer un corpus más acabado de la propia disciplina denominado especialización.

Los integrantes de un GOGM, deben estar asociados a un ejercicio profesional que resulta

de un acercamiento comprometido a la realidad particular de nuestro país, lo cual ha hecho posible encontrar en la historia y la singularidad de cada contexto, la ubicación y obligación profesional. Su práctica, no se concreta simplemente al diagnóstico del fenómeno ni tampoco a sus causas. Cada uno de ellos está obligado a no detenerse en la fase diagnóstica; antes bien, a partir de esta, se debe avanzar hacia el diseño e instrumentación de un cuerpo de medidas tendientes a reducir las consecuencias negativas, que para el individuo, el grupo, las instituciones, la comunidad o la sociedad en su conjunto tengan el hecho constatado y eliminar su presencia futura. Los vínculos con otras ciencias, hacen que se perfeccione el trabajo.

El planteamiento de esta investigación parte de las siguientes preguntas: ¿las diferentes disciplinas aceptan el enfoque de la multidisciplinariedad?, ¿debemos ocuparnos o no de la multidisciplinariedad como estrategia en los grupos de trabajo?, ¿la multidisciplinariedad daría mejores resultados en la atención de problemáticas relacionadas con la vejez?, ¿la vejez en el medio rural requiere del trabajo multidisciplinario?, ¿el medio rural es campo para los estudios multidisciplinarios?, ¿la multidisciplinariedad como estrategia permitirá conocer la calidad de vida de los adultos mayores?. Creemos conveniente comprobar si un grupo multidisciplinario es pertinente para abordar el estudio de la vejez y el envejecimiento, así como su calidad de vida y específicamente en el medio rural. Consecuentemente, si a partir de este enfoque se obtienen mejores resultados, se podrá demostrar que los estudios multidisciplinarios son una estrategia para adquirir conocimientos más profundos no sólo sobre la vejez y el envejecimiento en el medio rural, sino de cualquier otra problemática social detectada.

El estudio de la vejez hasta estos momentos, se ha abordado desde diferentes disciplinas sin que se haya propuesto estudiarla y atenderla tal como se requiere, ya que es un problema multidimensional que avanza y rebasa las posibilidades para la atención social, porque las necesidades de nuestra población envejecida demandan de la atención y la concientización de profesionales congruentes con nuestra realidad social.

El trabajo de investigación, se inició a partir de una serie de tareas previas y específicas, ya que éste se desarrolló tomando en cuenta intereses comunes y problemáticas sociales emergentes observadas, como lo es el envejecimiento. Una de las tareas más importantes dentro de la IAP, es la formación de los grupos de los investigadores y de los investigados. Un concepto de grupo puede ser, cualquier clase de asociación en la que los miembros se reúnen con el fin de llevar a cabo una acción para el mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida en el medio, o se constituyen porque deciden reunirse en torno a una acción y a su correspondiente investigación, este concepto junto con la participación comunitaria, son el punto medular de la investigación-acción-participativa.

En este escenario, un grupo multidisciplinario facilita y posibilita reordenar, sistematizar y aportar un conjunto de criterios, presupuestos y enfoques que contribuyen al estudio de la vejez y su contexto, análisis e interpretación de las nuevas realidades, para transformarlas mediante sus propuestas de alternativas conceptuales y metodológicas. Uno de sus objetivos, es la construcción de la teoría a través de la praxis o desde la construcción de la praxis, la teoría.

El estudio, trata de conocer las características que definen la calidad de vida de los adultos mayores en el medio rural veracruzano. La estructura propuesta para el desarrollo del proyecto es la siguiente: 1) La formación del Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario, 2) Etnografía de la comunidad a estudiar, 3) Reconocimiento de redes sociales y familiares, 4) Diagnóstico participativo, 5) Programas, 6) Implementación de acciones, 7) Gestiones, 8) Sistematización como

proceso y fin, 9) Resultados y 10) Sustentabilidad.

En este artículo lo que se reporta, es la formación del Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario como estrategia para el trabajo de campo, el cuál se define como grupo de aprendizaje o como personas que se reúnen alrededor de un objetivo común. Está conformado por profesionales de diferentes disciplinas: a) antropólogo social; b) psicóloga comunitaria; c) nutrióloga; d) médico cirujano; e) cirujano dentista; f) ingeniero bioquímico en alimentos; g) enfermera; h) ingeniero agrónomo y i) químico clínico. Se tomaron en cuenta los siguientes aspectos:

- Disciplina de origen y experiencia profesional
- Interés profesional y personal para desarrollar trabajos relacionados con la vejez y el envejecimiento
- Afinidad para realizar trabajos comunitarios, con los miembros del equipo y/o con otros profesionales que simpaticen con el tema a tratar.
- Disposición para realizar trabajo social.

El GOGM, propone la posibilidad de colaboración y cooperación en un sentido estrictamente metodológico y teórico, para luego concentrarse en un aspecto más pragmático, con el fin de obtener una institucionalización de los esfuerzos de cada uno de los integrantes. También concensuar que ningún conocimiento es superior en valor a otro, permitir una interpretación más clara de la acción social, apoyada por la participación comunitaria, considerada como un medio no como un fin. La participación comunitaria, tenderá a ser mayor en la medida en que el proyecto de desarrollo resuelva necesidades directas básicas de la comunidad y será menor o nula, si el proyecto apunta hacia menores prioridades o hacia fines exógenos a la misma comunidad. (Illescas, I. 2004).

Para el desarrollo del trabajo de campo, se consideró crear espacios de reflexión individual y grupal semanalmente, con el fin de analizar la información obtenida, de mantener la cohesión y evitar el conflicto en el trabajo grupal, ya que este representa un alto grado de complejidad en su alcance teórico, en sus características organizativas, sus dinámicas y técnicas que impactan en la formación y capacidad de servicio de quienes quieren o desean, participar en tareas de carácter comunitario.

Al final de cada etapa planteada en la investigación, cada integrante presentará un informe de actividades y de resultados, se autoevaluará de acuerdo a los criterios previamente acordados y presentará propuestas para mejorar su participación, de esta manera se retroalimentará el grupo, lo que elevará la calidad en el desempeño multidisciplinario.

La idea es entonces, trabajar con y para la comunidad de adultos mayores, lo que significa redefinir el objeto y el método, revisar la teoría y de acuerdo a las necesidades de desarrollo del proyecto, el rol de los profesionales dentro del grupo multidisciplinario irá variando según sean las habilidades y creatividad de los investigadores.

En todo grupo hay miembros de diverso status, unos de rango superior y otros de rango inferior y a cada status corresponde un rol, es decir, un determinado comportamiento en presencia de otros. El rol de cada uno de los profesionales de un grupo investigativo debe ir variando, ya que depende del proceso de aprendizaje continuo y reciproco, mismo que beneficia a la comunidad e implica responsabilidad de investigar, analizar y reflexionar para transformarse así mismos y a la realidad a través de la construcción del conocimiento, que es originado por la identificación de

problemáticas.

En el GOGM, el estatus y el rol está determinado de acuerdo a la disciplina y tarea a desarrollar, es decir, varía según las etapas de avance de la investigación, cada integrante al cambiar su rol, se convierte en un colaborador efectivo que también puede desarrollar habilidades que hasta ese momento le eran desconocidas al descubrir que su rol, se puede concebir como el de un practicante reflexivo-generativo, lo cual es una combinación del practicante reflexivo y del teórico generativo. El primero, es un interventor que intenta contribuir al bienestar humano a través del intercambio entre el uso y la generación del conocimiento, visto en una relación transaccional; el segundo, se propone a través del desarrollo teórico, contribuir al bienestar humano guiado por un conjunto de valores. Si el investigador no desempeña su rol de la forma esperada, se corre el riesgo de afectar el desarrollo y resultado de la investigación. Este rol, es acorde a la estrategia de la investigación-acción, la cual es un ciclo generador de conocimiento que comienza y culmina con la práctica, y que a lo largo del proceso emplea de manera sistemática la investigación y la reflexión.

Este tipo de grupos puede ser tan diferente, como diferentes sean las disciplinas que lo conformen. De acuerdo a los resultados de la etapa de diagnóstico participativo, es probable que se incorporen investigadores de otras disciplinas necesarias para atender nuevas problemáticas. Como la investigación propone la acción, esta se puede reforzar con investigadores externos según sean las necesidades del proyecto. Lo anterior, es una de las ventajas de emplear la Investigación Acción Participativa.

Esto nos permitirá conocer y analizar la problemática de la calidad de vida en los adultos mayores del medio rural veracruzano, desde diferentes perspectivas profesionales que nos aportaran los diversos aspectos tanto objetivos como subjetivos a partir de sus historias de vida, sus hábitos y costumbres alimenticias, sus procesos de salud y enfermedad, la percepción de su medio ambiente, la participación social y el manejo de sus recursos para alimentar su vida y reproducir su cultura.

Lo anterior apunta asumir que para el estudio de la vejez, debe contemplarse a la comunidad como una totalidad, sin lo cual sería difícil no sólo el análisis de esta problemática, sino también conocer los antecedentes históricos de los individuos y grupos sociales, al focalizar el tema objeto de indagación. En esta concepción metodológica, se revela también la dinámica que se establece entre lo general (comunidad) y lo particular (adultos mayores).

A la par de elaborar una concepción acerca de cuáles han de ser las dimensiones y variables para el conocimiento de la realidad como totalidad, esta investigación ha de contemplar los paradigmas, enfoques, perspectivas metodológicas y métodos que sostendrán, el estudio de su objeto de investigación desde la multidisciplinariedad y emplear aquellas herramientas, que le faciliten una mejor comprensión de los fenómenos sociales.

### **Contexto o población**

El trabajo científico se desarrolla en el Municipio de Naolinco de Victoria, Veracruz, ubicado en la zona centro montañosa del Estado, en las estribaciones de la Sierra de Chiconquiaco. Está regado por el río Naolinco, tributario del río Actopan. Su clima es templado-húmedo-regular con una temperatura promedio de 16° C. De acuerdo a los resultados que presenta el II Censo de Población y Vivienda del 2005, el municipio cuenta con un total de 18,885 habitantes. El

Espinal, es una de las 42 comunidades rurales que pertenecen a este municipio, en esta viven aproximadamente 1,866 habitantes, dedicados en su mayoría a las actividades relacionadas con el campo. La producción agrícola esta basada históricamente en la siembra y cosecha del café y el maíz, últimamente a consecuencia de su bajo valor en el mercado y a la cercanía al Ingenio de la Concepción, ha hecho que sean sustituidos por la caña. Muy pocos pobladores se dedican a la ganadería en pequeño, ya que los productos son consumidos en el mismo poblado.

Como en muchas de las localidades rurales del estado, en esta población existe la migración, varios jóvenes (hombres y mujeres) han salido de sus hogares dejando a sus padres o cónyuges al cuidado de los hijos, algunos han regresado, pero en su conjunto dejan sus familias, costumbres y cultura.

En El Espinal, se observa un incremento en las personas mayores de sesenta años que alcanza un 22.66% de la población total, en su mayoría son campesinos dedicados al cuidado de sus tierras, pocos son pensionados de instituciones gubernamentales, las mujeres se dedican principalmente, a las labores del hogar y al cuidado de sus descendientes, su contribución al gasto diario es por medio de la venta de animales de granja y comida regional. El 100% de la población de El Espinal, profesa la religión católica, tanto hombres como mujeres, en sus ratos libres colaboran y participan en actos religiosos y en la práctica del culto.

Últimamente, se formó el grupo de Adultos Mayores de El Espinal con el fin de recibir beneficios, información y capacitación para esta etapa de la vida, está integrado por 73 ancianos, de los cuales 65 son mujeres y 8 hombres, entre los 60 y 83 años de edad. Este grupo poblacional presenta carencias palpables de atención, ejemplo de la problemática que esta viviendo actualmente nuestro país. Por lo tanto, las investigaciones dedicadas al estudio de la vejez y el envejecimiento, requieren de un grupo multidisciplinario de académicos e investigadores interesados en estudiar sus necesidades y problemáticas, ya que esta etapa de la vida necesita de la participación y conocimiento de las diferentes especialidades dedicadas a este tema.

## **Resultados**

De acuerdo a la definición de Castro sobre la multidisciplinariedad, en nuestra experiencia podemos puntualizar, que el GOGM utilizado como estrategia, favorece metodológicamente a la investigación, ya que las diferentes disciplinas que participan en este grupo establecen vínculos epistemológicos, heurísticos y axiológicos, desde los cuales se originan nuevas propuestas que pueden ayudar a conocer la complejidad de la vejez y el envejecimiento. En este ejercicio, pudimos comprobar que con la participación de profesionales de diferentes disciplinas aplicadas para el estudio del envejecimiento se visualiza y se amplía la posibilidad de encontrar mejores resultados desde diferentes enfoques.

Al GOGM lo caracterizan las trayectorias académicas, las experiencias profesionales, así como las historias de vida a nivel personal, el interés de cada uno de ellos esta marcado por la experiencia personal, en la convivencia y cuidado con los adultos mayores, lo que le otorga su identidad. Este equipo de trabajo se origina dentro de una entidad educativa de nivel superior, ya que quienes participan son investigadores y académicos de la Universidad Veracruzana de diferentes áreas del conocimiento, con apoyo de alumnos en formación, de los niveles de licenciatura y maestría, que acordaron trabajar conjuntamente en la temática del envejecimiento en el medio rural. Las reglas y las normas definidas para el equipo, se establecieron de acuerdo a

los aspectos axiológicos de las diversas disciplinas que participan y a la legislación universitaria vigente, con el fin de obtener mejores resultados.

Los integrantes del GOGM, acordaron realizar una dinámica de integración en donde se identificaron y aportaron las características que se deben tener:

- Interés
- Ética
- Participación
- Cohesión
- Pertenencia
- Identidad
- Liderazgo
- Habilidad
- Responsabilidad
- Iniciativa
- Creatividad
- Conciencia del trabajo y alcances
- Compromiso con el proyecto
- Compromiso social
- Capacidad transformadora

Otra aportación útil del trabajo como GOGM es que:

- Se obtienen puntos de vista más completos
- Se pueden confrontar realmente los análisis y las estrategias de acción
- Se diversifican las acciones y se amplía la cobertura de la población
- Se protege y refuerza de cierta manera la investigación
- Hay mayor coordinación entre las disciplinas
- Se motiva la participación interna y externa
- Se propician la enseñanza y el aprendizaje
- Se actúa como miembro de una comunidad científica, pues la investigación forma parte de un proyecto de investigación académica.
- Los investigadores son gestores ante la comunidad estudiada en la búsqueda de recursos para desarrollar la investigación, pero también son iniciadores de estudios probables en otros campos.
- Permite la integración de estudiantes en formación de diversas disciplinas.
- Busca la validez ante la comunidad científica ya que por lo general, los trabajos comunitarios no son legitimados por la academia y mucho menos financiados.
- Se obtiene una actitud consciente ante lo que se aprende.
- Se desarrolla una posición reflexiva.
- Se construyen destrezas y habilidades.
- Se favorece la vinculación con diversas instituciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales.

Mientras más grande y complejo sean la problemática a estudiar y el contexto donde se desarrolle la investigación, más importante será contar con un grupo multidisciplinario que trabaje la investigación-acción, esto favorece la colaboración en conjunto, también depende



de los medios tanto económicos como técnicos y del tiempo disponible para el desarrollo de la misma, pues cabe la posibilidad de que surjan situaciones de riesgo que influyan en la obtención de resultados.

Los riesgos del GOGM pueden ser:

- El autoritarismo
- La manipulación
- El poder
- La dominación
- La intolerancia
- La indiferencia
- La deserción
- La rivalidad
- La competencia negativa

Por medio de espacios de reflexión y de dinámicas grupales, los integrantes del equipo analizaron el desarrollo del GOGM para evitar los riesgos arriba mencionados y tomaron decisiones que fueron favorables tanto en lo individual como en lo grupal.

En estas reuniones los investigadores, docentes, técnicos y/o promotores que participaron en esta etapa del proyecto, aportaron su capacidad teórica y metodológica, sus habilidades y creatividad para la realización del trabajo, en estas, se llevó a cabo la sistematización de las experiencias y se analizaron desde un enfoque multidisciplinario de tal forma, que los resultados en cada etapa son consensuados y revisados.

La comunicación para el GOGM y el desarrollo de la investigación, se convirtió en un proceso dinámico de interrelación a diferentes niveles: grupal e interpersonal, siendo algo importante e indispensable, independientemente de las diversas disciplinas de origen de los integrantes del grupo, pues se unificaron criterios epistemológicos y metodológicos, así como fue necesario utilizar diferentes canales y medios para la misma, ya que como cada uno de los integrantes labora en espacios físicos diferentes, fue necesario establecer estrategias de tiempo y forma para establecer contactos más frecuentes. Esto es, se realizaron sesiones de trabajo presenciales y electrónicas; intercomunicación vía telefónica y de mensajería.

### **Comentarios**

La formación de un Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario (GOGM), facilita el trabajo y desarrollo de una investigación, ya que su característica principal es que los integrantes representan una disciplina diferente que puede contemplar en su quehacer profesional el estudio de las problemáticas poblacionales, además que personalmente su interés se inclina a conocer, analizar y crear teorías que respondan a las necesidades de una sociedad por compleja que esta sea. El trabajo multidisciplinario, además de ser un ejercicio poco frecuente en una investigación, permite que los perfiles así como el rol que cada uno de los profesionistas tiene en las etapas de la misma, se destaquen y jueguen un papel muy importante. Evidentemente sus habilidades, destrezas y especialidades son significativas para el desarrollo de las diferentes tareas. En la planeación y organización de las diversas actividades, el grupo debe conocer específicamente en que fase de la investigación se necesita la colaboración de cada una de las especialidades, esto con el fin de que los resultados vayan lográndose en los tiempos programados. De esta manera en

los espacios de reflexión, el grupo investigador se fortalece al observar que se van alcanzando los objetivos en tiempo y forma, lo que permite mantener la pertenencia, la cohesión y la identidad del grupo para alcanzar las metas y los objetivos establecidos.

Para la investigación *"Calidad de vida de los adultos mayores en una zona rural del Estado de Veracruz"*, el Grupo Operativo Gestor Multidisciplinario, ha sido una práctica enriquecedora, en lo profesional y en lo personal como lo han manifestado sus integrantes, ya que se comprueba que la suma de conocimientos, experiencias e intercambios metodológicos de una y de otra disciplina, benefician el trabajo grupal y el científico.

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Para los científicos sociales la comunidad se le presenta como un espacio donde fluyen todas las relaciones sociales, donde los procesos históricos y culturales se presentan como ejes para la interpretación de su devenir y para el pleno conocimiento de las actuaciones de los actores sociales.

Desde este enfoque, la relación individuo-comunidad se presenta ante las diferentes ciencias como núcleo metodológico, mediante la cual se pueden dimensionar la subjetividad y la identidad de los individuos y grupos; por lo que es pertinente considerar esta relación como premisa para el trabajo teórico y práctico para cualquiera de las ciencias.

La relación individuo-comunidad, no sustituye la concepción que viene desarrollando cada una de las ciencias individuo-sociedad, de lo que se trata es de incorporar una visión diferente en el establecimiento de otras relaciones en el contexto de la comunidad lo cual esclarece con más precisión los límites del campo de acción de cada una de ellas.

# Youth in a multicultural setting

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## Abstract

*The following is a presentation of how young people (age 17-20) perceive and interpret their position in society according to their immigrant background in the Swedish majority society, subjective integration.*

*From the conclusions of a Master thesis where many of the youths expressed a sense of not belonging to the majority they presented strategies how to handle this situation. One possibility is when education is regarded as a way of self-realisation or as a mean to make it possible to move on to a life in another country. On the other hand they presented a strategy of starting an own company as an opposition to the Swedish society. This in order to create an own controlled unit within the society.*

*I will also give a practical example how a Social Service-project in a multicultural suburb can tackle the problem with youths who neither attend school and nor work. A situation that is connected to their lack of integration in the majority society. The project worked with young persons in a form of individual coaching in order to create a personal relation with them to motivate them for either education and/or seeking employment. The youths did simply get a form of attention that they did not get from schools and employment offices, which seemed to be successful.*

**Key words:** youth, ethnicity, integration

## Youth in a multicultural setting

The following presentation is a summary of an interview survey with 14 young people which all were 17-18 years at age and all living in a multicultural environment, in suburbs surrounding Stockholm. The persons interviewed have an immigrant or refugee background, were either they themselves or their parents have migrated to Sweden.

Exclusion/inclusion is the theme for this set of seminars and it is appropriate for my presentation since one of the major findings in my work is the constant reflection concerning the relationship between minority-majority, Swedish culture-one's own culture, these young people do.

In this presentation I will try to summarize this study, which is my Master thesis. I will outline my presentation in the following aspects:

First I will give a rough presentation of the suburbs were they lives in order to give an orientation of the specific context.

Secondly I will describe how they perceive the relation between their immigrant background and the Swedish majority society, which I have labelled a dimension of ethnicity.

For the third I will present Youth Centre, a social service project concerning education and work practise for persons that neither attend school and nor have any work.

And for the fourth and last I will present how they reason about their expectations of their future in terms of studies and occupations. In this section I will present two different strategies that they express, which I have named *Towards higher education* and *Towards independence*.<sup>1</sup>

### **The suburbs**

They all live in suburbs that were built during the 1960-70-ties. During the 1960-ties there was a great lack of housing in Sweden, especially in the major cities. In order to create new housing the government started a huge programme called *The million programme*, which aimed at during 10-15 years time create a million new apartments. The million programme can be described as a large scale housing project where totally new suburbs at the edges of the big cities were created.

In earlier periods of more larger scale housing projects in the Stockholm area you can say that these project took more consideration to the environmental surroundings in so fort as the new houses were aimed to fit in the natural surroundings of woods, hills etc. One can possibly consider these earlier periods as a way of a more natural growth of the city area. Because of the large amount of new housing in the million programme this was not possible. In order to fulfil the aim of the programme the buildings had to be very large-scale blocks of apartments. But one also had a vision to create something new as Arnstberg (2000) states:

That during the first period of the million programme the inhabitants where selected. In the suburb the new man should live, he who was neither bourgeoisie nor proletarian, not rural and nor city people. The suburb became a symbol for Swedish modernity and future.

One researcher, Bergström (1996), is of that opinion that the physical environment effects the social life in these areas:

*In the living areas of the Million programme there are large spaces of land that does not signal what they are meant for or who is in charge of them or who can use them. My hypothesis is that the anonymous spaces of land, the weak sense of belonging has a negative effect on the development of the social life.*

The suburb lacks social life since there is no flow of people and it is mainly a living area and, even as this special suburb Flemingsberg that most of the persons I have interviewed comes from, has lot of work-places, the people who work in the area never comes in contact with people actually living there because it is architecturally separated. The suburb has a lack of meeting-places which strengthens the effect of anonymity and as Bergström (a.a) states (concerning a similar suburb in Gothenburg):

*Like most structures of modern city environments the structure can only be perceived from the air or from a map. The purpose of the ground must be searched for in the city plan. The high degree of abstraction hinders the understanding of the place and makes it unintelligible.*

The young people I have interviewed all states that after a certain age, round 15, there is a constant lack of meeting places. The suburb is also a segregated area with a high degree of immigrants and people living on social subsidiaries. Many people look upon these suburbs as hardly belonging to the Swedish society, and this even occurs in state papers as in one report by *The Swedish National Agency for education*

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations' in this paper are my own translation from Swedish.

Leon (2001) quote and states:

In this report the schools that has been studied is defined as being in a areas with a “non-existent participation in the Swedish society”. In my opinion this statement is difficult to understand since these areas demonstrably is located in Sweden and has got an infra-structure that is a part of the Swedish society.

But this is also a complex and paradox orientation as we shall see when I go over and talk about the ethnic dimension, which I strongly connected to the place itself.

### **The ethnic dimension**

Bateson states that it is necessary to have two things “in order to create a difference” and in this sense it is absurd to talk about one isolated ethnic group because ethnicity occurs when cultural differences are made relevant through interaction.

The suburb is a place both of security and belonging but also of a tough and sometimes brutal environment. As one express it:

I don't like Flemingsberg; it's boring I can tell you. But I got my roots there. It's like having bad parents but they still are you're parents. That's the way with Flemingsberg, it's bad but it's still my place...you dislike Flemingsberg but still likes it.

This is a quite mature metaphor of a complex situation. Another person expresses the difficulty of attaining school because of his friends and surroundings that does not put education in the fore front. I asked him;

You said you would like to leave Flemingsberg when you have finished school?

*No, but during the time I attend school.*

So you would like to leave now?

*Yes, but not after school, then I would move back!*

The life in the suburb offers a security to be among friends of the same ethnic origin but also other non-Swedish neighbours consist in a sense of security, a sense of mutual understanding of both being non-Swedish. It seems as almost all of the persons I interviewed feel a sense of fellowship in being immigrants and not-Swedish. As one expresses it:

I would feel awkward living in a “Swedish environment” with only Swedish people living there. I am used to living with immigrants, which feel normal for me.

Borgström (1998) describes among immigrant adolescents of not feeling at home in a “Swedish” context because you are very “visible” there, you sort of stick out. In your own area you are just one in the crowd.

Integration is in this sense a very subjective feeling. To be integrated means you have to have a feeling of belonging and comfort in the society, which many of the young people I have interviewed seem to lack. One of my interviewees gives a clear example of this lack of trust when she says the following.

It's like if you have a problem at home. I have a cousin who is 11. He got a note from school stating that if there is trouble at home and you need someone to talk with, you can phone this number. I mean, this is sick.

She develops her statement even further as if this number could lead to authorities will come to take a child in custody. This is a very dramatic statement and needs a bit of explaining. The telephone number she is referring to is probably the number to BRIS, which could be translated as

the Children's Right in Society. This is voluntary organisation which helps children in crisis and is not connected with any authority and is a well known NGO that support children with counselling etc. The point here is not what authorities can do to a single person but what a person think the authorities can do to you. This girl lack a basic trust for society and in that way interprets this telephone number. And this lack of basic trust is damaging to her identity. As Ahmadi (2000) puts it:

Integration is rather a feeling, a subjective condition, which is connected to the subjective experience of belonging.

This could be good to keep in mind for the final section of my presentation. Before I come to the concluding episode of the Future expectations I will say something about the project at the Youth Centre.

### **Youth Centre, a social service project**

In my abstract I have said that I also should give some practical examples from a social service project, a Youth Centre (Gustafsson, 2007). That in a small scale, but in a rather successful way, have managed young people, who neither attended school and nor worked, to motivate them for education and work practise. First I will briefly say something about what the informants in my own study expressed about their school situation. They all come from similar multicultural backgrounds as the youngsters who are attending the Youth Centre and it is possible to relate those experiences to be more or less valid.

Their main experiences, which are here very shortly described, can be summarized in a problem dealing with ethnicity and cultural factors. My informants describe the situation that meetings between different cultures in school never take place. My informants do not interact in a substantial way with fellow students of "Swedish background". And many of them lack a confidence for their teachers, whom they say does not try to understand their points of view. They say that the teachers come to their school, a multicultural context, they teach and then they leave for their "Swedish" context. My informants express that no dialogue takes place. The Swedish teachers and the pupils of different cultural backgrounds do not interact.

What could, and I state should, lead to an intercultural meeting, in which school must be considered to be an ideal place and also an obligation to be, does not occur. What could become a multicultural meeting-place stays mono-cultural, on behalf of the teachers position in being persons in control of the educational situation.

Well, the project at the Youth Centre, where 5 young people aged 17-18 attended. The staff in the project consisted of two coaches, 1 teacher and 1 social worker, whose first task was to crate a functional group of these youngsters. This was the first problem to solve since they did not function in a group context, due to different reasons. It was also quite heterogeneous groups were some of them had problems with reading and writing. Some of them had a pressure from their families to get jobs and they tested the limits of the coaches like; What can you offer? You don't give me money!

They all had a small subsidiary for attaining the program, which was more or less a symbolic sum, definitely nothing you could live upon. So the first period of the project were very loud and messy. So the coaches realized that they had to change plans. Instead of working in a group context they started with individual teaching and a larger amount of practise at different



work places. This the youngsters did approve of. They got support in both education and in the practice at work places. A support they were not used in getting.

You can look upon the project as the opposite of their former experiences from a negative school context. The coaches managed to listen to and interpret their needs of support. The youngsters describes the coaches in terms of: "not like teachers and social workers but more of a supportive family".

So by quite simple means this project established a platform for these youngsters for further individual growth. Something that school had failed in doing.

### **Future expectations**

I have in this concluding section, that summarizes this study, identified two different strategies for the choice of future education and occupation. Strategies that are based on their experiences from school, the majority society that I have described earlier.

### **Towards higher education**

Two girls, *Agnes* and *Beata*, both strive for academic studies but from two different viewpoints.

*Agnes* is a girl which could symbolize a traditional high regard for education. She is a very reflexive person and also interested in politics, which no other of the persons interviewed have expressed. She looks upon knowledge as a way for personal growth, to widen ones mind. She is born in Sweden but both her parents are from Chile, fled during Pinochet which can account for her political interest. But she also thinks a lot about her multicultural environment and background and especially round the negative attitudes of the public consensus towards the suburb as a place. She says that she was very affected by these negative opinions earlier but that she now has liberated herself from that. She thinks she has gained from growing up in this multicultural environment. She is very determined of her plans for the future and says she also would like to go abroad, preferably Spain, for further studies as a means for increasing her experience with new ideas.

*Beata* on the other hand have one dream for the future and that is to become a dentist. She seems quite confident with these plans but she is not so successful in school as *Agnes*. Her educational results needs improvement to fulfil her goals to be able to make an application for dental school. Much of her wishes to become a dentist refer to her longing back to Turkey. Both of her parents are from Turkey but she is born and raised in Sweden. She expresses that if she had a choice she would prefer to go and live in Turkey and mentions her grandparents as important persons in her life. But in order to do so she must have an education and a high status profession. Becoming a dentist must be an excellent choice under these circumstances. If she does not succeed in this she will not leave for Turkey. She is quite critical concerning the living conditions in Flemingsberg. She says that living there has become tougher with more violence and drugs. She is critical to how Swedish parents educate their children. She thinks that there is not enough responsibility, one let children stay out late at night.

If *Agnes* longs to leave Sweden for studies, in order to get new impressions and experiences you can say that *Beata* does the opposite. *Beata* sees education as a way of rather returning to something, to her picture of Turkey.

### **Towards Independence**

This is a voluntary vague category. What I want to express is the ambivalence of this concept. Independence is both a form of personal independence but also independence in relation to the surrounding society. In this case from both the majority, the Swedish society, but also from the adult society, represented by their parents. One can actually state that the majority society in a sense forces this orientation. The persons in this category are all males *Adam*, *Bruno* and *Carl* and have different reasons for their plans of starting an own company, a small business, mainly a restaurant.

*Adam* attends the Individual programme at upper secondary school. This is a programme specially designed for students that does not have the adequate grades for attending a regular programme. The Individual programme also includes practical training at a working place a couple of days in the week. The aim of this programme is that the student after one year shall be qualified for the different regular programmes.

*Adam* does his job practice in his father's restaurant, which is a bit odd I presume. I asked him if the restaurant business was something he planned to continue with after school. He says that he has thought about that but his main interest is further studies in becoming a recreation instructor. He has previous experience from different sports clubs.

You can trace a conflict in opinion with what is *Adam's* interest and what are his fathers. *Adam* describes the relationship with his parents as good they listen to and respect each others. But *Adam* also states:

As long as you live in your parent's house you shall respect and obey their will and desire.

The way I interpret his wishes and plans for becoming a recreation instructor is that there is going to be a conflict between this and his fathers more or less explicit demands of him taking over the restaurant business.

*Bruno* on the other hand attends a Social science programme and his father has constantly urged and motivated him to study. He considers himself ambitious in school and he also works extra in his brother's restaurant at his spare time. He talks a lot about the relationships between Swedes and immigrants and he thinks of it as two separated or divided worlds. He says:

Immigrants stick to immigrants and Swedes with Swedes. It has always been like that, I really don't know why. I do know a lot of Swedes and we hang out, but actually it's nothing I do each day.

He sees his career opportunities as becoming a lawyer or economist but is not fully convinced with his own plans and say:

But it is still something that does not fit. I think I end up starting a small business, with my brother or so.

In *Bruno's* case, the plans for starting a small business, is based on a feeling that he does not fit in the Swedish context. He still wants to have an education but more of a way to broaden his possibilities and, not least, it is a good base for running a company.

Finally *Carl*, who came to Sweden 7 years ago from Turkey, and says he is not aware of why his family moved to Sweden. He has asked his father several times but he says he is too young to know. As in the case of *Bruno*, his father emphasizes the value of education. He himself worked as a dentist for 20 years in Turkey. Now he works as a taxi driver. *Carl* means that it is because his father has trouble with learning Swedish. *Carl* says that his grades are quite moderate and that he

from time to time has lived in a rather turbulent way. But his father has all the time urged him to study:

You better get hold of yourself before it is too late!

Carl has got a number of offers from relatives to work in their restaurants but his parents have rejected these offers. They want him to continue studying.

When I ask him what he wants he says he wants to become a flight mechanic. But at the same time he hesitates and says he will not apply for a technical education.

I want to study. I will create my own occupation. I don't want to work for anyone else.

Then he again talks about having a restaurant.

It is an easy job. It is a good job and it is better to work for your own benefit than for somebody else.

You can see that Adam, Carl and Bruno all have an orientation towards starting a small business and that they have different reasons for doing so. They all have that in common that they see starting an own company is one possibility for a future career since they feel it's difficult to fit in the "Swedish" society and the educational system.

### **A concluding summary**

The young people must tackle the demands and expectations from their parents *and* the society. According to the informants this situation is further complicated due to their immigrant background, a fact that can both limit or widen their opportunities.

In this sense the youth take different strategies in coping with their plans for the future. They develop a kind of strategy, which in some way is in contrast with the "Swedish" and the Swedish majority society. One possibility, as described in the section *Towards a higher education*, education is regarded as a way of self-realisation or as a mean to make it possible to move on to a life in another country. Or, as described in *Towards independence*, the strategy of starting an own company as an opposition to the Swedish society. This in order to create an own controlled unit within the society.

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# Making the psychological political – challenges for community psychology

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## **Abstract**

*Community psychology deals with the life of groups of people in context and is therefore inevitably concerned with their struggles, successes, projects and dreams. Sooner or later, because these contexts are constructed economically, politically and historically, engagement with the political is inevitable as all social groups encounter social and economic interests that differ from their own. On a global scale these conflicts include competition for resources, the dynamics of profit maximisation, and the use of violence to maintain and extend economic and political domination.*

*In Britain community orientated psychologists have become increasingly aware of these political questions and at least some are more ready than in the past to commit to political engagement both at the local level and on national and international questions.*

*Some of these developments will be traced, exploring some of the following questions:-*

*What are the connections with other attempts to develop a politically engaged psychology?*

*What are the prospects for such engagement and how best can community psychologists contribute to wider struggles and campaigns?*

*Why is this engagement increasing now?*

*What constraints are there to such action and do community psychologists self-constrain their political effectiveness?*

*What does this mean for the definition and focus of community and other related psychologies?*

*In exploring these questions it will be assumed that while professional ideology and practice has a historical specificity there is a universality of human needs and that this entails the transformation of community psychology in response to new challenges from global capital.*

**Key words:** psychology, politics, alternatives, organising, community psychology, activism

## Introduction

Community Psychology's main business is concerned with the life of groups of people in context, with their struggles, dreams, projects, successes and setbacks, in a variety of collaborative roles. Sooner or later this means an engagement with the political since groups encounter political and economic interests different from their own. That is to say conflict is intrinsic to human life and to that of people in context, a context that is constructed economically, politically and historically. Community Psychology then is inevitably political – unless it seeks escapism in other pursuits.

To give some focus to the argument it will be worth providing some examples of conflict situations that affect communities worldwide and that have impacted on the work of community psychologists in from the UK to Latin America, from Australasia to Palestine:-

- A social housing provider sells housing to a property developer to develop private housing.
- A government ban on hunting foxes threatens the livelihood of groups of rural workers.
- Government subsidy for public transport is reduced, isolating poor families.
- A transnational corporation transfers production to a location with cheaper labour or less regulation, removing employment and impoverishing a community.

with State support a transnational corporation displaces a farming community in order to extract minerals from the underlying earth.

A health centre and its primary care and preventative services is closed following the introduction of user co-payments imposed by the World Bank.

People are displaced to make way for a prestige project in a capital city.

Such conflicts have a number of root causes:-

- Competition for resources
- Profit maximisation
- Deficits in democracy and in the representation of marginalised interests
- The use of violence to maintain and extend economic and political hegemony.
- The continuing consequences (economic, behavioural, cultural, economic, political) of previous historical impacts of these factors.

At its worst, the liberal-philanthropic paradigm that includes much of community psychology can act as a mask for some of this. To the extent that its aspirations and practice are ameliorative rather than transformative, it can defuse social movements rather than fortify them. NGOs, where community psychologists and similar workers frequently work, are often part of Capital's strategic toolkit (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2005). Participation, so often emphasised by Community Psychology can be no more than co-optation sapping autonomous organising (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Kagan, 2006; Kagan, Castile, & Stewart, 2005).

However, there is a tendency in Community Psychology (whether or not it claims that title) that increasingly seeks to face up to the political saturation of community and community action, and there are signs of an increasing willingness to commit to political engagement both at local level and on national and international questions. The rest of this article explores some aspects of these developments.

Some examples and issues

- It needs to be made clear that this increasing politicisation is not entirely new, but we

will look at the recent growth of interest in political engagement in its present context.

Some of these recent examples include:

- Opposition to the psychologisation and medicalisation of misery.
- Opposition to war and the involvement of psychologists in the war apparatus.
- Work with marginalised groups, using an explicit political analysis – e.g. asylum and racism.
- Work on minority and human rights.
- Work with communities that are being or have been dispossessed.

However, this engagement with a more politicised set of issues is new territory for many community psychologists (although not all, Burton, 2004; Burton & Kagan, 2005).

I shall use the experience of some members of the network of community psychologists in the UK to highlight some critical dimensions of this unaccustomed engagement with the political. Three recent initiatives from the UK that highlight this relative inexperience will be reviewed.

#### 1) The Birmingham manifesto

This Statement was produced by a group that met in Birmingham in April 2007. At the Great Yarmouth Community Psychology Conference in September 2006 it had been proposed that there should be an interim event, before the 2006 September 2007 conference in York. This event should aim to produce practical, meaningful outcomes and address relevant issues such as “war” or “the environment”. Before the event, consultation took place with the members of the UK community psychology listserve. These consultations were also facilitated by the West Midlands Community and Critical Psychology Interest Group which organized the meeting. This process clarified the topics to be addressed at the event and the manner in which the day was to be organised.

The topics identified were “War and torture” and “globalisation”. Speakers were identified to provide orientating statements on these, after which participants had the opportunity to work in groups towards practical outcomes to address the issues raised by the presentations and the subsequent discussions.

The day was remarkable for the consensus that was readily established within a broadly Marxian orientation to understanding the wider global context as it impinges on people and communities and on the construction of psychology itself.

The manifesto takes the form of four linked statements on the priority areas of:

- War and Imperialism
- Sites of counter-system resistance
- Action on global warming/environment
- Public services/Privatisation of the National Health Service.

The manifesto<sup>1</sup> was circulated to the network of UK community psychologists, but there was little immediate reaction. Nevertheless a workshop based on it at the York conference in September 2007 was well attended and led to a more specific statement on poverty.

#### 2) The York Statement on Poverty

This statement was produced at the annual UK Community Psychology conference in a large workshop session (about 30 people) organised by some of those who had produced the Birmingham manifesto. The specific focus on poverty was influenced by the presence at the

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.compsy.org.uk/The%20Birmingham%20Manifesto.pdf>

conference of a keynote speaker Richard Wilkinson (an epidemiologist, see Wilkinson, 2005; Wilkinson, 2007) who had presented evidence on the link between social and economic inequality in a society and measures of wellbeing (he was not involved in the production of the Statement). It was also influenced by the conference setting – York was an important setting for the seminal work of the liberal reformer Seebohm Rowntree who documented the effects of poverty around York, and by the presence of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation at the conference with a keynote speech on the Foundation's anti-poverty programmes of social action.

The statement was brief and focused on the role of psychology in relation to poverty.

As community and critical psychologists we believe that psychologists have a fundamental responsibility to join with others to end both poverty and societal inequality independent of absolute wealth, which we believe are personally, collectively and socially destructive.

We believe mainstream psychology to be complicit with the prevailing psychologically toxic neo-liberal economic order and believe psychology has allowed itself to be used to hide systemic effects of poverty and inequality and instead position poverty as a consequence of individual psychological dysfunction.

We call for the radical transformation of psychology so that it has the resources necessary to expose the personally, collectively and socially destructive effects of poverty and inequality and the proactive deployment, with allies, of this transformed psychology to end poverty and societal inequality and the exploitation, exclusion, oppression, distress and illness which result from them."

...on behalf of the UK community psychology network

However, having produced this, the network didn't seem to either know what to do with it, or to have the organisational capacity to take it into a relevant public arena. The point was made that doing this would be best linked to a relevant news story, but when subsequently the Labour government faced an internal revolt as a result of removing the first, low, band of income tax, leaving many on low incomes less well off, we community psychologists were nowhere to be seen or heard. Similarly a possible submission to a Scottish parliament enquiry into child poverty was identified as a possible opportunity for intervention but again nobody was able to commit the necessary time and effort to this and the deadline passed. To be fair, the York statement was more a way of talking to ourselves, affirming an orientation to a major social problem rather than a programme for action as such, but nine months on there has been a seemingly complete failure to do anything more with it in any organised collective way.

### 3) Changing politicians' minds about changing our minds

On 10 October 2007 the UK government announced a £170 million expansion of psychological therapies "to provide better support for people with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression"<sup>2</sup>. This was to emphasize Cognitive behaviour therapies which were said to be more effective than drug therapies (which it later emerged were themselves generally no more effective than placebo). Members of the Community Psychology network had serious reservations about this, a) because of the exaggerated evidence for the effectiveness of these approaches and b) because of the neglect of the social and economic causes of distress, and c) because of the psychologising and individualising of social problems inherent in this kind of discourse and policy prescription. An email discussion on the UKCP listserv<sup>3</sup> led to agreement of

<sup>2</sup> see <http://nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=321341&NewsAreaID=2>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/COMMUNITYPSYCHUK.HTML>

a press release<sup>4</sup> on the matter, the summary statement of which follows.

“Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and associated approaches are comprehensively problematic. Primary prevention is the only way to substantially reduce socially, economically and materially caused distress. To be effective primary prevention must involve social rather than cognitive change. Reducing income inequality in our society would be one of the most effective ways to reduce psychological distress and ill health”,  
*the UK Community Psychology Network.*

This was released to all national news outlets of any quality and standing and to the specialist press on 16 October 2007 – quite a feat of organisation for a headless coalition.

Unfortunately there was no follow up from any mainstream press agency. We know that press releases need follow up by those issuing them (Monbiot, 2001), but again our lack of organisational capacity (or just organisation) was insufficient. Moreover, we probably allowed our reluctance to use titles and positions on the statement to weaken its impact. Had we said it was issued by four professors of psychology and a number of other senior professionals and academics maybe it would have registered as a controversy for the press to explore.

Nevertheless the statement has remained a useful point of reference for UK community psychology network members, being returned to in various debates. It was also read out at a large event at a British Psychological Society conference with Lord Layard present. He is the economist credited with the government’s policy on making psychological therapies and especially CBT more widely available: he apparently said he agreed with it.

#### 4) Seroxat

The Seroxat SSRI User Group (SUG) is an action group on the SSRI antidepressant Seroxat. It offers support to those who have been harmed by taking SSRIs, providing information and advice on how to seek legal redress against the pharmaceutical industry and on how to cope with and withdraw from SSRIs. It has also been campaigning to hold the following to account:

a) GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) for withholding on commercial grounds, clinical trial data that showed Seroxat lacked efficacy and was unsafe

b) GSK in particular and the pharmaceutical industry in general for the social harm caused by the over-medicalisation of social problems and for putting drug profit before public health

c) The government for failing to implement the recommendations of the House of Commons Health Committee Report into the Influence of the Pharmaceutical Industry (2005). Among other things, the report recommended that the pharmaceutical industry in the UK be more tightly regulated.

d) the medical and allied professions for not ensuring that their members are adequately trained to recognise adverse drug reactions in patients, properly judge clinical trial data on drug efficacy and safety so that they are not duped by drug company marketing

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<sup>4</sup> available at <http://www.compsy.org.uk/changing%20minds.pdf>



practices, deal with drug company professionals in a way commensurate with protecting public health. They also want coroners made aware and make use of clinical data that shows the risk of death from taking SSRI medication.

One of those who had been involved in the Birmingham manifesto and subsequent activity posted a suggestion on the UK Community Psychology mailing list (on Thursday 22 Nov 2007 at the end of the working day):

*I am asking as a matter of urgency (before 28th Nov [ - i.e. the following Wednesday]) whether our community psychology network could offer support and solidarity to SUG by endorsing the organisation (at the very least) or coming up with a short statement of solidarity/support (at the very most). SUG have a meeting with Prime Minister Gordon Brown next week to put their case forward. To have a statement of support from a collective of psychologists and users of psychological services might help them.*

There was a good response from list members and a collectively edited statement was agreed:

*CPUK SUG statement*

*"The Community Psychology UK Network (CPUK) supports the work of the Seroxat & SSRI User Group (SUG) in their efforts to protect public health from any inadvertent harm caused by the pharmaceutical industry and the medical and allied professions [The use of the term inadvertent was perhaps unfortunate.] CPUK support SUG's aims to ensure UK health regulatory bodies have sufficient remit, responsibility and resource to guarantee public health and to ensure that those harmed by the products of psychopharmacy are given the support they need to seek justice and get well."*

*Statement from The Community Psychology UK Network (CPUK), November 2007*

*CPUK is a broad coalition of over 150 professionals and paraprofessionals that includes, among others, psychiatrists, psychologists, users of psychological services and members of the public. CPUK is committed to work that promotes health and well-being through securing social justice for those marginalised by society's economic, social and political institutions.*

The initiator of the statement provided the following feedback to the list:

SUG asked the Prime Minister (Gordon Brown [GB]) three things:

1) Why had the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency not, after four years, concluded its criminal investigation of GlaxoSmithKline?

GB answer: can't comment on an ongoing criminal investigation blah blah blah (standard reply, SUG didn't expect much else, it was enough to see if GB could keep a straight face when explaining why the criminal investigation has so far taken 4 years).

2) Why were doctors not better informed about the dangers of SSRI before they prescribe them and better trained to scrutinise clinical drug data?

GB answer: he will write to the British Medical Association and suggest SUG meet to talk with them about this

3) Will the government support SUG or help the group identify where support might be found (SUG has 10,000 personal testimonies of people who have been harmed by Seroxat and SUG have no resources to analyse those nor the resources to provide support to the people who have been harmed).

GB didn't answer because he had to run off to the commons for a vote.

Meeting lasted about 15mins and was on a bad day for the PM (criminal investigation into

labour party funding had been announced that day). That aside, SUG came away with something - a letter of introduction to the BMA from the PM - the leverage of having had the PM consider SUG's concerns were serious enough to merit a meeting to discuss it, and the opportunity to keep a dialogue going with the PM's office [made possible] by [the fact that] the meeting was interrupted and the third question was not answered.

The CPUK statement of support was handed directly to the PM. SUG found it of considerable help for the meeting.

However there has been no follow up from the network. When early in 2008 research hit the press (BBC, 2008; University of Hull, 2008) showing Seroxat to be no more effective than placebo (Kirsch et al., 2008), there was a suggestion that the network carried out an action about this but after some debate the idea disappeared. The political voice of community psychologists was again, collectively, and inconspicuously absent.

These case studies of attempts to intervene in a more explicitly political way can now be briefly explored to try to identify some of the wider issues that arise when community psychologists try to overtly politicise concerns that although linked to their legitimised practice and roles involve stepping over a boundary that can be both implicit and explicit.

Evaluating the four initiatives.

Strengths

The three initiatives were a new departure of UK Community Psychology into the political realm and as such they were a step forward. They,

Made explicit that there was a distinctive Community Psychology position on social and political questions.

Helped Community Psychologists to commit to a politically progressive orientation.

Led to some political education among the Community Psychology community.

Made legitimate the idea of politically explicit, public and collective intervention.

Added leverage to a community based campaigning group in their campaign for justice.

### **Weaknesses**

*Sustainability (and organisation).* We can see from these examples that at least in these UK examples, Community Psychologists were not able to build effectively on the initiatives they promoted. This reflects their general lack of organisation, a feature of Community Psychology in Britain where there is as yet no formal organisation. In other countries with small relative numbers of Community Psychologists this is also likely to be the case. We saw that the three more outward-facing initiatives were not properly followed up - it was as if it was enough to make the statement.

*Ideological purity versus pragmatism.* A misplaced ideological purity may also have impeded the effectiveness of these initiatives. An understandable suspicion of hierarchy and elites and fear of reproducing such features in our initiatives meant that the CBT initiative, for example, was less effective than it might have been - who were we that people should take any notice? In our view this reflects a misunderstanding of the processes of social reproduction, committing a category error in confusing the generative socioeconomic processes that create and sustain elites and power relations with the necessary roles of leadership that are required in any effective political movement. The former would not be changed by a Narodnik eschewing of 'elite' labels and identities, while the latter rather depended on it. As a result the need to be effective was

traded for the politics of the gesture.

*Political incoherence.* One problem with a loose group of community orientated psychologists from across the country trying to organise together politically is the diversity of their outlook as well as varying levels of political development. A related problem is that most (British) psychologists have not been political activists so there is not much practical know-how in terms of organising campaigns, nor of the familiar debates on the dilemmas of organisation .

*Psychological isolationism.* Perhaps the biggest problem though relates to the question of psychologists organising as a group. In some of the background work for the Birmingham manifesto the point was made that Community Psychologists have three potential roles within which political commitment can be discharged:

### **Citizens**

We are all citizens and it is fundamentally in this role that we should be organising and participating in counter-systemic struggles, whether on burning excessive hydrocarbons, opposing more wars, solidarity with progressive social movements and so on.

### **Experts**

As psychologists we have some legitimacy and expertise. We know and can say with authority that commercialisation is poisoning childhood. We know and can say with authority that restrictions on abortion harm women. We know and can say with authority that Britain's asylum laws destroy family life. We don't have to be pompous about it, just claim the expertise we can for the good of the cause.

### **Workers**

We are workers who sell our labour power, some are only one or more pay cheques away from destitution. We should defend the interests of ourselves and of other workers world-wide using the vehicle developed for this, the trade unions.

From the Birmingham Manifesto available at <http://www.compsy.org.uk/The%20Birmingham%20Manifesto.pdf>

But in negotiating these roles there is scope for confusion. There are at least two potential problems:

the denial of specific position based expertise and influence (a stance touched on above) in a false effort to assume the undifferentiated role of activist - in circumstances where that would be better served by assuming a more specific and expert role (Quintal de Freitas, 1994), and

the failure to make appropriate and effective alliances with those who are not psychologists. This was noticeable in the case of a 'psychologists against facism' group set up to campaign against far right political groups. The group in question was reluctant to even ally with other allied professions and as a result was so small that it failed to acquire an effective critical mass.

These two opposing tendencies seem almost symbiotic - the failure to understand one's specific role contributes to a denial of it that then leaves many psychologists feeling exposed and retreating to the security of the psychological community after all. There are, however, examples of radical psychology networks that have been more effective in forging effective alliances (Burton, 2004). In the UK *Psychology, Politics, Resistance* for example has emphasised work with survivors of the mental health system and taken action on issues such as electroconvulsive treatment.

### **Questions**

We now turn to a discussion of the wider implications of a political turn in community

psychology, considering what it means for other politically orientated psychologies and for community psychology itself, together with its prospects for making any kind of a contribution to human wellbeing on a wider terrain.

What are the connections with other attempts to develop a politically engaged psychology?

There are some connections with other attempts to develop a more politically engaged psychology – some participants in the above initiatives have had involvement in the mental health system survivors' movement for example while others have been involved with more theoretically orientated variants of critical psychology. Some network members have also carried out work on the war of terror, torture and psychological complicity (Burton & Kagan, 2007 in press; Duckett, 2005; Harper, 2004, 2007). Some have been involved with community-based struggles through their Community Psychology roles. However in general the developments described here are largely independent of other radical/political psychologies. This is both a strength and a weakness: most previous attempts to develop more politically engaged psychology have had little effect (Parker & Spears, 1996) and a fresh approach starting from today's context could perhaps be more successful. But many issues are likely to be predictable, dealing with the same relations between economy, society and the life-worlds of people, so access to already existing conceptualisation is likely to be helpful, particularly given the general academic and professional isolation of psychology from other fields of social science, so long as this does not mean a retreat into the restricted codes of academic theoretical discourse.

What are the prospects for such engagement and how best can community psychologists contribute to wider struggles and campaigns?

It is difficult to assess the prospects for such engagement – this will depend on both internal and external contexts, and if we know anything it is that prediction is difficult. But the key question here is, "how best can community psychologists contribute to wider struggles and campaigns?"

The Birmingham workshop identified the three roles of citizen, expert and worker and we want to suggest that while conceptually distinct they do necessarily overlap in practice. For example in campaigning against a hospital closure we might be potential users, experts on the impact of such closure on access by marginalised sections of the community, and health service workers affected by the changes. Sometimes our interests in these roles will be in conflict but often, as in this example they will not be and the key uniting factor is to question and combat the neoliberal models of efficiency and marketisation (Lister, 2005) that underpin such policies.

Campaigning groups will rarely say: "let's invite a community psychologist to work with us and advise us" (although there are exceptions Kagan, Lawthom, Knowles, & Burton, 2000; Sánchez, Cronick, & Wiesenfeld, 1988). Indeed there is understandable suspicion as to what psychological expertise could contribute. So it is often necessary to approach struggles and campaigns in those other roles of citizen and worker, not making a big thing of the psychological role. In other cases the campaign emerges while the community psychologist is already engaged in a community based project and here the task may be to renegotiate the role.

Examples of the areas where Community Psychology has relevant expertise include;

Group organisation and dynamics – really important when small groups are engaged in difficult campaigns.

Communication and propaganda.

Understanding and documenting community impacts.

The caution to observe in all of this is that while we have a certain expertise, if we are truthful it isn't all that great, or at least the seduction of applying it across contexts can lead to error.

Why is this engagement increasing now?

This heading rather begs the question that political engagement is increasing, and this could be no more than wishful thinking in the context of declining political activism as the conduct of politics becomes the privilege of professional politicians, marketing and media machines, themselves obligated to dominant economic interests. However, taking the claim at face value, we could attribute it to the ever increasing domination of Capital and its servant the State. The reshaping of capitalist strategy in the form now called neoliberalism continues to influence community life in many ways. It also affects the work lives of psychologists as neoliberal restructuring (marketisation, facilitation of capital entry) reaches welfare services, educational establishments, urban planning and non-governmental organizations, while the impacts of the State's military adventures and internal security provisions are felt in communities, particularly poor or dissident ones. This brings the dominant political-economic forces home to community psychologists and occasions this more activist-engaged stance. We should therefore expect more such political engagement from Community Psychologists as neoliberal strategy both intensifies and exhausts itself.

What constraints are there to such action and do community psychologists self-constrain their political effectiveness?

There are constraints of various kinds to such action. It is important to be aware that the space for committed political action in (all?) societies is conditional – the implicit contract being “yes you can organise and lobby, but only so long as you don't try to fundamentally change the system” (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). This is why ultimately this kind of activity must be part of a broader political strategy and coalition.

However, there are some things that seem to potentially constrain the current effectiveness of community psychologists seeking to engage politically:

Psychologists are mostly dependent on the State for their income and position power, and can be constrained in taking on a more open political role. Indeed in some circumstances it will be dangerous for one's employment.

Psychology is not traditionally political in orientation – its very construction has been that of the science of the general individual, abstracted from anything but the most proximal social context (Danziger, 1990; Sève, 1975). So political analysis and activity does not come easily to psychologists, nor in many cases does the formation of alliances with others (as discussed above). Community Psychology is in many ways the counterfactual case, but we should not underestimate the extent to which it carries the traits of its parent.

What does this mean for the definition and focus of community and other related psychologies?

The growth points mentioned so far are small and tender and may not become anything at all viable. But if they do it is possible that they will give new definition to the central concern (or perhaps contradiction) of Community Psychology

It is 'community' psychology because it emphasises a level of analysis and intervention other than the individual and their immediate interpersonal context. It is community 'psychology' because it is nevertheless concerned with how people feel, think, experience and act as they work together, resisting oppression and struggling to create a better world.

(Burton, Boyle, Harris, & Kagan, 2007)

That is to say community psychology could renew its orientation to transformation through a recognition that its mission is ultimately political and the redesign of its practices to that end.

### **Conclusion**

Community Psychology is a construction – historically and societally bounded. This determines its politics. To the extent that the battle of ideas steps up, so will the contradictions that affect Community Psychology and its practitioners. One response would be quietist distraction (for example the study of the community as object) while at the other extreme would be naïve attempts at activism. The latter have to be encouraged since this is how learning takes place, overcoming naiveté through praxis, but this is only likely to yield much if community psychologists are able to step outside the isolation of being psychologists.

### **Appendix – the 4 core statements from the Birmingham Manifesto**

#### 1) War and Imperialism

We believe that the war and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq is immoral, illegal and irresponsible.

As community psychologists we have seen how these wars have created suspicion, fractured trust, intensified racism, and damaged community cohesion both within and between countries.

These wars and occupations are not about promoting democracy. Rather, they have restricted freedom of thought and freedom of movement.

There is a psychological cost both for civilians and soldiers, creating a rip in the global social fabric between individuals, families, communities and our social institutions.

Furthermore, we believe that these acts of war are based on the interests of Anglo-American capital and as such constitute an act of Imperial aggression.

#### 2) Sites of counter-system resistance

The community psychology network will support any individuals, groups, organisations or movements, at area, national or international level, which are working to oppose inequality and disempowerment. Amongst allies we would therefore expect to offer our support to some of the following: professionals and professional groups dedicated to the provision of public services based on the principle of equity and those campaigning to preserve and extend such services; campaigns, such as feminist, lesbian, gay and bisexual, and anti-racist campaigns, which support the rights of groups who may be disempowered because of prejudice and discrimination; campaigns of support for countries and peoples affected by past and current forms of imperialism; those promoting open access, non-capitalistic, forms of communication such as the internet, use of open access software, and development of non-commercial forms of publication; and any faith group, political party, trade union, or individual writer or broadcaster which/who represents a

'site of resistance' to inequality or disempowerment. At the same time we recognise the need, in parallel, to develop the CP network itself as an effective site of resistance; by providing mutual support, building on the start made at the Birmingham meeting, and by combating the isolation of a group largely composed of psychologists.

### 3) Action on global warming/environment

We believe that as psychologists we have a responsibility to contribute to government and community action to protect the environment.

Ecological damage and climate change currently threaten continuing life on the planet. The immediate consequences of global warming particularly threaten the poorest and least resourced people in the world (and those least responsible for the problem).

As psychologists, we should be contributing our knowledge and skills to support and help to progress the work of environmental scientists, campaigners and activists in areas such as energy stewardship, investment in public transport and encouraging sustainable consumption.

Psychological theory and practice can help to:

Understand and counter processes of denial

Expose and critique powerful vested interests

Understand processes of participation, persuasion and decision-making

Encourage and enable people to work together toward sustainable futures.

If we are to survive and thrive, people and societies need to make change happen: as psychologists, we must play our part.

### 4) Public services/Privatisation of the NHS

It is the duty of government to govern in the interests of its citizens, promoting their well being through positive policies and by ensuring protection from threats. This includes a duty to address inequalities through a coherent policy framework that includes effective public services.

The UK network of community psychologists commends important aspects of the track record of the Labour government 1997-2007 in promoting the health and well being of the population. In particular there have been significant advances on child poverty and early intervention, the increased real expenditure on the NHS and joined up strategies to improve local population health and well being, for example through Local Strategic Partnerships.

However, we believe that these developments are lacking in ambition for social justice and they are compromised and threatened by other government policies that favour the private sector and especially big business. Examples of this inadequacy are:

Failure to reintroduce progressive redistributive taxation of incomes and to reduce indirect taxation that hits the poor.

The creeping privatisation of the NHS that is leading to fragmentation, demoralisation

5 The National Health Service in the UK, established by the 1948 Labour government with the following founding principles: Comprehensiveness - a service covering and meeting all kinds of health care needs - from infancy to old age, not just for physical illness (mental health and wellness), preventative and curative. Universality - a service of uniform quality for all - on the basis of citizenship rather than either ability to pay or insurance scheme parameters. Free of charge - it would be paid for by the state (on the basis of redistributive taxation – a principle since eroded). Equality - those with more resources (educational, money, etc) would get no better a service than those who were less advantaged. Since people do not have equal health care needs, the point is to have access on the basis of need and not any factor irrelevant to need (see [www.dhrsa.org.uk](http://www.dhrsa.org.uk)).

and inefficiency - this last being inevitable since private enterprise has to make a return to shareholders.

The failure to effectively manage and constrain those business interests that threaten community health and well-being, including

- the drinks and gambling industries
- industries targeting children
- the car and airline industries
- speculative finance capital whose impacts on job security and community life can be devastating
- large retail concerns that are driving small local enterprises out of business and threatening institutions (such as the milk delivery and corner shop) that are critical to a neighbourhood based community.

We believe psychologists are well placed to comment on the impacts on health and well being of the current policy mix and we will contribute to the development of a positive alternative people-oriented policy framework, contributing experience, skills, knowledge and evidence to the efforts of groups campaigning for an effective, adequate public policy framework that places people ahead of profit, recognises the value of publicly owned resources and services and that fearlessly tackles vested interest for a better society.

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# Engaging Community Leadership: The Intersecting of Global Dialogue and Systems Change (Adaptive and Engaging Leadership with a Purpose in a Shifting World)

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## Abstract

*It has been said that living life is living history in the making. In the classic historically based book, A Tale of Two Cities, the author Charles Dickens writes in the classic book that "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The Dickens saga was set in the years leading up to the French Revolution when globalization appeared different than it does now. The field of community development is expansive given the divergence of theories, concepts, training and approaches in institutes, colleges and universities. Around the world the changing and shifting circumstances of nations, cultural regions and communities presents significant challenges as well as opportunities at this point in time in the globalization journey. Globalization is also a driving factor and force in emerging trends toward community development research, theory, practice and potential outcomes and strategies. In our current time there are compelling events that have shaped and are shaping these times as we all go into the future amidst the swirling array of human dynamics, the quest for freedom, diverse groups of people and their leaders, human crises and needs, commerce and innovation, North and South perceptions and realities, and a changing global climate among other factors at play. Consequently, it is the view of this author that it is important to promote dialogue exchange as the pace, rate and reach of global systems change, human orchestrated and natural, continues full speed ahead. In this vein, the cacophony of regional and world events and forums for strategic contemplation, thought and action includes annual G7 or G8 summits, the World Economic Forum that is held in Davos, United Nations convening and other global implication summits and settings for years to come.*

*Still, there are naturally ascendant conditions that are challenging the knowledge transfer competencies that crosses at will all country and community boundaries to threaten diverse people in places, regions and countries that are aligning and realigning along racial, ethnic and cultural divisions and groups. In some ways it's people coming together in the pursuits of freedom and livelihood at times around conflicting views of reality. The intent in this exploration of ideas about community talking and eventual actions is to present and comment on some of the critical and key interrelated factors that are driving adaptive leadership strategies as communities confront and contend with a multiplicity of circumstances and situations that are interwoven that involves business, economic and social arrangements and strategies to manage affairs with a focus and eye toward the near future given the possibility that situations and other situations are still to arise. Moreover, all of these factors with complex connections also involve the need for people and groups who are engaged in the contextual play between systems and freedom in all aspects of community life and livelihood*

## Introduction

As one considers the organizing theme, the visioning of community systems leadership development in a worldwide perspective I offer for consideration Thomas Friedman writing in The World is Flat (2006) where he states that Globalization 3.0 is different than Globalization 1.0 or 2.0 that he suggests briefly are two periods of European discovery in the world and the rise and expansion of transnational commercial organizations that are in some ways more connected in partnership with diverse communities. It is important to note that discovery is a two-way process and situation albeit the clarification is not always evident in the reporting of discovery when it involves city-states and nation states. Friedman offers that Globalization 3.0 is going to be more and more driven not only by individuals but also by a much more diverse-non-western, non white group of individuals because individuals from every corner of the flat world are being empowered, a new leveling of the playing field according to Friedman. Globalization 3.0 makes it possible for so many more people to plug and play, and you are going to see every color of the human rainbow take part. I also offer that the current globalization reality and trend is being aided by the flow of migrating knowledge workers whose competencies and skills are needed by the European Union, the Americas, Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries, and in Asia. The early data from what appears to be a strengthening movement is beginning to provide links between migration and development

I also think about the key factor of general systems theory as developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Jay Forrester among others. Systems theory and its multiple applications and critical nuances in the realm of community development involving community leadership is important for unpacking, describing and understanding some of the major factors involved in community development such as connecting passion, interest and leadership, power and influence, inter-group relationships, development planning activities, asset mapping and measurement and other components of process and action. Clearly, the reality of community development when it is connected to or combined with community leadership engagement strategies is a complex human set of activity. I return again to the discussion of freedom as emotional intelligence and as a mindset for building participative, empowering and diverse communities within and across societies. The view held by Friedman and the view held by George Soros on freedom are not so different as I reiterate that it is important to both think and act on the importance of freedom in these times. In a very short historical snapshot of the world the notion and meaning of freedom over the previous twenty centuries was experienced by fewer people for a host of reasons and situations. A single nation debate generally about the United States is being discussed more widely in the world as suggested by Christopher Hitchens as freedom for nations is coming more into question geopolitically. I will also in this paper refer to expressed voices to illuminate the picture that I seek to present. One of the voices is Amartya Sen the Economist who in Rationality and Freedom (2002) poses the dual questions of what is the place and process of perceived and actual freedom for individuals and communities; and what is freedom when referring to human welfare and economic progress by again linking freedom to opportunity and process? Amartya Sen in describing the place and process of freedom refers to T.H. Green who wrote in 1881 "that freedom, rightly understood, is the greatest of blessings; that its attainment is the end of all our effort as citizens. Sen further states, whether or not we "all" agree with so exacting a claim, it is hard to deny that ideas of freedom influence us deeply. We have reason to value our own

freedom, and it is difficult to think of the excellence or the limitations of a society, or the rightness or wrongness of social arrangement, without invoking—in one way or another—freedoms of various kinds and their fulfillment and violation in the societies under scrutiny. Clearly Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and most recently Nelson Mandela each had a vision of freedom as well as a voice for freedom to engage local and large communities.

It is also important to recognize that freedom is impacted by economic, social and governing factors at a time when four of the world's five biggest economies including the U.S., the Eurozone, Japan and the U.K. are in decline with only China and India experiencing strong growth in the world into the coming year and the next year to follow (*The Wall Street Journal*, Friday, August 15, 2008). The authors of *Megacommunities* (2008) discuss and describe a deliberate equilibrium because the new complexities are a natural consequence of a world made smaller by greater integration and interdependency. Again, economic freedom impacts economic potential, and social and education realities as I am also reminded of hearing the voices of middle school youth some years ago and more recently as many youth still are looking to find freedom to grow and to explore their knowledge and economic potential because the educational experience they were receiving was not adequate to meet their desires and needs.

There are other expressed voices to consider as well Ronald Heifetz & Marty Linsky in [Leadership on the Line](#) (2002), Niall Ferguson in [The War of the World \(Twentieth Century Conflict and the Descent of the West\)](#), 2006), Frances Hesselbein & Marshall Goldsmith in [The Leader of the Future \(Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the New Era\)](#), 2006) among other voices participating in the emergence of viable community building and engagement that encourages future thinking about managing multiple options for multi-cultural human groups and societies who are seeking practical ways for grasping and introducing adaptive, cultural and collaborative leader prospects and perspectives in the pursuit of community investment for renewal in coming years.

#### As the World Turns, the World Shifts

In this paper some of the ideas and themes are meant to foster as well as support community dialogue transitions is taken from three International Association for Community Development (IACD) region centric declarations where the strategic thinking outcomes were developed in partnership with participants in diverse stakeholders, partners, and communities around the world. These are The Hong Kong Declaration in 2007, The Yaounde Declaration in 2005, and The Budapest Declaration in 2004. Additionally, there will be reference to other ongoing efforts regarding strategic options and strategic thinking when the need is to focus on identifying, engaging and building linkages within and across communities where proactive engagement becomes a foundation for adaptive capable future leadership as facilitative methodology within a given community during uncertain shifting times now and for all time to come.

In brief, the introduction, advancement, and constructing of future community dialogues to establish shared community outcomes provides ample opportunity for broadening inter-community leadership involvement that is fundamental to discovering, seeing, and developing inventive ways to work with others for goals in common. To do so involves human intuition, knowledge and flexibility for solution making across divergent systems that might include social agencies, NGOs, indigenous leaders, local and national government representatives, funders, business leaders, citizens and others who have stated interests for working together to achieve and sustain community based and community driven success—and the caveat that I add is that

local decision making and local ownership remain important in such a process. One example is the recent report in the Washington Post in the United States that reported Cape Verde is rising to take its place in the world because of its freedom to embrace democratic values along with local and national will that are factors in expanding political and economic stability. This reemergence of Cape Verde is now being aided by a special partnership that was signed with the European Union in November 2007 that is focused on trade and security to which I add is gaining freedom. The Cape Verde partnership has lots of upside potential for that community for a long time to come. Cape Verde also receives investments from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a U.S. Government entity that aggressively seeks to reduce poverty through rural economic expansion and infrastructure development. The World Bank is also a partner in this wide community and economic development partnership—to which I will add that in Cameroon a paper and meetings with local citizens at the 2005 IACD Africa focused conference helped in the decision making process to invest in infrastructure development. Cape Verde Prime Minister Jose Maria Perenia Neves who is quoted as saying the partnership is thriving because of local credibility. Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance and Public Administration Christina Duarte a former Citibank Vice President for Angola has been implementing policies that engender investments into the nation states general budget rather than a project aid modality where the community and country has little local control. As you are aware, there is also the building of a port in Cape Verde and a port in Burkina Faso as the process goes forward.

It is important to state clearly and strongly that this representation is not a formula rather it is recognition that the structures and conditions through which local results are achieved or made at the community level is often a long-term scenario, proposition and situation. An example of systems non-convergence and systems not coming together is reflected in some non-harmonious locations around the world including efforts in several American communities with local nonprofits that work with ex offenders, low skilled youth, and a host of city, state and national agencies and foundation partners to create opportunity for economic advancement of young men and young women. These ongoing efforts involve shared interests and multiple levels of dialogue and constant action. Still, much of what is being accomplished while intense and purposeful is further influenced and impacted by increasing resource competitiveness, the ongoing public policy debate and direction, and the role of effective dialogue that is critical for getting to, getting through, and getting beyond the complexities of managing racial, ethnic or gender group held attitudes within a given society as well as the complexity of building sustaining mutual relationships. Dialogue is essential to a community generated and owned process of interacting and deepening involvement with a community that wants to or needs to come together to act together in community to embrace a mission as a group to strive for a common ideal, need or goal. In a given community within global society the needs will vary and for example there has been a recent request made to secure the participation of 5,000 African American adult males to serve as mentors to younger African American males to stem a major public and community crisis concerning the numbers of young African American men who do not graduate from high school nor are those young men participating in the labor force in Baltimore city or the region this long standing trend has further family and health consequences for the entire community and region.

The need for new approaches and ways and structures to engage and manage social, economic, and environmental change also helped foster the United Nations Global Compact

(GC) that was initially launched in the year 2000. In 2007, the Global Compact achieved broad international signatory support and adoption and the GC involves more than 3,000 companies from more than 100 countries including Portugal. At the Setubal conference The First Lady of Portugal, Senhora D. Maria Jose Ritta delivered a speech in support of responsible corporate citizenship to also involve communities. Richard Howitt, European Union Parliament Rapporteur on ethical business was quoted to say that Europe strongly supports CSR. A footnote here is that there is no universally accepted definition of CSR and it must be viewed with a given context. Howitt went on to say that he welcomed the presence of the Global Compact at the Setubal conference, in the Portuguese context; and also the development of a Global compact network in Portugal was encouraged (United Nations Global Compact, 2003). Here and in other places is strategic potential for global extension to Asia, Africa and the Americas as spiraling activities will in time impact and further encounter diverse communities in reaching for new potential.

Additionally, there are more than 700 civil society and international labor organizations and academic institutions all engaged in the initiative to ensure that business is part of the solution to the challenges of globalization. In this way the private sector in partnership with other social actors can help realize a more sustainable and inclusive global economy (The United Nations Global Compact, 2007). Also critical to the efforts that are being mounted by the Global Compact is the community strengthening and connecting potential of dialogue. By dialogue I mean it as expressed by Peter Senge author of *The Fifth Discipline* who offers a meaning for dialogue as community expressed in Native American Indian cultures, "you talk and talk until the talk starts." Senge then refers to the dialogue approach as presented by William Isaacs (*Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, 1999) who defines dialogue as being about shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something you do to another person. It is something you do with people." Thus, dialogue matters greatly in recognizing a challenge and then deciding to take concerted action such as the challenge as is now the case in Baltimore.

As such, I offer that it is critically important for citizens and community groups to be able to distinguish between technical challenges and adaptive challenges that are most often bound together. Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky (2002) make the delineation clear by posing the question what's the work and for this experience it is engaging and involving community? The illumination they offer is that the technical involves applying current know-how while the adaptive is learning new ways and for the learning I add extending learning to doing, then to envision, and then moving an action or process forward. At a parallel level the distinction between technical and adaptive is who does the work? The illumination for this is when being technical it's the authorities or officials, and when being adaptive it's the people who have the problem and I add that it the people or group who can create a solution together. In doing so, there is the possibility of erecting new scaffolding as a necessary foundation for building new community enterprise frameworks and doing so does require thinking to arrive at workable processes for devising effective strategies to meet desired needs in time and over given time. This I think is crucial for beginning to gauge the impact of challenges that are further influenced by extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors when individuals and groups of people seek to grasp as well as adapt to managing change in a shifting environment. The question now becomes how to bring together those whose preference is being risk adverse with others who are risk taking because understanding the importance of different mindsets is also acting on the criticality of awareness of self and environment. Furthermore, it is

recognizing that adaptive learning is an essential tool and technique for developing individual and group adaptive leadership strategy and practice through which authentic engagement takes place. There is still another parallel idea to be considered and the idea is that there is no real way to escape politics in life in addition to what is perception and what is reality.

In discussing and exploring the issues of technical and adaptive challenges side by side with perception and reality the current and previous classes of Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation Fellows began to say what was on their minds. I think that the Weinberg Foundation Fellows are becoming a learning community in a multi-step process to becoming a more effective network community that will hopefully be more empowered to engage citizens in local communities because they are engaged in knowledge building that is meant to add to skills and current capacity to enhance the functionality and capability of their organizations to perform better, to promote future capacity building in the sector, to explore resource sharing, and networking as strategic outcomes that can be measured. The technical challenge for the Fellows as I have observed is 1) flexibility and becoming comfortable with the need to manage perceptions, reality and expectations, 2) becoming comfortable with the need or desire to learn new methods and ways to lead, follow and do, and 3) how to manage close and also distant relationships with board chairs, board members and existing and new relationships with donor agencies, funders, and social entrepreneurs during a time of diminishing financial resources and investments from national foundations. As I have talked and exchanged thoughts with the Fellows, and we will do so again in the coming months, there are two or three interrelated ideas that we will continue to explore in-depth. The first idea is that dynamic complexity matters—that is that all of the variables need to be accounted for when seeking to position as well as unravel a problem or challenge faced even when that problem situation appears to be small (and listening, observation, perspective and personal paradigms matter). The second idea is that the building, shaping, and applying of a community-oriented and based remedy requires anticipation strategy planning, proactive partnering, and keeping an eye on improvement, authentication and lasting impact for the organization and the community that is being engaged and served.

I also think that the ideas that I am advancing are similar to an idea that has recently been put forth by Charles Handy (2006), a highly regarded and recognized management thinker whose work is interdisciplinary with wide implications. Handy refers to the time in which we are living being a prime space and time for 'philosopher leaders.' Handy's idea stems from Plato's seminal text *The Republic* and the notion is that philosopher leaders shape a perspective, seek understanding, and have discernment capacity to make decisions that affect fellow citizens. As was previously mentioned, there is always going to be politics as a part of life along with the simultaneity or difference between perception and reality. These are important variables found in all cultures and not necessarily with the same or similar meaning. GlobeScan, a Toronto, Canada based global public opinion and stakeholder research organization is one of a number of organizations that sheds light on perception and meaning—and there is more to mention a short time later in this paper. It is my further thinking that modern philosopher leadership is then transcendent in practical use and in resulting behaviors that are manifested because of contextual factors and situations. The point being made is that one person or a group or a community of people might or might not profess to a way of life while at the same time subscribing to or following a particular way of life in a given culture.

A brief time ago in this paper I mentioned GlobeScan (2008) an organization whose research suggests that people living in the North and South halves and regions of the world have different priorities about the world's problems—and the south is more heavily populated than the North. Briefly, the South sees wars, conflicts, and terrorism as one set of problems among many problems. All together only 15 percent of the respondents to the poll in the South say that war, conflicts and terrorism related and as connected problems are the world's most important problem, while 4 in 10 respondents in the South say its economic challenges. Meanwhile, in the North, one in three people interviewed or surveyed mentioned wars, conflicts, and terrorism as the most important problem. It is important to mention this dichotomy because GlobeScan collects and analyzes data annually on 55,000 people from around the world in formulating the research opinions, conclusions, and positions that are taken by subscribing organizations and governments.

### **Adaptive Leadership Futures for Changing Times: Futures Can be Made**

Once more in these times there is challenge as well as opportunity for promoting community engagement because communities are places where needs, desires, and interests overlap for thinking, building and constructing practical and viable solutions arrived at by shared visioning and a congealing of voices that explore, share and communicate practical and useful engagement processes and tools. By intent and other factors people centered activity with a deliberate aim of advancing, recognizing, replenishing and sustaining individual and group efforts in a community can lead to culturally sensitive efforts to come because there is greater potential to facilitate the depth of shared effort and work in diverse communities as a concerted leadership strategy, and these efforts have the potential to be sustained. In doing so, I will discuss first hand or second hand ideas, and offer trends and practices that are emerging in Africa, Europe, Asia, Canada and the United States through the work of the International Association of Community Development (IACD), The World Bank, The United Nations and other associations and bodies doing work and supporting work in communities.

*The Hong Kong Declaration*—in late June 2007 more than 250 community development workers, academics, researchers, donors, policy-makers and representatives from government, civil society organizations and community groups came together in Hong Kong at an international conference Partnership for People-centered Development: Challenges and Responses in a Globalising World. In total 30 countries were represented with the majority of countries from the Asia-Pacific Region. What emerged is that Community development is viewed as a way of promoting active civil society, sustaining peace based justice, and creating democratic life by prioritizing the decisions and actions of people, their communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It is both a process and a goal. Further, the delegates requested regional bodies and national and local governments, to commit themselves to work in genuine partnership, in building socially and economically inclusive, diverse, environmentally sustainable, gender-responsive and just societies. The expressed goals and resolve is to pursue opportunities and strategies to achieve a wide range of goals and future outcomes.

*The Yaounde Declaration*—in June 2005 almost 400 delegates from across Africa and other parts of the world met at a international conference in Yaounde, Cameroon with the theme



Building civil society through community development. A total of 25 African countries from all areas of the continent were represented in the deliberations. It was stated that that the practice of community development in Africa must also reflect and respect the African experience and culture – for example the existence of strong family, tribal and community roots. Furthermore, the requirement calls for both an African understanding of the meaning of “development” at a community level that also respects and recognizes basic human rights for all. Second, that infrastructure and rapid urbanization in the continent has placed great strains on both urban and rural communities and that rural development policies should be strengthened with a view of slowing rates of movement from rural to urban areas. At the conference it was firmly asserted that solutions to Africa’s problems must lie firmly and democratically in the hands of the African people themselves. Finally, The African Union should encourage more effective interaction between different levels of government, NGOs and also local and international groups within Africa

*The Budapest Declaration*—in late March 2004 one hundred thirty participants from 33 countries across the European Union (EU) and from other countries in the world met at a international conference focused on building civil society in Europe through community development. The partner sponsors were IACD, the Combined European Bureau for Social Development, and the Hungarian Association for Community Development under the Patronage of the President of Hungary. The delegates in attendance acknowledged the priority that was and is being given by the European Union to strengthen civil society and emphasize the important role that which community development can play in supporting that process and protecting the rights of all. The delegates requested the EU, national, regional, and local governments - as appropriate- to commit themselves actively to build a socially and economically inclusive, diverse, environmentally sustainable and socially just society, and to ensure the structures, policies and mechanisms are in place to support dialogue between the EU and member states on the one hand and civil society on the other. This will require both moral and practical support for community participation, and appropriate legal, institutional and material conditions, but with specific support for community development itself.

Over the past six years the world-wide engagement by IACD with a wide number of community development groups, partners, governments, NGOs and others has been vital to the future direction of community development. Once more, there are many challenges and an equal number if not greater number of opportunities for advancing community development across the world.

### **An Expanded Role for Business: Global Social Responsibility**

As previously mentioned the question of what is the role of business in society and with communities is high on the agenda of business schools, a growing number of businesses who have joined together with the United Nations. The question was also addressed in 2006 by the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship (BCCCC). The Boston College Center in a report said that it is no longer a widely held view that social responsibility is simply a business increasing their profits, rather it is forging positive relationships with society that gives a firm identify while “defining who we are.” I think that the evidence of defining is going to take a lot of time to assemble as present conditions will change in future years to come. Thus, I offer that many more business organizations and NGOs are increasingly finding and moving to common ground under the

umbrella of the green economy. If future business interests and community interests are going to be joined together in searching for sustainable and renewable natural resources then green enterprise can become an opportunity as Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric (GE) would sometimes allude to the need for GE to know “who we are” in referring to the shifting influence of having the capacity to identify and meet opportunity. GE in 2008 is leading the way to green commerce and community investment under the leadership of current CEO Jeffrey Immelt is striving to become a trend setter and world leader in shaping the expanding green economy while also gearing up to build and fulfill orders for innovation laced locomotives that will be used to further transform the industrial capability of China to meet growing national demands and growth. The surge by GE and a growing number of leading business organizations toward a green economy in a competitive global environment is a complex situation that signals more change to come this year and in succeeding years to follow.

Concerning the question of the role of business in society and local communities, the Exxon-Mobil Company in the United States had sales of \$404 billion dollars in 2007 and this figure is greater than the GDP of more than 120 countries. There is an intensifying call by shareholders and the general public for Exxon-Mobil to be more community supportive as the role of oil in the global economy is itself shifting with worldwide production having peaked in the years 2000-2001. China, Japan and India need more oil and gas to fuel growth as does the United States and Europe to sustain high quality life styles as do other areas and regions of the world. This is important to consider because Brazil and Russia appear to be successfully transforming their economies. Tata Motors in India will soon introduce an automobile that will sell for \$2,500 in US dollars in India and other countries in Asia and potentially Africa. Toyota is locked in a global battle with General Motors (GM) for primacy as the world's largest auto manufacturer. China is on schedule in the year 2008 to surpass Germany to become the number one exporting nation in the world. The growth and expansion of large cities continues and Lagos, Nigeria followed closely by Dhaka, Sri Lanka is currently the world's fastest growing city adding 58 new residents per hour. The unfolding scenario that is unleashed is an emerging reality of rising competition driven by an aging industrial model that by many estimates is not sustainable economically, socially, governmentally or practically in the world. Chris Moore refers to what Harvard professor Samuel Huntington has coined “The Davos Culture” which is a select group of globally based business, political leaders and social activists who meet in Switzerland each year to deliberate on business and social policy directions and decisions that have major implication on the social and economic conditions around the whole world. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the role of globally competent and facile leadership will be vital in this unfolding scenario.

A question that is raised is what is the language and lexicon that is enabling of finding meaning, mutual agreement, and understanding in the community. Chris Moore a writer and researcher suggests that globalization is a philosophical quandary because globalization in his view calls for a consolidating of the world's resources, combines aspects of co-mingling cultures, makes a point to display the imbalances that exist between fledgling economies and nations who must compete with a very small group of nations whose economic and political power is clear in all dimensions.

### **Community Leadership and Management Innovation: Then, Now and Future**

It is generally agreed that the formal study of leadership and management in organizations

became an organized field of study and research activity early in the twentieth century with Henri Fayol. The noted twentieth century economist Joseph A. Schumpeter offered and linked two important economic based theories together around entrepreneurship and innovation. In Schumpeter's view innovation and technology stems from entrepreneurs. Second, that the movers of innovation in a national economy are the big companies. It was the late Peter F. Drucker who often implied business cannot stand apart from society nor benefit communities and larger society by only existing and operating for profit.

Yes, there are many factors and influencers that converge on work, family, neighborhood and city sized communities. The rate and scale of systems change that includes work, technology, cultures, organization, and family and community that is the simultaneity of intersecting systems that will continue during advancing globalization. The community driven philosophy of Robert K. Greenleaf who as a early proponent the servant-leader is servant first recognized the societal need for dialogue driven leadership and followership that supports citizen and community owned responsibility for owning the process. There is promise to be further realized in Cape Verde, Brazil, China, India, and in Baltimore and in Portugal because I think that the action will be the result of local initiative that can benefit from external supports in seeking to balance power dynamics. The global issues of drinkable water, available food to feed a growing population, renewable energy sources, healthy and thriving oceans, and a changing global climate cast major challenges for now and the immediate future for all countries. The economic historian Niall Ferguson (2006) refers to the twentieth century and the more than 100 year trajectory of the western world as being a reorientation of industrial prominence from the West to the East. Ferguson's view is that the global shift that is underway is unstoppable, has involved and does involve conflict, and it is a comingling of cultures and all that comes with the journey. Once more, the direction of engagement is equally forceful North to South. It is the further interpretation of this author that the globalization shift is in full force and that the intensity of what human systems are facing is a constant shaking and stretching of life support systems and work systems that will severely test and overcome some models and approaches that cannot be adapted in the production of goods, services, and human commerce and livelihood around the world. I stress that this assumption is not an end of the world declaration rather it is a call to take exploratory approaches and in some cases revolutionary thinking and action will more than likely be required to present risk taking ideas for finding the critical and needed solutions in which leadership and management practices are contributing factors for navigating change.

### **A Closing Thought: Building Adaptive Community**

Going forward into the future Gary Hamel asks an important question in the Future of Management (2007), why does leadership and management seem stuck in a time warp? Hamel's answer begins with "we've reached the end of management—in the sense that Frances Fukuyama argues we've reached the end of history." Hamel goes on to refer to Stuart Kauffman an evolutionary biologist who has a notion of a "fitness landscape" in describing evolutionary progress that eventually reaches the summit of a local peak. I hope that the ideas that I want to convey indicate that communities can befall local peaks. Also at this time the insight and concept of reaching a local peak put forth by Kauffman I think is similar to continuing to push forward leadership and management ideas and processes against strong headwinds that are blowing from the direction of the future. I am in agreement with Hamel and the other voices regarding

the plight of communities and community leaders and followers who as partners need supports and investment to build and maintain community focused processes for engaging in dialogue and actions that influence the responsiveness of external systems that ultimately affect expressed freedom to manage local circumstances as community systems and structures both locally and in a global context. It is also my view that what is needed is innovative efforts stemming from ideas and approaches to leadership and management practices that are future possible and future driven by engaging in open dialogue that results in active participation at community level as evidence that building community processes can lead to community resilience and increased community participation and healthier outcomes internally for improved systems that are vibrant and ongoing as favorable and unfavorable conditions come and go over time.

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# Nuevas metodologías en investigación y prevención de la violencia en la pareja<sup>1</sup>

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## Resumen

*El presente trabajo enfoca la relación de los estereotipos de género con la violencia percibida por la gente común en las relaciones de pareja (hetero u homosexual). La investigación se desarrolla en diversos países iberoamericanos. Entre los instrumentos utilizados en el estudio figuran un IAT (Implicit Association Test), un cuestionario (que incluye series de ítems cerrados y de preguntas abiertas) y ejercicios de Fotointervención. Un primer avance de los resultados de la parte de la investigación realizada en España y en Puerto Rico pone de manifiesto el alto nivel de arraigo de los estereotipos de género y especialmente de los relacionados con los agentes y víctimas percibidos de la violencia en todo tipo de pareja. Ello tiene diversas implicaciones teóricas y prácticas en el ámbito de la prevención de la violencia en la pareja.*

**Palabras clave:** estereotipos, género, violencia, pareja.

## Introducción

La perspectiva de género viene orientando, a lo largo de los últimos lustros, la investigación y la intervención sobre la *violencia en la pareja* (Comisión Europea, 2000, Corsi, 2003, Ferreira, 1992, Osborne, 2001, Walker, 1980), hasta el punto en que la misma Ley Orgánica (2004) de medidas de protección integral contra la violencia en la pareja se presenta como la ley contra la *violencia de género*. Al igual que el sexo, el género ha sido pensado y hablado tradicionalmente en un lenguaje dicotómico: “Los estudios sobre el género ponen de manifiesto que, tras la *división sexual del trabajo*, se esconden los estereotipos culturales del género: el varón se realiza *masculinamente* como *productor* y *proveedor*, cumpliendo el rol *agéntico* (Deaux, 1985), esto es, vertebrando su identidad y su actividad en la dimensión *pública*, centrada en el desempeño *laboral* del rol *profesional* (*job model*, Dex, 1988) y en la generación de *valores de cambio*. La hembra humana hace lo propio *femeninamente* como *reproductora* y *cuidadora*, desempeñando su rol *comunal* (Deaux, 1985), desarrollándose como mujer en el ámbito *privado*, ejerciendo el rol *doméstico* (*gender model*, Dex, 1988) y en la producción de *valores de uso*” (Blanch, 2003, pág. 56).

Este enfoque basado en la dualidad de género define los criterios para una lectura teórica

<sup>1</sup> El presente estudio se inscribe en el marco de un proyecto de investigación del Plan I+D+I 2004-2007. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales. Instituto de la Mujer sobre Violencia de Género. Nuevos desafíos para la investigación y la intervención (Cantera, 2006).

y para la prevención práctica de la relevante problemática social de la violencia en la pareja, que se caracteriza además por un *marcado énfasis heterocentrista e implícitamente homofóbico* que induce a centrar de modo casi exclusivo la atención en la violencia que se da en seno de una *pareja "normal"*, en la dirección de hombre a mujer, lo que equivale al escenario *socialmente correcto* de un modelo "patriarcal" de familia (Cantera, 2005, 2004). Cuando sólo se tiene en cuenta aquel marco explicativo, resulta casi impensable e invisible la violencia que se da también en parejas homosexuales, ya sean de tipo lésbico o gay (Island & Letellier, 1991, Leventhal & Lundy, 1999, Renzetti & Harvey, 1996, Ristock, 2002). Aún así, diferentes publicaciones afirman que el índice de violencia dentro de una pareja homosexual, bien sea esta gay o bien sea lésbica, es igual o superior que la violencia que uno puede encontrar dentro del seno de parejas heterosexuales (Patrick C. McKenry, Julianne M. Serovich, Tina L. Mason and Katie Mosack, 2006; Brown, C. 2008).

Diversos estudios muestran como la percepción de la violencia en el seno de una pareja varía en función de si ésta es heterosexual u homosexual (Carvalho, A. 2002; Paustian, M. 2007). Por ejemplo, las víctimas son vistas como más responsables de la violencia ocurrida cuando el agresor es de su mismo sexo (Paustian, M. 2007).

La presente investigación parte de la sospecha de que el pensamiento *políticamente correcto* sobre la *violencia de género* puede inducir, por un lado, a una especie de conspiración de silencio y ocultación de la violencia en parejas homosexuales, lésbicas y gay y, por otro, a cierta idealización de la pareja homosexual como una especie de oasis exento de los problemas de violencia que se dan en la pareja "normal". Así mismo se traduce en el mantenimiento de una serie de estereotipos heterosexistas y homofóbicos, que dificultan la imaginación de que en tales parejas se pueda dar algún grado significativo de violencia. Entre tales estereotipos, destacamos los siguientes: *"sólo las mujeres heterosexuales pueden ser agredidas por su pareja"*, *"no existe violencia propiamente dicha en parejas lésbicas, porque es impropia de su género"*, *"la violencia doméstica en las parejas gay tiene su "lógica" (los hombres son propensos a la violencia), pero en lesbianas no (porque las mujeres no lo son)"*, *"en las gay, puede haberla, pero de baja intensidad, porque se da entre 'iguales'"*, *"al ser la pareja del mismo sexo, el maltrato es mutuo y, en cierto modo, simétrico"*, *"el maltrato en parejas del mismo sexo no es tan cruel, severo y duro como cuando una mujer es maltratada por un hombre"*, *"en parejas homosexuales, sólo se da propiamente como práctica 'sodomasaquista'"*, *"en una pareja, sólo maltrata la persona más fuerte, corpulenta, celosa y posesiva"*, etc. (Cantera, 2006).

En la medida en que tales estereotipos estén anclados en la sociedad y en las mentalidades de los diversos tipos de profesionales (del ámbito social, jurídico, policial, médico, psicológico, etc.) implicados en la atención a las víctimas de la violencia en la pareja -incluidas las que se dan en relaciones homosexuales-, puede quedar negativamente afectada la calidad de la atención a estas víctimas. Un primer paso para progresar en el conocimiento de esta problemática consiste en evaluar el grado de arraigo de estos estereotipos en la sociedad y en los sectores profesionales más directamente implicados en la atención a estas "otras" víctimas de la violencia en la pareja.

Este estudio apunta hacia esta dirección a un doble nivel: (a) metodológico, con la puesta a punto de un conjunto de instrumentos de recogida de información empírica adecuado a un objeto complejo y por tanto difícil de captar directamente, como son los estereotipos sociales sobre género y violencia y (b) empírico, con una primera colecta de información preliminar en esta área en España y Puerto Rico.

Y parte de una doble hipótesis:

1. Los estereotipos específicos sobre *violencia de género* (en la línea *hombre – violento, mujer – pacífica*) tienen un notable grado de arraigo social, tanto en hombres como en mujeres.
2. La violencia en la dirección hombre – mujer en el seno de una pareja heterosexual tiene más visibilidad psicológica y social que la que se da en la otra dirección y en cualquier otra modalidad de pareja.

### **Método**

#### **Participantes**

En la fase piloto, una muestra de conveniencia (estratificada con criterios de género, generación y orientación sexual declarada) integrada por 155 personas, residentes en las ciudades de Barcelona y de Málaga. Después de la puesta a punto de las herramientas de investigación, Posteriormente, se realiza el estudio sobre otra muestra de 185 personas de Barcelona, de edad comprendida entre 18 y 60 años, un 71% de las cuales son mujeres y el otro 29 % hombres. Una cuarta parte de este colectivo estudiado declara orientación homosexual y el resto corresponde a la mayoría numérica heterosexual. También participan en esta fase 33 personas de Puerto Rico (80 % mujeres y un 20 % hombres). Todas las personas participantes en este estudio se autocategorizan como jóvenes (<de 30 años), heterosexuales y con estudios superiores.

#### **Instrumentos**

Para el estudio se han utilizado tres instrumentos: un IAT, un cuestionario y la Fotointervención.

#### **IAT**

El *Implicit Association Test* (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) es una técnica que mide la fuerza asociativa entre conceptos y es muy utilizada para registrar *actitudes implícitas*. Tradicionalmente, para el estudio empírico de prejuicios y estereotipos han sido utilizadas las más diversas “técnicas explícitas”, como tests proyectivos, entrevistas en profundidad, diferencial semántico, escalas de actitudes y encuestas, cuyo uso conlleva ciertos problemas de control de variables como las “estrategias de auto presentación” o la tendencia a expresarse de acuerdo con el “pensamiento políticamente correcto”. En este punto, el IAT es presentada como una innovación metodológica (Nosek, Greenwald & Banaji, 2005).

Entre las ventajas del uso de esta técnica de medida de “actitudes implícitas”, destacan la simplicidad de su diseño, la facilidad y rapidez de su uso, su aplicación por ordenador, su aplicabilidad a grupos y su adaptabilidad a múltiples campos temáticos, entre los que destacan los de actitudes y estereotipos (Ortiz y Ruiz, 2004, Aberson & Beene, 2007).

Los diseñadores del IAT asumen que asociaciones *fuertes (compatibles)* entre pares de *concepto diana – atributo (dimensión evaluativa)* son más fáciles de clasificar juntas que asociaciones débiles (incompatibles) entre los mismos (Banaji y Greenwald, 1995). Un ejemplo convencional de asociación fuerte (*compatible*) aportado por Greenwald et al (1998) es el de *flor-agradable vs. insecto-desagradable*. Por el contrario la conjunción *flor-desagradable vs. insecto-agradable* constituye un ejemplo de asociación *débil o incompatible*. Esta fase incompatible conlleva una mayor *demanda cognitiva* a la hora de clasificar los diferentes estímulos que irán apareciendo en la pantalla del ordenador. Los resultados del IAT se miden a través de los *tiempos de respuesta*, medidos en milisegundos, y de los *errores* en las categorizaciones. En general, cuando una persona se sitúa una situación *incompatible (flor-desagradable vs. insecto-agradable)*, tarda más en



clasificar palabras como *amapola* o *mosca*. En tales casos, se espera un mayor *tiempo de respuesta* y también una más elevada *tasa de errores*. Siguiendo con el ejemplo, el *efecto IAT* se manifiesta en una *actitud general más positiva hacia las flores que hacia los insectos*. La aplicación del IAT pone empíricamente de relieve lo que ocurre cuando se sustituye el binomio flores e insectos por otros psicológica o socialmente más relevantes, como los de jóvenes y viejos, blancos y negros, hombres y mujeres, etc.

En la presente investigación se ha utilizado tres IAT, que tienen respectivamente por conceptos-diana los de *hombre-mujer*, *hetero-gay* y *hetero-lesbiana* y como atributo *violencia-paz*.

### **Cuestionario**

Una sus secciones consiste en una serie de 48 ítems referidos a “actividades” como *Conversar, Cuidar, Dañar, Dialogar, Dominar, Escuchar, Golpear, Hablar, Humillar, Insultar, Pegar, Proteger, Tolerar, Torturar*, etc. que la persona debe categorizar numéricamente en una escala de 1 a 7 con formato de diferencial semántico en cuyos polos figuran “*de hombre*” y “*de mujer*”.

Otra invita a puntuar, también en una escala de 1 a 7, en qué medida se dan unos determinados atributos -como *confianza, seguridad, sensibilidad, tolerancia, agresión, bondad*, etc.- en diferentes modalidades de relación de pareja: heterosexual (hombre – mujer), lesbica (mujer – mujer) o gay (hombre – hombre).

Una serie de preguntas abiertas recogen la *opinión* acerca de diversos aspectos de la violencia en la pareja:

La cantidad de violencia física (golpes, empujones, etc.) y psicológica (humillaciones, insultos, amenazas o intimidaciones verbales, chantaje emocional, etc.) que se da en diferentes tipos de pareja: (a) heterosexual, de hombre a mujer, (b) heterosexual, de mujer a hombre, (c) homosexual (gay), de hombre a hombre y (d) homosexual (lésbica), de mujer a mujer.

La *explicación* de tales formas de violencia física y psicológica en tales tipos de relaciones de pareja.

La distribución de la violencia física y psicológica según se trate de relaciones de pareja gay, lesbica o heterosexual.

La atribución de las eventuales *diferencias* con respecto a esta distribución.

### **Fotointervención**

La fotografía es una herramienta que se utiliza en investigación en disciplinas como la sociología, la pedagogía o la psicología. Siguiendo el protocolo del proyecto (Cantera, 2006), se pide individualmente que las personas hagan uso de una cámara fotográfica para tomar un número determinado de fotografías relacionadas con el concepto que tengan de *violencia*. Posteriormente, se genera unos grupos de discusión a través de los cuales se potencia el diálogo y la reflexión con relación al concepto de violencia y sus conexiones.

El material obtenido en estas sesiones permite, por un lado, evaluar el impacto de los estereotipos de género y la percepción de la violencia en los diferentes grupos y, por otro, generar en los participantes una actitud de participación y acción involucrada en el proceso.

### **Procedimiento**

En la fase piloto del IAT, se valida la serie de verbos elegidos como estímulos. Un grupo de discusión trabaja asimismo en el control de una serie de características de los términos (como la tipicidad, la familiaridad o la frecuencia de uso) que podrían repercutir en el tiempo de reacción.

Finalmente, Ortiz y Ruiz (2007) ponen a punto la versión definitiva del IAT.

Para el cálculo del *IAT D Effect*, se aplica el procedimiento algorítmico que tiene en cuenta la latencia de las respuestas correctas y los errores, que se calculan sumando 600 milisegundos a la media de las correctas del bloque correspondiente (Greenwald, Nosek & Banaji, 2003).

Cada IAT consta de una fase *compatible* y de una *incompatible* con 60 ensayos cada una ellas. La cantidad de estímulos por categoría es de cinco en el caso de *violencia* (Abusar, Humillar, Dañar, Imponer, Insultar) – *paz* (Pactar, Escuchar, Respetar, Dialogar, Conversar) y de uno en el caso de *hombre – mujer, hetero – gay, hetero – lesbiana*, siendo este estímulo la misma categoría diana. Las palabras – estímulo, elegidas en la fase piloto atendiendo a criterios como los de su frecuencia de uso en español y su longitud silábica, se repiten aleatoriamente a lo largo de los 60 ensayos practicados de cada fase.

La figura 1 (inspirada en Ortiz y Ruiz, 2004) esquematiza las fases del IAT, simulando la pantalla del ordenador.

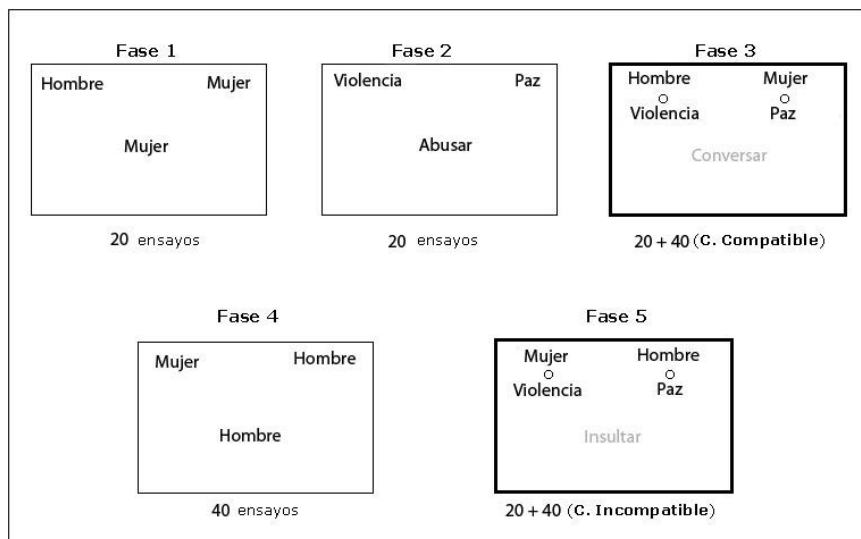


Figura 1 - Fases del primero de los IAT diseñados para la presente investigación

Para el análisis de los datos obtenidos mediante la aplicación del cuestionario se ha utilizado el programa SPSS (14.0) en el caso de los numéricos y la técnica del análisis de contenido en el de los textuales.

### Resultados

En cuanto a la información obtenida de la aplicación del IAT, una vez procesados los datos, identificados los *tiempos de respuesta* y los *errores* acumulados en las condiciones *compatible* e *incompatible* y efectuada la transformación algorítmica que determina el *IAT D mean effect* para cada uno de los tres IAT, se muestra las medias y las desviaciones para cada uno de los tres IAT en las dos condiciones de aplicación en la siguiente tabla.

Tabla 1

	IAT 1	IAT 2	IAT 3
Condición 1	.421 .34	.085 .22	.208 .27
Condición 2	.487 .33	-.094 .34	.018 .31
<b>Total</b>	<b>.459</b> <b>.34</b>	<b>-.018</b> <b>.31</b>	<b>.099</b> <b>.30</b>

Las tres variables IAT 1, IAT 2 y IAT 3 siguen una distribución normal (Z Kolmogorov-Smirnov = .570, .227 y .995 respectivamente). El análisis de la variancia intersujetos mediante ONE-WAY ANOVA revela diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre las dos condiciones para los IAT 2 y 3 ( $p < .001$  en ambos casos); lo cual denota un efecto de la presentación que no se da en el IAT 1 ( $p = .235$ ).

La media total del IAT 1 (.459) indica un alto nivel de anclaje del estereotipo de *violencia de género* (*hombre violento vs. mujer pacífica*) en ambos sexos y en todas las orientaciones sexuales. Sólo un 11% de los individuos obtiene puntuaciones negativas en este IAT. El análisis de la variancia revela diferencias estadísticamente significativas al respecto en cuanto el sexo ( $p < .001$ ). La media de los hombres es de .26 y la de las mujeres de .55, lo cual indica a su vez que las mujeres perciben mayor asociación de *hombre-violencia* y *mujer-paz* que los hombres.

En las dos condiciones del IAT 2, las medias (.085 y -.094) tienen valores próximos a cero, notándose un cambio de signo de una condición a otra. Asimismo, en la condición 1 del IAT 3, la media (.208) refleja una doble asociación: pareja heterosexual - violencia vs. pareja lésbica - paz; lo cual no aparece en la condición 2, donde la media (.018) es muy próxima a cero. Las puntuaciones máximas obtenidas en la condición 1 y 2 han sido .87 y .73 y las mínimas -.40 y -.67 respectivamente.

Atendiendo a las respuestas al cuestionario, una comparación de medias indica que una serie de actividades *de género* aparecen significativamente diferenciadas por sexo, de modo que las mujeres tienden a puntuarlas de modo significativamente más polarizado que los hombres en el siguiente sentido: las mujeres valoran como propias de ellas algunas actividades características del rol de género femenino, asignándoles puntuaciones significativamente más próximas al 7 (polo "*de mujer*") que las que les dan los hombres ( $P < .05$ ). Casualmente, estas actividades (*atender, colaborar, complacer, confiar, cooperar, escuchar y tolerar*) están revestidas de connotaciones socialmente positivas. Asimismo, y en contrapartida, las mujeres valoran como propias de los hombres algunas actividades características del rol de género masculino, asignándoles puntuaciones más próximas al 1 (polo "*de hombre*") que las que les dan los hombres ( $P < .05$ ). También casualmente, estas actividades tienen connotaciones socialmente negativas (*humillar, maltratar y oprimir*). Por otra parte, y acaso como contrapeso, los hombres puntúan el *mentir* como algo más característico de aquéllas, asignando a esta actividad puntuaciones significativamente más próximas al 7 (polo "*de mujer*") que las que le dan las mujeres ( $P < .05$ ).

También aparecen diferencias significativas ( $P < .05$ ) en cuanto a orientación sexual: las personas heterosexuales piensan que *agredir y golpear* es más *de hombre* que las personas homosexuales. Además, éstas creen menos que aquéllas que *compartir y provocar* sean actividades más relacionadas con la mujer que con los hombres.

Asimismo, las personas que en el momento de contestar el cuestionario no tienen pareja

están más convencidas que las que la tienen ( $P < .05$ ) de que *abusar e intimidar* es más propio de *hombre* que de *mujer*.

Por lo que respecta a la pregunta del cuestionario donde la persona puntúa la cantidad de violencia física o psicológica que percibe en una pareja heterosexual (en todas las direcciones, de hombre a mujer y de mujer a hombre), así como en una pareja homosexual (de hombre a hombre y de mujer a mujer), las medias más altas asignadas de violencia tienen como protagonista agente al hombre y como sujeto paciente a la mujer, por lo que, obviamente la dirección principal de la violencia en la pareja es la que va *de hombre a mujer*: En este marco, en la escala de 1 a 7, el hombre recibe una puntuación media de 4.01 en cuanto a *violencia psicológica de hombre a mujer* y de 3.93 en lo que se refiere a *violencia física de hombre a mujer*. En contrapartida, las puntuaciones medias más bajas corresponden a la asignada a la *violencia física de mujer a hombre* (2.18), seguida de la *violencia física de mujer a mujer* (2.23).

En relación con las respuestas textuales a las preguntas abiertas se hallan ciertas similitudes entre España y Puerto Rico. Las variables o categorías muy destacadas en ambos países son las siguientes: falta de respeto, inseguridad agresor, conducta aprendida, aspectos culturales y roles, así como el escribir no me lo explico o no tiene justificación como respuesta a la pregunta cómo te explicas la violencia física que se da en algunas relaciones de pareja. El grupo de Puerto Rico tiende a explicar la violencia en una relación de pareja invocando principalmente variables como el *desamor*, el déficit de autocontrol y la incapacidad de manejar las propias emociones. El de España en cambio remite mayormente a “problemas externos”(económicos, familiares, laborales, etc.).

Con respecto a los factores percibidos de la *violencia psicológica*, se destaca en ambos países la inseguridad y la baja autoestima de uno o de ambos miembros de la pareja, así como la tendencia personal a controlar, manipular, humillar, dominar, manejar el poder y sentirse superior. El grupo de Puerto Rico señala que esta forma de “conducta aprendida” duele más que la física”. El de España subraya la estrecha relación percibida entre la violencia psicológica y el lenguaje verbal (insultos, palabras hirientes, amenazas, etc.) que suele acompañar y a veces preceder o seguir a la violencia física. Se identifica muchas veces la violencia psicológica con la violencia verbal que ocurre en un momento puntual de estrés o de discusión en la pareja, por ejemplo, un desahogo en una discusión con gritos e insultos.

Con relación a la pregunta acerca de si hay o no diferencias en cuanto a los niveles de violencia entre parejas de tipo heterosexual, gay o lesbica, una de las respuestas más características en la muestra de Puerto Rico es la del caso siguiente: *Creo que no hay tanta diferencia entre las parejas gay o lesbica y las heterosexuales porque estos otros tipos de pareja repiten y asumen los mismos roles y actitudes de aquellas parejas heterosexuales* (Puerto Rico 30.029). No se percibe diferencias entre la violencia que se puede dar en parejas heterosexuales o en las homosexuales porque se considera que en estas últimas se dan roles diferenciados, como en las heterosexuales. En cambio, en la muestra española casi no aparece este tipo de explicación basada en la hipótesis de dicotomía de roles. Y cuando en esta muestra se percibe alguna diferencia, se presupone que hay menos violencia en relaciones homosexuales atribuible a la *igualdad de sexo*. Un ejemplo típico de esta clase de respuesta es el siguiente: *Creo que la diferencia de sexo influye de alguna forma, y que se da menos violencia en las parejas del mismo sexo, quizá por las diferencias físicas y de fuerza, que son menos acentuadas normalmente que en las parejas heterosexuales* (España

6.025). Otra de las razones invocadas para explicar la presunta menor intensidad de la violencia en relaciones homosexuales se basa en la suposición de que las personas homosexuales son más sensibles, menos violentas, más abiertas de mente, y por lo tanto, más tolerantes y menos celosas, etc. que las heterosexuales. Este tipo de explicación no se encontró en ningún caso en las respuestas obtenidas Puerto Rico.

En cuanto a los resultados aportados por la **Fotointervención**, se observa que la muestra española tiende a fotografiar imágenes obtenidas a través de diferentes medios de la prensa escrita y audiovisual, de carátulas de videojuegos de diferentes videoconsolas (Playstation, Nintendo Wii, etc.) y de películas. Muchas de las fotografías presentadas son de tipo simbólico y alegórico. Algunas de ellas tratan de circunstancias de riesgo de producción de violencia en la pareja, como las derivadas del contexto laboral.

En cuanto a temas de violencia social, en España suele tematizarse el al terrorismo, mientras que en Puerto Rico se trata más de maras y de bandas de delincuencia. En ambos países se presentan fotos relativas al entorno residencial, presentando unas veces fenómenos como los graffiti y los daños causados a elementos públicos, papeleras, señales de tráfico, etc. Otras veces los temas aparecen diferenciados: en España, se alude a (la violencia que representa) la especulación en el ámbito de la vivienda. En Puerto Rico, en cambio, se fotografían casas con rejas y vallas, que sirven de protección de la violencia que supuestamente viene del exterior.

Entre otros conceptos reiteradamente fotografiados en España figuran los relativos a la alimentación (como transgénicos), a la naturaleza (biocombustibles, agua, energías contaminantes) y a determinados modelos de belleza femenina impuestos por la publicidad convencional.

### **Discusión**

En conjunto, la información aportada por la aplicación de los tres instrumentos se refuerza mutuamente. La media total del IAT 1 (.459) indica un alto nivel de anclaje social del estereotipo de *violencia de género (hombre violento vs. mujer pacífica)*, aportando evidencia confirmatoria de la hipótesis 1. En consonancia con ello, las respuestas al cuestionario asocian, por un lado, *golpear, agredir, pegar y acosar* a actividades características del hombre, muy relacionadas con la violencia, atributo del "cazador" y, por otro, *acariciar, conversar, escuchar y cuidar* a la mujer, tópicamente "pacífica" y, en último término, "cuidadora".

A ese respecto, en el IAT 1, las mujeres muestran esta creencia más marcadamente que los hombres, al asociar más fuertemente que ellos (.000) el binomio *hombre-violencia*. Este dato aparece corroborado además por las respuestas al cuestionario, en las que las mujeres tienden a polarizar más sus respuestas que los hombres, acentuando las puntuaciones de las actividades estereotípicamente asociadas a cada uno de los géneros. Esta diferencia indica o bien una tendencia de las mujeres a maximizar ciertas características negativas del otro género o bien la tendencia de los hombres a minimizarlas (por la necesidad psicológica de autoevaluarse positivamente o menos negativamente al respecto) o bien por la interacción de ambas tendencias.

Los resultados del IAT 2 no muestran diferencias significativas entre la violencia atribuida a parejas heterosexuales y la que se percibe en parejas gay, mientras que los del IAT 3 aportan indicios de una débil mayor asociación de la violencia con la relación heterosexual que con la lesbiana. Estos datos apuntan levemente en la línea de la hipótesis 2.

La comparación de medias de las respuestas dadas a las preguntas del cuestionario relativas a la cantidad de violencia física percibida en los distintos tipos de pareja indica que la

violencia de los hombres es valorada en función del tipo de relación (homo versus heterosexual), de modo que el hombre heterosexual aparece como más violento que el homosexual.

Pero si la violencia en la pareja por parte de un hombre es puntuada en función de su orientación sexual, la violencia ejercida por una mujer en una pareja es valorada en función del tipo de violencia: una mujer aparece como violenta psicológicamente, pero no físicamente, con independencia del tipo de relación que mantenga.

En suma, los resultados reflejan el juego cruzado de estereotipos sobre género, violencia y orientación sexual, corroborando en las muestras española y portorriqueña unos sesgos y tendencias ya parcialmente detectados con anterioridad en otros entornos y reflejados en la literatura científica, básicamente anglosajona, a lo largo de los últimos lustros (Island & Letellier, 1991, Leventhal & Lundy, 1999, Renzetti & Harvey, 1996, Ristock, 2002).

### **Conclusión**

En el presente estudio se ha investigado el grado de arraigo social de los estereotipos sobre violencia de género en la pareja en España y Puerto Rico. Los resultados expuestos muestran que la percepción social de la violencia en la pareja se fundamenta en los estereotipos de *género* (hombre-proveedor, mujer-cuidadora), está filtrada por el paradigma de *violencia de género* (hombre-violento, mujer-pacífica) y presenta un carácter marcadamente heterocentrista, que induce a minimizar la violencia potencial en parejas homosexuales (gay y lésbicas).

Esta constatación tiene implicaciones teóricas y sociales, al tiempo que conlleva desafíos para la investigación: Por una parte, este punto de vista generalizado contribuye a la invisibilización de la violencia en la pareja cometida por agentes que no encajan con el estereotipo *hombre-violento* en una relación de pareja heterosexual. Una persona maltratadora que no encarna el estereotipo que define dicha categoría será más difícilmente identificable y denunciable y su víctima tendrá aún más dificultades para ser reconocida y atendida como tal.

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# Safety Planning for Abused Children; Using a Multidisciplinary Approach

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## Abstract

*Safety Plans are formal arrangements, most often drafted for child abuse and neglect cases that are Court involved, in which a Guardian ad Litem [GAL] is appointed by the Court to monitor . These plans may enable contact, even placement, of a child with a parent who may have been found or suspected to have perpetrated some form of abuse to the child, or may pose a risk to the child for some other reason(s).*

*In a variety of these cases, where the violence or trauma is of known or unknown origin or merely suspected; (including sexual abuse, shaken baby syndrome and Munchausen's [Syndrome] by Proxy) safety plans can be developed, using a multidisciplinary approach to consider safety issues, assessment of risk and deployment and implementation of services,*

**Key words:** safety plan, multidisciplinary team, Guardian ad Litem [GAL], child abuse, domestic violence, dependency cases, trauma

While child abuse appears to be rising at record proportions, resources to address the issue seem to be declining. Whether this is more a lack of resolve or a lack of resources is unclear. Statistics of the Children's Bureau, Administration of Children, Youth and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services show that over 906,000 children in the United States are reported having been abused and neglected annually. Of these reports, 63% involved neglect issues, 18% physical abuse allegations, 10% sexual abuse charges and 5% of the children reported are victims of emotional maltreatment<sup>1</sup>. When these cases rise to the level of court involvement and a child is placed outside of the home, they become among the most difficult and challenging for everyone involved; including the children and families themselves. Frequently, Juvenile and Family Court Judges and protective service agencies are called upon to make decisions about when and if children can be returned home; often without assurances about the efficacy of the plan for their return.

"Safety Plans" are formal arrangements that are developed using a specific process, in which

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1 Susan Orr, Ph.D. Associate Commissioner 15th National Child Abuse Conference, Boston, MA April 2005

foreseeable dangers, threats, services and providers are identified, and protocols established to manage safety concerns, while corrective services are implemented. Originally formed for use in domestic violence and sexual assault cases, Safety Plans can effectively be used in for child abuse and neglect cases that are court involved (Dependency Cases<sup>2</sup>) or with families involved with protective service agencies, with the chance of Court intervention.

Safety Plans can enable contact and even placement of a child with a parent who may have been found (or suspected) to have perpetrated some form of abuse to the child, or may pose a risk to the child for some other reason(s). Safety plans are developed with an assessment and understanding of risks and supports, as well as strengths and weakness, as they exist within a family.

Safety Plans depend on a “team” approach to servicing a family, with the family itself being a part of the team. As the safety plan is defined for the specific case, all those involved begin developing a sense of shared responsibility allowing for both the providers and family members to learn from their mistakes and develop their strengths.

Safety planning has its origins in the field of domestic violence (Davies et.al. 1999). Utilizing specific tools such as the Danger Assessment instrument (Campbell 1995), and taking into consideration case specific factors, such as the cognitive state of individuals as well as mental health issues (Hardesty.& Campbell 2004), safety planning has now become an important tool in the treatment of child abuse and neglect.

At the very heart of many of these cases is the issue of trauma. Too often, however, there is an assumption that trauma comes from one place, when in fact it comes from someplace else, or is or is a result of something else. As a result of this false assumption, a safety plan can potentially put the child at even more risk. For example, it may be believed that a child’s behavior is the manifestation of the child being sexually abused by his/her father. In fact, if the sexual abuse was perpetrated by someone else or the child was not sexually abused ,but is suffering from some other emotional difficulty. Sometime a clinician fails to consider alternative theories as to where a symptom originates. Sometimes an allegation itself is prompted by something else (a contentious divorce or other motivation). As a result , any plan put in place to simply eliminate a suspected Father’s contact, is not only going to fail to treat the issue , but may add to the trauma.

Unfortunately, as we consider the variety of violence or trauma perpetrated on children by their parents in these cases, there are times when the origin of trauma is merely “suspected” or unknown. This becomes a crucial issue in the development of safety plans.

The underpinning of a safety plan is that a “contingency plan” of sorts, which can be developed so, as much as possible, we can consider conditions or scenarios that might pose a “risk” to an individual child or family. As a result of what is learned, a plan is developed to mitigate or eliminate the risk. For example, a risk may be posed by a single source; the perpetrator’s presence. Therefore, knowing where the perpetrator is at all times then may mitigate or eliminate the risk. Drugs or alcohol use is another important factor that, in many cases, is not the primary

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2 A **dependency** action is started by filing a petition (written request) in Juvenile Court. The petition must allege that the child is “dependent.” A “dependent child” is a child who: a) has been abandoned by his or her parent, guardian, or other custodian; b) has been abused or neglected by a person legally responsible for care of the child; c) has no parent, guardian or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child such that there is a danger of substantial damage to the child’s psychological or physical development; or d) has a developmental disability which requires services that cannot be provided at home.

concern, but clearly exacerbates risk. Therefore, assuring that there is abstinence may minimize or eliminate that issue, and lower the risk.

Key to each and every safety plan is

- employing open communication
- consideration of case history
- adoption of a philosophy in which the child is visible to a wide variety of individuals, especially professionals who are aware of the past abuse and/or safety issues
- a method of identifying specific supports
- locating primary provider, and furnishing the pertinent information, as well as
- additional safeguards, (employment of any needed court orders and releases).

The utilization of ‘Multidisciplinary Teams’ has also been a growing phenomenon in the fields of child abuse and neglect (Bross 1988). More and more, professionals, from a range of discipline are not only are willing to work with and rely upon the expertise of colleagues in other disciplines towards problem solving and servicing the most complex cases.

The multidisciplinary team, this group of professionals from diverse disciplines, comes together on behalf of a child and family. In child abuse cases, the disciplines typically represent the broad spectrum of services that may already be involved with families before the court, and include: protective services, criminal justice system, health and social services, and mental health services. Some teams include specialists in domestic violence, child advocates, substance abuse experts, and/or providers of comprehensive assessments and consultation services. The family is also part of the team.

Family problems that brought about the need for the formulation of the multidisciplinary team may include; economic difficulties, mental illness, and substance abuse, parenting deficits rooted in the parent’s own early trauma, homelessness, and domestic violence. When these problems rise to a level that puts their children in danger, it is mandated that the state child protective system and often the family or courts intervene to protect them. Few families welcome this intervention and scrutiny by the “system” and often view this intrusion with suspicion and hostility. With the devilment and implementation of a multidisciplinary team designed to develop a cooperative plan, this suspicion and hostility can evolve to a sense of trust and a feeling of calm and willingness to engage.

Central to the formulation of these multidisciplinary teams is the notion that there needs to be involvement of key providers of services to be particular family being serviced; although they can encompass a wide range of sources or services who ultimately can provide not only a wide range of information, but different points of view. Although the players may change from case to case there are certain disciplines typically represented in child abuse and neglect or “protective cases”. Many teams include “permanent representatives” from domestic violence advocacy groups, substance abuse specialists, providers of comprehensive assessment and consultation services.

Often it is the Court Appointed Guardian ad Litem [GAL] the person appointed by the Court to look out for the “best interests” of the child, during the pendency of legal proceedings, that becomes the person who manages the formulation and implementation of the Safety Plan and the Multidisciplinary team.. The GAL becomes a driving force behind the movement towards the achievement of the goal. The GAL becomes responsible, in essence “the ball carrier”, for directing with the “team” towards ultimate goals.

Because of the broad scope of the typical GAL's role within these complex cases and the necessity to work across disciplines GAL's are often picked to take on the role of "monitor" if not manager in these cases.

In many States in the United States, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the state has an affirmative responsibility to make efforts towards keeping families together or making efforts for reunification, while at the same time keeping children safe. Some pioneering judges in Massachusetts have become innovative in responding to these matters and have utilized GAL's to assist in investigating and evaluating the most highly sensitive of family matters so that a disposition can be reached; which serves the interests of the children who are subjects of the court action, and to develop and monitor safety plans for children.

Historically, the role of the GAL is determined by Judges using their broad "discretion" under the equity powers dictated by state statute, although with recent budget cuts, that too has become limited. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State's Supreme Judicial Court had described the function of the GAL as an individual who "acts for the ward and determines what should be done for the best interest and welfare of the ward." In his treatise on juvenile law (Ireland, 1993), Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Justice Roderick Ireland wrote, "As an exercise of judicial discretion the judge may authorize a Guardian Ad Litem to take a particular type of action in order that the Guardian Ad Litem's function will be optimally effective in the circumstances of the case". To that end, Judges clearly have the authority to fashion such appointments based on the specific conditions present in each case, whether they chose to assert that authority is another matter.

Increasingly in child abuse and neglect cases, as Judges, attorney's, social workers, and mental health practitioners consider what should come about as the result of the Court's intervention, there has been a growing realization that collaboration is essential.

There has, at the same time, been growing awareness of the fact that there are different professional languages; a jargon that meant to be used and understood by the profession using it and not necessarily by all those involved in the case.

The idea of collaboration may be, for many, a new way of assessing these situations, leading to the development to a new interventions or collaboration among service providers. The GAL/Multidisciplinary Team Leader is instrumental in directing the team in a purposeful and meaningful direction.

The creation and utilization of multidisciplinary teams has served an important role in resolving these cases. While their primary purpose is typically to help team members resolve difficult cases, teams may fulfill a variety of additional functions. Some of these functions include: promoting coordination between agencies; providing checks and balances; ensuring that mechanisms are in place so that the interests and rights of all concerned parties are addressed; and identify service gaps and breakdowns in coordination or communication between agencies or individuals.

The multidisciplinary teams have also had another indirect effect on the system as a whole. Participation in these teams has often served to enhance the professional skills and knowledge of individual team members by providing a forum for learning more about the strategies, resources and approaches used by various disciplines.

Many jurisdictions utilize only attorneys as GAL's, while others utilize individuals with

clinical backgrounds; Psychologists, Social Workers, Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists. In either case, GALs often come to their work with a diverse background, varied training and experiences.

The success or failure of the multidisciplinary team leader, whether appointed as a GAL or not, is highly dependent on how the role is defined by the Court and the authority given. However, it is also clearly contingent on the leader's ability to overcome obstacles inherent in an imperfect system or related to the various players and their respective agenda. To that end the GAL/team leader is called upon to use his or her skills in negotiation, mediation, clinical expertise, and simple common sense. By doing so, the leader earns the trust and respect of all parties. This trust evolves out of the leader's willingness to avoid imposing values, respect and understanding of cultural and gender issues, ability to consider the positions of each of the parties and capacity to reach conclusions based on the facts or evidence and the leader's best clinical judgment.

Wearing many hats can pose challenges to some multidisciplinary team leaders who seek clear definition and delineation of duties and responsibilities. However, the reality is that the implementation of a safety plan, that everyone can embrace and develop a sense of accountability for, may require a more flexible role for the team leader. The team leader must be able to effectively triage, stabilize, investigate and evaluate issues related to custody and visitation in families where there has been a history of abuse. Safety Planning can also work in the most difficult of situations that come before a Court including but not limited to: violence, sexual abuse, Shaken Baby Syndrome and or Munchausen [Syndrome] by Proxy.

While there may be some nuances to a particular kind of case, Munchausen by Proxy cases for example, that warrant the use of a specific protocol (Kinscherff 2000), the fact is that it is imperative to focus in, most importantly, on identifying and mitigating the recognized concerns of a particular case, rather than trying to insulate the child or attempt to eliminate all or any of perceived danger, and as a result rapidly losing focus and/or depleting resources. Protocols that have been set up in Munchausen by Proxy Cases are also the best example of how a safety plan can be best utilized not only to provide safety for the child but be extremely helpful in making the diagnosis itself.

Primary too, to the design of any Safety Plan, is giving careful consideration to the case history. Often decisions are made using existing, second hand, unreliable or limited information without making efforts to get all of the needed information or going to the primary source. It is important to always remember the saying *Init Pergamentum Exit Pergamentum*, "garbage in garbage out".

In generating a good safety plan a philosophy must also be adopted which makes the child visible to a wide variety of individuals, especially professionals who are aware of the past abuse and or issues. This is especially true the younger the child is, or the more physically isolated the family may be from the community.

Supports must also be identified specific to the needs of the family, including locating primary providers and furnishing the pertinent information while insuring that additional safeguards, including legal avenues (such as employment of court orders, stipulations and voluntary releases).

Responsibilities must be clearly defined, with the multidisciplinary team leader/GAL monitoring the flow of activity. In another words; "*Who is carrying the ball?*"

As noted, the development of a safety plan involves the gathering of historical information in terms of the family's involvement with medical providers, protective services, a review of records including any and all psychological evaluations, parenting assessments and interviews with professionals and family members and anyone who knows the family well. School personnel are especially important. In this process of assembling the data - key questions- become focus.

Other key questions include; *"What is the capacity of the parents or caretakers to utilize services?"*; and *"What is the level of insight derived from the implementation the services?"*. Presuming a realistic or reasonable safety plan is developed, the goal of reunification becomes a reality as the safety plan is implemented. At the least, there is closure given to the family as the implementation takes its course. Concurrent planning remains an option so that time is not wasted from the child's perspective if a reunification cannot be successfully accomplished, because the crucial questions are being answered one way or the other.

In formulating any safety plan other specific dynamics need to be considered. These may be considered "risk factors" for example the involve the age or stage of development of the child, or "strengths" that may exist such as the existence of support system; which will be available and a crisis plan in the case of relapse.

The adult caregiver's capacity to parent, their cognitive ability, the vocational skills they posses and the capacity to empathize with the child are just a few of the factors considered.

A chief element of the safety plan is the parent's willingness to continue services for their child or children. One important goal is to develop a partnership with the parent(s) based on mutual respect trust and the expectation that there will be stumbling blocks. Through the successful collaboration of efforts, crisis is neutralized and new strategies are established to address the new issues or issues that resurface. At collateral meetings, the mission (goals) of the plan are clearly discussed and new objectives established. Benchmarks for measuring success are defined and the service providers often overlap so that cross training occurs. These collateral meetings enable communication to be enhanced, tension reduced, leadership is shared, and as gains are made the plan is revised so that the progress will not be lost. Again, the family itself is has membership in the team.

Upon completion of the initial investigation/evaluation/assessment a multidisciplinary team comes together in accordance with the order of the Court , protocol, interagency agreement or charter that may apply, to actually develop and begin implementation of a formal written safety plan, which may be presented to the court for approval. The safety plan is developed trying to perceive problems and solutions from many different points of view. Ultimately, the plans are based on maximizing the strengths of the individual family members and the family as a unit and working to minimize or collaboratively problem solve around areas of deficiency.

The GAL or multidisciplinary team leader as the monitor of safety planning, has great advantages and significant drawbacks. As is true in any effective clinical practice, maintaining boundaries and clearly defining roles is critical. Furthermore, maintaining accurate and detailed records insures that that good clinical practice occurs, and important to safety planning. When the team leader is in a position to wear many hats, however, their role can become complicated, especially if they are a clinician. If a Court has predetermined the role, defining it in either a broad or more narrow manner, there still is room for ambiguity; even when the court has seemingly defined the agenda and objectives.

Of course, the GAL must also remain aware of personal biases and societal influences and avoid even the appearance of discriminatory practice.

Additionally, at the outset, non-confidentiality warnings are administered and repeated in every contact making it clear that what is said is not confidential or private, but will be provided to the court and could be used to aid the court in rendering a decision. By being clear in defining one's role and the focus, the foundation is established for trust. By reinforcing one's role and the focus, trust is maintained. This reinforcement and need to be clear is paramount if the team leader is to be effective in implementing the safety plan.

For over a century, with the growth and development of the Juvenile Courts in the United States, efforts have been made to insure that those charged with addressing these complex cases have the skills needed to understand the dynamics and the wisdom to render decisions, which bring about positive change. Increasingly, states across the country are striving to establish specialty courts equipped to address in a legally sound manner and a clinically sensitive manner these highly personal issues.

In Massachusetts, this effort had come to fruition in the form of county based Juvenile Courts staffed by Judiciary who are skilled at understanding the complexities of the issues facing these children and families.

This evolution has meant that these Courts have gone from simply being umpires between family members and the State, to proactive problem solvers dispensing a kind of therapeutic justice.

In fashioning the appointments of the GAL or multidisciplinary team leader, the Judiciary is doing so in the hopes of bringing together a partnership with the family to develop safety plans, so that the children can develop in a healthy fashion and be provided with the protection that many take for granted.

In the Family and Juvenile Courts in the United States, there is no other use of the Judge's discretion where the impact is so far reaching. Usually, the state agency charged with insuring the child's well being, also has the power to make placement decisions, as well as judgments with regard to the child's day to day care, medical treatment and visitation with parents and or siblings. These are very important discretionary determinations, which ultimately could result in the severing of all ties between the child and his or her birth family as occurs in the termination cases.

In some situations, the Court can only intervene where there is a finding that the state agency has abused its discretion, in dealing with a child or family, by acting in an arbitrary and or capricious manner. The court too may abuse its discretion by allowing the state agency to make decisions which exceed its mandate.

At the same time, even in a democracy, where the State relies upon the rule of law; neither the state child welfare department nor the Court can predict every eventuality in a given situation. A corner stone in these cases therefore is use of judicial and professional discretion, that is the exercise of sound reasonable judgment based on the facts of a case and the law, policy, clinical knowledge and measures as they apply.

Child abuse and neglect cases are among the most challenging and complex. Frequently, these family situations tax those servicing them in a way which can be haunting; leading to many sleepless nights. The use of a safety plan allows for collaboration to occur which can allow all

involved to rest easy with their decisions. At the same time, these safety plans address the highest of risk situations in a comprehensive manner.

The efficacy of safety plan is dependent upon a number of factors not least of which are the client's motivation to utilize services; as well as their capacity to make the necessary changes in their life. The willingness of a family to be candid about how the individuals are functioning is also fundamental to success.

The safety plan in essence creates a village to support the family. Ideally, through the process of implementing the services the family is able to utilize the village created in the transition process and beyond so that the change will be integrated into the being of the family, thereby avoiding recidivism. The safety plan very much is a grass roots effort designed to empower needy families, enlighten some and educate others in recreating what many of the adults were lacking in their own lives.

Through its implementation, those involved in the implementation of the safety plan learn to anticipate stumbling blocks through a collaborative effort and develop or propose strategies to overcome these same stumbling blocks.

In each case the multidisciplinary team works on the development and implementation of a viable, safe plan, in which each member engages in a way that is reasonable, professional and clinically appropriate. It is important to remember when developing a safety plan that it is important to set it up in a way which generally be unique to each family because each family is unique.

Optimally, safety plans should not be seen in and of themselves as solutions to problems but a mechanism for treatment as well as further examination.

Typically multidisciplinary team meetings are set up by Courts or protective service agencies to streamline services to families and to resolve cases in an expeditious way. We can go on and on to discuss the specifics on how a multidisciplinary team can affect an individual family. At the end of the day and central to the success of the multidisciplinary team is the fact that there is always the opportunity for collaboration so that *things can be done*, that *should be done*. More, importantly however, these teams can be pivotal in bringing to bear the power and expertise for things that *must be done* to provide for the care and protection of children and families.

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# The experience of overcoming the stigma associated to HIV/AIDS: a call for collaboration with community Psychology.

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## Abstract

*After more than 20 years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is noticed an intense connection with different forms of discrimination. The evolution of the epidemic has revealed that it stressed other forms of prejudice related to sexual orientation, to gender, race and social class. In Brazil, where the social inequality is very severe, the social exclusion is even a more important feature, once it exposes a bigger number of people to the infection by the virus and other sexual transmitted diseases. This situation generates an intense suffering, inhibiting emancipatory actions to face the stigma for a better quality of life of people who live with HIV/AIDS. By the practice of the Community Psychology at Cruzeiro do Sul University, in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), with poor communities in the periphery of São Paulo, it was intended to strengthen the psychological aspects of these people as an instrument for constructing more active citizens in the communities. The procedures were: 1 – Community and Institutional Diagnosis, by means of interviews and participative observation; 2- Group work, focusing on the exchange of experience between soropositive and soronegative women; 3- Elaboration and discussion of the group meetings, registered in weekly reports over a 10-month-period. The results have demonstrated that the suffering, resulting from a little tolerant society and culture, can be transformed by group practices focused on the strengthening of intersubjective exchanges which 1 – discuss the living experience of stigmatization and discrimination as a result of the articulation of subjective experiences with cultural background and social, political and economical aspects; 2- promote healthy mental aspects (affective and cognitive) related to the ability of noticing, in spite of the difficulties, the public space of an NGO as place for overcoming the stigma; 3- stimulate the strengthening of friendship between the participants and the social nets for support.*

**Key words:** Community Social Psychology, HIV/AIDS, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Stigma, Social Exclusion, Strengthening Communities.

## Introduction

The process of globalization of the capitalism is quite complex and unequal. In countries such as Brazil the consequences are related to: the increase in social inequality; the increasing concentration of income; the increment of structural unemployment; flexibilization of the social rights and increase of the feeling of insecurity in work and life; the weaken of the old identity and solidarity of social class; the growth of international migratory current; the uncontrolled consumption geographically expanded; increased the scope and global environmental degradation; the reactive fundamentalism affirmation of identities of the non – included people (Mancebo, 2003).

In this context, Psychology has been requested, as well as other areas of knowledge, to contribute to change that social reality. Throughout its history, we can see different political

positions. At some stages the Psychology underwrote a more conservative position, for example, developing technical and interventions that sought a passive adaptation of the subject to the social environment; in other times, has taken a more critical position, looking for instrumental to understand the subject as complex beings resulting from the interaction between psychological, biological and social factors. (Lane, 1984; Bock, 2003).

Among some of the theoretical and practical approaches, we highlight the Community Social Psychology, which has as a scope the construction of the most active subjects in their social environment, and for which citizenship and autonomy are guiding parameters of actions that promote the development and changes of the communities (Campos, 1996; Montero, 2003).

In this direction the Community Social Psychology which guided many of the discussions of the Psychology Community course taken by the students of the fifth year of Psychology at Cruzeiro do Sul University, we bring some of the results achieved over approximately 10 years with the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that act in the AIDS field in Eastern and Central São Paulo. These areas have high social vulnerability and they have few public resources available to people. In this way AIDS-NGOs concentrate many of the demands of this population, resulting from social exclusion of basic rights, such as education, health and work.

This kind of intervention in communities is guided by action search, according to Montero (2007), it is a method based on ethics and committed as well with the production of knowledge and social change. The main steps of this method consist of: Get familiar with the community; identification of needs (held with the community); meeting with leaders and members of the community and the development of collective actions.

Therefore this article builds itself by the documentation of everything that we could learn (supervisor and students) with the experience of the process of an intervention through the training in Community Psychology. Emphasizing the politization of the people involved and their social links, i.e. of the people that are living with HIV/AIDS (PHA) and are engaged in activities of NGOs/AIDS, mainly in reference to coping with the psychosocial consequences of the disease, highlighting the stigma and discrimination.

### **The Praxis of Community intervention: some of the psychosocial aspects of social exclusion.**

According to Gomes & Pereira (2005), the term social exclusion includes temporal and spatial meanings: a social group is excluded according to specific geographical area or in relation to the economic and social structure of the country. In Brazil, this term is mainly related to poverty, since the people in this condition are groups in social exclusion, because they are at personal and social risk, i.e. excluded from social policies (work, education, health, housing, food). Poverty cannot be defined in a single way, but it is clearly a part of the population that is not capable of generating enough income to have sustainable access to basic features that ensure a decent life.

In her turn, for Sawaia (2002), the social exclusion is a complex and multi-faceted process, a setting of material, political, relational and subjective dimensions. It is a subtle and dialectical process, because it exists only in relation to its contrary part, i.e. the inclusion. It is not a thing or a state, but a process that involves the human and its relations with the other. It does not have a single form neither it means a system failure nor, and it should not be defeated as something that disturbs the social order, on the contrary it is the product of the system.

In addition, Sawaia (2002) discusses the process of social exclusion based on affectivity, in particular by the suffering arising from unfair living conditions, which is called suffering of ethical-political. The manipulation of the affection is an important factor in the understanding of the maintenance of authoritarian and undervalued relations of the potential citizen of the people.

For this author to question about suffering and happiness in the study of social exclusion is to overcome the view that only worry of the poor people is solely the survival, and there is no explanation to deal with the emotion when going through hunger. Epistemologically, this means to put the idea of humanity in the center of the discussion about social exclusion. This way, to talk about social exclusion, means talking about desire, temporality and affectivity, at the same time of power, economy and social rights.

Also the author speak of potency of action and explains that, from its research carried out with residents of street, she could know different ways of thinking, feeling and actions caused by social exclusion. The potency of action of an individual shows when he/she copes with the exclusion.

For Montero (2003), to review the origin of the Community Psychology, in Latin America, as well as in the United States and Canada, we will see that, although there are trends oriented at paternalism, there is an attention focused on the organization of the members in the Community and its development, supporting the positive qualities of these people, so that they achieve by themselves changes that improve their quality of life and access to goods and services of their community.

According to the same author (2003) the definition of Community Psychology includes to develop, to promote, to maintain the control and the power in people that form a community, and this control and power should keep focused in the community and not be taken as something from outside. Thus, activity, control, participation and decision are important conducts to achieve fundamental changes, and for that reason they require strengthening processes.

In addition Montero (2003), taking into consideration several other authors, sets this strengthening process as a strategy by which the members of a Community together develop capabilities and resources to control their lives, acting in a critical, conscious and committed way to achieve the social and collective transformation, according to their needs and aspirations, at the same time transforming themselves.

In this way the institutions are privileged places for community actions and for the development of the most active subject in society. From the point of view of the Community Social Psychology the institutions can be used as means of access to communities. Campos (1996) defines institutions as everything that is recognized by all as being part of a broad social system. In general, we can say that everything that became established, accepted as having materialized existence in social life is considered an institution.

Campos (1996) stresses the importance of the institution as the access way to the community, since the communities are studied as organized elements functionally in a system of intricate interdependence and continuously changing. The institution presents itself as a space of mediation between what is from the nature of the social and what is from nature of the individual.

In this context, Bleger (1984) emphasizes that the Institutional Psychology inserts itself both in a History of social needs, as in the History of Psychology and, in this last one, it does not

only deal with one field of application of Psychology, but fundamentally, with a field of research, highlighting that the Institutional Psychology is not a field of the Applied Psychology, which can mean in itself an extraordinary advance on the investigation and on the development of Psychology as a profession.

To the author, Institutional Psychology covers, then, the set of the physical existence of the organizations that has a certain degree of permanence in any field or specific sector of the activity of the human life, in order to study in all of them the human phenomena as a result of the relation with dynamic, structure, functions and objectives of the institution.

Thus, these theoretical and political approaches contribute to a broader and contextualized understanding of the work in Community Social Psychology with groups in the situation of social exclusion, specifically those who are living with HIV/AIDS and that are engaged in NGOs/Aids.

### **Human rights and HIV/AIDS- related stigma-reduction approaches**

On the very beginning of the AIDS epidemic, stigma and discrimination have been associated with PHA (UNAIDS, 2005). Based on Goffman's Stigma (1988), Parker and Aggleton (2001) interpretation the stigmatization is an underestimate of social and cultural relations. Moreover, these authors suggest that we must understand stigmatization and social discrimination within the context of power relations and domination.

Thus, the more obvious manifestation of stigma associated with HIV/AIDS may reveal masked social and cultural relationships. In addition, the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS often can be to overcome beginning with a much deeper social transformation. Therefore it represents just the top of the iceberg revealing a small fraction of the visible elements of a culture deeply rooted in conservative moral values, expressed through a lack of solidarity and a progressive increase in individualism.

Indeed, the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, and its resulting social exclusion, have a long history. It is connected with other social exclusion mechanisms that affect PHA, such as poverty, gender discrimination, sexuality, race, and ethnicity (Parker & Aggleton, 2002).

This social discrimination and stigmatization leads to several consequences for PHA, including: unemployment, the disintegration of social relationships, and negative public labeling. From this exclusionary framework, it becomes clear that social vulnerability is one factor that may expose far too many people to HIV. At the same time, it may also suggest some viable pathways to confront it. (Ayres et al. 1999; Gostin & Tarantola, 1999). For instance the strengthening of the Human and Civil Rights becomes an important strategy in the reduction of the stigma and discrimination connected with HIV/AIDS. The fight to achieve and retain human rights contributes for the PHA to comprehend their citizenship; that is, they strive to exist with dignity, autonomy and better quality of life.

To illustrate some actions that are working to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma we may consider some information from a recent UNAIDS report. This report presents a number of case studies illustrating approaches to stigma reduction. The report's authors present three points that are relevant in appreciating the relationship between stigma, discrimination, and human rights: "preventing stigma; challenging discrimination when it occurs, and promoting and protecting human rights, including monitoring and readdressing human rights violations." (UNAIDS, 2005,

p.13) These approaches have been in various degrees of development in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

According to the report activities relating to the reduction of stigma it suggests multiple strategies for prevention and treatment. These initiatives aim to achieve these goals through improving the quality of life for PHA through integrated care, including home-based care; mobilizing religious leaders to foster respect and compassion for people living with HIV; addressing broader inequalities through participatory education; creating a supportive and confidential space for the discussion of sensitive topics; providing comprehensive HIV treatment and HIV/AIDS care, including access to antiretroviral therapy; empowering people living with HIV to take the lead in diverse support and advocacy activities; mobilizing community leaders to encourage greater openness around sexuality and HIV-related issues within communities by building on positive social norms; and raising awareness. In addition, the report asserts that the implementation of these programs is a vital element in proactively addressing discrimination and developing laws and policies that defend PHA.

The development and effectiveness of these approaches rely upon a number of factors including volunteer training, enrollment of community and PHA, and establishing partnerships between the government and the civil society.

The Shanga Metta Project in Thailand, for example developed activities from Buddhist doctrine to raise awareness and compassion among monks, nuns, and novices enrolled within this project. One of the factors that contributed to the effectiveness of this action was related to the recognition of the attitudes and cultural values of the local population. Furthermore, these monks, working as a bridge between PHA and their communities, increased the willingness of that community to get involved with PHA. For example, HIV positive children that were previously denied admission to school are now admitted

In Brazil, the HIV/AIDS movement originated from the context of a broader social movement. On the 1980s, the social movement has worked as a setting where people may fight for improvements in their lives, such as, urban infrastructure, and sharing situations of social oppression, mainly gender, race and sexuality (Sader, 1995). In this way the NGO setting promotes personal development and enhances citizenship.

Since the beginning of HIV/AIDS epidemic AIDS-NGOs have been playing important role in giving material and social-emotional support to PHA. As such, providing concrete assistance to HIV/AIDS patients and their families, these groups have focused on building and strengthening the rights of patients; including their rights of citizenship. (Parker, 1994; Altman, 1995)

In this way, the AIDS-NGOs may create new meanings for the suffering shared by PHA, and emphasize the psychosocial dimensions related to the stigmatization and discrimination process. These institutions provide support to people who identify with social oppression; and through their political participation, the construction of a common identity becomes far stronger. Therefore, the comprehension of political participation may help PHA to develop and consolidate changes that started from grassroots movements, NGOs and related social actions.

Through such approaches we may consider, from the relationship between actions taken and report outcomes, that there have been significant changes, which may have resulted from the implementation of these projects. These changes are, in fact, improvements in policies relating to HIV/AIDS, which emphasizes both the social and cultural aspects of the disease.

### **The building of a method: step by step of a community intervention**

From above theoretical-practical and political statements we developed the following steps of intervention in the community, including the process of institutional / communitarian diagnosis and the practice with PHA groups at AIDS/NGO:

1. Analysis of official documents, in order to know the status, mission of the institution, its resources, among other information about infrastructure and its social role.
2. Interviews with the coordination of the institution to get acquainted with the history and work done. At that time, also visits were carried out to the institution, in the participant observation model, to better understand its dynamic and activities.
3. Individual semi- structured interviews with the PHA that are users, and in many cases, participants of the institution, in order to deeply know the demand, including personal data, socio-economic conditions, and the coping with HIV/ AIDS.
4. Creation of the intervention proposal, which referred mainly to programming the PHA group activities to happen in meetings of two hours per week, in order to provide a space for the exchange of the experience of living with HIV/AIDS and their relationship with the social context in which they are inserted, on their lives and relationships. The method used were group dynamics, texts readings and thematic phrases for group reflection, free drawing, and themes brought by the participants.
5. The registering of the weekly meetings happened through transcription and discussion, each in supervision. And these reports, delivered weekly, were made of the following parts: description of the meetings, in-depth analysis, highlighting the main points and a preliminary summary, which sought to develop the theoretical and practical hypothesis that guided the interventions.

### **The description of a psychosocial intervention: the process of coping with the experience of living with HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination**

The development means the beginning of the Group activities with the participants who went through the sorting process, highlighting that such process, including visits to the institution and interviews, privileged an important rapport important for the beginning of activities.

The description of this experience wants to highlight some aspects that were important in the course of this type of intervention which targeted the strengthening psychological and community capacity for PHA. The task (with a view of working group led by Pichon-Riviere) was to create an area of conversation, drafting and actions that help the PHA to deal with the new condition of living with HIV soropositive. In that sense we highlight three aspects, from a psychosocial point of view, which contributed to the development of this intervention:

#### *1 - The recovery of history and path of life beyond the living with HIV / AIDS*

The history of most of these PHA suffers a great transformation with the news of HIV-positive. The impact of this news in our days, takes the experiences of imminent death and deep anguish. The situation becomes more difficult when the life of these people is beginning to be negatively affected, because when required a change in their routine to go frequently to treatments at Reference Centers of HIV/AIDS (CRT/AIDS) and diet changes, among other requests.

The personal and working routine are drastically changed. Moreover, because many of these people discover the disease from a symptom, sometimes from a serious illness as pneumonia or tuberculosis (so-called opportunistic diseases).

The effects on the people of their everyday living are unpredictable, accenting in the family and at work, but generally in these two settings reproaches and charges are harder. The PHA feel abandoned and betrayed by the people who were mostly close to them.

The search for an NGO/AIDS happens at this moment of intense solitude and many doubts about the disease and treatment, besides administration of the antiretroviral drugs varies widely from person to person even because of their emotional susceptibility

From that moment on, the participation in NGO activities- from self-help group, passing through income-generating activities until participation in actions of political pressure towards the Government- allow people to broaden their understanding of the disease, i.e. understand HIV/AIDS linked to their social economic and cultural dimensions. This process helps to reduce the feelings of guilt and shame in the light of the perception of themselves as a subject in interaction and influenced by the social environment that imprint an individualistic understanding of the PHA .

However the ability to tackle the stigma and discrimination varies according to the intensity of the psychosocial impact of HIV/AIDS in their lives, in most of these cases added by other forms of oppression already in progress. This situation generates deep sequel, conducting the person to hopelessness, social isolation and difficulties to reorganize their lives.

In this context the setting of the Group contributed for the rescue of their life histories with achievements and expectations that have been obfuscated or stifled by psychosocial negative repercussions of the disease. On the group activities were encouraged to facilitate the reporting of life histories which showed other aspects of identity of these PHA. Many of these stories were about personal achievements, such as migrants telling about the effort and struggle to arrive in a big city as São Paulo, or women who tackle the oppression of the family and their husbands to fulfill their professional wants.

Thus to contribute for the new meaning of these life histories triggers other potential that were blocked by HIV/AIDS-related to stigma and discrimination, causing divisions that increase feelings of powerlessness and unhappiness.

## *2 - The focus on healthy psychosocial aspects*

From the perspective to make the group a place of conversations about stories and experiences of life, new meanings and unique strategies to manage their lives have been started.

The recovery of psychological healthy aspects refers to the prospect that in the middle of feelings of helplessness, expressed many times by symptoms of depression, preserved emotional resources are valued, as for example, desire of changes and build of new friendships, among others.

In this sense we are promoting the empowerment of these PHA by building a therapeutic space that not focuses on only on the symptom, on the contrary the impact of living with HIV / AIDS would generate more resistance and defenses reaffirming feelings of guilt and shame.

The empowerment acquired is part of a dialectical process where the institutional setting serves as connection with the community and the construction of citizenship. Through which



the feelings of empowerment increase in a context of welcoming and respect. It is important to highlight the role of the group coordinator as the one who facilitate the exchange and preserves the welcoming feeling in the group. Moreover, the coordinator contributes to a greater engagement of PHA with the institution. This as a setting that promotes alternative life projects associated with the enhancement of public space and coexistence.

The friendships built in this institutional setting act as an important affective support giving PHA new life dimension. This kind of support generates opportunities to develop group cohesion and consequently more chances of this group to continue.

### *3 – The Politization of new friendships in public space*

In this work of following up the activities of NGOs/AIDS, the affective aspect is a main factor in the quality of the relationship bond and tackling of HIV/ AIDS-related to stigma and discrimination. It is through the welcoming and an attentive listening and without prejudices that the PHA can diminish the anguishes and feelings of guilt and solitude. The possibility of building a friendship in this public space (NGO) brings a great potential of the disease politization.

The concept of friendship seen as a political exercise, for instance, experimenting with new forms of sociability and community (Arendt, 2003 and Ortega, 2000), helps us to understand this type of public space that is not restricted to the area of family intimacy. Friendship promotes meetings that instigate changes, and the friend, in this line of thought, is not a mirror in which we search a reproduction of our image. Nietzsche (apud Ortega, 2000) was the first to break with this tradition of the friendship concept in which the proximity, equality and agreement, place the friend not as an unconditional adhesion, but like the one that encourages and challenges us to transform ourselves.

To bring out the moments of asymmetry and emotional non-reciprocity provides a space where the heterogeneity and otherness in relation to the other is preserved (Ortega, 2000). Nevertheless, we are not thereby enhancing the disagreements and conflicts, but mainly put ourselves away from the consensus. The care of another implies certain detachment, because, when it is possible, the affection can help, otherwise, suffocate.

This prospective of friendship helps us to understand the relationship that NGOs can promote, i.e. type of relationships that strengthens identification among equals, protecting themselves from a common enemy promoting coping and emancipation. Friendship would preserves a filed of distinction in which a subject keeps his/her singularity. It is necessary the maintenance of certain distance, in order to preserve some solitude inherent to human existence. An excessive intimacy leads to feelings of possession and lack of differentiation between people.

Therefore, the NGO setting can express the possibility of sharing and giving new dimension through symbolic elaboration of the life experience of PHA. At some point of their personal struggle against HIV/AIDS, the PHA perceive that their suffering, concern and indignation can be giving new meanings by the interactions that were built from the engagement with the NGO (Castro-Silva, 2004). Spink (1996) reminds us that the institution is nothing but permanent expression of the various actions of people. Then to link the impact of HIV/AIDS in the life of PHA and the dilemmas of their participation in an NGO/AIDS can contribute to the strengthening of the solidarism and citizenship of social networks.

### Final considerations

We consider that the psychology can be an important tool for psychological and community strengthening of subjects that repeatedly suffer with the consequences of social exclusion. It can contribute for the transformation of reality shown and this is possible through a look that gives privilege to a subject in bio-psycho-social dimensions and capable to transform their social environment, i.e. more than dealing with symptoms, often triggered by unfair social situations that lead to feelings and perceptions of low self-esteem, humiliation, shame and other feelings constructed and reinforced by prejudices. Therefore, the Community Social Psychology proposes a more comprehensive intervention with a differentiated work in favor of communities (Montero, 2003; Sawaia, 2002).

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## Risky behaviors and substance use in youth leisure time

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### Abstract

*This research is related to a wider program promoted in Italy by European Union, whose participants are Public Institutions, No Profit Enterprises and Faculty of Psychology of University of Florence. The program is aimed to improve health promotion in young people leisure time by means of community based interventions. Theoretical approaches come from studies about risky behavior, legal and illegal substances use, outreach work in leisure time for promoting healthy behaviors. The aim of this step of the research is to obtain quantitative data about youth lifestyle and about risky behaviors, particularly drug use, during entertainment events. Participants are 1283 subjects, male (51,4%) and female, aged 18-30 years, living in different Italian regions.*

*Instrument: a specifically adapted questionnaire to collect biographical data and information about life style, spending leisure time, risky behaviors and patterns of substance use.*

*Results highlighted in young people importance of peer group in spending leisure time, patterns of undertaking risky behaviors as legal and illegal substances use, particularly party drugs use, careless and drunken driving coming back from discos, concerts or raves. Results moreover show behaviors change in leisure time, problems in recreational drug use, gender differences, experiences in harm reduction and in health promotion programs.*

Key words: Risky behaviors, young people lifestyle, leisure time, community based programs.

### Introduction

This research is related to a wider program EQUAL (2008), promoted by Europe Union, whose participants are Public Institutions, No Profit Enterprises and Faculty of Psychology of Florence.

The program is aimed to improve health promotion in leisure time, promoting young people enterprises and committing them in planning events safeness, for young participants and for local communities.

Theoretical approaches come from studies about risky behavior, legal and illegal substances use, outreach work in leisure situations (for instance in great musical events) for promoting healthy

behaviors (Ostazewski, Zimmerman, 2006; White, Degenhardt, Breen, Bruno, Newman, Proudfoot, 2006; Eiserman, Diamond, Schensul, 2005; ter Bogt, Engels, 2005; Mair, 2006; Meringolo, Chiodini, 2005; Sweeting, West, 2003). They come also from systemic approach in system change (Hirsch, Levine, Miller, 2007; Tseng, Seidman 2007; Kelly, 2007; Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Yang, 2007).

Particular attention was paid to analyze experiences in prevention of risky behaviors that happen frequently during events, as drug dealing and drug use, car accidents, driving while intoxicated, aggressive behaviors, difficulties in relationship with local communities and with inhabitants.

### **Aim**

The aim of this step of the research is to obtain quantitative data about youth lifestyle and about risky behaviors, particularly drug use, during entertainment events in order to better promote community based interventions in leisure sites.

### **Method**

Participants are 1283 subjects; male (51,4%) and female; aged 18-30 years (mean 22,7).

Instrument: A specifically adapted questionnaire to collect biographical data and information about life style, spending leisure time, risky behaviors and patterns of substance use. The Questionnaire form was preceded by depth interviews carried out in the previous qualitative research.

### **Results**

Demographics: participants were students (35,3%), employed (25,1%), students/employed (22,6%) and subjects looking for first employment (16,2%); they live usually with their families (73%), and for the most part of them (59%) in a small town, that is sometimes perceived (33%) lacking of leisure opportunities. They come from different Italian regions (North of Italy, Center, South and Isles).

Results highlighted in young people importance of peer group in spending leisure time, patterns of undertaking risky behaviors as legal and illegal substances use, and particularly “party drugs” use, careless driving and drunken driving coming back from discos, concerts or raves. Results moreover show behaviors change in leisure time, gender differences, experiences in harm reduction and in health promotion programs.

### **Particularly:**

Young people usually spend their leisure time prevalingly *alone, at home*, then *with significant others* (as family, partner, friends), or *outside, without a planned activity, or playing sport*, or in *discos and musical events*. *Cultural activities* seem less attended. There are significant gender differences: for instance girls seem more interested in activities carried out at home or with a small group, and less in sport and in going anywhere. We can see nevertheless that *staying alone and at home* is negatively related to satisfaction in spending leisure time, that is more relevant when they stay with their peer group, or when they go outside for a walk, or in a pub.

Preferred meeting places are *pub, town squares*, and also *home*. Less chosen seem associations as *recreational clubs* or *parish groups*. Few participants state that they are often attending *gyms*.

There is a strong correlation between *closeness to substances* and some everyday activities. *Closeness to substances* is a variable that we have built on answers to these items: “to know some people who are using substances, to be present while other people are using, to receive a proposal

for using, to use”.

Musical events are strongly related to closeness to substances, as we could foresee, but also staying alone at home and going outside anywhere appear as predictive factor for substance use. On the contrary, spending time with significant others or groups seems to be a protective factor.

ANOVA shows significant differences between means, and particularly it reveals that *Closeness to substances* increases with different kind of *Meeting places*: recreational clubs and pubs are at the top, followed by town squares and home (also in this case staying at home doesn't appear a protection against drug use), and finally by gyms and parish groups.

Choosing an entertainment: what kind of criterion? *Friends presence* seem to be the most important reason for choosing an event. There are significant differences between male and female participants: the last ones seem to be more worried for *price, engagements for the day after and return time*.

About substance use: we have asked what kind of substance young people prefer, in a scale from never to rarely, 1-3 times a month, 1-3 times a week, nearly everyday. The prevalence is for alcohol abuse<sup>1</sup>, that concerns youth at least several time a month, then cannabis use and at last, with low prevalence, cocaine, LSD, heroin. From the interviews we say, nevertheless, that incidence of cocaine is increasing and also heroine is now rising, particularly in younger participants.

Gender differences are lower than in past generations, for all kinds of substances, and in both male and female seems to prevail use of recreational drugs (alcohol and cannabis).

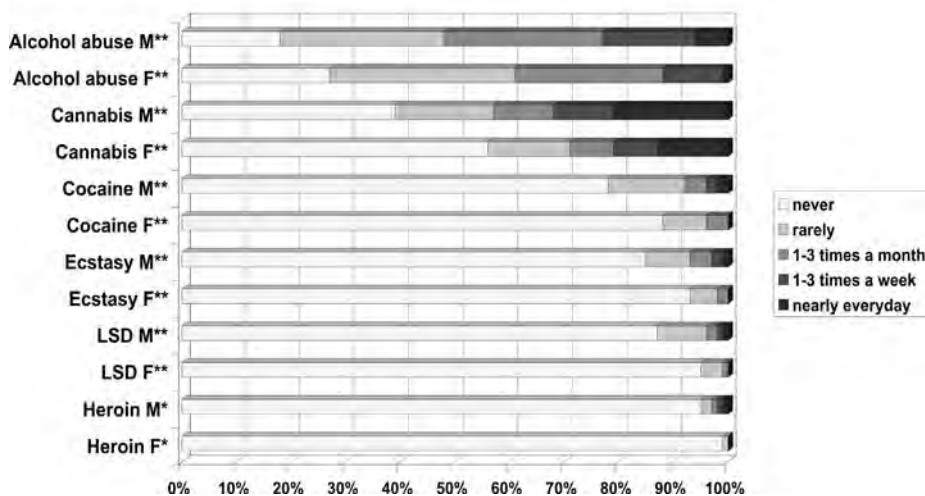


Fig. 1

The results show significant gender differences (\*= p<0,05 and \*\*= p<0,001) in way of substance use. For all the substances the use in female participants seems to be generally less frequent (Fig. 1), and it seems to concern only few of them. However a very high use, that is the habit of consuming nearly every day concerns, for instance use of *cannabis*, more

<sup>1</sup> For alcohol we considered “abuse”, and not use, according to literature, particularly in Italy when alcohol use is a social habit.

then 20% of males and more than 10% of female. We suppose, according with literature and with evidence based interventions, that the use of recreational drugs, that's cannabis, is now an "usual" practice for young people, that probably need prevention and health promotion based on youth commitment, on all behaviors in every day life and on harm reduction, rather than on indiscriminating prohibition.

Perception of prevention in leisure places: we asked participants about their perception of street outreach work that is usually carried out in leisure places in Italy. Youth that experiences risky behavior (as *Closeness to substances* and *Substance use*, *Driving while intoxicated*, *Alcohol abuse*, *Unsafe sex* and *Aggressive behaviors*) knows this work, even though they don't pay a great attention to it. The matter is that they don't think that this intervention may be addressed to them, with a sort of unrealistic optimism. What's more, the higher are undertaken risky behaviors the less is perceived importance of prevention.

We have identified then three cluster, based on importance of experienced risks. Low risk cluster concerns about 43% of participants, medium risk cluster 39% and high risk cluster 18%. Female participants are decidedly more present in low risk cluster, while male participants prevail in the medium risk cluster and above all in high risk cluster.

Low risk cluster experiences less risky behaviors, but results show increasing means for *Alcohol abuse* and *Aggressive behaviors*. Medium risk cluster undertakes several risky behaviors, and particularly *Dangerous driving*, *Closeness to substances*, *Unsafe sex*, and *Alcohol abuse*. These results may indicate need of prevention also for youth that appears as "normal" population.

For high risk cluster, more experienced behaviors seem to be *Drive while intoxicated* and *Substance use*, but we can also observe *Unsafe sex*, *Aggressive behaviors* and *Dangerous driving*.

We can think that *Driving while intoxicated* together with *Careless and dangerous driving* lead to the great number of accidents that usually happens in the week end on Italian roads.

Participants were asked about their perception of *Motivation* for substance use. They stated different motivations, and above all *Curiosity* and *Emotions seeking*.

Results show (Fig. 2) that as well that the higher is the experienced risk level, the less are perceived "problematical" motivations, as *Being agreeable to friends*, *Escaping difficulties*, *Problems at home*, *Loneliness* or *Lack of values*.

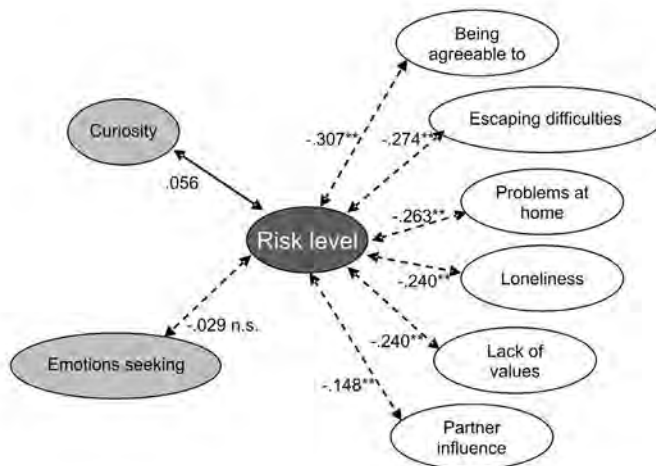


Fig. 2

Particularly for high substance users (from 1/3 times a week to nearly everyday) Curiosity and Emotions seeking reach the highest values.

High users (18% for alcohol abuse and 26% for cannabis use) are participants recruited prevalently in large towns (for instance Rome). This group will require paying attention in future researches and above all in future interventions for health promotion, analyzing also other psychological variables and personality features.

### Conclusions

Results highlighted in young people everyday activities a gap between what they are used to do (staying alone and at home) and what they wish to do (staying with significant others). Importance of peer group in spending leisure time is often pointed out. We have reached besides a better knowledge about present patterns of undertaking risky behaviors, particularly legal and illegal substances use, quite different if compared with what happened only few years ago, and quite different in high use for males and females. Other behaviors, as dangerous and drunken driving coming back from discos, concerts or raves, ask for planning specific prevention programs in the future.

Results show as well difficulties in participation in health promotion interventions, and lack of motivation in protecting themselves. Young people seem to think that perhaps outreach work in this field would be important, but not for them. It's possible that only individual prevention or school site prevention is not enough to change this kind of risk perception, while community based programs, being able to commit young people and especially the whole peer groups, would be a better practice to improve healthy behaviors.



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## Risk Behaviours in Adolescence: Risk and Protective Factors

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### **Abstract**

*This presentation put forward the preliminary results of a study undertaken in the context of a PhD dissertation on risk and protective factors linked to deviant behaviour in adolescence. The study employs a sample of 1042 adolescents (mean age 16 years), drawing from elementary and high schools of Lisbon's suburban area. Measures of deviant behaviour include drug use (alcohol, tobacco and marijuana) and antisocial behaviour (physical and verbal violence, crimes against propriety and indiscipline). Independent measures assess individual, interpersonal and contextual factors: expectations about drug use, self control, motivation and academic achievement, parenting, peers' relations, social control and social support from neighbourhood.*

*A summary of epidemiological local data is presented and the risk factors for each one of the categories of deviant behaviour are examined through a regression analysis. Statistically significant associations were found for most of the factors considered. Peer relations and expectations about drug, and sensation seeking appear to be the strongest predictors for drug use and antisocial behaviour. Parental monitoring and positive bounding to school are negatively related to both drug use and antisocial behaviour.*

**Key Words:** Drug use, antisocial behaviour, risk factors, protective factors

Adolescence is often a period of vulnerability for risk behaviours. When facing the combined psychological and physiological changes that affect this period of the lifecycle, it has been estimated that one quarter to one half of US youths experience, at some point, a tumultuous route. This vulnerability may be amplified by the influences of the social, economic and cultural changes that marked the last decades, which have affected particularly youths from urban areas where the phenomena's of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation are combined with a culture of consumption, and magic passports to pleasure, success and happiness.

The worsening of these problems has fostered several research endeavours aimed at explaining the etiology of these phenomena. A large part of this knowledge comes from the field of epidemiology and revolves around the concept of risk. Risk factors are those conditions or variables that are associated with an augmented likelihood of negative or undesirable outcomes – morbidity or mortality in classical usage, or more recently, behaviours that may compromise health, well being, or social performance (Jessor et al., 1995). The research on risk factors has become more complex in recent years, evolving from studies focused on a single variable, in a single domain to multivariate analysis which tries to map both social and personal influences over time. The interest of studying not only the conditions that may contribute to the increase of risk behaviours but also the possible factors that may protect the rise of these behaviours

brings the concept of protective factors to the fore of the research. Protective factors are being used in two different ways in the literature. Sometimes as the opposite of risk factors – *Promotive factors* (Sameroff, 1999), or as *buffering factors* that mediate or moderate the effect of exposure to risk. According to Sameroff (1999), when protective factors are regarded as the opposite of risk factors its effects manifest both in low risk populations as well as in high risk populations. When protective factors are taken as moderated variables, their effect may be null or residual in low risk populations but it is expected to be amplified in high risk populations. The methodological distinction between promotive factors and *buffering factors* demands a joint analysis of high and low risk samples.

Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller (1992), classified risk factors in two main categories: *contextual factors* and *individual and interpersonal factors*. Concerning *contextual factors*, the authors listed: factors related with laws and norms favourable toward drug use; availability of drugs; economic deprivation and neighbourhood disorganisation. Concerning *individual and interpersonal factors*, the authors mentioned: physiological factors (biochemical and genetic influences); family addiction; poor and inconsistent family management practices; family conflict; low bonding to family; early and persistent problem behaviours, academic failure; low degree of commitment to school; peer rejection in elementary grades; association to deviant peers; alienation and rebelliousness; attitudes favourable to drug use; early onset of drug use.

In the field of delinquency, Losel, Bliesener, and Kofert (1989, cit. in Kaplan, 1999) refer that since 1950 several longitudinal and cross-sectional studies have pointed to a set of common factors that are associated with delinquency: parental criminality; poor parental supervision; cruel attitudes passive or neglectfully attitudes from parents; erratic or harsh discipline mutual; conflict; large family size; socioeconomic disadvantages.

### **Purpose of the study.**

Taking these concepts as guidelines and the major findings in empirical research, this study aims to examine risk and protective factors that are linked at an individual, interpersonal and contextual level to drug consumption and antisocial behaviour.

## **METHOD**

### **Procedure**

The data used in this study was collected through self completion questionnaires, mostly in a school setting and only a few cases were gathered from dwellings of social disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

### **Participants**

Considering the methodological guidelines presented in the literature, specifically the need of comparing populations of higher and lower levels of risk as a way of examining the interplay between risk and protective factors, this study employs a combined sampling strategy, using probabilistic sampling and purposive sampling (heterogeneity sampling) (Sadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). Three samples were drawn. The larger one provides local epidemiological information about risk behaviours from the suburban area of Lisbon – Vila Franca de Xira – and consisted of a representative sample of 9th to 12th grade students of that region. The second sample is composed by 214 students enrolled in special teaching classes (students with low academic achievement and high prevalence of risk behaviours) and the third sample included 104 youths from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The total sample comprises 1042 adolescents

(age mean 16 years old, DP = 1.62). 92.4% are Caucasian, 6.3% are African and 1.3% belong to other ethnic groups.

## MEASURES

### Dependent Variables

The questionnaire included a variety of items designed to examine adolescent's risk behaviour in the areas of substance use, antisocial behaviour and sexual activity.

Three indicators of drug use (alcohol, tobacco and cannabis) were constructed based on the combination of information about prevalence (once in a lifetime, last year and last month) and frequencies of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis use. Antisocial behaviour is measured also by three indicators (indiscipline, crimes against propriety and violence) resulting from the combination of data from the prevalence and frequency of the behaviours considered. The indicator of risky sexual behaviour results from the combination of number of partners, age at first sexual intercourse, and pregnancy.

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

#### Demographic Variables

Age, sex, ethnicity, parents' educational level, and parents' occupational status were the most relevant demographic variables used in this study.

#### Personality Variables

**Sensation seeking.** The questionnaire included a reduced form containing 8 items of the Sensation Seeking Scale (Zuckerman, 2004)

**Motivation for drug use (alcohol, tobacco and marijuana).** Three scales adapted from the source scales of Wills, Sandy, and Shinar (1999) holding 21 items were used to examine the motivations for the consumption of a particular substance. Indicators of motivations for tobacco, alcohol and marijuana consumption were constructed based on a factor analysis of the scale items.

**Self control.** In order to assess self control (considering this concept as multidimensional), the questionnaire include 5 scales of good control (calm, planning, good delay of gratification, behavioural coping and cognitive coping) and 4 scales of bad self control (impulsivity, low level of delay of gratification, coping anger, coping tension) used in a number of studies by Wills and collaborators.

#### Interpersonal Factors (Relationship with Family, Peers, School and Neighbourhood)

**Relationship with School.** A scale with 21 items which included 14 items from the scale of Scholl Climate (Negreiros, 1996) and 7 items from the scale of motivation and academic achievement of Bryan and Zimmerman (2002) was used to examine several dimensions of the relationship with school.

**Parenting.** The measures of parenting included 6 scales adapted from the following source scales: Parental Support (Galambos, Barker & Almeida, 2003) Responsiveness (Paulson, 1996); Demandiness (Paulson, 1996) Parental Involvement (Paulson, 1996); Parental Monitoring (Small, 1993). Psychological Control (Barber, Olson & Sahgle, 2001).

**Peer support and conflict.** The questionnaire contains 4 items related to the perception of acceptance, support and conflict with peers.

**Affiliation with Peers.** A 19-item Scale about the perceptions of antisocial and pro-social behaviour of friends was used to examine the affiliation of deviant and not deviant peers.

**Contextual influences (School and neighbourhood).** Three scales containing items related to antisocial and pro-social behaviour of peers belonging to the same neighbourhood and school, were used to evaluate the broader influence of peers

In this domain, 5 items adapted from a sample of items used in a study by Nash and Bowen (1999) were also included in the questionnaire in order to evaluate social support and social control from the neighbourhood.

## RESULTS

### Prevalence's of Risk Behaviour in the Representative Sample

The results reveal that the substance with higher prevalence of consumption was alcohol, with 57.9% of adolescents reporting the use of this substance in the last 30 days, and 29.2% reporting drunkenness at least once in the previous year. Distilled drinks were the most consumed in the last 30 days, 26.2% of adolescents reported the use of tobacco in the past 30 days, and for marijuana the levels of use are considerable lower with 12.2% of adolescents reporting the use of this substance at least once in a lifetime, 8.1% in the last 12 months, and 4.5% in the last 30 days. Statistically significant gender differences were found in the levels of substance use. Boys reported a higher level of alcohol and marijuana use and girls reported higher levels of tobacco use. Anti-social behaviour was assessed through a combination of items drawn from several major studies of adolescent's problematic behaviour. Three dimensions has been considered: misbehaviour in school (school suspension or expulsion, bullying, and teacher's physical or verbal offences); violence (verbal offences, fist fights, gang fights, causing injury to another person who required medical treatment, and use of weapons to threaten or harm another person), property crimes and involvement in other illegal activities (robering, breaking and entering in private houses and stores, car theft, fire setting, and drugs selling). Gender differences were also found, with significantly higher prevalence of antisocial behaviours in males. Youths with school adjustment problems were significantly more vulnerable to drug use and anti-social behaviour, and presented a higher risk of pregnancy.

### Associations Among Problems Behaviour

Table 1 depicts Pearson's correlation coefficients between pair of indicators of various risk behaviours. At a first glance, it becomes salient that statistically significant associations were found among all pairs of the behaviours considered. It is worth of note the correlation between tobacco and marijuana consumption and indiscipline and also the correlations among the various antisocial behaviours (indiscipline, violence, and crimes against property). These results align with a number of previous studies (e.g., Donovan & Jessor, 1985; Negreiros, 2001) and as such contribute to reinforce the belief that risky behaviours cluster together.

Table 1 – Pearson's correlation coefficients between risk behaviours (N=1042)

	Tobacco consumption	Alcohol consumption	Marijuana consumption	Indiscipline	Violence	Crimes against property
Alcohol consumption	.39**					
Marijuana consumption	.53**	.31**				
Indiscipline	.34**	.25**	.32**			
Violence	.25**	.22**	.22**	.65**		
Crimes against property	.24**	.17**	.27**	.57**	.70**	
Sexual risk behaviours	.12*	.07	.04	.28**	.31**	.25**

### Associations Between Variables (Independent and Dependent Variables)

Table 2 and 3 show Pearson's correlation coefficients between response variables (at the following levels: individual, family, school and peer relationships) and indicators of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana consumption, indiscipline, violence and crimes against property. Only statistically significant correlations (0.1% significance level) whose coefficients are equal or greater than .10 were reported.

Table 2 – Pearson's correlation coefficients between independent variables and indicators of tobacco , alcohol and marijuana consumption

	Tobacco	Alcohol	Marijuana
Ethnicity	-	-	-.10
<b>Family problems</b>			
Mother addiction	-	-	.11
Father alcoholism	-	-	-
Mother depression	.11	.10	-
<b>Parenting</b>			
Monitoring	-.23	.19	-.22
Support	-.12	-	-
School involvement	-.17	-	-
Achievement values	-	-	-.10
Parent attitudes toward drug use	.28	-	.23
Psychological control	.12	-	-
<b>Personality and social behaviour</b>			
Sensation seeking	.25	.30	.21
Playfulness	-.14	.18	-.13
Good delay of gratification	-.19	.14	-.15
Behavioural coping	-.12	-	-
Tension coping	-.12	-	-
Calm	-.15	-	-
Cognitive coping	-.10	-	-
Impulsivity	.19	.15	.15
Anger/tension	.16	.12	-
Anger/violence	.20	.16	.12
<b>School relation</b>			
Scholl failure	.22	.12	.13
Academic achievement	-.22	-.14	-.17
Scholl motivation	-.15	-.13	-
<b>Peer relations</b>			
Youths from the same school with drug use	.15	.16	.12
Friends with consumption of alcohol and tobacco	.46	.44	.43
Friends with indiscipline and delinquent behaviour	.21	.13	.14

	Tobacco	Alcohol	Marijuana
Youths from the same neighbourhood with delinquent behaviours and use of illegal drugs	.14	-	.11
Youths from the same neighbourhood that use tobacco and alcohol	.29	.29	.24
Friends with pro-social behaviour	-.19	-	.12
Youths from the same neighbourhood with pro-social behaviour	-.12	-	-
<b>Neighbourhood relation</b>			
Social support	-.11	-	-
<b>Tobacco use motives</b>			
Emotion regulation/self enhancement	.12	-	-
Achievement	.40	-	-
Socialization	.11	-	-
<b>Alcohol use motives</b>			
Emotion regulation/self enhancement / socialization	-	.38	-
Achievement	-	.18	-
Borrow relief	-	-.12	-
<b>Marijuana use motives</b>			
Emotion regulation	-	-	.21
Achievement and health	-	-	.20
self enhancement / socialization	-	-	.15

Several statistically significant correlations emerged, ranging from .10 to .46. Stronger values were found for associations involving peers' deviant behaviour, expectations towards tobacco, alcohol and marijuana consumption, sensation seeking, academic achievement and parental monitoring practices.

Table 3 – Pearson's correlation coefficients between independent variables and indicators of indiscipline, violence and crimes against property

	Indiscipline	Violence	Crimes against
Ethnicity	-	.14	-
<b>Family problems</b>			
Parental divorce	-	.10	-
Father addiction	.11	.15	.11
Father alcoholism	.12	.11	-
<b>Parenting</b>			
Monitoring	-.29	-.24	-.16
Support	-.16	-.14	-
School involvement	-.16	-.11	-
Achievement values	-.16	-.12	-
Parent attitudes toward drug use	.11	-	.10

	Indiscipline	Violence	Crimes against
Parent attitudes toward delinquent behaviour	.10	.10	-
Psychological control	.15	.15	.12
Behavioural control	-.10	-.11	-.12
<b>Personality and social behaviour</b>			
Sensation seeking	.30	.25	.19
Playfulness	-.16	-	-
Good delay of gratification	-.17	-.12	-.10
Behavioural coping	-.10	-	-
Impulsivity	.27	.21	.15
Anger/tension	.13	.15	-
Anger/violence	.34	.31	.23
<b>School relation</b>			
Academic achievement	-.32	-.26	-.21
Scholl motivation	-.11	-	-
Teacher's and school support	-.13	-.09	-.11
<b>Peer relations</b>			
Peer Support	-	-.11	-
Acceptance from peers	.10	.15	.12
Youths from the same school with drug use	.11	.16	.17
Friends with consumption of alcohol and tobacco	.26	.22	.16
Friends with indiscipline and delinquent behaviour	.45	.51	.38
Youths from the same neighbourhood with delinquent behaviours and use of illegal drugs	.19	.24	.16
Youths from the same neighbourhood that use tobacco and alcohol	.15	-	-
Friends with pro-social behaviour	-.30	-.25	-.18
Youths from the same neighbourhood with pro-social behaviour	-.14	-.10	-
<b>Neighbourhood relation</b>			
Social support	-.16	-.14	-
Social Control	-.10	-.11	-.12

### Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Drawing on the previous results and in order to disclose the causal direction between variables, hierarchical regression analysis was carried out for each one of the response variables (tobacco, alcohol and marijuana consumption, indiscipline, violence and crimes against property), taking only those indicators flagged as the strongest correlations as explanatory variables.

In the first step, the variables with a more remote influence on risk behaviours were selected (personality structure, family issues, parental practices).

In the second step, only possible intervening variables between the first set of variables and the risk behaviours, that is to say, social skills were considered.

In the third step, the variables believed to impact more directly on drug consumption and anti-social behaviour (expectations toward consumptions, peers' influence and academic



achievement) were further added to the model

The results of the abovementioned regression analysis can be found on Tables A1 to A5 (see Appendix). Taken altogether, 19 to 38% of the variability of response variables on the sample is explained by the explanatory variables. Variables included on step one and step three of the regression analysis show strong predictable power.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

A first conclusion we can draw from the results of this study, concerns the fact that the different forms of risk behaviours are strongly associated, assumption confirmed in different studies on this subject (Donovan & Jessor, 1985; Negreiros, 2001).

A second conclusion, concerns the existence of different risk and protection factors at a individual, family and social levels, common to the different risk behaviour considered, conclusion that once again aligns in the direction of the results found in the field of research carried out on this matter.

This conclusion leads to the need of privileging an intervention targeting the risk in adolescence issue, in a comprehensive, integrated way, able to take into account the cumulative effect of risk (Bartko, Baldwin, Baldwin & Seifer, 1999), since partial interventions targeted at a particular risk factor, by itself, may not lead to expected results. This integrated approach does not invalidate, however, the need of taking into account the specificity of the factors identified at each level of analysis as assuming greater predictive power of the different risk behaviours.

Among these factors, and taking into account the variables that were the subject of this study, it can be referred, at the individual level, the tendency of young people with risk behaviours to seek strong sensations. Sensation seeking (need to experience new and exciting experiences, situations of danger and adventure; Zukerman, 1978), is one of the factors noted in various studies as a predictor of drug use (Tarter, Moss & Vanyukov, 1995; Zucker, 1994; Wills, Vaccaro & McNamara, 1992).

At the level of individual variables, it is also pointed out in the field of social and academic skills the fact that risk behaviours are associated with the lack of social skills, namely, poor self-control (impulsive behaviour, anger and difficulty to delay gratification), poor academic achievement and low commitment to school. Note that these skills are more correlated with antisocial behaviour than with the consumption of drugs.

Also in the field of individual factors, and more specifically in terms of expectations towards drug use, young people who consume more tobacco, alcohol and marijuana are the ones holding the most positive expectations regarding the consequences of consumption of these substances. The expectations towards the effects of drug use are one of the variables that present higher correlation with the consumption behaviour. This result converges with the findings of other studies that came into account with this predictor (Wills, Sandy, & Shin, 1999; Wills, Sandy, & Yaeger, 2002). Among these positive expectations it is pointed out the possibility of drugs playing a positive role in the regulation of emotions (reduction of the malaise associated with the psychological states of anxiety, anger, sadness and induction of states of relaxation), self enhancement and self confidence and finally, the function of consumption of these substances in facilitating the socialization and relationship with the other. Conversely, young people who have more negative expectations about the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana are those with lower levels of consumption of these substances. Of note, only for the consumption of tobacco,

negative expectations assume greater predictive weight for consumption of this substance, than positive expectations (this result does not concern, however, the effects of the consumption in physical health but as regarding the possibility of tobacco to constrain the achievement of future goals). Therefore it seems that both the young consumers and non-consumers have similar beliefs about the consequences of smoking to physical health. Regarding the consumption of alcohol, positive expectations are more determinants than negative expectations on the distinction between consumers and non consumers and, in the consumption of marijuana, the weights of negative and positive expectations become more proximal.

With regard to family factors, we found some positive correlations, though reduced, among certain family problems and young people's risk behaviour, being the mother's depression more critical for drug use and drug addiction and alcoholism of father more critical for anti-social behaviour and the separation of parents to the sexual risk behaviour. In the domain of parenting, monitoring practices appear to be the factor with greater weight in the protection of risk behaviour, then comes involvement of parents in school tasks and expectations and values of achievement towards school and, finally, is the acceptance and support of parents (this negative associations are stronger for anti-social behaviour). In the opposite direction, practices characterized by withdrawal of love as a form of punishment and permissiveness, are positively associated with risk behaviour, particularly with regard to anti-social behaviour (indiscipline, violence, crimes against property).

Regarding peers relationship, the results of this study point out to the fact that the association to friends with deviant behaviour and the perception of school and neighbourhood environments marked by young people with deviant behaviour are strongly associated with the consumption of drugs and anti-social behaviour of young people. The influence of peers, appears therefore to constitute itself as one of the factors, in addition to the expectations towards drug use, more decisive in the explanation of deviant behaviour (these results align themselves once more with the findings of other studies that included this factor among the set of predictive variables; Wills, Sandy & Yaeger, 2002; Wills, Sandy & Shin, 1999). Of note, that most of the more distal factors, at the level of parental attitudes and practices, problematic in families, also appear correlated with the tendency of young people to be associated with deviant peers. The association with deviant peers may therefore play a mediator role of the effects of these more distal factors in behaviour.

Finally, and with regard to socio-demographic factors analyzed in this study, we are highlighting the significant differences found in levels of consumption of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana and antisocial behaviour associated with gender. Girls presented higher prevalence of tobacco use and boys higher levels of consumption of alcohol and marijuana. Boys also show considerably more anti-social behaviour than girls. Also to emphasize the influence of ethnic group regarding the consumption of marijuana, and for violence and sexual risk behaviour. Noting that African youths consume less marijuana than Caucasian, but they tend to engage in more anti-social behaviours, particularly physical violence and to engage themselves in sexual risk behaviour.

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**APPENDIX**

Table A1 – Tobacco consumption in function of parenting, sensation seeking, self control peer relations, school relation drug use motives: hierarchical regression analysis (N = 1042)

Predictor	r	Coefficients <i>beta</i> and probabilities						Multiple correlation	R <sup>2</sup> Change
		Step 1		Step 2		Step 3			
		$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>		
<b>Step 1</b>									
Mather depression	.11	.07	.012	.06	.024	.05	.040	R= .42 <i>p</i> =.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .18 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .18	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .18 <i>p</i> < .000
Parental attitudes toward drug use	.28	.26	.000	.26	.000	.10	.000		
Monitoring	-.23	-.15	.000	-.10	.002	-.07	.029		
School involvement	-.17	-.10	.001	-.09	.003	-.03	.250		
Sensation seeking	.25	.18	.000	.14	.000	.04	.131		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Good delay of gratification	-.19			-.04	.171	.02	.487	R= .45 <i>p</i> =.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .20 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .19	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .02 <i>p</i> < .000
Calm	-.14			-.06	.072	-.04	.166		
Impulsivity	.19			.06	.050	.06	.037		
Anger/tension	.16			.03	.333	.01	.780		
Anger/violence	.20			.05	.133	.08	.006		
<b>Step 3</b>									
Positive motivation to tobacco use /achievement)	.40					.27	.000	R= .60 <i>p</i> =.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .36 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .35	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .16 <i>p</i> < .000
School achievement	-.22					-.07	.012		
School motivation	-.14					-.05	.070		
Friends with alcohol an tobacco use	.46					.24	.000		
Youths from the same neighborhood that use alcohol and tobacco	.29					.06	.055		
Friends with pro-social behavior	-.19					-.02	.535		

Table A2 – Alcohol consumption in function of parenting, sensation seeking, self control peer relations, school relation, drug use motives: regression analysis (N = 1042)

Predictor	r	Coefficients <i>beta</i> and probabilities						Multiple correlation	R <sup>2</sup> Change
		Step 1		Step 2		Step 3			
		$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>		
<b>Step 1</b>									
Mather depression	.10	.06	.031	.06	.042	.04	.121	R= .44 <i>p</i> =.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .20 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .19	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .20 <i>p</i> <.000
Parental attitudes toward drug use	.33	.30	.000	.29	.000	.14	.000		
Monitoring	-.19	-.13	.000	-.11	.001	-.05	.075		
Sensation seeking	.30	.24	.000	.22	.000	.11	.000		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Good delay of gratification	-.14			-.04	.152	.00	.887	R= .45 <i>p</i> =.10 R <sup>2</sup> = .20 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .20	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .01 <i>p</i> <.000
Impulsivity	.15			.02	.477	.03	.344		
Anger/tension	.16			.00	.908	.01	.825		
Anger/violence	.12			.05	.154	.02	.543		
<b>Step 3</b>									
Positive motives to Alcohol use (emotion regulation/ self enhancement/ socialization)	.38					.22	.000	R= .57 <i>p</i> =.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .32 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .32	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .12 <i>p</i> <.000
Positive motives to Alcohol use/ achievement	.18					.10	.000		
School achievement	-.14					-.02	.449		
Youths from the same school with drug use	.16					-.01	.698		
Friends with alcohol an tobacco use	.44					.23	.000		
Youths from the same neighborhood that use alcohol and tobacco	.29					.07	.031		

Table A3 – Marijuana consumption as a function of parenting, sensation seeking, self control, peer relations, school relation, drug use motives: regression analysis (N = 1042)

Predictor	r	Coefficients beta and probabilities						Multiple correlation	R <sup>2</sup> Change
		Step1		Step 2		Step 3			
		β	p	β	p	β	p		
<b>Step 1</b>									
Mather addiction	.11	.21	.009	.07	.013	.083	.002	R= .35 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .12 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .12	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .12 p< .000
Monitoring	-.22	.20	.000	-.15	.000	-.082	.014		
Parents attitudes toward drug use	.23	-.17	.000	.21	.000	.076	.010		
Parent’s achievement values	-.10	.43	.644	-.01	.842	-.031	.318		
Sensation seeking	.21	.24	.000	.13	.000	.047	.134		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Playfulness	-.13			-.02	.553	-.011	.753	R= .36 p=.186 R <sup>2</sup> = .13 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .12	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .01 p< .000
Good delay of gratification	-.15			-.04	.332	.006	.877		
Impulsivity	.15			.05	.138	.037	.222		
Anger/Tension	.12			-.01	.800	-.031	.329		
<b>Step 3</b>									
Positive motivation to Alcohol use (emotion regulation)	.21					.104	.000	R= .51 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .26 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .25	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .13 p< .000
Positive motivation to Alcohol use (achievement and health)	.20					.130	.000		
Scholl achievement	-.17					-.066	.034		
Friends with alcohol an tobacco use	.43					.322	.000		
Youths from the same neighborhood that use alcohol and tobacco	.24					.030	.341		
Friends with pro-social behavior	-.11					.059	.052		

Table A4 – Indiscipline as a function of parenting, sensation seeking, self control, peer relations, school

relation: regression analysis (N = 1042)

Predictor	r	Coefficients <i>beta</i> and probabilities						Multiple correlation	R <sup>2</sup> Change
		Step1		Step2		Step 3			
		$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>		
<b>Step 1</b>									
Father addiction	.11	-.32	.051	.047	.104	.03	.203	R= .42 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .18 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .17	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .18 p< .000
Father alcoholism	.12	.16	.008	.083	.004	.07	.009		
Monitoring	-.29	.45	.000	-.140	.000	-.04	.307		
Parental support	-.16	.26	.005	.102	.013	.04	.337		
Parental School involvement	-.16	.19	.055	-.063	.063	-.02	.633		
Psychological control	.15	.15	.006	.010	.752	.01	.860		
Parent's achievement values	-.16	-.30	.009	-.070	.040	-.01	.813		
Sensation seeking	.30	.24	.000	.146	.000	.09	.002		
Teacher support	-.13	-.32	.000	-.103	.000	-.08	.003		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Playfulness	-.16			-.012	.735	-.02	.520	R= .47 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .22 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .21	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .05 p< .000
Good delay of gratification	-.17			.000	1.000	.05	.152		
Impulsivity	.27			.094	.003	.09	.004		
Anger / violence	.34			.165	.000	.11	.001		
<b>Step 3</b>									
Academic achievement	-.32					-.15	.000	R= .58 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .33 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adjust</sub> = .32	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .11 p< .000
Youths from the same school with indiscipline and delinquent behaviour	.16					-.04	.230		
Friends with indiscipline and delinquent behaviour	.45					.25	.000		
Friends with alcohol an tobacco use	.26					.03	.431		
Friends with pro-social behavior	-.30					-.08	.011		
School failure	.24					.07	.013		

Table A5 – Violence as a function of parenting, sensation seeking, self control peer relations, school relation: regression analysis (N = 1042)

Predictor	r	Coefficients beta and probabilities						Multiple correlation	R <sup>2</sup> Change
		Step 1		Step 2		Step 3			
		β	p	β	p	β	p		
<b>Step 1</b>									
Father alcoholism	.11	.05	.121	.05	.071	.03	.266	R= .37 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .14 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .13	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .14 p< .000
Father addiction	.15	.11	.000	.10	.001	.09	.002		
Ethnicity	.14	.12	.000	.11	.000	.03	.262		
Monitoring	-.24	-.17	.000	-.13	.001	-.01	.775		
Parental support	-.13	.06	.110	.05	.159	.00	.895		
Psychological control	.15	.10	.001	.04	.224	.03	.341		
Parent's achievement values	-.12	-.04	.275	-.02	.625	.03	.286		
Sensation seeking	.25	.20	.000	.13	.000	.06	.058		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Good delay of gratification	-.12			-.01	.789	.04	.210	R= .41 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .17 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .16	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .03 p< .000
Impulsivity	.21			.07	.040	.04	.183		
Anger/Tension	.15			.02	.616	.00	.870		
Anger / violence	.31			.18	.000	.10	.002		
<b>Step 3</b>									
School failure	.22					.07	.010	R= .57 p=.000 R <sup>2</sup> = .32 R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ajust</sub> = .31	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub> = .15 p< .000
Academic achievement	-.26					-.09	.002		
Youths from the same school with indiscipline and delinquent behavior	.14					-.09	.002		
Friends with indiscipline and delinquent behavior	.51					.39	.000		
Friends with alcohol an tobacco use	.22					.01	.783		
Youths from the same neighborhood With delinquent behavior	.24					.05	.076		
Friends pro/social behaviour	-.25					-.04	.153		



## Sense of community in adolescence

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### Abstract

*In adolescence, Sense of Community (SoC) grows thanks to positive experiences with peers and significant adults in different settings (e.g., neighbourhoods, schools) and contributes to the development of personal and social identity and to positive developmental outcomes. In order to study SoC during this developmental period, it is important to develop instruments that adequately capture adolescents' feelings and experiences within the community.*

*This paper describes the process of construction of an instrument to measure Sense of community among adolescents. A series of qualitative and quantitative studies lead to the identification of five dimensions of SoC, consistent with McMillan & Chavis (1986) model, that are relevant for this age group: sense of belonging, support and emotional connection with the community, support and emotional connection with peers, satisfaction of needs and opportunities for involvement, opportunities for influence. The scale, both in its complete (36 items) and short (20 items) version, demonstrated good psychometric properties, and positively correlates with perceived social support and well being. SoC referred to the hometown decreases across the adolescent years. Results of research conducted using this instrument indicated the important role of SoC in enhancing social participation during adolescence, and its contributing role in increasing social well being.*

**Key words:** Sense of community, measurement, adolescence, social participation

### Introduction

Belonging to a community where people feel connected, supported and influential has to do with a "fundamental human phenomenon of collective experience" (Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008, 62). Collective experiences are the basis for the development of Sense of Community.

In adolescence, in particular, Sense of Community (SoC) grows thanks to positive experiences with peers and significant adults in different settings (e.g., neighbourhoods, schools) and can give important contributions to the development of personal and social identity and to positive developmental outcomes. Given such relevance, it is important to develop instruments to capture adolescents' feelings and experiences within the community.

In this context we will briefly illustrate the development of an instrument for measuring Sense of community in adolescence and some lines of research we conducted to investigate SoC in this developmental period.

### **How to measure Sense of community in adolescence**

Research studies on Sense of community in adolescence have mainly used adult scales (e.g., SCI; cf. Pretty, Andrews, & Collett, 1994; Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996) or ad hoc scales developed through content analysis of interviews (e.g., Chipuer, Pretty, Delorey, Miller, Powers, Rumstein, et al., 1999). It was unclear whether the adult scales adequately represent the nature and the experience of community for adolescents.

Studies conducted on Italian adolescents using the Italian Scale of Sense of community for adults (Prezza, Costantini, Chiarolanza, & Di Marco, 1999) confirmed that instruments developed for adults are not well suited for younger populations, both in terms of item formulation and differences in factor structure (e.g., Zani, Cicognani, & Albanesi, 2001; Albanesi, Zani, & Cicognani, 2004). For such reasons, a research programme was initiated, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, with the aim to develop a scale which could be suitable for young people.

A qualitative study, using focus group interviews, was conducted in order to investigate young people's meanings and understanding of community and sense of community (Albanesi, Cicognani, & Zani, 2005) and verify whether McMillan & Chavis's (1986) dimensions of SoC were appropriate to conceptualize SoC also during adolescence.

Three leading questions drove our study:

Which kinds (local, virtual or relational) of communities are relevant in adolescents' experience?

What are their feelings and their experiences about community?

Is influence a relevant dimension of adolescents' SoC ?

To collect data we asked young people to tell us what "community" meant to them, which were the required characteristics in order to talk about community, and, if any, to which kind of community they felt they belonged. We asked them to indicate the reasons for their belonging to a particular community, what could endanger their bond with the community, and what could reinforce it. Moreover we discussed with youngsters what they did in practice in order to affirm that they belonged to their community, and if having power or influence was important in order to feel part of a community. Finally, we asked them if being part of a community is always positive or if it can have negative (dark) sides (e.g., feeling of being trapped, impotence).

Data collected were analysed following a grounded theory approach. The analysis produced two groups of hierarchical descriptive categories, one referred to the term "community" and the other referring to "Sense of Community" (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1

Categories about “community” emerged from focus group discussions

C O M M U N I T Y	CATEGORIES		
	Community Concept		Terms related to community
			Examples of community
			Collectivity (vs community)
			Borders – dimensions - place
			Important characteristics
			Negative aspects for a community
	Differences between different kind of community	Virtual community	
		Forced community	
		Spontaneous community	
		Neighbourhood	
		Local community	Collectivity
			Strengths
			Weaknesses
			Aims and objectives
Community one belongs to		Kind	
		Strengths	

Figure 2

Categories about “Sense of Community” emerged from focus group discussions

S O C	CATEGORIES		
	Changes and development		
	Belonging	Belonging to local community	
		What effects sense of belonging	Primary needs
			Familiarity
			Primary group
	Belonging and sense of responsibility		
	Influence and power	Opportunities to influence community	
		Belonging and influence	
		How community influences individuals	
	Needs	Youths’ needs	
	Emotional Connection	Youths’ feelings	Adult influence
(reciprocal) lack of trust toward politics			
Distrust toward local administration			
Social Cohesion			
Relationships, bonds, ties			

Results indicated that the term “Community” is associated with words related to bonding (sharing, brotherhood, acceptance, support) in the context of specific relationships (friendship, family). Young people experience difficulties to conceive a community without a direct (face to face) contact among members and without a place allowing such interactions. The local community for adolescents is:

a) a place for experimenting feelings of belonging; this requires familiarity and experiences with the context;

b) a place “not chosen”, allowing the satisfaction of material needs (cf., Obst & White, 2007 on differences in levels of SoC between self selected and “not chosen communities”). The peer group is the context for satisfying relational needs (a nested community within the local community, cf. Brodsky & Marx, 2001).

Influence refers to the opportunity to participate and to contribute to the life of the community through vote, individual and collective action, and it is fundamental for experiencing feelings of membership; however, contexts allowing to experience it are limited and previous experiences of influence have been unsatisfactory.

According to these results a new scale was developed, including both items drawn from previous instruments (the Italian Scale of Sense of community by Prezza et al., 1999; the NYI by Chipuer et al., 1999; the SCI by Perkins et al., 1990) and new items taking into account the results of the focus group interviews, in the effort to measure SoC according to the needs and experiences of this developmental phase. The new scale was meant to measure SoC referred to the local community (country or city), considering it both as a geographical context and a locus of meaningful social relations for adolescents (Puddifoot, 1996). More specifically, the process of scale construction involved the following steps:

1) *Selection of items from pre-existing scales*: in particular, we excluded items referred to specific past experiences of influence because they were not relevant for adolescents (relevant experience of influence reported during focus group discussions referred mainly to school or religious groups and not to local community); we included items measuring shared emotional connection with the community as a whole (*People in this place support each others; People in my town work together to improve things, Many people in this town are willing to help each others*).

2) *Adaptation of some items*: in order to have the possibility to use the scale for the assessment of SoC with reference to different territorial contexts, we formulated the items using specific terms (e.g., this place, which could be easily replace by the name of the town, or this/my town, etc.) and we included specific instructions for its completion.

3) *Reframing of some items*: items measuring influence and needs satisfaction were modified by using a language closer to adolescents' experiences (e.g., *If only we had the opportunity, we (youngsters) could organize something good for this town; In this place there are many situations and initiatives which are able to involve young people like me*). Moreover, since youths' lack of commitment in their community was a core topic of discussion in all focus groups, we included an item assessing perceived opportunities to exert influence on the local community with respect to the improvement of quality of life (*Honestly I feel that, if we engage more, we would be able to improve things for young people in this town*).

4) *Inclusion of new items* referred to support and emotional connection with peers (*I like to stay with other adolescents of this town*) and with the local community (*In this town people look for each others and want to stay together*).

The final version of the instrument, emerging from the validation study (Cicognani, Albanesi, & Zani, 2006), includes 5 subscales, for a total of 36 items (response alternatives ranging from 0 = *not at all true* to 4 = *completely true*) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3  
The Sense of Community Scale for Adolescents

<b>Satisfaction of needs and opportunities for involvement</b> (α .82)
In this place there are enough initiatives for young people
In this place it's easy to find information about things that interest young people
In this place young people can find many opportunities to amuse themselves
This place gives me opportunities to do many different things
There are many activities that young people can do in my town
In this place there are many situations and initiatives which are able to involve young people like me
In this place there are enough opportunities to meet other boys and girls
<b>Support and emotional connection with peers</b> (α .90)
I spend a lot of time with other adolescents that live in this place
Many of my real friends are young people that live in this town
I like to stay with other adolescents that live in this town
In this place, I feel I can share experiences and interests with other young people
I think I have a lot in common with other young people that live here
In this place there are people able to stay beside me if I need it
If I need a little help, I can ask for it to someone who lives in my town .
If I feel like talking I can generally find someone in my town to chat to
There are people here that represent an important source of moral support for me
In this place it's not difficult to find someone that can give some advice, if I have to take some decisions
<b>Support and Emotional connection in the community</b> (α .81)
People in my town collaborate together.
People in this place support each others
People in my town work together to improve things.
Many people in this town are willing to help each others
In my town people look for each other and get along well.
People in my town are willing to share things.
<b>Sense of Belonging</b> (α .85)
I think this is a good place to live in
This is a pretty town
I feel like I belong to this town
I feel safe here
As compared to others, my town has many advantages
Some of our local holidays and celebrations attract many people because they are very nice and well organized
During local holidays and celebrations, I' feel proud to live here
I like to notice that when some local events are organized many people participate and get involved
In this town there are many places loved and appreciated by all inhabitants
<b>Opportunities for influence</b> (α .71)
Honestly I feel that, if we engage more, we would be able to improve things for young people in this town
If only we had the opportunity, I think that we could be able to organize something special for our town.
If the people here were to organize they would have good chance of reaching their desired goals
I think that people who live here could change things that are not properly working for the community

The instrument showed good psychometric properties, good stability over time ( $r = .88$ ) and good construct validity. It correlates positively with life satisfaction and perceived support from friends and the family.

More recently, attempts to develop a shorter version of the scale (20 items) have also been made (cf. Cicognani, Menezes, Nata, & Marcon, 2007). Results of the validation study indicate that the short version has good psychometric properties (Cicognani & Chiessi, 2009).

### **Sense of Community and its relationship with adolescent social and political participation and well being**

Results of studies conducted using this instrument indicated the following. Scores on sense of community are higher in the dimensions *Opportunities for influence*, and *Sense of belonging*, and lower for *Support and emotional connection in the community*, suggesting that opportunities for adolescents to exert influence over their community are a critical aspect in the development of sense of belonging. This result is consistent with Evans (2007, 704): "SoC for these teens is incomplete without the experience of power (...) power comes from developing capacity, experiencing voice and reasonance, and having opportunities to play meaningful roles in the context of caring adult support and challenge".

Moreover, for adolescents the dimension *Support and emotional connection with peers* scores higher than *Support and emotional connection in the community*, confirming that at this age, the peer group is a more significant context for social interaction (a "nested community" within the territorial community).

As regards age differences, results indicate that SoC decreases with age, and particularly the dimensions *Satisfaction of needs and opportunities for involvement* and *Support and emotional connection in the community*: this result suggests that as adolescents grow, they find their town as less adequate in satisfying their changing needs (cf. also Cicognani, Albanesi, & Zani, 2008; Cicognani, Zani, & Albanesi, submitted). As stated by Evans (2007, 706): "evidence shows that young people's global SoC decreases as they move through high school – no doubt due in large part to the mismatch between their increasing need to exert influence and the lack of meaningful roles afforded by them". In fact, "as teen age, they congregate in areas away from neighbourhood and thus feel less connected and have less opportunities to influence the neighbourhood" (695-696).

As regards gender, results are not consistent: some studies did not find differences (Cicognani et al., 2006; Albanesi, Cicognani, & Zani, 2007) but others indicated higher scores for males (Cicognani, Albanesi, & Zani, 2008; Zani & Cicognani, 2008; cf. also Albanesi et al., 2004). Gender differences in adolescent SoC should be further examined: it is still unclear to what extent they are an effect of different experiences of specific communities (with males having more opportunities to explore different ways of belonging, receiving more support from adult members of the community and having the opportunity to belong to a wider range of communities) or an effect of different perceptions of the community. Colarossi and Eccles (2003), provided different explanations of gender differences in social support involving both gender role-related behaviours and beliefs about communality: even if the authors did not clarify the causal path that lead males to receive more support from adults compared to females, their findings could be an interesting starting point in order to verify and understand gender differences in SoC.

As regards the size of the town, adolescents living in small towns score higher on SoC, particularly on *Satisfaction of needs and opportunities for involvement, Support and emotional connection with peers* and *Support and emotional connection in the community* (Albanesi et al., 2007). This result is consistent with studies on adult population (Prezza et al., 1999).

As regards group membership, scores in SoC are higher among adolescents who belong to a formal group than among those who do not belong to any group. This result holds particularly for religious groups and sports groups, and differences concern mostly *Sense of belonging, Satisfaction of needs and opportunities for involvement, Support and emotional connection with peers, Support and emotional connection in the community* and, in case of religious groups, *Opportunities for influence*.

As regard participation we found that SoC has positive correlations with both protest oriented and prosocial-oriented civic engagement (Albanesi et al., 2007): this result is consistent with our previous studies that showed that adolescents and young people who participate more to local community life have higher SoC compared to less involved youth (Zani, Cicognani, & Albanesi, 2004) and with a general recognition of the relevance of participation in order to increase adolescent' SoC (Pretty, 2002; Evans, 2007). Other studies (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2007) have shown that "sense of community connectedness" is a significant predictor of civic commitment and that it reinforces individuals' willingness to engage for the benefit of their neighbourhoods. Overall, these studies emphasise the need to deserve particular attention to the relationships between SoC, social and political participation: in fact, SoC can play a significant role in the development of attitudes toward politics and in willingness to be involved in political processes (Boeckmann & Tyler 2002). These issues are very important, notably nowadays, a period characterized by a constant decline in political participation, particularly among the younger generations.

A result that is consistent through all our studies is the significant role of SoC in influencing young people's social well being (Zani et al., 2004): SoC increases social well being directly when studied in deprived context (Cicognani et al., in press), and mediates the relation between group membership and social well being when we studied it in connection with civic engagement (Albanesi et al., 2007). SoC exerts its positive effect increasing the adoption of active coping strategies, especially among female adolescents. These results are consistent with a bulk of literature that emphasizes the protective effect of family, school and community relationship against adolescent loneliness (Pretty et al., 1994), depression and anxiety (McGraw, Moore, Fuller, & Bates, 2008) and their importance in determining wellbeing (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007). However, they also suggest that the way contexts are perceived (and not only their objective characteristics) is relevant in order to understand contextual effects on stress, coping and wellbeing. On the relationship between SoC and residential stress our results suggested that at least in some circumstances, a stronger emotional investment in the community might lead to a more critical attitude towards what happens within it, and may possibly become a source of stress when ones' expectations are not met (Cicognani et al., 2008). However this topic should be further examined: in a different research (Cicognani et al., in press) we found that when using the global score of SoC its effect on stress was not significant, but using its dimensions we found a significant effect of *sense of belonging* in reducing stress levels.

McWayne, McDermott, Fantuzzo & Culhane (2007) suggest that in order to understand

neighbourhood and community effects on child development, information about multiple dimensions of the physical and social aspects of their neighbourhood should be collected: our studies confirm that SoC is one of them, but posit the question of levels of specificity we want to apply to when using it.

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# Community Critical Psychologies: Ideological Convergence Despite Geographical Dispersion

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At first sight there appear to be, internationally, many diverse, radical, manifestations of ‘community psychology’ but we share a belief that international community psychology has gradually become decreasingly diverse and decreasingly radical the more it has become academically and professionally established and evangelised and is now endangered as a critical alternative to the disciplinary ideologies, theories, procedures and practices of mainstream psychology. As a consequence, in our view, the interests of people whose lives are most characterised by immiseration, suffering, social injustice and oppression are increasingly blighted and increasingly threatened. However, we believe that these reactionary developments were and are not inevitable and can be reversed by those collectively committed to community critical psychology.

In this paper, despite many differences in our constituting contexts, approaches and work, we come together in solidarity as community *critical* psychologists to emphasise our common commitment to the development and enactment of community *critical* psychologies, and our common opposition to the dominant community (acritical) psychologies. The ordering of terms is significant here. We are committed to the wider spectrum of critical psychologies which expose and contest community injustice and misery rather than to the subset of community psychologies which are critical in standpoint. We are critical in relation to oppressive and unjust societal arrangements but also critical in relation to community psychologies, and other manifestations of ‘psy’, which collude with or actually construct and maintain oppression and injustice.

Although the concept of community is central to community critical psychology, we believe it is remarkable how seldom and how superficially the notion of community has been subjected to critical i.e. historical, political and ideological critique by community psychologists who use the term.

In dominant discourses “community” is usually positioned either as a ‘safe’, ‘warm’, ‘friendly’ ‘place’ or community is positioned as marginal, amoral, anomic or foreboding, forbidding and frightening. Because the uncritical construction of community can lead to a justification for processes of ‘othering’, exclusion and apartheid-construction through boundary drawing, we believe that we have an obligation as community critical psychologists to critically reflect on the concept of community, to clarify to which community we refer when we use the term ‘community’,

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to consider who is being 'othered' by being placed outside of 'community', through our talk, thought and action, and to theorise how the concept has been constructed historically and is reconstructed and deployed today. This is especially the case when community is positioned as a place of familiarity (shared interests, shared space, shared identity and so on) and othering is achieved through positioning in terms of alien exteriority.

The concept of community has been transformed and employed by various interest groups for varying political and economic purposes and is rooted in regulation. For example, historically, the concept of community was tied to the management of workers under colonial direct rule in East Africa where 'community' was constructed to classify and regulate South Asian immigrant skilled manual workers. The construct 'tribe' had been used to administer the African workforce but this was regarded as inappropriate for South Asian workers so a new concept had to be created. During the dramatic social upheavals of the English Industrial Revolution, community was reconstructed to transfer the regulation of society from regulation by nature (agriculture and artisanship) i.e. to the regulation of society through bureaucratic social administration and the mechanisation of working practices (agribusiness, commerce and industry). More recently, in the UK, community was incorporated in 'third-way politics' – transferring responsibility away from social institutions to 'communities' with the consequence that 'community' has become the site of a political project which mediates between the individual and social institutions.

It is therefore essential for community critical psychologists to undertake critical analyses of "community" because it is important to understand the constitutive material, social, socio-economic, cultural, ideological and discursive contexts within which attempts are made to anchor its meaning, the ideological purposes for which it is invoked and the types of subordination it creates.

This larger context, within which the objects of study and intervention of community psychology are in contemporary times inevitably immersed, is in perpetual socio-economic, cultural, political, ideological and historical flux. We believe that contemporary 'hyper-', 'late-', 'post-', 'liquid-' or 'modern-' societies are impossible to comprehend on the basis of single organizing principles, as at least appeared to be the case in the past when traditional societal organizations seemed more stable, rigid and *simple*, i.e. less complex, and more predictable. Contemporary societies have become increasingly characterised by: paradox and contradiction; developmental trends working in divergent and sometimes opposite directions; accelerating social change, unremitting scientific and technological innovation; rampant ubiquitous consumerism; elimination of common cultural/collective reference points; the gradual disappearance of successive grand meta-narratives and the emergence of individualising, life narratives. Relations between traditional societies and contemporary ones have, in other words, been ruptured.

We believe these changes have cumulatively changed the means through which personal existence can be rendered meaningful and as a consequence: people have found it increasingly difficult to construct a sufficiently coherent understanding of themselves and the social world in which they live; isolated and victimised persons have been blamed for their own social exclusion, unemployment or having been 'othered' in myriad ways; and governmentality has been increasingly achieved through uniquely subtle modes of control in which psychology has been central because both constructing 'known' psychological dimensions of 'reality' and itself being a manifestation of the psychologised-therapeutic cultures which it has played a part in constructing.

'Community' is an ambiguous concept which has, in diverse lay and expert discourses, a wide variety of sometimes contradictory meanings, serving the interests of a wide variety of ideologically distinct interest groups. The growing individualisation and privatisation of life has been paralleled by a mythologizing of 'community' which has ignored the often inegalitarian and unfair aspects of communities and refrained from consideration of the problematic specificities of particular communities in their socio-historical context i.e. power imbalances associated with ethnocentrism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, sexism, embodied diversity and, especially, patriarchy and colonisation.

We believe that colonialist practices constitute one of the most important causes of community mental health problems. There are a number of examples of colonialist practices to be drawn upon. However, here, we focus upon problematic uncritical western funded projects misleadingly referred to as "civil society" organizations, often NGOs (Non Government Organizations) which have come to constitute an encompassing network recently imported and now operating widely in the third world.

During the first two decades of resistance to the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip managed to establish an extraordinary network of grassroots organisations and community level committees, including student unions, women's groups, workers' groups and a wide variety of professional organisations. Underlying this sense of community and collective responsibility was spectacular participation in volunteering and contribution to the public good. When the first *Intifada* erupted in 1987, these grassroots community groups engaged in sustained resistance to oppression and provided much needed social and psychological support to victims of political and military violence.

When the second *Intifada* erupted in 2000 the situation was quite different. The Palestinian community in the West Bank and Gaza was less prepared to sustain collective struggle and provide the level of social and psychological support it did before because indigenous, grassroots, and community based voluntary organisations had been disabled by an invasion by a plethora of Western Non Government Organizations providing individualized, depoliticized, psycho-social training-cum-mental health care services to a broad variety of groups including women, children and victims of military violence. Not only were these projects sporadic, overlapping, ill defined, seldom properly evaluated and generally unrelated to any strategic plan or a clearly defined movement to enhance the mental health of oppressed Palestinian communities but they were constrained by the economic and political agendas of the funders and contributed to the construction of demoralised, depoliticised and pacified communities through psychologising, medicalising and individualising collective injustice and oppression stemming from brutal repression and military violence perpetrated through the occupation. The work of these Non Government Organizations was anything but praxis towards liberation and social justice for the communities they purport to serve. Within this oppressive context mental health research and practice became part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

We call for the development of community critical psychologies up to the task of understanding and contesting the constructed consequence of prolonged colonialist oppression and profound social injustice recently reproduced in recent reactionary, so-called, 'innovations' in mental health social policy and practice in Western Europe which fail to address the most basic social, political and economic issues and, paradoxically, contribute to the creation of oppression,

injustice and suffering.

Take the example of the UK which currently has one of the highest rates of child poverty in Europe, although the relevance of this – even at a time when the discourse of ‘evidence-based practice’ is dominant - tends to be underplayed or actually ignored. The US and the UK in the 1970s and 1980s exemplified the political, economic and social changes that came to be known as neo-liberalism which encouraged a right of centre focus on the supply side of the economy. Corporate interests were placed at the heart of the political agenda and in country after country, markets were deregulated, state planning and power dismantled, welfare cut and/or criminalized and full employment policies abandoned. These changes were directly responsible for grossly inflating the number of people living in poverty, growing social inequality, decreasing occupational security, work intensification and homelessness.

Regarding mental health, the overwhelming focus of inquiry has been on the individual. Individual discourses of suffering have been promoted in medicine, the media and politics. This is exemplified by Richard Layard, who, in his work in the economics of happiness and in his affiliation with the Blair government, became a prominent spokesperson and influential lobbyist for individualistic interventions in relation to mental health. Layard contended that 10,000 extra therapists and 5,000 clinical psychologists needed to be trained over a short time and the consequent ‘Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Programme’ was the UK government’s solution to the mental health crisis. The aims of the programme included providing psychological therapy to help people stay in work and improve their well-being. More recently the UK Government announced plans to provide CBT to people made redundant. All the while the UK government, in conjunction with a business community with growing influence over social and economic policy, and bolstered largely by uncritical, compliant or even collusive institutionalised psychology, has continued to collude with damaging economic and labour market practices that contribute to increasing social distress.

We believe that social science relevant to health and community is characterised by four broad forms of intellectual labour and knowledge production operating alongside each other, sometimes in synergy and sometimes in uneasy co-existence. These synergies and tensions speak to the ambiguities and challenges inherent in the broader quest to advance liberatory forms of scholarship and praxis in community psychology and other social and human sciences.

The first form of labour, ‘knowledge brokering’, is characterised by utilization of a range of mathematical and statistical techniques and formulae to make meaning of what was assumed to be objective, measurable phenomena. Such meaning and understanding, in the form of empirically produced data are used as instruments to construct and legitimate pronouncements and recommendations.

The second form of labour, evidence-led model development, is characterised by the promotion of various models of service delivery guided by the principles of community psychology and emphasises partnership, equity, prevention, positive mental health, appreciation of context, experimental efforts dedicated to developing replicable, cost-effective, and culturally appropriate modes of psychosocial services.

The third form of labour, rebellion, is characterised by recognition of community members as authentic and vibrant intellectual agents and attempts to synergize particular analytical and methodological skills with project participants’ investigative and dissemination skills such as

story-telling and narrative exposition. Like any innovation this form of labour produces new and unexpected tensions and questions about how to restrict the dominance of certain forms of knowledge creation within and outside of science and how best to foster egalitarian relations when science meets society.

The fourth form of labour, critical introspection, is characterised by introspective critique of the production and re-production of material and discursive inequalities in the system of knowledge-creation.

Whilst there is diversity in our respective community critical psychology standpoints and practices, we have here tried to draw out some characteristics of the standpoints and practices which we share. Thus we tend to:

draw upon subjugated literatures and conceptual frames of reference from outside the mainstream Anglo-Saxon psychological disciplinary tradition;

problematise: individualism, the psychological and 'the community' as modes of conceptualisation and bases for intervention;

critique mainstream psychologies as disciplinary practices;

emphasise that capitalist neo-liberal globalisation, colonialism and patriarchy are fundamental causes of misery and ill health in contemporary societies;

emphasise the importance of developing and enacting politically progressive community critical psychologies as contributions to the task of collectively transforming social reality to promote health, well-being and social justice;

recognise the obligation to reflexively turn the critical gaze not only on the disciplinary ideologies, theories, procedures and practices of mainstream psychology but also on those of acritical *community* psychologies;

urge the reconstruction, root and branch, of the interconnected conceptualisations, practices, procedures, technologies and ideologies which constitute both elite 'psychology' and popular 'psy'.

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# There's foreigner *and* foreigner: xenophobic reasoning and anti-immigrant discourse

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## Abstract

*This research aims at analysing the expression of both overt and covert forms of xenophobia in native citizens' discourse by adopting an integrated analytical approach that combines discourse and cognitive analysis. In particular, we are interested in detecting those discursive strategies that appear to be of crucial importance to the expression of xenophobic thinking and in examining the role exerted in concrete social contexts by cognitive mechanisms in shaping the inner "logic" of xenophobic discourse. To this purpose, 20 in-depth interviews were administered to adult residents from two districts in Milan. Verbatim transcripts are analysed in 3 steps: a) computer-aided quantitative and qualitative data analysis; b) discourse analysis; c) cognitive analysis.*

Keywords: xenophobia, discourse analysis, cognitive analysis, threat

## Introduction

The spread of explicit and implicit forms of xenophobia is being more and more documented in international research studies with regard to the emergence of social and political movements which support an anti-immigration position and to the cross-national diffusion of such a position in European public opinion (see Rydgren, 2003, 2004; Van der Valk, 2002; EUMC 2001a, 2001b, 2002). As Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner (2008) show, prejudice and discrimination directed at immigrants are a widespread phenomena across Europe and several cross-European surveys support this conclusion. European public opinion has responded to immigration flows in diverse ways ranging from full acceptance to prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Pettigrew, 1998a, 1998b; Pettigrew et al., 1998). Immigration has generally been framed as a problem and it has often been perceived as a threat by the native population.

Theories of prejudice and discrimination attempt to uncover the psychological mechanisms that explain individual readiness to feel threatened by and to exclude ethnic groups. One major research tradition focuses on blatant and subtle prejudice (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1985); threat is regarded here as one of the two components that explain blatant prejudice. Research shows that it is the perceived - and not the actual - proportion of immigrants that is the critical predictor of threat and anti-immigrant opinions (see, Semyonov, Raijman, Tov, & Schmidt, 2004). According to the integrated threat theory of prejudice (Stephan, Ybarra & Bachman, 1999; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur Kaspas, 1998), four types of threat (realistic, symbolic, intergroup

anxiety, and negative stereotypes) cause prejudice. Realistic threats consist of threats to the very existence of the in-group, threats to the political and economic power of the in-group, and threats to the physical well-being of the in-group or its members. It is important to emphasize that it is the subjectively perceived threats posed by the other group that are the most relevant to causing prejudice. Symbolic threats arise because of perceived group differences in morals, values, norms, standards, beliefs, and attitudes. Symbolic threats are threats to the in-group's worldview. Out-groups that adhere to different worldviews threaten the in-group's worldview and often are disliked as a consequence. People often feel threatened during interactions with out-group members because they are worried about being rejected, embarrassed, ridiculed, or exploited (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). The anxiety elicited by these feelings of threat can lead in-group members to dislike out-group members. Several studies have shown that intergroup anxiety is related to prejudice (Britt, Bonecki, Vescio, Biernat & Brown, 1996; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan et al., 1999). Negative stereotypes are implied threats to the in-group.

## 2. Theoretical background

As Van Dijk (2000) points out, discourse plays a crucial role in the reproduction and legitimation of prejudice, xenophobia, ethnic dominance and exclusion. There is a rich selection of studies describing the structure and function of xenophobic discourse (van Dijk, 1984; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001), its diffusion through the mass media (van Dijk, 1991; Wodak & Matoucheck, 1993; Jäger & Link, 1993) and its semantic organization in political discourse (Van Dijk, 1997; Van der Valk, 2002, 2003).

Discourse about 'foreigners' can be regarded as a symbolic resource which is used in group identity negotiation (Gotsbachner, 2001). 'Others' (i.e. foreigners) are viewed as 'different' and, in many cases, as 'outsiders' or even as 'enemies' (Savic, 2005; Colombo & Senatore, 2003).

Xenophobia implies a sense of menace, fear, danger, unsafety and the perception of risk both at the individual level and for the in-group. Our aim is to analyse how xenophobia is expressed in discourse: are all immigrants talked about as dangerous? Or else, only some of them are talked about as dangerous? Is any distinction established among different ethnic groups? Is any distinction established among different contexts where intergroup contacts takes place? Which sort of risks are referred to? How do people argue in support of these risks?

In order to answer these questions we attempt at developing an integrated approach that combines discourse analysis and cognitive analysis.

The major assumption of discourse analysis is that the phenomena of interest in social and psychological research are constituted in and through discourse. In this framework, xenophobia and prejudice can be regarded as a discourse objects; these objects are intersubjectively constructed in order to lend meaning to social experience. The term "intersubjective" refers here to the idea that subjectivity is socially elaborated: this means that interpretative resources are already available in culture and organised linguistically. In this perspective, xenophobic discourse can be regarded as a means to position oneself within the context in relation to all the other agents and to construct different forms of social relation. Discourse provides with conceptual repertoires with which we can represent ourselves and others. Different linguistic procedures are used to construct a "we-group" through particular acts of reference that simultaneously imply a distancing from the "other". The accomplishment and negotiation of prejudiced/unprejudiced

identities has been documented through several studies (see, Edwards, 2003; Rapley, 2001) as well as the processes through which those designated as 'Others' are represented in discourse (Augoustinos, Tuffin e Rapley, 1999; Tileaga, 2006; Verkuyten, 1998a, 1998b, 2001; Wetherell e Potter, 1992; Wodak e Matouscheck, 1993). In talk about 'foreigners', the concept of community is rhetorically used to refer to national identity in order to make problematic the out-group identity when integration and acculturation are at issue (Tileaga, 2006).

Discourse-oriented studies focus on the semantic organization of xenophobic discourse and on relevant discursive strategies such as self- and other presentation and social actors description. We focus here on how these strategies are performed in order to discursively construct a sense of menace when talking about ethnic groups and intergroup relations in different contexts. In order to analyse how people attain internal coherence, and get convinced of the correctness of their arguments we combine discourse and cognitive analysis.

A few studies (see, Rydgren, 2004) deal with the inner logic of xenophobic beliefs and the role exerted by sampling biases in information gathering (e.g., illusory correlations), common fallacious thinking tendencies (e.g., analogisms or similarity-based heuristic thinking, confirmation biases, deductive use of inductive schemata). A cognitive analysis of xenophobia would take into account:

1) illusory correlations, that is perceiving associations between variables that are not associated. For example: "Most immigrants I heard of were dangerous people; hence, being an immigrant is a symptom for dangerousness". In this example the fallacy is two-fold. First, a sampling bias: I heard only about some immigrants, and, because in my group there was some reason to speak about them and no reason to speak about many others, it is likely that they were not a random sample from their population. Second, a pseudodiagnosticity bias: that is, the tendency to consider diagnostic for dangerousness the rate of dangerous immigrant, without comparing it to the rate of dangerous non-immigrant (see, Cheng e Holyoak, 1995; Cheng e Novick, 1990; Holyoak, Koh, Nisbett, 1989; Holland, Holyoak, Nisbett, Thagard, 1986; Mandel e Lehman, 1998; Hamilton, Dugan, Trolie, 1985; Fiedler, 2000);

2) some analogical strategies, according to which properties of an individual are generalized to a different individual bearing some resemblance to the former. For example: "Jules is an immigrant, and he's a criminal; Jim is an immigrant, then he's likely to be a criminal, too" (see, Cherubini, 2005);

3) some fallacious logical schemata, like the "affirmation of the consequent": for example, "people with low intelligence get unqualified jobs; immigrants get unqualified jobs; therefore, immigrants have low intelligence" (see, Cherubini, 2005);

4) Various "confirmation biases", a family of thinking strategies that bias individuals toward a systematic confirmation of their opinions in the face of contrary or ambiguous evidence (see, Cherubini, Castelvechio, & Cherubini, 2005; Nickerson, 1998; Poletiek, 1996; Snyder & Gangestad, S. 1981; Snyder & Campbell, 1980);

### **3. Procedure**

20 in-depth interviews were administered to residents from two districts in Milan [high vs low presence of foreign immigrants].

The interview addressed the issue of immigration and inter-ethnic relationships at 3 different levels implying growing distance between the interviewee and the object of the

question:

micro. Questions about the school, the immigrant schoolmates of the subject's siblings, and their parents: the interviewee is at a short distance from the object of the question, she/he should have more precise experiential and direct information;

meso. Questions about inter-ethnic relationships in the neighborhood: most knowledge is grounded on accidental encounters and indirect evidence, hence causing an intermediate distance between the interviewee and the object of the question;

macro. Questions about immigration in Italy in general: the interviewee is more distant from the object of the question and have little and sparse direct knowledge.

Verbatim transcripts were analysed in 3 steps: a) computer-aided content analysis; b) discourse analysis (semantic strategies, self- and other presentation, social actors description, rhetorical devices); c) cognitive analysis.

Main results are summarized in the next section.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Content analysis

A computer-aided content analysis was conducted with a recently developed software called T-Lab. This software analyzes the internal structure of a text through a series of statistical tools thus allowing for both a concise and global view of the corpus. The software automatically identifies and selects the units to be analyzed (lemmas in lexical correspondence analysis; lemmas and sentences in cluster analysis), Cluster analysis identifies significant clusters, each of which:

a) is composed of a set of sentences;

b) sentences included in each cluster are similar with regard to the co-occurrences of lemmas;

c) each sentence is indexed by the extra textual variable (i.e. the district).

By performing cluster analysis we aimed at uncovering the lexical composition and the semantic organization of interviewees' discourse. Three clusters were identified (see graph 1 in the appendix)

The main factor allows for a distinction between cluster 2 that concerns the topic of inter-ethnic relation at school [to the right of the origin] and those containing lemmas referring to the neighbourhood (cluster 3) and cultural identity (cluster 1). A sense of menace emerge both in cluster 1 and cluster 3, while no reference to any perceived risk is reported in cluster 2 (see the appendix for a list of the most significant lemmas included in each cluster).

The main semantic dimension emerging from the lexicon of cluster 1 refer to the macro-level and to cultural identity ("group", "culture", "identity", "keep", "value"). The out-group is portrayed as threatening the cultural identity of the in-group (symbolic menace).

Lemmas included in cluster 2 mainly refer to the school, that is to a microlevel context where inter-ethnic relations may occur ("children", "teacher", "classroom"). Inter-ethnic relations are described as supportive ("help", "trust", "support"). The most common term for the outgroup is "foreigner". Other terms for the out-group refer to ethnic groups (e.g. "Indians", "Arab", "South-Americans"). From the analysis of lemmas and sentences included in this cluster, it emerge that at this level (micro) the out-group is not represented as threatening. At the same time, the term "integration" clearly refers here to the idea of cultural assimilation.

Lemmas included in the cluster 3 refer to inter-ethnic relations at the meso-level, that is in the neighbourhood (“street”, “house”, “live”). The presence of immigrants is associated to the idea of negative changes in quality of life in the neighbourhoods and to the perception of individual unsafety. (“dirt”, “degrade”, “damage”). Immigrants are categorized through a coherent set of oppositions: legal vs illegal, integrated vs non-integrated, male vs female immigrants. Two coherent sets of terms characterize this cluster: the first concerns the problem of control and regulation of immigration flows, the second concerns the feelings of general unsafety associated to illegal immigration and the increasing risk of crime. The lemmas “country”, “we”, “our” refer to the opposition between the in-group and the out-group. Immigrants are associated here to “crime” and “delinquency” (realistic menace) and, consequently, the need for control is invoked.

#### 4.2. Referential and predicational strategies

As in previous studies (see, Van Dijk, 2000), it was found that the overall semantic strategy underlying interviewees’ discourse is characterized by a positive self- presentation and a negative other-presentation strategy. Referential strategies are used to naming social actors (individuals and groups), to construct and represent them in discourse through social membership. Predicational strategies are used to labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively. In interviewees’ discourse the opposition in-group-out-group is emphasized and immigrants are frequently associated with problematic social phenomena, especially crime and delinquency.

The most common terms for the out-group are “immigrants” and “foreigners”. The pronoun ‘we’ is used to refer to the Italian people, especially when the focus is on nationality. Italian citizens are specified and differentiated in the toponymical characterization ‘Italy’ and/or the ethnonymical designation ‘The Italians’. Nation-related references such as ‘the people’, ‘the country’, ‘our country’, frequently occur (cluster 1 and 3). Collective identity is invoked here as the “Other” is perceived as threatening the cultural identity of the ingroup.

The objective category of legal status is used to establish a fundamental division inside the general category “immigrants” between the legal residents and illegal ones, thus giving objective reasons for a rejection of the out-group. This group representation reinforces evaluations in terms of the opposition between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ immigrants; the latter are attributed negative traits and are explicitly associated to individual unsafety.

#### 4.3. Inferential structures

As an illustration of cognitive analysis, we report here the analysis of one excerpt from the first interview that – in its brevity – highlights a variety of cognitive mechanisms that build up the “logic” of that person’s attitude toward immigrants. It is an example of argumentation at the meso-level. Spontaneous misreading of clues, integrated with some commonsense general premises and with a fallacious deductive step, build up a case for immigrants’ dangerousness subjectively compelling, but lacking any conclusive evidence.

*Excerpt 1, Subj1:* I mean...I was never personally mistreated, or involved in arguments. What you see is broken bottles scattered all around the neighborhood, and drunk people wandering around.

This excerpt gives a glimpse of the many complex, yet fast and spontaneous, inferential passages that build up the background opinions that this person is reporting. We might assume

that she begins with a useful, and true, general rule from previous knowledge:

1. Drunk people are dangerous

In the excerpt she mentions perceptually salient environmental clues, “broken bottles”. Why does she associate them to immigrants?

What is spontaneous is associating salient, distinctive, features with other salient, distinctive, features: the accumulating broken bottles are perceptively salient, and that immigrants tend to leave them around *relatively* more (but not *absolutely* more) than Italians is also perceptively salient: the resulting thought is, that if there’s a broken bottle around, it has been probably left by an immigrant: this is a typical illusory correlation.

On the grounds of this “perception” (but, as we saw, it is an inference, not a direct perception) subject 1 inductively concludes:

- Immigrants drink a lot of bottles

This is likely true, if we speak of the immigrants as a group: simply because the group is numerous (we previously estimated it at 4% of the population). But it hides a fallacy in the following – and rather spontaneous - step, known in logic as “distribution fallacy”. It consists in applying a property of an aggregate entity to each component of the aggregate entity (example: Americans are a rich people; Uncle Tom is an American; therefore, Uncle Tom is rich). In this context the fallacy allows the invalid conclusion:

*Each* immigrant drinks a lot of bottles. (Or its probabilistic equivalent: it is highly probable that an immigrant drinks a lot of bottles).

The following ring in the logical chain is retrieving another true general rule from previous knowledge:

4. Whoever drinks a lot gets drunk

From 3 and 4 she derives the conjecture, *convergent* with the social representation of immigrants:

5. Immigrants are drunkards.

She does not specify that they involve immigrants, but presumably she tacitly implies it.

This inductive evidence for 5 is an example of what is commonly known as “positive control”, a very strong tendency in human explicit hypotheses testing. When hypothesizing that X (“being an immigrant”) is associated to Y (“drinking a lot”), positive testing consists in focusing on X cases (immigrants), in order to detect those who are Y (drunk). If it detects a reasonable amount of X&Y cases (drunk immigrants) it concludes that the hypothesis is confirmed, without comparing them to X&not-Y cases (sober immigrants), and almost totally neglecting not-X cases (that is, the rate of drunkenness in non-immigrants). That is, positive control means focusing on X&Y confirmatory instances and not looking for, or underestimating, not-X & Y, X & not-Y, and not-X & not-Y instances.

Of course, 1 and 5 entails the *valid* conclusion (remember: valid does not mean true; it means true *if all the premises were also true*):

6. Immigrants are dangerous

Conclusion 6 is the “background knowledge”, or default general rule, backing all her following arguments. “Immigrant are dangerous” is also a *topos*, a frequent feature of the social representation of immigrants.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis shows that not all immigrants are talked about as dangerous and that different kinds of risks are invoked depending on the context. Arguments concerning individual unsafety are offered when talking about the presence of foreign immigrants in the neighbourhoods (meso-level) while threats for the in-group emerge when inter-ethnic relations are regarded at a macro-level.

People strive to build subjectively coherent arguments in order to support their xenophobic feelings.

Many of these arguments are rooted on known cognitive tendencies – potentially fallacious when dealing with social realities. Accordingly, those arguments are *subjectively* rational and self-persuading, conjuring up a subjective world where immigrants are an actual, objective threat.

Xenophobic feelings reflect only in part – if at all – objective risks conveyed by massive immigration; at the individual level, most of them spring from the interaction between the boundaries of the social environment and the constraints of human cognitive processes, and are diffused, reproduced and strengthened by shared discursive practices.

## 6. Conclusions

The distinction between “foreigners and foreigners” outlined by the analysis of content in the first part can be seen, from cognitive perspective, as the macroscopic result of the different domains of application of the two human inferential systems: the explicit one, dealing with limited information and uncertain environments, and the implicit, experiential one, gathering and systematically processing, in an automatic way, pieces of evidence from well-known, limited, relatively stable environments (see, De Neys, 2006; Sloman, 1996, 2002; Stanovich & West, 2000). In this section we will see some examples of their microscopic workings.

The question in the interviews were of two categories, depending on the “distance” of the interviewed from the target of the question:

Questions about the school, the immigrant schoolmates of the subject’s siblings, and their parents: the interviewed is at a short distance from the object of the question, she/he should have more precise experiential, direct information, and should recur less to explicit thinking strategies;

Questions about the immigrants in the neighbourhood, eventual problems connected to them, immigration in Italy in general, the importance of cultural identity, and the importance of inter-group contacts: the subjects are more distant from the objects of the questions and have little and sparse direct knowledge about them; furthermore, the objects of the questions are rapidly changing realities, likely not allowing the fine-tuning of the experiential system to them; accordingly, many answers to these questions should recruit explicit thinking strategies, including some erroneous or imprecise ones.

The nearest boundary between the categories of immigrants that our subjects depicted coincides with the different domains of application of the two human inferential systems. Indeed, a majority of subjects, with different degrees of intensity, arrived at or described some xenophobic conclusions concerning immigrants when responding to questions concerning their neighbourhood or immigration in Italy in general: questions whose answers mostly hinged on explicit thinking. By contrast, most of them described positively (again, with different degrees of intensity) the restricted and better known domain of their siblings’ immigrant classmates, and of

their parents. They rarely used argumentation at all in doing this: mostly, they simply reported their positive impressions, and impressions are the direct results of implicit thinking processes applied to a familiar environment.

Moreover, our results suggest that when intergroup contact is not conceived as a generic and anonymous intersection of different ethnic groups in a neighbourhood, but as a structured relationship in a bounded social and physical space (the school) between members of different groups pursuing the same goal (an acceptable school for their children), it can foster a reciprocal knowledge based on a vast amount of direct experiences; this sort of experiential knowledge has more chances of being unbiased than conjectures based on explicit thinking. In this sort of situations, contact might effectively limit xenophobia. Unfortunately, this sort of experiential, inter-personal knowledge is specific, and it is hardly – if ever – generalized to larger groups and less known environments.

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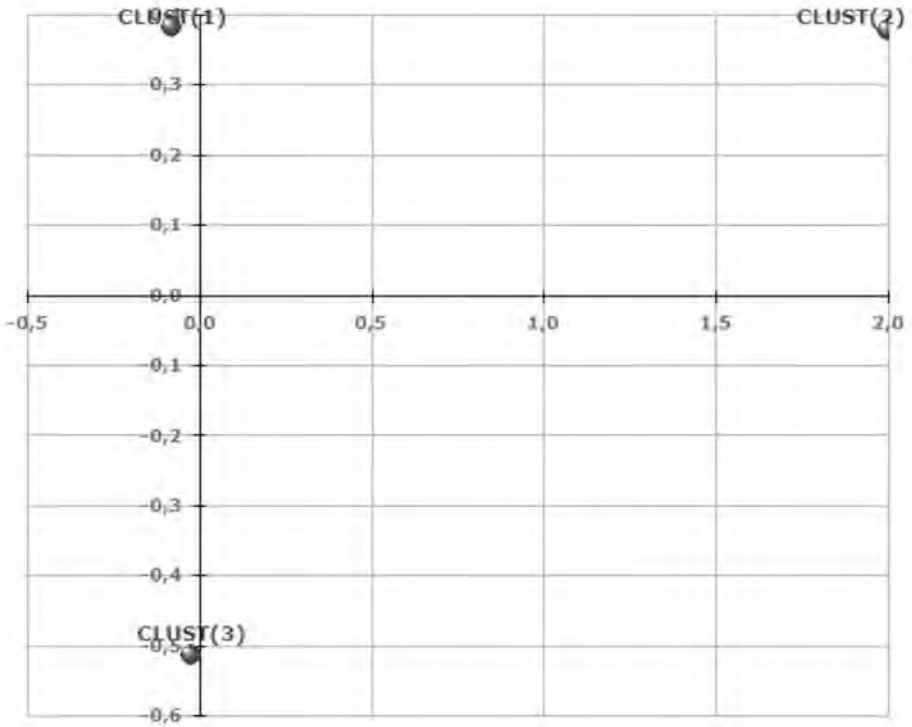
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## Appendix

Graph1. Distribution of clusters in the Cartesian plot



Cluster: N° 1

CAT	Lemmas	CHI2
LEM	keep	1688,948
LEM	identity	1420,324
LEM	characteristic	941,538
LEM	important	746,597
LEM	cultural	411,937
LEM	exclude	286,596
LEM	group	234,301
LEM	contact	143,532
LEM	necessary	138,003
LEM	culture	30,488
LEM	believe	29,378
LEM	value	8,215
LEM	different	7,819
LEM	origin	4,409
LEM	structure	4,228

Cluster: N° 2

CAT	LEMMAS	CHI2
LEM	child	433,23
LEM	classroom	210,85
LEM	son	116,99
LEM	parent	84,53
LEM	compagno	59,37
LEM	attend	58,41
LEM	foreign	57,94
LEM	primari	52,02
LEM	relationship	50,57
LEM	language	49,63
LEM	teacher	46,88
LEM	chinese	45,73
LEM	mother	45,18
LEM	friendship	33,87
LEM	family	27,45
LEM	school	27,19
LEM	italian	26,33
LEM	play	24,07
LEM	support	20,59
LEM	group	19,34
LEM	together	18,91
LEM	friend	17,23
LEM	egyptian	13,91
LEM	El_Salvador	12,47
LEM	learning	12,45
LEM	program	10,38
LEM	origin	8,20
LEM	integrate	6,55
LEM	Sri_Lanka	5,46
LEM	arab	4,78
LEM	skin	4,72
LEM	indian	4,50

Cluster: N° 3

CAT	Lemmas	CHI2
LEM	person	70,97
LEM	people	61,27
LEM	rule	42,71
LEM	live	41,92
LEM	reside	40,47
LEM	situation	37,59
LEM	neighbourhood	37,13
LEM	street	35,75
LEM	respect	35,27
LEM	zone	34,11
LEM	need	31,50
LEM	control	30,89
LEM	we	29,97
LEM	our	28,92
LEM	respect	22,42
LEM	police	21,40
LEM	country	19,00
LEM	delinquency	18,88
LEM	entry	18,86
LEM	law	17,62
LEM	life	14,35
LEM	change	13,50
LEM	right	13,39
LEM	immigration	13,26
LEM	illegal	12,58
LEM	steel	12,16
LEM	dirty	12,16
LEM	urban decay	11,33
LEM	discomfort	10,20
LEM	evening	9,31
LEM	increase	9,26
LEM	bother	8,57
LEM	bad	8,38
LEM	delinquency	7,26

# The Bio-psychosocial impact of forced migration: a participatory approach amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Malta

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** *To explore the bio-psychosocial impact of forced migration on asylum seekers/refugees in Malta. This paper focuses on the complex processes of interaction between asylum seekers/refugees and their physical, psychological, social and cultural environments, in their search for meaning. The author's concern prior to the study was how the participants make sense out of their lives following forced migration whilst encompassing complex challenges, affecting their health (physically and psychologically) and their social well-being.*

**Design:** *A participatory qualitative study of subjects' experience of forced migration was chosen for this study. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used as the main instrument to collect data. Additionally, a body outline figure was used to direct participants into the context of the study and to generate further discussion. Two research assistants who assisted with the recruiting of the sample, data collection and analysis were trained by the researcher and conducted the focus group interviews in the Amharic and Tigrinya languages.*

**Subjects:** *14 Eritrean/Ethiopian adults 7 males and 7 females who were released from the detention centre six months prior to this study.*

**Results:** *Four themes emerged from the findings of this study. The first refers to the effects of detention over a very long period of time which contributed to feelings of helplessness, psychological distress and suicidal urges. The second theme revealed that negative attitudes and poor communication with health professionals and front desk personnel led to the inaccessibility of health care services. Moreover, according to the participants, their dark skin is the cause for avoidance and lack of social support, unemployment and hostility from the dominant culture which greatly affects their integration within the Maltese society as described in the third theme. In the fourth theme participants were found to have high expectations of a third country resettlement which was perceived as a means towards better working conditions and economic prospects.*

**Conclusion:** *This study illustrates how assessing and meeting the needs of vulnerable individuals such as asylum seekers/refugees represents a challenge for health and social care. It highlights the need for implementing cultural competence training for professionals in this sphere, (see leaflet) if the needs of asylum seekers/refugees are to be addressed holistically. Furthermore, while mainstream facilities should be a basic component of the refugee experience in a resettlement country, culturally sensitive programs may contribute to facilitate acculturation*

**Keywords:** Forced Migration, Health, Participatory Research, Psychosocial Distress, Cultural Competence

## **Introduction**

In this paper I will present some reflections on participatory qualitative research among a population in search of meaning. It draws upon the methodology used to explore the biopsychosocial impact of forced migration and how it is perceived by asylum seekers and refugees in Malta (Podda Connor, 2007). Irregular immigrants, who flee their homeland for security are constantly trying to make sense of their lives; bridging gaps by moving across time and space.

The term asylum seekers/refugees will be used throughout this paper. The difference between these terms in the context of Malta is that asylum seekers refers to irregular immigrants who are either in detention waiting for the outcome of their application for refugee status or those who have been granted humanitarian protection. Refugees are individuals who have been granted refugee status. The latter have the right for a work permit, education, health and social security benefits.

## **The significance of the study**

It is hoped that this study enables individuals on the forefront of public services, especially nurses, doctors, social workers, military and law enforcement personnel, to connect and come to know the vulnerable asylum seeking person and to challenge their availability for social action. This study also aims to empower asylum seekers and refugees to exercise individual choice and take effective action, and make their existence known to the dominant culture.

Asylum seekers are fleeing misery, hunger, deprivation, war, persecution and torture. What forced migrants have in common is the limited choice available to them and the pressured decision they are compelled to make as they leave their homes in an effort to ensure their own, and their family's survival (Grove and Zwi, 2006).

## **The journey**

The arrival in Malta is often accidental: the boats are normally heading for the Italian islands of Lampedusa and Sicily, which offer direct access to the rest of Italy and mainland Europe (Moorehead, 2005). However, many of them run out of fuel or are hit by bad weather and seek a haven in Malta which is a signatory of the Geneva Convention 1951.

According to a study by Pugh (2000) up to 4,000 forced migrants drown every year, half of whom in the Mediterranean, as they flee persecution and poverty. These figures were derived from interviews with refugees, records of bodies washed on shores, wrecks and government statistics. The vessels used by human traffickers and asylum seekers are often old and not sea worthy. They have unreliable engines and steering, and little by way of safety equipment. To risk one's life in long and dangerous journeys across deserts and the sea in sub-human conditions shows desperation. Asylum seekers suffer tremendous losses, giving up everything familiar and facing severe difficulties en route as well as when they arrive in the host country (Blackwell, 2005).

Following such perilous crossings, those who survive the journey encounter other complex challenges in the host society: an indefinite period in detention, a different language, adapting to a country which is composed of structures and systems unlike those in some underdeveloped countries and problems of acculturation in a diverse culture. They often prove to be very resourceful and resilient and it is these strengths which may enable them to flee to a different country and face the associated challenges, including health.

During the period they spend in the detention centre (which is often excessively lengthy) asylum seekers manifest high levels of psychological distress due to the uncertainty about the outcome of their applications for refugee status; they may be exposed to respiratory infections including tuberculosis as a result of the poor, cramped and unhygienic living conditions and suicidal urges due to fear of deportation. Severe health consequences can result from past traumatic experiences and torture, as well as other epidemics of

Infectious diseases due to the crowded living conditions of most <sup>1</sup>detention centres/ <sup>2</sup>open centres. These attributes were also reported in an Australian based research which allowed broad comparisons between asylum seekers/refugees held in detention centres with those in a community group (Silove *et al.* 2001).

Once out of the detention centre, many refugees are often unemployed, live in deprived neighbourhoods, and have an increased risk of ethnic and social vulnerability that influences their health negatively. Failure to examine potential indirect effects of unemployment prospects on mental health may also explain the depth of marginalisation in which asylum seekers and refugees dwell

### **The study**

This paper considers the situation of Eritrean and Ethiopian asylum seekers/refugees and the impact of forced migration on their bio-psychosocial components of health employing a participatory qualitative approach. A Qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this study as it uncovers new meanings by allowing for the expression of a full range of beliefs, feelings and behaviours. The role of the researcher in this study was to walk “a mile in the other person’s shoe understanding the person’s point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994 p.29).

Participatory research was indicated for this study because of its involvement with extended communities that are vulnerable to the control or oppression of a dominant group or culture, such as asylum seekers and refugees (Polit and Beck, 2004). It involves participatory problem definition, visioning and building a shared agenda for action. The aim of participatory research is not only to produce knowledge, but action and consciousness-raising as well.

### **Reflexivity**

Prior to commencing this study the author acknowledged and recognized a certain degree of personal reflexivity by acknowledging factors which otherwise may have influenced this study. Personal reflexivity involves reflecting upon the ways in which one’s own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research.

At the outset of the present study the researcher adopted a reflexive approach which was exercised in a previous study (Papadopoulos, 2000) to regard the research process meticulously

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- 1 Detention centers: confinement within a narrowly bounded or restricted location, where freedom of movement is substantially curtailed which accommodates asylum seekers who are awaiting the outcome of their application for refugee status. This period of time is not less than 4 months but not longer than 18 months
  - 2 Open Centers: This term generally refers to government supported accommodation centers to house groups of individuals who have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection.

and rigorously, suspending personal belief and past professional experiences, eliminating biases and prejudices (Leininger, 1991).

An overview of the participants' ethnohistory was an important aspect of this study in order to understand the socio-geo-political baggage of Eritreans and Ethiopians who are forced to migrate from their country of origin. This population was chosen as the target group for this study due to the unrest between these two countries where unremitting attacks on democratic institutions and civil society, the arrests of political opponents, destruction of the private press, and the incarceration of anyone thought to challenge the government's policies (World Report, 2007) led to the involuntary migration of the participants in this study. Although the two countries where the participants came from were currently at war during the time this research was conducted, the group agreed to take part in this study affirming that they are friends and find the support they need away from home in each other. They all reasoned that it is their governments who are at war, leading them to flee their homeland. Hence in this study there were no ethical issues in having a group mix of participants coming from two countries at war with each other.

### **The objectives of the study:**

To explore the perceptions of asylum seekers/refugees' physical and psychological impact of their experience of forced migration.

To describe perceptions of asylum seekers/refugees regarding adaptation to their new environment.

To examine the factors and challenges which forced migrants encounter in their search for meaning.

### **Recruitment of research assistants**

At the beginning of the study, the researcher consulted with community stakeholders (The director of the Jesuits Refugee Services, Malta and other NGOs) through whom two Eritrean/Ethiopian key individuals (1 Eritrean male and 1 Ethiopian female both fluent in Amharic and Tigrinya languages), who play an important role in the everyday lives of asylum seekers/refugees, were appointed as research assistants for this present study. The importance of the study was discussed with the potential research assistants who agreed to participate in the research process. They were trained by the researcher to assist throughout the different stages of the research process.

Recruiting research assistants from the same ethnic background of the population under study may represent unique logistic and analytic challenges as the latter may hold different values, concepts and beliefs from those of the researcher because of socioeconomic status, immigration history and other factors (Tsai, *et al.* 2004).

Their training was aimed at enhancing the importance of the study, discussing the questions for the focus group prepared by the researcher, eliciting relevant information by appropriate probing, listening attentively to meanings behind what was being said and looking out for discernible non-verbal gestures which convey meanings. Furthermore, they became skilled at conducting focus groups, obtaining demographic data through brief individual interviews, using and checking equipment used during interviews, recording interviews, and taking notes. The training was held over three afternoon sessions.



### **The study sample**

The purposive sample consisted of 6 Eritreans (2 males and 4 females) and 8 Ethiopians (5 males and 3 females) adult asylum seekers and refugees from all open centres (group accommodation) in Malta and others living in rented accommodation.

The research assistants attempted to recruit two groups comprising of eight Eritrean/Ethiopian females and eight Eritrean/Ethiopian males through a purposive sampling technique. An equal number of Eritrean/Ethiopian men and women over eighteen years of age was aimed for. Mays and Pope (2000) claim that in order to provide for a wide range of opinions, it is crucial to employ a sampling technique that will provide an accurate representation of the population under study into the focus groups.

### **Inclusion criteria**

Eritrean/Ethiopian men and women over the age of eighteen who had been released from detention for six months or more prior to taking part in this study. This would mean that asylum seekers/refugees would have had sufficient experience within the Maltese society. Furthermore, persons to be chosen needed to have experience with the Maltese health system.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

Non-Eritrean/Ethiopian individuals, unaccompanied minors and children. The involvement of asylum seekers/refugee children in research warrants a completely different approach due to their vulnerable age and situation.

### **Informed consent**

The participants were provided with an information sheet which was also read in the Amharic and the Tigrinya languages. While Amharic is the official language of Ethiopia and Tigrinya that of Eritrea, the latter is also widely spoken in Ethiopia.

Informed consent enabled the participants to consent to or decline participation voluntarily. This was followed by answering any questions the participants wished to ask or clarify prior to signing the consent form. Reassuring all participants that their involvement in the study would not adversely affect anything to which they are normally entitled may have increased participation. Permission was granted by the participants to audiotape record the interviews for better transcription. The research assistants were asked to inform the group that on completion of the study, the tapes would be discarded.

### **The research tool**

Focus groups were the chosen instrument by which the main data was to be obtained. Additionally, a brief demographic interview of each participant took place prior to the focus group interviews, and a body outline figure was utilized to direct the informants into the context of this study.

Fourteen individuals turned up for the two focus group interviews which were held on two different days. The female focus groups consisted of 4 Eritreans and 3 Ethiopians, and 2 Eritreans and 5 Ethiopians participated in the male focus group interviews.

### **Socio-demographic data**

At the start of the meeting the research assistants collected general socio-demographic information regarding the participants through brief individual interviews. The purpose of these short questions prior to the main data collection was to depict a collective image of the participants without identifying them. The respondents' age, gender, nationality, educational achievement and employment experiences at the time the research study was being carried out were used to investigate whether differences in acculturation and integration outcomes exist due to these variables.

In the introductory comments, an attempt was made to encourage the group to maintain confidentiality in that 'what is heard in the group, remains in the group' (Jackson, 1998). A promise of confidentiality is a pledge that any information participants provide will not be publicly reported in a manner that identifies them and will not be made accessible to others (Polit *et al.* 2001).

### **Focus groups**

The questions for the two focus groups were carefully selected and phrased in advance by the researcher. A dialogic approach was aimed for; therefore a checklist of semi-structured prompting questions was used to make sure that the domains within it were covered at some stage by all subjects. Subsequently, the questions were reviewed together with the research assistants during one of the research assistant training sessions.

According to the research assistants some questions regarding mental health problems were considered to be inappropriate and of a highly personal nature for the Eritrean/Ethiopian community to discuss in a group, due to the stigma involved. Therefore it was decided that questions relating directly to this issue were to be omitted as the researcher has a duty to respect the norms and values of the informants in the study.

The semi-structured focus group questions were designed to unfold an understanding of the culturally relevant aspects of Eritrean/Ethiopian asylum seekers and refugees' perceptions of bio-psychosocial effects of forced migration. Although no pilot study was carried out, the questions were carefully selected and phrased in advance together with the research assistants, to elicit maximum responses by all participants. The framework of the questions was designed to maintain a focus directed at relevant areas for both male and female focus groups. Amharic and Tigrinya languages were used during the interviews and for this reason a third research assistant was recruited, who later on in the study back-translated the transcript of the audiotapes, and assured the quality of the translation. To enable the research assistants to maximize the accuracy of the data, the discussions were audiotape recorded after permission from the participants was granted. This recorded data may have enhanced the potential validity of the data analysis. Note-taking was minimal as the respective research assistants were advised to take into consideration any non-verbal cues or gestures which convey meaning.

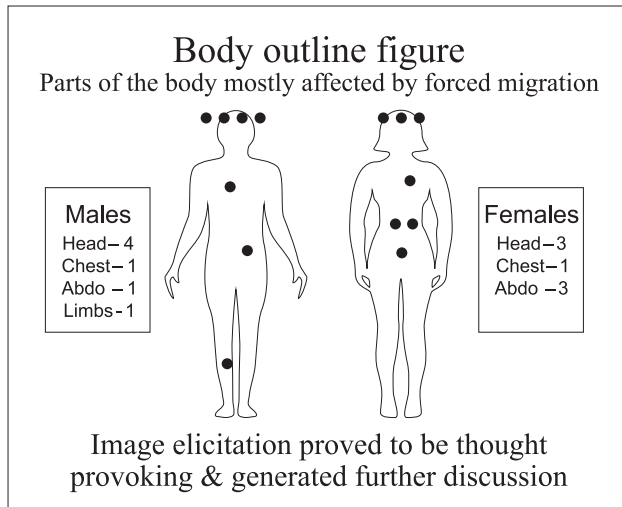
Since the focus groups interviews were carried out in Amharic and Tigrinya, the researcher who was present during the interviews, was not able to handle any problems that may have arisen; such as checking behaviours against attitudes, challenging and drawing out respondents with opposite views and looking for the emotional component of the responses (Steward and Shamdasani, 1990). However, throughout the discussion, in collaboration with the research assistants, the researcher encouraged debate, explored inconsistencies and sought to clarify the

participants' ideas (Kingry *et al.* 1990; Krueger, 1994; Kitzinger, 1996).

### The body outline figure

Another form of data collection was obtained by distributing to the participants a figure of two body outlines: one male (for the male participants) and one female (for female participants). The informants were asked to mark on the figure the body part which was mostly affected as a result of forced migration. This idea arose during the training of research assistants when they both remarked on the need to put at rest the mind of the asylum seekers/refugees participating in the study as they might be sceptical about the purpose of the study. The body outline figure was developed to save the participants any unnecessary anxiety, and to prevent biased responses and gain their trust. Moreover, the researcher developed the body outline figure to direct the focus and plunge directly on their experiences of health and social issues at the outset of data collection. This image elicitation method proved to be thought provoking and generated further discussion.

Figure 1



Gaining trust under these circumstances was difficult and therefore, an effort to build professional relationships with communities was crucial. As an 'uninvited professional stranger' within the Eritrean/Ethiopian community the researcher needed to ensure that the data collection instrument is not informed by Eurocentric perspectives.

The two focus group interviews (male and female groups) lasted 1.5 hours and each took place within the same week with a 3 day interval in between. They were held in a quiet setting in one of the Open Centres on the island, with chairs arranged in a closed circle where all members, research assistants and the researcher could see each other. Access to use the premises was granted by obtaining permission from the open centre coordinator. The researcher attempted to set up a non-threatening environment conducive to expression of perceptions. After each of the two meetings tea, coffee and cake prepared by the researcher were offered to the participants and an honorarium was presented to each of the participants as an appreciation.

### **Data analysis**

Soon after the interviews, the research assistants were asked to transcribe and translate the interviews from Amharic/Tigrinya into English. Following this a randomly selected transcript from the two groups was back-translated into the original languages by a third research assistant. In this way the quality of the translations was assured. The scripts were read several times to ensure identification of categories. Relevant words, phrases and descriptive terms were highlighted and extracts from the data were identified.

Although it was initially intended to use the software programme (NUDIST) as part of data analysis during the planning of this study, due to the researcher's unfamiliarity with this programme, manual content analysis was ultimately the chosen approach to analyse the data.

The research assistants were asked to document what they regarded to be important issues and themes, and to discuss these with the researcher. All data was reviewed by the researcher after taking into account all the themes and emerging issues which were grouped, coded and sorted with the research assistants. The reviewed data showed a process of evolving consensus and debate, where assertions were qualified and challenged by the researcher team. This helped to clarify any differing conceptual meanings and allowed the researcher and the research assistants to cluster and retrieve segments of related data (Miles and Huberman, 1984). These explanatory codes served to group the data into meaningful units of analysis.

### **Verification of the analysis and findings**

In a qualitative research the researcher is an involved participant rather than an objective observer (Avis, 1998; Bhatti, 1995). Hence, this inclusive role played by the researcher placed more emphasis on the credibility of the researcher as a central component to the success of the study.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

The explicit use of group interaction differentiates focus groups from other types of data generation interview (Robinson, 1999). Indeed according to some, the interaction between participants may reveal information that would be difficult to obtain in an individual interview (Kingry *et al.* 1990).

Despite its content value, the range of information obtained in focus group interviews is limited. Furthermore, a purposive sampling techniques are employed, cannot represent the wider population. While Bristol and Fern, (1996) suggest that there is little empirical evidence to support the view that focus groups are superior to other methods, Asbury (1995) argues that they produce data rich in detail that are difficult to achieve with other research methods. The use of multiple methods (Triangulation), to gather information would have rendered the study more credible and permitted the checking of data as the true picture of the study at hand. However this was not possible in this present study due to time constraints.

### **Permission and access**

Permission to carry out the study was sought from the Ethics Committee of HSSC Middlesex University in London and from the Research Ethics Committee and the Data Protection Board in Malta. Further permission to have access to asylum seekers/refugees in open centres was sought

officially from the coordinators of the premises.

### **Informed consent and respect for autonomy**

Research assistants who purposively chose the participants for the present study were advised to select with fairness and respect. Participants have the right for informed consent (Burnard and Morrison, 1992). Therefore individuals participating in the study were presented with an information letter informing them about the aims and process of the study. After making a rational decision they were asked to sign an informed consent form (Treece and Treece, 1986).

Participation in research was voluntary according to the principle of autonomy (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001). Participants were informed that they were at liberty to abstain from participation at any time. They were provided with adequate information regarding research, and the power of free choice, enabled them to consent voluntarily to participate in the research or decline participation (Polit *et al.* 2001).

### **Confidentiality**

The major ethical issue to be dealt with in this study was confidentiality, given the vulnerable status of the participants. This was assured in the following manner: no participant was to be identified by name in any report or publication associated with the study; the recorded information was kept within the parameters of the researcher and the respective research assistants during data analysis. The audio-recorded tapes which were used during the interviews were discarded immediately following data analysis and no names were carried forward in the write-up of the report. Anonymity could not be maintained due to the chosen method of data collection.

### **Beneficence and non-maleficence**

It is imperative that if disclosures relating to personal or traumatic events were to be made during data collection, or at any other stage in the study, the researcher would have been willing to provide to the participants effective support with appropriate and accessible sources of help (Papadopoulos *et al.* 2002). This is particularly relevant when dealing with vulnerable people. However the questions during the focus groups did not elicit any traumatic past experiences. The responsibility not to harm the respondents in any way was crucial to this study

### **Findings and Discussion**

This study affirms that an asylum seeker/refugee is a successful individual temporarily without funds and opportunities. The participants of this study shared problems which are common to marginalized and deprived groups in general.

Although the initial questions during the focus group interviews aimed to explore the impact of forced migration on the participants' health, very little information regarding this issue was mentioned during the focus groups. Nevertheless, symptoms associated with mental distress, such as headaches, memory loss, somatisation and high anxiety levels were mentioned throughout the discussions and also marked as highly influencing factors on the body outline figure where the majority of the markings showing parts of the body mostly affected by migration were around the head as shown in Figure 1

Their main preoccupations were related to factors interweaved in the four major themes which emerged from the findings. These were mainly related to their extensively long experience at the detention centres upon arrival, the negative attitudes of health care professionals/reception staff towards them, the avoidance of society which was perceived to be due to their skin colour and their high expectations of finding better economic prospects when/if they were to resettle in a third country.

### **On becoming detainees**

It is often said that a society's moral strength is measured by how humanely it deals with the most vulnerable individuals living within its domain (Silove *et al.* 2001). Most of the participants in this study have spent long periods (12 to 18 months) in detention centers, awaiting the outcome of their refugee claims. During this time the participants

manifested high levels of depression, lived in poor cramped and unhygienic conditions where suicidal urges, due to boredom and fear of deportation, were also reported.

*I suffered in different ways in detention: worrying, thinking a lot, stomach problems, feeling tired although not doing anything. I had loss of appetite and the food we used to eat in the detention centre was giving me more stomach problems. There are a lot of discomforts that could not be explained.*

*The fact that I was in detention used to make me feel bad, sometimes I wanted to die. Thoughts about home, the family I left behind, it was all too much.*

*Participant 2: Male*

During this dismal period decisions regarding the participants' health were taken by the military personnel who approved or disapproved whether the asylum seeker really needed medical attention. Furthermore, whenever he or she was referred to a health centre or to hospital he/she was handcuffed throughout the whole journey. This humiliating strategy contributes to the psychosocial distress of asylum seekers, as locals looked down on them as if they were criminals as a female participant stated;

*Before they released us from the detention centre they took us to hospital to take an X-ray. I was pregnant then and they (the soldiers) handcuffed me to 3 other girls. Then we were expected to climb at the back of a military truck. I approached the women soldiers and told them that I cannot possibly go up the truck handcuffed and pregnant, so she freed me until I went up on the truck.*

*Participant 5: Female*

Instead of providing special care for the most traumatised individuals fleeing persecution, western countries may be subjecting them to the very conditions that are likely to hinder psychosocial recovery (Silove *et al.* 2001).

### **Attitudes of health care professionals and health care utilization**

The findings in this study show that encounters with health care professionals and front

desk personnel were found to be major barriers for asylum seekers to access health care services. These findings are consistent with those of other studies where doctors, nurses and reception staff had no formal training in coping with asylum seekers and refugees (Van Ryn and Burke, 2000) perceived persons of low socio-economic status to be less intelligent persons with negative personality characteristics (Karmi, 1992) and exhibited less non-verbal attitudes, empathy, courtesy and information giving (Roter *et al.* 1997) as reported by one of the female participants:

*None of the nurses or doctors show any interest in our background or ask us if we prefer to be seen by a female doctor. It is very embarrassing for us to be examined by a man. In the end I started to miss appointments as the majority of doctors are men. They (the staff) expect us to change our values and beliefs overnight. When I first came out from detention, I did not understand anything about the Maltese system. I did not know that I needed a prescription to buy medicine or what to do when I go to a health centre. By time I learnt, but these things take time. I feel sorry for those people who are yet to come out of detention, as they will feel lost at first.*

*Participant 2: Female*

*I already suffered from stomach ulcers back home, but now it has become much worse. Together with all the worrying about my family back home I have encountered difficulties in the health system. I once went to the emergency department because I was very sick and vomiting blood. I was there at 9am. I understand that all over the world there is a priority for emergency cases, but in this case there were people coming from outside and getting in to be seen. When I approached the receptionist the person was very rude and unsympathetic. I was made me to feel like I should not be there and that she has a personal grudge against black people.*

*Participant 6: Male*

### **The skin colour phenomenon.**

The Maltese population is not used to interacting with ethnic societies. According to a Eurobarometer study which explored discrimination in the EU (Ameen, 2007) it was found that only 32% of Maltese citizens said they believe that ethnicity enriches local culture. The participants perceived that certain behaviours of host nationals, have scarred their spirit more than any physical condition or illness resulting from forced migration. They felt that this is due to their skin colour as stated by these two participants

*The Maltese invite us to parties organised by the company where I work at Christmas, but we are never on the inside of things. They always maintain a certain distance. There seems to be a line between us and it is very difficult to break that line, because our faces (black) are not very common here.*

*Participant 5: Male*

*It takes some time before you can call someone your friend. They (the Maltese) are not very happy with us at first, in fact they are shocked when they see that they will*

*be working with us but then after a long time they start to ask you where you come from, your religion and only after they made a certain judgement about you they become your friends and accept you. But their first impression is that they are shocked to see a black man.*

*Participant 1: Male*

According to Herring (2002) skin colour has an impact on occupational attainments and in identifying baseline differences in who gets what. Although some of the informants received secondary and tertiary education in their homeland, most of these were employed in the construction industry as labourers in Malta. According to Beiser, (1999) refugees tend to work at menial jobs which are shunned by the locals and where the attainment of educational qualifications makes little difference. It must be understood that it often happens that employers do not recognize the immigrants' work experience and qualifications (Polidano, 2005).

*Employers do not recognize our ability. I can prove that I can do it but they will always send someone to supervise me, someone to watch that I am doing it right, even if this person is less qualified than me. It sometimes bothers them that a black man is able to do certain things.*

*Participant 5: Male*

*It is very difficult to find a job here. They do not respect our qualifications or that we can learn as fast as others, especially when there were only few of us in the beginning. Due to our nationality they give us a position where we are less paid than others doing the same job. No one gives us any information about unions and rights.*

*Participant 3: Male*

Although refugees have the right to have a working permit in Malta, the majority of irregular immigrants have a humanitarian protection status only. It is this group of individuals who are highly exploited by employers as they do not have any rights and therefore cannot defend themselves in the case of abuse by their employers.

These issues regarding the skin colour of refugees and difficulties with employment may have influenced the future hopes of the participants in this study, the majority of whom are yearning to resettle in a third country as they believe that it will provide them with better economic prospects:

*Maybe if I was in a large country like England or France, they (the natives) would treat me better because they have more experience with black migrants in these countries. In Malta if I had a British background I would be treated much better and my qualifications will be taken into consideration. There are also many eastern Europeans where I work, but they do not have the problems we have. So it all boils down to skin colour.*

*Participant 4: Male*



Their expectations of work opportunities and a better life may be far fetched as problems of employment and integration encountered in Malta are also found in other studies abroad (Rudgren, 2004; Valtonen, 1999; Papadopoulos *et al.* 2002; Papadopoulos, 2006)

### **Limitations of the study**

The participants of this study were from Eritrea and Ethiopia therefore the findings cannot be generalized to all asylum seekers/refugees in Malta. The involvement of 'insiders' (research assistants) who were familiar to all participants may have influenced the participation of some and the refusal of others. Moreover, most of the participants knew each other, therefore they may have been hesitant to elaborate in certain aspects of the discussion.

### **Conclusion**

This study has raised issues around the impact of the asylum seekers'/refugees' experience of forced migration. The comprehension of this experience tinged by shades of humiliation and despair and leading to severe psychological distress, necessitates the profound understanding of trained personnel in cultural competence, especially those who work in the various areas of the public sector who have the opportunity to exercise and implement harmonization within diversity.

For this reason a leaflet was devised by the author to promote an awareness regarding the significance of meeting the biopsychosocial needs of asylum seekers and refugees amongst health care professionals using the Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor Model for the Development of Cultural Competence (Papadopoulos *et al.* 1998). Moreover, while mainstream facilities should be a basic component of the refugee experience in a resettlement country, culturally sensitive programmes and educating the public regarding the hardships of being a refugee may minimize the effects of their psychosocial culture shock facilitating acculturation.

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# Parent Education Programs: (Co)construction with Parents

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## Abstract

*The parent education / training programs that have been developed for the last two years at the Family Support and Parental Counselling Centre of NÓS were developed for and with parents of children and youth at risk as a strategy to prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect. The weekly multi focused 3 hours sessions specifically target the parent's response to the child or youth's needs previously evaluated according to the Framework Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000). As so, each program is unique and its duration depends on the group's characteristics. Parents chose several themes like "Child Development and Discipline", "Family-School Relationship", "Children Protection and Safety" and "Children and Domestic Violence", which are developed with a multidisciplinary team that includes psychologists, a social worker, an attorney and a social-cultural animator. Through a developmental perspective and a strong ecological and systems approach, these collaborative programs are designed to respond to the needs of the participants, fathers and mothers, aiming to enhance their knowledge, skills, resources and strategies, promoting a safe and stimulating healthy environment for the children and youth, through positive parenting practices. The strategies of intervention and preliminary qualitative data about the programs are discussed, as well as the future orientations.*

Keywords: Parent education / training, children / youth at risk for abuse or neglect, ecosystemic approach, CAFAP

## Introduction

The social welfare service known in Portugal as CAFAP – *Centro de Apoio Familiar e Aconselhamento Parental* – in english "Family Support and Parental Counseling Centre – has been recently implemented in several portuguese non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NÓS – *Associação de Pais e Técnicos para a Integração do Deficiente*, an NGO that works with the population of two counties of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, Barreiro and Moita, has its own CAFAP since 2006. This CAFAP's main goal is to prevent and reduce risk or danger of maltreatment for children/youth and their families within their environment by promoting their well-being. We here define child abuse or maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in

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actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (World Health Organization, 1999).

CAFAP's ultimate purpose is to prevent children from being removed from their homes. Therefore, the emphasis is on families as the primary social context for children to develop, one of the fundamental principles according to Minuchin, Colapinto and Minuchin (2007) to work with families and service systems. Its conceptual framework is based on Belsky's (1980, quoted in Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2005) adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1979, qtd. in Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2005) to child maltreatment. As underlined by Minuchin et al., it's more effective to plan and implement services once understood the context where people live, the involvement of others and the resources available within the family's informal and formal social network.

The guiding principles "family centered", "strengths-based" and "cultural responsiveness" (Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2005) are integrated into the ecosystemic assessment and intervention inspired in the Framework Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000). Assessing the needs, as well as the strengths and difficulties, is a core assignment of CAFAP's ecological team (i.e., psychologists, a social worker, an attorney, a social-cultural animator and volunteers) and its local community partners (e.g., social welfare service, child protection service, schools) to determine with the family whether a child is in need and how that child and family might be better helped. Assessment should take account of three domains: (1) the child's developmental needs; (2) the parents' or caregivers' capacities to respond appropriately; (3) the wider family and community factors (Department of Health, 2000). Once established whether or not a child is in need, an intervention plan is designed with the family. Besides individual and family intervention, CAFAP may invite the parents to participate in a parent education program (see Figure 1). This multilevel and integrated approach is fundamental to many of these families who in their path to a better parenting encounter several services that instead of being perceived by the family as community resources (e.g., child protection services), are perceived as a source of family stress. It is therefore fundamental to search for a systemic "services delivery" equilibrium (Alarcão, 2002). At CAFAP's programs, these families, defined by Alarcão (2008) as challenged families, have the opportunity, in an initial interview, to express their expectations and their suggestions.

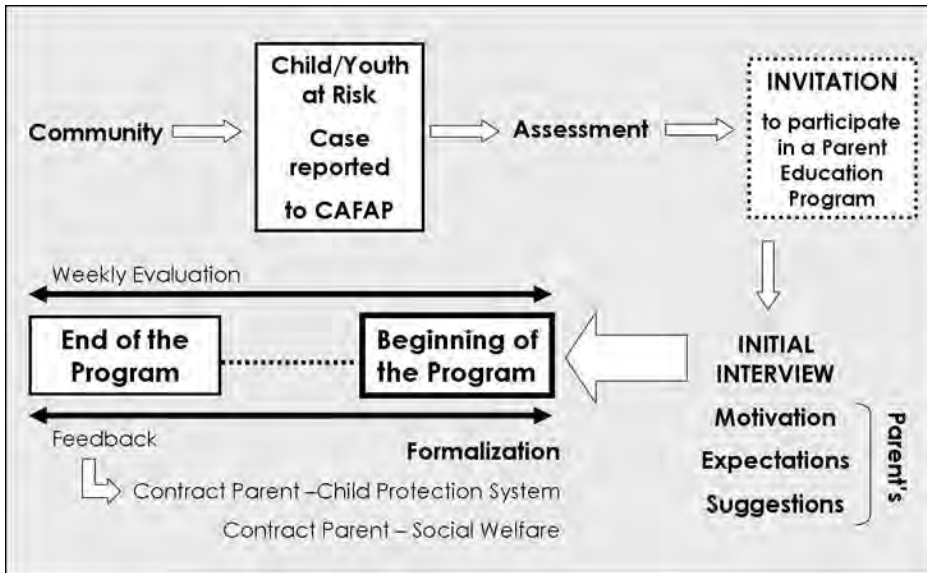


Figure 1: From case reporting to parent's participation in a parent education program.

Each program described in this paper is guided by the “good enough” (Winnicott, n.d.) parenting principle is a “non-fit them all” solution addressing multiple risk factors (Shwartz, 2002), valuing each parent idiosyncrasies, thus enhancing parent’s motivation to participate in the program by making them co-authors of the program’s design. Parent’s participation maybe formalized in the shape of a written agreement with the local child protection service (i.e., Comissão de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens) and/or with the local social welfare service as part of the social insertion plan, to whom is given frequent feedback about parent’s attendance, participation and parenting competencies development. This paper main goal is to unveil what works through the evaluation of the programs’ execution along with the perceived impact of the parent education programs, thus exploring its characteristics and outcomes.

### Method

The development of document content analysis of all the materials of the three groups of the parent education programs developed by CAFAP between 2006 and 2008 allowed the gathering and crossing of the information about its implementation. This analysis was based on the programs files and archives, containing planning documents, schedules, session’s resources, individual evaluations and attendance sheets (see Table 1), regarding the participation of 40 parents/caregivers (38 mothers, one father and one grandfather).

CAFAP’s third parent education program was more thoroughly evaluated by Ferreira (2008), as part of an integrated master thesis. Following a qualitative approach which also contained a quantitative section, this study was carried through the guiding principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003), with a major focus on strengths and skills.

Twelve parents participated in this study (Ferreira, 2008) – all who completed the program – and the participant’s sample illustrated the general characteristics of the population served

by CAFAP. There was also a professional sample, composed of the CAFAP's team members who participated in the program sessions. The data was collected through two major strategies: 1) appreciative interviews, before and after the program, both to team members and to program participants, which accessed the positive expectations about parenting and about the program, focusing on strengths and positive change, that results on a transformational inquiry and 2) the portuguese version (Pedro, Carapito, & Ribeiro, 2008) of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart (1995, 2001), which accesses three parenting factors: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive.

## Results

As a result of the document content analysis, Table 1 illustrates the comparison of three groups of parents that participated in the programs, regarding attendance, evaluation strategies and session themes.

The typical weekly session lasted 3 hours, with a 30 minutes pause, and had the following organization: 1) short motivational activity; 2) introduction to the theme; 3) processing the information (e.g., brainstorming, written exercises, role-play and games); 4) applying the information to known and to new situations.

The content analysis of the final evaluation questionnaires and interviews provided information about the participant's most important gains, including personal and professional development, improved self-esteem as a parent and empowerment of their social network.

Concerning the cumulative weight of each of the focus areas referred in the Framework for the Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000), some differences between the three parent education groups are revealed (see Table 1). While the number of sessions focusing on the child development needs is stable across all groups, on

the third group there was a marked increase on the focus on community and family resources. On all three groups, more sessions were focused on the caregiver than on any other area.

The best practices of the programs, also gathered from this analysis, encompassed a focus on a variety of child maltreatment risk factors, a professional's depowerment that brought out parents expertise, and a smaller group format which allowed increased sharing.

Preliminary results of the third group evaluation indicate that through the program the parents showed major changes in child's behaviour management strategies, social support, parenting skills and emotional management, while the professionals referred mainly the positive development of the in-group leadership and social support (see Ferreira, 2008, for complete data).

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of the Groups / Programs

		Group I	Group II	Group III	
<b>Participants</b>					
N <sub>total</sub>		14	12	14	
N <sub>attendance average</sub>		7	5	7	
Drop out		4	4	3	
<b>Evaluation</b>					
Initial Interviews		-	×	×	
Final Interviews		-	-	×	
Psychological Assessment Instruments		Parenting Educative Styles Scale	-	Parenting Styles and Dimensions Question- naire	
Weekly Individual Evaluation		-	-	×	
Final evaluation questionnaire		×	×	-	
<b>Session Theme</b>					
Focus on	Child	Child Development	2	4	2
		Nutrition	1	1	1
		Child Safety	1	2	1
		Health	1	1	2
		Children and Domestic Violence	1	1	1
		N	6	9	7
		Caregiver	Creativity and Imagination / Playing	-	2
	House and Financial Management		1	1	1
	Parental Stress and Parenting Models		-	1	1
	Child Behaviour Management / Discipline		2	3	2
	Self-Awareness		2	1	1
	Life Story		2	4	1
	Personnal projects and development		2	-	2
	N	9	12	9	
	Family & Community	Family Rituals	1	1	1
		Family and School Relationships	1	1	1
		Child Day-care and Alternative Edu- cation Solutions for Youth	-	-	1
		Child Protection System	-	-	1
		Social Insertion Income and other social benefits	-	-	1
		Employment	-	-	1
		N	2	2	6
	Program organizations and evaluation		2	4	4
	Sessions		19	27	26
	N <sub>total</sub>				



## Discussion

### What is the best

The discovery of what is a “good practice” in parent education programs, one of the aims of this study, is only possible through evaluation. Programs have been “delivered” in different ways (Bolen, McWey & Schlee, 2008) by several formal and informal groups but it remains urgent to adopt systematic evaluation practices (Long, 1997). As stated by Dufour and Chamberland (2003), program evaluation contributes to a better decision making in the process of adapting the programs to the target population.

Building on CAFAP’s evaluation practices, there has been a considerable evolution in our programs since 2006. We have moved from a service “delivery” posture to a more collaborative one, involving caregivers and other community resources in the construction and implementation of the programs. This evolution through evaluation is illustrated in this study by the marked increase on the focus on community and family resources present on the third group. This change surely contributed to a visible increase in autonomy and empowerment as elicited through the interviews. As an example, it was important to capacitate parents for job searching through activating community resources, thereby raising their autonomy level, while also preventing against child maltreatment, which is strongly correlated with poverty (UNICEF, 2007).

### What is a best practice

One of the most remarkable features in the last CAFAP’s parent education group was the focus on the promotion of in-group management and leadership, which valued each parent’s competence by sharing new strategies for, as an example, dealing with child behaviour management situations. This professionals’ depowerment posture that elicits participants’ competence is also referred by Shannon (n.d.), as a main practice on parent education programs aimed at preventing child abuse, and by Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) as one of the best practices in working in community. The reflexive evaluation of our third program by Ferreira (2008) also revealed that many of these families are well aware of their own capacities and skills, even when they get contrary information from professionals that still carry a deficit-based attitude.

Also, Bolen, McWey and Schlee (2008) argued that more attention should be given to the parent perception of what is a good parenting practice. This may be a strategy to overcome the contextual factors that impair the notion of “good enough” parenting (Winnicot, n.d.).

In our third program, these perceptions, along with the motivations and suggestions, captured by the initial interviews, allowed us to adapt the implementation to the group’s needs and characteristics (Ferreira, 2008).

The raw information gathered through the weekly sessions posed as a reality check for our systematic program review and adaptation (allowed by the program’s flexible length), functioning as a calibration procedure for the integration of participants’ and professionals’ perceptions. This process allowed an increased flexibility in procedures, such as the referred focus on superior ecological levels activating social and personal resources, and the connection with community partners (as an example, inviting job centre speakers). This major focus on a larger ecological view is an urgent need in all community actions, instead of a limited focus on the less comprehensive ecological levels (Peirson, 2005). However, narrowing our focus to these levels has its importance

due to individual and family risk factors. As an example, there was an investment in the caregivers' realistic expectations about child developmental milestones, improving their notion of "good enough" parenting (Winnicot, n.d.) and preventing child maltreatment (Scannapico & Connel-Carrick, 2005).

The final document analysis of the weakly individual evaluations sheets – which also allowed the programs' permanent flexibility – as well as the final interviews results (Ferreira, 20008), showed that the most important gains were outcomes that are referred by Shannon (n.d.) as best practices in programs aiming at preventing child abuse, namely improved self esteem and emotional management of caregivers through a constant sharing, personal and professional development and empowerment of their social networks.

Based on the systematic reflection on the evaluation results (Ferreira, 2008), the main intervention clues for future programs started to unveil. These clues included: 1) a focus on the co-construction of the program which comprised both professionals and parents; 2) enhancing the self-management and leadership of the parent group through the professionals' posture of depowerment (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005); 3) a more structured continuity of the sessions through the construction of shared projects and objectives in order to increase participation; 4) a deeper investment on male parenthood participation, starting as soon as the initial family assessment and also in the adaptation of the session's activities and tasks; 5) an increased focus on promoting the informal social support and networks of the parents; 6) a renewed approach to the parents' emotional management strategies; 7) prioritizing practical and hands-on tasks activities during sessions; 8) a higher connection and exchange with community resources; 9) the promotion of significant rewards per session and 10) creating a major emphasis on the sharing strategy between parents, especially regarding child behaviour management.

### Limitations and Challenges

Due to the target population day to day reality, to our programs characteristics and its implementation procedures, we also faced some challenges and limitations which we tried to overcome with new strategies, thereby introducing feedback to better (co)construct future parent education programs.

Some of the most important constraints in the program's implementation are also known limitations of other intervention strategies like home visiting, namely poor maternal mental health (e.g., depression), maternal substance use and partner violence (Duggan, Caldera, Rodriguez, Burrell, Rohde & Crowne, 2007), thus reinforcing the need to promote a multilevel and multimethod strategy to work with these families.

Parents' mandatory participation is also one of the constant limitations, however the focus on the previous engagement with CAFAP's intervention (i.e., parents are invited to participate and get involved on the program's design) and activities resulted on a non compulsory posture in many parents. Another important way to overcome family resistance is to make the sessions fun and comfortable to parents (e.g., social gatherings, relaxation exercises, outside activities, etc.), as well as promoting personal competence and valuing parents' aspirations and perceptions. The low involvement of male caregivers represented another limitation and this may be related to the well known female majority (Sousa, 2005) in multi-challenged contexts.

Another program's implementation challenge was the fact that the schedule was mainly

accessible to unemployed parents, which narrowed our population, and the low attendance especially of parents with financial strain (e.g., occasionally had no money to buy a bus ticket) and single parenthood (e.g., lack of support in case of child sickness). However, on the first program we managed to provide some bus tickets, on the second we frequently gave a lift to some parents with a bus from NÓS, and on the third program, we had a babysitting service.

Through the evaluation process the small samples resulting of the above limitations led to a limited generalization of the results. Adding to this idea, the absence of an external evaluative commission may result in some evaluator bias in the results analysis.

#### New directions

When Ralph P. Bridgman presented the future directions of parent education programs almost 80 years ago, these programs were by then “a toddling movement” (Bridgman, 1930). Although much has been accomplished in the last decades it remains actual his urge to scientifically study the programs’ effectiveness, to share what works (and what doesn’t work) with whom and how. The evaluation and exposure of parent’s education programs might contribute to develop best practices guidelines for future programs. Nonetheless, the prevailing focus should not be on the “one size fits all” attitude, since it limits the matching between child-family needs and intervention, thereby reducing the intervention spectrum (Schwartz, 2002). Therefore, it is our intention to diversify our strategies (e.g., more quantitative evaluation instruments, using video interaction guidance strategies), to develop a follow up study and a meta-analysis to compare these programs with others. Moreover, we need to identify the specific contribution of different variables to the program’s implementation and outcomes, like the characteristics of both professionals and caregivers. Furthermore, as it may overcome the reduced number of portuguese investigations (Coutinho, 2004), it must be emphasized the positive initiative that several universities and the Portuguese Welfare System are developing regarding a comparative study of parent education programs with a national sample (Almeida, Pinto, Gaspar, Brandão & Ribeiro, 2008).

It may also be positive to design specific programs with parents of younger children. That is, in a primary prevention perspective, parents could be engaged in this kind of programs from pregnancy and the program focus could be, as suggested by Geeraert, Van den Noortgate, Grietens and Onghena (2004), on child’s development and on the development of the infant-parent dyad.

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# Standing against the coloniality of power: Claiming the right to democratic participation in the globalized neoliberal state<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Public schools are spaces where multiple local and global struggles are played out. Racism and xenophobia, for instance, are not simply manifestations of local hierarchies of oppression; these are key elements of the coloniality of power, the living legacy of colonialism around the globe. This legacy is reproduced and contested in the struggle for meaningful public education for marginalized groups. The globalization of neoliberal education policies geared towards the decentralization of public school systems has resulted in increased transfer of responsibility for the administration and academic outcomes to marginalized school communities while control over the content of education, the power structure and funding remains out of their hands (Fine, 1993; Spring, 1993). It is in this context where thousands of disenfranchised communities strive to transform their public schools reclaiming public education as a social right and a public good, a place for alternative political and democratic socialization (FLAPE, 2007; Peschard, 2006). In this paper I look through the conceptual lenses of coloniality of power (e.g., Quijano, Mignolo), social, cultural and political capital (e.g., Bourdieu, Chronic Poverty Research Centre) to examine ethnographic material from an action research project that aims to promote collective participation on education policy matters at a historically marginalized black and immigrant community in Puerto Rico.*

*Keywords:* coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, social capital, cultural capital, political capital, political culture, power, public education, citizen participation, ethnography

Have you heard that slogan “Think globally, act locally”, the one that began to catch the imagination of environmentalist and other activists in the United States and elsewhere in the late ‘60’s. The slogan signals the importance of engaging immediate social concerns within a global framework, suggesting the uniquely transformative meaning local actions can have when they depart from a critical understanding of the connections between local struggles and world-wide realities. I thought about that slogan as I was mulling over how to articulate the interconnectedness between concepts rarely put together in community psychology research literature, that is, power, political culture, cultural capital and coloniality. If placing power at the center of our praxis has proven challenging, seeing sociopolitical dynamics in their complexity and interrelatedness

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is even harder (epistemologically, ontologically and methodologically speaking). However, the dynamics of most interest to us are by nature complex and experientially indivisible.

For several years I have been developing strategies to integrate critical ethnography (e.g., Trueba & McLaren, 2000) with community action (e.g., Alinsky, Freire), becoming a witness/actor of ground-up social change processes as they unfold. This transdisciplinary weaving is useful for crafting stories of oppression and liberation highlighting lived complexities and possibilities. In this paper I attempt to connect multiple levels of analysis to expose how politics and power manifest in ways that reproduce and contest the hegemonic political culture which maintains cultural capital under the control of the beneficiaries of colonial arrangements.

The paper is written in four sections. The first, lays the conceptual ground for understanding politics and power from a shared global history of coloniality. The following two sections narrate how coloniality is manifested in four school meetings: two in a small school district in the United States where Mexican immigrants collectively advocate for school changes; and other two in Puerto Rico, one of the oldest colonies, where a group of community residents are working to reclaim their neighborhood public school. At the end I point out the contributions transdisciplinary multi-level approaches could make to an emerging critical community psychology that is long overdue.

Coloniality, Cultural Capital, Political Culture and Power: Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries to Grapple with Oppression and Liberation in Everyday Life

Although we are yet to agree on what we mean by *power* and what impact does it have in our field, it is clear that community psychologists have argued for placing *power* at the center of our theories and actions for decades (Rappaport, 1977; Serrano García, 1994; Fisher & Sonn, 2008; Smail, 1994, 2001). Recent special issues on power in the *Journal of Community Psychology* (2008) and the *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* (2007) attest to our continuing struggle to collectively integrate our social values with our theories and practice.

Rappaport (2000, as cited by Smail, 2001) has reasoned this problem in terms of the field's "attachment to individualistic psychological concepts and victim-blaming practices." Fisher, Sonn and Evans (2007) argue that it's the hegemonic scientist-practitioner model itself that "emphasizes individualistic, internal states and objective, value-free empirical research." I want to argue here that part of the difficulty in giving *power* its rightful place in community psychology (or as Fisher and colleagues, 2007, call it the field's *raison d'être*), comes from our collective institutionalized incapacity to deal squarely with the coloniality of power and knowledge. Social scientists and humanists like Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Anibal Quijano, Edgardo Lander, Edward Said, would advise us to place analysis of power within a deeper understanding of the continuing legacy of colonization. The ways in which power is leveraged to maintain racialized conditions of inequality, oppression and exploitation is part of a global political culture that has been in the making since the invasion and conquest of the Americas.

Quijano (2007), a Peruvian sociologist, explains the continuing legacy of colonialism (or what he terms "coloniality") in this way:

*With the conquest of the societies and the cultures which inhabit what today is called Latin America, began the constitution of a new world order culminating, five hundred years later, in a global power covering the whole planet. This process implied a violent concentration of the world's resources under the control and for the benefit of*

*a small European minority – and above all, of its ruling classes...<sup>2</sup>*

*This domination is known as a specific Eurocentered colonialism... this colonial domination has been defeated in the large majority of the cases... Its successor, Western imperialism, is an association of social interests between the dominant groups ('social classes' and/or 'ethnies') of countries with unequally articulated power, rather than an imposition from the outside...*

*However, that specific colonial structure of power produced the specific social discriminations which later were codified as 'racial', 'ethnic', 'anthropological', or 'national', according to the times, agents, and populations involved. These intersubjective constructions, product of Eurocentered colonial domination were even assumed to be 'objective', 'scientific', categories... That is, as natural phenomena, [rather than] referring to the history of power. This power structure was, and still is, the framework within which operate the other social relations of classes or estates.*

*The colonizers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction. Cultural Europeanisation was transformed into an aspiration. It was a way of participating and later to reach the same material benefits and the same power as Europeans" (p. 168-169).*

Although in this excerpt Quijano narrates the history of coloniality in past tense, the point is that the coloniality of power has persisted colonial rule and it is being enacted over and over again in contemporary life. Nandy (1989), as cited in Smith (1999/2005)

*... discusses the different phases of colonization, from 'rapacious bandit-kings' intent on exploitation, to 'well-meaning middle class liberals' intent on salvation as a legitimization of different forms of colonization... Nandy ... describe colonization as a 'shared culture' for those who have been colonized and for those who have colonized.' (p. 44-45)*

In separate works, Edgardo Lander and Linda Tuhiwai Smith both show how this shared culture was built upon multiple separations and naturalization processes: separation of humans from nature in ways that justify its exploitation, and naturalization of certain Euro-centered worldviews. Today many around the planet continue struggling to stand against the coloniality of power, as suspicious Euro-centered and imperialist ideas of what constitute development, modernity, good government, good science, "ethnic culture" and so on continue to be imposed as the criteria for evaluating what is accepted, funded, published, marketed (think about the impact that funding programs from, let's say, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, U.S. Aid or NIMH have on how struggling communities define and address their problems).

The concept of *cultural capital*, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is rather useful for linking macro and micro-levels of analysis. Cultural capital encompasses the ways of knowing, knowledge and practices of the dominant classes who are capable of imposing their norms as the criteria for evaluation (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Implied here is that those norms

<sup>2</sup> See Eduardo Galeano (1971) *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina* to learn about how Europe benefited from the colonization of The Americas



are not fixed or “good” in an essentialist way but rather serve the interest of the dominant classes and thus, can and do continuously change (e.g., what does it take to “make it” in the U.S. economy now vs. 30 years, 50 years ago).

Let’s now return to our field’s concern with power. From this recognition/understanding of the coloniality of power, it seems to me that rather than focusing on a decontextualized and interpersonal approach to power as, for instance, Prilleltensky (2008) does (see Fryer; Fisher & Sonn; Reich, Pinkard & Davidson in the same special issue), we need to confront (and deconstruct) how coloniality is inscribed in societal structures of domination/exploitation/oppression (see Quijano, 2000). Or as Fryer (2008) puts it

*rather than seeking to engage with power as such... we should be engaging with the way societal hierarchies are set up and maintained through wealth, class, labor market position, ethnic dominance (majority/minority status), gender, etc., and the way societal structures impact on people both objectively and through their subjective understanding of them (p. 242).*

Fryer (2008) argues that “the apparent ‘power of individuals’ is better understood as subjective manifestations of the societal distribution of power.”

An understanding of the coloniality of power challenges us to think beyond narrow/localized ways in which unequal distributions of power and cultural capital create “individual” and/or “community”<sup>3</sup> suffering, and move us towards questions about politics and political culture. Analyses of power devoid of a critical understanding of politics run the risk of decontextualizing and essentializing social dynamics as issues of poor/rich, black/white, immigrant/non-immigrant.

Montero (2001) defines politics as matters about how public life is organized and the ways in which power<sup>4</sup> is claimed to define “lines of action”<sup>5</sup>. Political culture here refers to shared (and contested) meanings of politics that guide how people understand/engage/act upon how power is organized in a society (traditions, institutions, relations, structures).

Leticia Heras Gómez (2004), a Mexican political scientist, explains the challenges Latin American countries face towards achieving democratic<sup>6</sup> societies from an analysis of the coloniality of our political cultures. She points out Latin America’s colonial history is much longer than its “democratic” history and it is that colonial history that has shaped our political cultures. She sees this legacy in the ways in which, for example, the hegemonic political culture in Latin American societies places more importance on the figure of the politician (who is he/she, how one

3 The concept of “community” should be interrogated as it has and is used by the state and its institutions to regulate the poor and marginalized in an effort to quiet discontent.

4 I disagree with notions of power that suggest *some have it* and other do not, but rather see power as a means and a medium for domination/exploitation/oppression/resistance/liberation. If we think about the struggles to resist the coloniality of power and knowledge we can also think that what is at stake is a profound deconstruction (or questioning) of hegemonic political culture, not power as an essentialized/reified entity.

5 It would be important to introduce here some of the issues raised by Dussel in *20 Tesis de Política*

6 Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, the notions of “democratic government” and “democracy” also need to be subjected to critical reflection. For instance, 1) the terms refer to ideals that emerged from rather problematic social arrangements (not all living in the polis were considered legitimate actors in so called democratic processes); 2) there *are* other ways of conceptualizing political arrangements other than democratic governments as we know them that could lead to socially just and sustainable societies (see for example, François Houtart (2006) *Un socialismo para el siglo 21*); and 3) it has been argued that contemporary notions of democracy are sociopolitical ideals not quite fulfilled yet by any society (just as with socialism and communism).

may access him/her, what he/she can give me/us) than on the institutions of the State, a dynamic present since Spanish colonial rule where the figure of the virrey was absolute and the laws of the Crown “mandated but were not obeyed” by the local authorities. She also locates the largely impermeability of the racial/class social hierarchy to the way social relations were organized by the Spanish rulers.<sup>7</sup> Heras Gómez sustains that without acknowledging and challenging the ways in which we understand political life, attempts at deepening our democracies will undoubtedly fail.

In sum, the question that I’m posing is whether we can work<sup>8</sup> towards balancing power without boldly challenging the enduring legacy of coloniality in our political culture? As Anibal Quijano (2000) points out, the history of colonization is the history of power as we know it: how domination/oppression/exploitation and liberation are enacted is very much linked to our shared colonial legacy. As Smith carefully argues, what we claim as valid knowledge for public policy purposes or within academic circles is tied to that shared colonial history. Regardless of whether we figure out if/how to deal with power explicitly, the enduring legacy of our colonial history will continue to shape politics and power in the public sphere. Unless we joint other efforts to not just redistribute the cake or teach people how to eat it, but come up with a different kind of flour.

### **One Meeting and Five Hundred Years of Coloniality of Power and Knowledge**

For the last seven years I have joined neighborhood-based efforts to promote democratic participation in school politics and reclaim public schools as a public matter. As a beginner critical ethnographer and ally, I first worked four years with Mexican immigrant in the U.S. vying to make their schools accountable to them (Reyes Cruz, 2008). Later I returned to my country, Puerto Rico, where I have been engaged in similar efforts for over a year, this time working with other Puerto Ricans to reclaim a neighborhood elementary school as a vital piece in a larger community development project. Although there are substantial differences between the two settings some things seemed quite familiar; the way politics and power were enacted revealed the continuing legacy of colonization.

Public schools galvanize multiple stakeholders toward actions that reflect common, collective, and conflictive interest. Thus, schools cannot be understood without grappling with politics and power. Here I scenes from ethnographic work in Illinois to show the ways in which the coloniality of power and knowledge is manifested in the exercise of cultural capital. The first is a meeting between Laura, a light-skinned Mexican immigrant mother, and school staff. She had summon the principal, her daughter’s teacher (both White U.S. Americans), the bilingual teacher (a light-skinned woman of Mexican descent) and myself (the brown Puerto Rican ally-translator) to discuss some of her concerns regarding her child’s schooling. The school was located in a predominately poor and African American neighborhood. Its students were mostly African Americans and immigrants from Latin America.

*At a school meeting organized by Laura to discuss her daughter’s performance, the regular classroom teacher started by cheerfully declaring, “Your daughter has made a lot of progress!” He showed Laura the child’s scores in a district-wide math and vocabulary test. The child had gone from a score of 1-20 on a previous test to a*

7 What the author describes for Latin America rings true for other ex-colonies like the United States, at least for those who suffer the brunt of this hegemonic cultural system.

8 By “we” and “work” I mean a work that has to be done by necessity collectively.

score of 40-60. Laura asked, "What's the maximum score they could get?" The teacher responded, "A 100."

*[Laura stared at him.] ... The child was showing signs of improvement on test scores. But compared to the standard Laura's daughter was measured against, the teacher was portraying a distorted image of the student's academic progress. Hers was not the kind of achievement associated with college-bound students. What parents like Laura really wanted to know was if their children were making the kind of academic progress that would lead them to a college education.*

*[Laura then] expressed her concern with what she described as "lack of respect in the school," [specifically] between teachers and students, and among students. She had seen staff mistreating children, particularly African American students. Her child was also being mistreated by other children and the adults were not intervening. The regular classroom teacher responded, "The staff works very hard at encouraging respect among students. Look at the messages about respect posted on the classroom walls. The school pledge, recited every morning, also speaks about respect. Children are told all the time they have to keep their hands to themselves." The principal explained that not all parents had the same vision as Laura, they were not interested in getting involved in the school or what their children do, they didn't teach their children respect, and that was what the school had to deal with.*

*Laura insisted the issue was a school-wide problem. She suggested that the staff work on the staff end and she could work with other parents to try to get parents involved on this issue. No one from the staff said anything about it. The principal broke the silence, "You should encourage your daughter to come to the staff when others are bothering her and we will deal with the situation."*

*Laura responded that her daughter, "No les tiene confianza," which I translated as "Her daughter does not trust you." The ESL teacher corrected me saying that what Laura said was that her daughter "Didn't feel comfortable" talking with them about her troubles. I replied that "confiar" was not the same as "sentirse cómoda." The teacher then asked Laura in Spanish what she meant and Laura responded her daughter didn't trust the staff would actually listen to her.*

*On our way out of the room ... Laura said to me, "No pueden ver más allá (They can't see beyond their noses), they do not want to address the issue of respect at the school level, they want to make it about my child."<sup>9</sup>*

Coloniality is working at different levels here: from the racialized/ethnicized way in which cultural capital is enacted (who has the power to decide what counts as valid knowledge claims), to the ways in which the school staff promote child-center individualistic parent participation separating the personal from the collective/public and quieting potential claims of collective discontent. These notions, as the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano would say, are 500 years on the making.

The second scene narrates a moment in which the coloniality of power and knowledge was crystallized at a public meeting when the group of Mexican parents mobilizing for school change confronted head the limits of their "democratic participation" in school-decision making.

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9 Reyes Cruz (2008)

*During their first year [the group] recruited and collaborated with bilingual/bicultural Latinos (including myself)<sup>34</sup> who had access to information and resources... With the support of their allies the parents organized and facilitated meetings with district staff, including the superintendent himself, to address concerns and monitor progress; participated in the hiring of bilingual staff; influenced the creation of new positions and changes in current positions; pressed for the establishment of the most effective program for second language learners; and influenced the removal of staff.*

*One of the areas of contention during committee meetings was the structure of programs for Spanish speakers learning English. The coordinator and the bilingual staff were adamant about the benefits of bilingual education. The coordinator wanted to make sure parents had an understanding of the theory and research that supported bilingual education, hoping this would bring parents and staff to a shared understanding of the importance of the program and its needs. The district indicated they wanted parent input on what types of programs would be implemented in the upcoming years and the coordinator wanted to make sure parents made informed decisions.*

*For several meetings district staff described different models and their effectiveness... to the parents. During the discussions it became evident that parents understood some programs were better than others... and that the district was offering the program shown to be less effective... Lucero [one of the Mexican mothers] highlighted how [her preferred program] would facilitate the students' bilingualism, support parent-child relationships by strengthening the children's knowledge of the home language, and equalize the academic-racial hierarchy of the schools.*

*When parents and staff finally met to decide what program they wanted implemented at Dubois, district staff presented models that had not been discussed before and not the models presented as the most effective. A mother asked ... "What do you know about the effectiveness of these program options?" The district staff replied those were the options other districts were implementing; although they did not know how effective the programs were they believed it would be better than what the schools currently had."<sup>10</sup>*

## **Two Days and a Year Standing Against the Coloniality of Power to Reclaim a Public School for its Public**

When I left Illinois, the advocacy group formed by the Mexican parents was dissolving. It seemed like much was accomplished and things were still the same. Moreover, the group was struggling with different "needs and wants" that greatly reflected the same separations inherited from our colonial history: personal/individual vs. common/public interests, power in numbers vs. the power of ethics.

For the last year I have been engaged in education organizing efforts with community residents and their organizations to rescue one of their schools. After decades of administrative negligence, blatant corruption and generalized disaffection River Elementary School was slowly dying before everyone's eyes. This neighborhood elementary school with its hundred students is comfortably nestled in a historically black and poor community of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans,

<sup>10</sup> Reyes Cruz (2008)

right next door to Puerto Rico's financial district. The school is just one of the many serving eight communities engaged in an unprecedented development project. With the first Commonwealth of the Land those communities aim to revitalize their neighborhoods and protect themselves from gentrification.

Early in 2007, concerned staff, local residents, their organizations and allies decided to mobilize to rescue River school. Concerns included dwindling registration, dilapidated infrastructure, lack of educational materials, administrative inefficiency and neglect, low academic achievement, racism, xenophobia, misappropriation and fraud (from getting paid for hours that were not worked, stealing food from the school's cafeteria to manipulating standardized academic achievement tests). The River School Committee held multiple school meetings that generated interest from dozens of parents and local officials. After a year of mobilizing and advocacy activities, the Committee's most resounding achievement was the removal of the principal who had been at River for over a decade.

In the process the committee had been advocating for a democratic selection process to hire the new principal that would work collaboratively with all sectors of the school community. The Department of Education's first response was to send an interim principal whose idea of community participation was to ask them for resources when she needed them. After taking our concerns directly to the Secretary of Education, again, his office ended up inviting us to attend the interview process for the new principal and present our concerns to the candidates. Actually, we did not know what that meeting was about or what role we were expected to play until we arrived to the meeting place.

*The meeting was at one in the afternoon. It was real hot, we were running late, and we had no idea where the Regional Office of the Department of Education was. Esperanza, a long time community resident and leader, received a last minute call from the Secretary of Education's Office asking the River School Committee to attend today's meeting. Unknown to us, it was going to be the first time in the Regional Office's history that a group of community advocates would be present during the evaluation of candidates for their school's principal.*

*After informal greetings and small talk, the representative of the Secretary of Education welcomed everyone saying,*

*"The Secretary is deeply committed to River School and the community development process taking place there. He wants to hire a school principal that will work in close alliance with the community leaders and their organizations to develop an integrated educational project".*

*The chair of the evaluation committee added*

*"This is an unusual meeting. For the first time in this office's history we have a community group attending the interview process. The group was instrumental in opening the principal's position at River School. They will present to you their concerns regarding the school and listen to what you have to say. The task of the evaluation committee is only to make recommendations to the Secretary. This should be clear to everybody: although we make recommendations, it is the Secretary who has the last word".*

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11 Puerto Rico has a local Department of Education. A significant amount of its funding comes from the United States Department of Education.

*This introduction did not get lost on us the “outsiders”: After all, as most people in the room knew, the committee had been holding meetings with school staff, parents, other neighborhood residents, the Secretary of Education himself, his assistants, the local district representative to the Legislature, and the Governor’s advisor on education issues. The goal was to address the problems identified by the school community, including changing the principal. Without such high profile advocacy effort we would not have been invited to that meeting in the first place. The committee was building public accountability for the school and it seemed to be working.*

*But the administrators’ opening words were not lost on the candidates either. One by one, they turned around to face us directly and addressed Esperanza, Marcos, Carmen and I as if it all depended on getting on our good side.*

*One of the candidates seemed to have all going for her. She was a long time River teacher who participated actively in the committee in its beginning. One of her close coworkers was there seating at the evaluators side. And, as we were later told, she had access to the interview questions before hand. However, to everyone’s surprise, during her interview the woman choked. I was writing away taking note of the question and answer session when all of a sudden I felt that I had to look up. There was a question in the air and the woman could not speak. She mumbled a couple of things without addressing the question. The chair challenged her to respond from her knowledge and experience at the school. She could only gasp and look at Esperanza and me with trembling eyes.*

*The next day the Secretary of Education brought his staff to River where school staff, the interim principal, a few mothers and the River School Committee awaited. The Secretary thanked the principal for bringing the school up to speed administratively and making some needed infrastructural changes. He said that the interview process for a new principal was in progress.*

*“The new principal has to have the approval of the community and his or her performance should be evaluated at the end of the first year by the community and my office. If things are not working out we’ll look for another person.”*

*One of the teachers said that they all agreed the interim principal had done a great job and proposed that her contract be extended. The Secretary simply said it could not be done. She had retired and could not be hired officially as the full time principal. Then the teacher began raising questions about the emphasis on community participation. He argued that most parents didn’t care about what was happening at the school. “Most don’t work and never respond when we call on them to attend to issues with their children”. The teacher beside him nodded. (Never mind that the school has 100 students and in a period of three months 45 five parents attended the meetings coordinated by the River School Development Committee).*

*The next day Esperanza told me that rumors of a challenge to the validity of the selection process for the new principal were spreading wild. Some school staff (which included community residents and the interim principal) were upset about the presence of community representatives at the interviews and were challenging the process. (Never mind two strong candidates were being considered for recommendation and*

*it was apparent that the evaluation team had reached consensus about who was best qualified. Only the River teacher on the evaluators' side did not agree. She was adamant about her coworker being the best candidate despite evidence to the contrary.)*

*Gubernatorial elections are six months away. The Secretary of Education is nominated by the Governor. The current Governor has been indicted for corruption charges by the federal government. The committee knew we had to call the Secretary and let him know the process to select the new principal was being challenged. The struggle had barely begun.*

Undoubtedly there are substantial differences between the experiences of the Mexican immigrants group and the River School Committee. For example, unlike the Mexican immigrants who were legitimate but not legal residents, the people engaged in the education organizing effort in Puerto Rico are all legal historical residents of the Island. The River school community (including staff and parents) is mostly black Puerto Rican and Dominican while Mexicans constitute a racialized minority in the United States. And while the Mexican parent group was numerically larger, the River Committee had a multisectorial effort in community development giving them legitimizing their authority vis-à-vis the school staff and the Department of Education, having a share of political and cultural capital.

On the other hand, Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States where people can vote for their favorite candidate in a presidential primary but cannot vote in the presidential election. Our economy is also suffering the effects of the recession but we have little room to make decisions about which country or multinational we buy gasoline or rice from, who or how much we pay to import and export goods.

However, in Illinois and San Juan school districts are bounded by U.S. federal education policies that call for parent and community participation in school decision making. Such policies have been part of the World Bank's strategies for decentralizing public education systems for over a decade, placing increasing responsibility for school outcomes on their historically disadvantaged immediate communities. However, as Anderson (1998), Fine (1993), Sarasson (1996) and Fullan and Watson (2000) have shown, hegemonic school culture is contrary to authentic democratic participation. Marginalized communities without the "right" cultural and political capital stand to fail in their efforts to secure more autonomy over their schools.

### **Some Notes from/for the Resistance**

I depart from the premise that in order to enact critical community psychology for social justice we have to deal squarely with the coloniality of power and knowledge. This praxis must lead to collectively crafting explicit analyses of the dominant political culture integrating micro and macro levels of analyses of domination/oppression/ exploitation in every day life and how that is challenged from the ground-up. As an applied social science discipline, a critical community psychology has a distinct contribution to make to scientific understandings of politics and power as we work on "the ground" with social actors engaged in both social reproduction and contestation. Perhaps different from other ethically akin fields and disciplines, we can be simultaneously engaged in developing deeper understandings of complex social relationships and processes while working towards a just and sustainable world.

We have a lot to learn from multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary academic activist (like

those who have joined efforts to see Social Forums happen across the planet). We have much to do and learn about participatory action research and other forms of critical research such as discourse analyses, political surveys, and critical ethnography that could open our range of action and levels of understanding. But more immediately, we have a long and hopeful road to travel together to battle the negative impact of what some have termed academic capitalism and create the institutional spaces for graduate students and non-tenured-yet academics doing *trabajo de frontera*, who take great risks in precarious institutional circumstances. We need creative ways of supporting each other and our work to secure the field's relevance and survival by fostering the critical mass necessary for a transformative praxis.

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# Compreendendo os Processos de Risco e Resiliência em Adolescentes que Vivem em Situações de Vulnerabilidade Social no Brasil

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## Abstract

*This work presents researches developed at the Center for Studies and Research in Adolescence, at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, with adolescents who live in situations of social vulnerability. Risk and protection factors in the development of adolescents that live away from their families, in the streets and/or institutionalized in shelters, are discussed. Based on the framework of the Bio-ecological Approach for Human Development and the Positive Psychology, the methodology that has been used in these studies, mainly qualitative and with the ecological engagement of the researchers in different contexts is presented. The instruments used have been adapted to the needs of a chronological approach study which investigates the past, present and future of the adolescents, aiming to detect time changes and its influence along their development. The studies have allowed characterizing the social and physical contexts where the adolescents are engaged and the risk and protective factors that permeate their stories. We can observe, on one hand, the transitoriness and precariousness in the life of these adolescents, and on the other hand, the emotional relationships established in the new context of development that bring a sense of positive adaptation leading to resilience processes. Thus, it is discussed the importance of new affective relationships, the role of the social and emotional support network, the adolescent's future plans, their engagement in their own community spaces and other actions that might help them overcome the vulnerable situation.*

**Key-words:** adolescents, vulnerability, risk, resilience.

Este trabalho tem por objetivo apresentar resultados de pesquisas, desenvolvidas junto ao Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Adolescência (NEPA), da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Têm sido desenvolvidos estudos junto a jovens que vivem em situação de rua e/ou em instituições de abrigo, afastados de suas famílias, por motivos tais como violência ou abandono. O desenvolvimento de crianças e adolescentes em situação de vulnerabilidade social tem despertado o interesse de inúmeros pesquisadores (Koller & Lisboa, 2007; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1987), que estão preocupados em compreender os processos psicológicos frente ao risco e suas repercussões no desenvolvimento cognitivo, emocional e social.

Assim, são apresentadas e discutidas neste trabalho as abordagens teóricas e metodológicas utilizadas nos estudos desenvolvidos e os resultados de alguns estudos desenvolvidos pelo NEPA com adolescentes em situação de vulnerabilidade no sul do Brasil.

## Abordagens Teóricas

Os trabalhos desenvolvidos no NEPA têm utilizado mais especificamente as perspectivas teóricas da Psicologia Positiva (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001) e a Abordagem Bioecológica de Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996; 1999; 2004), que é um sistema teórico para o estudo científico do desenvolvimento humano no ambiente natural, através do tempo. No modelo de Bronfenbrenner, o desenvolvimento é definido como um fenômeno de continuidade e mudança (qualitativa e quantitativa) nas características biopsicológicas do ser humano como indivíduo e como grupo. O fenômeno estende-se a todo o curso da vida, através de sucessivas gerações e do tempo histórico passado e presente (Bronfenbrenner, 2004).

O modelo bioecológico entende o ser humano como um ser em relação, dentro de um ambiente em constante mutação, sendo, por definição, um modelo contextualista e sistêmico. Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996; 1999; 2004) propõe que, para se compreender a pessoa em desenvolvimento, é preciso ir além dela própria e das relações mais próximas que ela estabelece. É preciso examinar toda a ecologia do desenvolvimento – o padrão de interação dentro da família e as influências da cultura mais ampla – a partir de sistemas que interagem em relações recíprocas, destacando quatro aspectos: o processo, a pessoa, o contexto e o tempo (modelo PPCT).

No *processo*, Bronfenbrenner (1999) trabalha em dois sentidos: o que se refere aos mecanismos constantes e não lineares de ligação entre os níveis ambiental e da pessoa; e o relacionado à forma como a pessoa se desenvolve, através de atividades diárias, papéis e inter-relações. *Pessoa* refere-se às características psicológicas e físicas que orientam o indivíduo em relação ao seu ambiente. O *contexto* é a configuração ecológica das características e relações existentes nos níveis ambientais, aos quais a pessoa está exposta e é composto por quatro sistemas: microsistema (conjunto de atividades, papéis e relações interpessoais experienciadas pela pessoa); mesossistema (constituído pelas inter-relações ocorridas nos microsistemas); exossistema (composto pelos ambientes nos quais a pessoa não está presente, mas cujos eventos influenciam diretamente seu desenvolvimento); e macrossistema (conjunto compartilhado de crenças, ideologias e valores que perpassam as formas de organização social). O *tempo* é estudado a partir de um ponto de vista histórico-evolutivo, importando tanto o processo proximal, que determina o desenvolvimento ao longo do tempo, quanto o processo histórico, que envolve a pessoa e o ambiente.

As alterações deste modelo PPCT levaram ao Modelo Bioecológico de Desenvolvimento Humano e, atualmente, à Teoria Bioecológica do Desenvolvimento Humano (TBDH), que se mostra útil para o estudo e para a compreensão do construto da resiliência, uma vez que procura integrar aspectos individuais e ambientais, contemplando os fatores relacionados com o fenômeno a ser investigado. Deste modo, se constitui em uma abordagem através da qual se pode compreender o desenvolvimento em situações atípicas, privilegiando aspectos de resiliência, vulnerabilidade, risco e proteção (Cecconello, 2003).

A Psicologia Positiva, por sua vez, é uma perspectiva teórica contemporânea que busca compreender o indivíduo e o seu comportamento a partir dos recursos saudáveis presentes no mesmo. Para Sheldon e King (2001), Psicologia Positiva é o estudo científico das virtudes e das forças do homem comum, chamando a atenção para a natureza do funcionamento do ser humano que, de forma eficaz, faz uso de suas habilidades e recursos adaptativos. Nessa perspectiva, a resiliência caracteriza indivíduos que conseguiram combater ou restabelecer-se de adversidades, sendo um processo relacionado às respostas da pessoa ao seu contexto frente a situações de

risco ao desenvolvimento (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). Para Yunes e Szymanski (2001), a resiliência não pode ser considerada um atributo individual, fixo e imutável, o qual uns indivíduos possuem e outros não, podendo se manifestar em determinados momentos. Segundo as autoras, a resiliência é o produto final da combinação e acúmulo dos fatores de proteção. Por outro lado, a vulnerabilidade é uma predisposição para o desenvolvimento de disfunções psicológicas ou de respostas pouco adequadas à situação, frente a fatores de risco (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). No entanto, para Rutter (1987), risco não se apresenta de forma estática, se constituindo em processos ativos, expressos com dinamicidade nos contextos, cultura, história e características pessoais, que juntos ou isolados podem provocar resultados disfuncionais. Assim, os fatores de risco não são condições negativas determinadas *a priori* no desenvolvimento, mas que, quando associadas à percepção de precariedade, ausência de possibilidades e esperança em superar desafios, podem dificultar o acionamento de processos de resiliência e agravar a vulnerabilidade (Koller & Lisboa, 2007).

Os fatores de risco, portanto, são definidos como condições ou variáveis que estão associadas a uma alta possibilidade de ocorrência de resultados negativos ou não desejáveis e os fatores de proteção, pelo contrário, são mecanismos ou processos que reduzem o impacto do risco e exercem efeitos positivos na saúde mental do indivíduo (Rutter, 1987). Entretanto, deve-se compreender o conceito de fatores de proteção enfatizando-se uma abordagem de processos, através dos quais diferentes fatores interagem entre si e alteram a trajetória da pessoa, podendo produzir uma experiência estressora ou protetora em seus efeitos (Morais & Koller, 2004). Dessa forma, Pesce, Assis, Santos e Oliveira (2004) constataram que a vivência de eventos negativos, ou de fatores de risco, não estava associada ao desenvolvimento da resiliência, mas, por outro lado, os fatores de proteção, como boa auto-estima, apoio social e gênero, atuaram como facilitadores no processo individual de perceber e enfrentar o risco.

### **Estratégias de Pesquisa**

Para a realização dos estudos com adolescentes em situações de vulnerabilidade social tem sido necessário desenvolver estratégias de pesquisa e novas metodologias que possibilitem o acesso a estes adolescentes que vivem em contextos diferenciados. São estratégias metodológicas que permitem conhecer suas histórias de vida e suas percepções, de forma que seu mundo possa ser compreendido. Elementos objetivos e subjetivos dirigem o curso do desenvolvimento humano, e por isso, é necessário dar voz aos participantes, colher suas histórias através de entrevistas, além de ter uma observação cuidadosa do ambiente que os envolve. Para Santos (2006), é preciso captar aquilo que é vivenciado no interior da pessoa e ao seu redor, na convivência e interação com seus amigos, sua história de vida e as pessoas, objetos e símbolos presentes em seu cotidiano.

Para que o pesquisador possa acessar a estes contextos é importante uma metodologia que permita um mergulho no ambiente ecológico no qual os participantes das pesquisas vivem, com o objetivo de conhecer a sua realidade, investigar a rotina institucional e os fatores de risco e proteção, entre outros. Nesse sentido, a inserção ecológica, desenvolvida por Ceconello e Koller (2003), se constitui num importante processo metodológico de coleta de dados, que consiste na operacionalização do modelo científico bioecológico, que inclui visitas, observações, conversas informais e entrevistas, de forma que os pesquisadores se tornam parte do ambiente ecológico. Assim, a Inserção Ecológica está apoiada nos preceitos da TBDH, postulada por Bronfenbrenner

(1979/1996), que repercute nos objetivos dos pesquisadores.

De acordo com Prati, Couto, Moura, Poletto e Koller (2007), o envolvimento com o contexto por parte de todos os membros da equipe de pesquisa é condição prévia à inserção ecológica. Há uma busca pela compreensão dos espaços estudados e os pesquisadores observam e investigam as interações que acontecem entre os diversos sujeitos, símbolos e objetos do contexto e que possibilitarão a validade ecológica dos achados, entendendo o processo, a pessoa, o contexto e o tempo no desenvolvimento humano. Para as autoras, esta inserção precisa abarcar a complexização da interação e o rigor dos dados colhidos e registrados sistematicamente.

A partir da proposta metodológica da Inserção ecológica, diversos instrumentos para a coleta de dados têm sido criados e utilizados: diário de campo, entrevistas semi-estruturadas, desenhos, confecção de cartazes, adaptação de instrumentos padronizados, entre outros (Dalbem, 2005; Santos, 2006; Siqueira, Betts, & Dell'Aglio, 2006). Esses instrumentos têm sido adaptados às necessidades de uma abordagem temporal, que investiga o passado, presente e futuro destes adolescentes, tentando-se, assim, captar as mudanças ao longo do tempo. Os estudos têm permitido a caracterização dos ambientes físicos e sociais onde os adolescentes se inserem, suas histórias de vida, a presença de fatores de proteção e de risco permeando suas histórias e os contextos dos quais elas emergem.

### **Pesquisas sobre a institucionalização de crianças e adolescentes**

Diversos núcleos de pesquisadores no Brasil têm desenvolvido estudos com crianças e adolescentes que vivem afastados de suas famílias, contribuindo para um maior conhecimento desta realidade e podendo subsidiar programas de intervenção junto a esta população. Um levantamento nacional sobre a situação dos abrigos para crianças e adolescentes apontou que cerca de 20 mil crianças e adolescentes vivem em 589 abrigos no Brasil, sendo na maioria entre sete e 15 anos, negros e pobres (Silva, 2004). Os dados também apontaram que 87% das crianças e adolescentes que viviam nestes abrigos tinham família, sendo que 58% mantinham vínculo com seus familiares.

A institucionalização de crianças e adolescentes encontra-se relacionada à vulnerabilidade das famílias brasileiras em situação de pobreza. Fatores presentes entre estas famílias, tais como a pobreza, a monoparentalidade, o desemprego, a baixa escolaridade dos cuidadores, presença de doença física e/ou mental, família numerosa, entre outros fatores associados, dificultam a tarefa de cuidar dos filhos, colocando em risco o desenvolvimento e o bem-estar de suas crianças e adolescentes (Masten & Garnezy, 1985; Siqueira & Dell'Aglio, 2007). Para Saraiva (2002), a falta de recursos materiais básicos, situação presente em famílias com precárias condições, tem como um de seus resultados a negligência em relação à educação dos filhos ou ao seu abandono. Conforme o Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente (ECA, 1990), que é uma lei federal, a institucionalização é uma medida protetora, excepcional e provisória, que visa retirar a criança ou adolescente da situação de risco em que se encontra, seja por maus-tratos, negligência ou algum outro tipo de violência. As instituições de abrigo têm a função de proporcionar atenção às diferentes necessidades da pessoa em desenvolvimento. No entanto, este contexto deve ser transitório, até que a família do jovem esteja organizada para recebê-lo novamente o que sua inserção em outro lugar seja autorizada judicialmente. Os motivos para a institucionalização têm sido relacionados a tráfico de drogas, problemas de saúde física dos pais, dependência química dos pais ou dos

próprios filhos, prisão dos pais, enfermidade mental, pobreza e violência doméstica. As medidas de proteção incluem abrigos para crianças e adolescentes entre zero e 18 anos, geralmente em centros de atenção governamentais e não-governamentais.

Em relação aos jovens que vivem em situação de institucionalização, muitos estudos apontam que o ambiente institucional não se constitui no melhor ambiente de desenvolvimento, enquanto para outros, em casos de situações ainda mais adversas na família, a instituição pode se constituir num contexto que proporciona condições favoráveis e de proteção (Dell'Aglio, 2000). Uma análise das publicações sobre esta temática indicou uma mudança na perspectiva do entendimento do contexto institucional: estudos mais antigos apontavam predominantemente os prejuízos no desenvolvimento de crianças e adolescentes, enquanto estudos mais atuais indicam uma percepção positiva quanto a esta vivência e à qualidade da assistência dos abrigos. Essa mudança parece estar relacionada aos métodos mais qualitativos de investigação, partindo do ponto de vista dos abrigados; às teorias-base que destacam a importância do contexto para o desenvolvimento; e à influência advinda do ECA (1990) nas políticas públicas de atendimento a esta população no Brasil (Siqueira & Dell'Aglio, 2006).

Dell'Aglio (2000) investigou o desenvolvimento de crianças e adolescentes que viviam em instituições de abrigo e que viviam com a família, não tendo encontrado diferenças consistentes entre os grupos. As análises apontaram resultados semelhantes no nível intelectual, desempenho escolar, estratégias de *coping* e estilo atribucional, tendo sido encontrada diferença somente nos índices de depressão, que foram mais altos entre as meninas institucionalizadas. No entanto, conforme Dell'Aglio (2000), este resultado não pode ser interpretado como indicação de que haja alguma relação causal entre institucionalização e depressão. Na maioria dos casos a institucionalização se deu em consequência de eventos traumáticos na família (abandono, violência doméstica, negligência), podendo ter sido este o principal fator de risco para a depressão.

Outro estudo (Dell'Aglio, Borges, & Santos, 2004) também investigou eventos estressores e depressão em adolescentes do sexo feminino, inseridas em diferentes contextos (família, abrigos de proteção e abrigos para cumprimento de medidas sócio-educativas). O abandono mostrou-se o motivo mais freqüente da institucionalização das adolescentes nos abrigos de proteção, seguido por violência física e abuso sexual. Foram observadas médias mais altas no número de eventos estressores e nos escores de depressão entre as adolescentes institucionalizadas, demonstrando que nestes casos a família não exerceu seu papel protetivo.

Dalbem (2005) investigou características da representação do apego em adolescentes institucionalizadas por medidas de proteção. Os resultados indicaram que o contexto institucional, vivenciado pelas adolescentes participantes, possibilitou a formação de novas relações afetivas, tanto com os adultos cuidadores quanto com pares, que contribuíram para uma representação de apego mais positiva e para o desenvolvimento de competências. Além disso, houve um grande destaque à importância dos monitores, cuidadores dos abrigados, o que reforça o indiscutível papel destes adultos no desenvolvimento dos adolescentes abrigados.

Outro estudo, que também enfocou a rede de apoio social e afetivo de adolescentes institucionalizados indicou que os diretores, técnicos, monitores e voluntários dos abrigos são os principais fornecedores de apoio afetivo e emocional (Siqueira, Betts, & Dell'Aglio, 2006). O abrigo foi identificado como um espaço que proporciona segurança, proteção e formação de novos vínculos afetivos. Entretanto, os resultados apontam para a existência de vínculos ainda fortes

entre esses adolescentes e suas famílias. Estas são apontadas, no estudo, como a principal fonte de apoio, seguida pelos técnicos, monitores e funcionários do abrigo.

A repercussão dos eventos negativos de vida foi estudada por Wathier e Dell'Aglio (2008), que investigaram a manifestação de sintomas depressivos e a frequência e o impacto de eventos estressores em crianças e adolescentes institucionalizados e não-institucionalizados. Foram encontradas médias mais altas de sintomas depressivos e no número de eventos estressores no grupo institucionalizado. O estudo aponta que os jovens abrigados apresentaram maior exposição a situações potenciais de risco, o que pode estar relacionado à maior manifestação de sintomas depressivos. Também foram observados indícios de vulnerabilidade e risco, como a precoce experimentação de drogas, alto índice de repetência, baixa escolaridade e desempenho escolar, além da presença de eventos estressores relacionados à família, escola, pares e violência.

A institucionalização pode se constituir em uma alternativa de proteção e saúde para muitas crianças e adolescentes em risco, operando como um fator de proteção ao seu desenvolvimento. Mas por outro lado, a separação da família e o ingresso em um ambiente novo e estranho podem atuar como mais uma violência para estes. Pesquisas relacionadas à recuperação de crianças que sofreram violência apontaram fatores facilitadores para que elas se transpusessem à experiência adversa. Tais fatores de proteção podem ser desenvolvidos e estimulados em quaisquer contextos, como nas instituições de abrigo. Nos trabalhos de Dalbem (2005) e Siqueira e Dell'Aglio (2007) são encontrados exemplos de situações em que o abrigo cumpriu a função protetiva e serviu de referência para que os jovens se sentissem seguros e com condições para continuar seu desenvolvimento. Assim, pode-se observar que adolescentes institucionalizados podem apresentar processos de resiliência, através da constituição de uma rede de apoio efetiva, de possibilidades de atividades construtivas e de vínculos afetivos positivos no ambiente da instituição, que atuam na promoção de saúde.

### **Pesquisas com Adolescentes em Situação de Rua**

O estudo sobre o desenvolvimento de adolescentes que vivem em situação de rua no Brasil tem se justificado pela constatação de que estes jovens trazem uma história de resistência e enfrentamento às adversidades, pela qual rompem com um padrão social-familiar e criam novas formas de ajuste psicossocial – rompimento que os expõe a alguns riscos, mas os retira de outros e lhes ensina, diariamente, estratégias de sobrevivência (Santos, 2006). Para definir a população de adolescentes em situação de rua, têm sido utilizados os cinco critérios propostos por Neiva-Silva e Koller (2002): vínculo familiar, atividade (lícitas e ilícitas), aparência pessoal (aspectos externos, como vestimenta suja e falta de higiene), local em que se encontram e ausência de um adulto responsável. Tal ausência tem reflexos visíveis na aparência da criança e/ou do adolescente e torna-os também, e acima de tudo, vulneráveis aos mais variados riscos de seu meio.

A criança e o adolescente que deixam a sua casa para morar na rua instigam os pesquisadores. Alguns estudos apontam para problemas derivados de uma vida nas ruas: déficit de crescimento físico, baixa auto-estima, retardo na escola, depressão, abuso de drogas, entre outros (Ribeiro & Ciampone, 2001). No entanto, Panter-Brick (2002) pondera que muitos resultados de estudos que enfatizam os aspectos destruidores da vida nas ruas vêm de amostras pequenas, mal definidas e/ou não representativas dessa população. Outros estudos descrevem também o cotidiano dessa população, seus contatos sociais e as oportunidades de interação com objetos e

símbolos (Alves et al., 2002; Koller & Hutz, 1996; Martins, 1996; Tyler & Tyler, 1991).

Segundo alguns estudos (Tyler & Tyler, 1991), as crianças e os adolescentes acham que suas condições de vida nas ruas são melhores que em casa. Ao se afastarem de uma série de circunstâncias negativas que encontravam em casa, as crianças e os adolescentes mostram habilidade de reorganizar suas vidas, de forma produtiva e por conta própria (Koller & Hutz, 1996). Assim, o importante seria focar a atenção das pesquisas nas variações encontradas dentro da própria população de rua e entender por que algumas crianças e adolescentes exibem uma série de problemas de saúde mental, enquanto outros sobrevivem mais favoravelmente (Panter-Brick, 2002).

Os estudos de Alves et al. (2002) e Koller e Hutz (1996) revelam o ambiente da rua como um microsistema efetivo para os que nele se encontram, podendo ser identificados componentes fundamentais ao processo de desenvolvimento, como as atividades, o contato social e a continuidade temporal. Paludo e Koller (2004) apontam que a rua não deve ser percebida, apenas, como uma ameaça ao desenvolvimento dos meninos e meninas que se utilizam dela, e que se torna importante e necessário compreender a vivência da rua na sua interação entre risco e saúde, valorizando e analisando em sua totalidade as experiências, as emoções e as habilidades desenvolvidas nesse contexto. Assim, a rua emerge como uma paisagem complexa, cheia de contrastes e multideterminada por fatores micro, meso e macrosistêmicos.

Santos (2006) desenvolveu um estudo, através da inserção ecológica, com adolescentes em situação de rua na cidade de Salvador, Bahia, no Brasil. Para isso, foram desenvolvidos e adaptados diversos instrumentos para coleta de dados, que permitiram uma inserção profunda no contexto de vida de alguns adolescentes em situação de rua. Foi observado que os adolescentes tentam construir *habitats*, mesmo frágeis, nas ruas. Procuram, assim, imprimir suas marcas pessoais nos lugares para reconhecerem-se e se fazerem reconhecer, tentando resgatar, no espaço, a história de suas vidas no tempo, convivendo com riscos e proteção, possibilidades e desafios. A análise dos casos escolhidos permitiu a caracterização dos ambientes físicos e sociais onde transitavam os adolescentes. Ao longo do estudo, foi observado que as diversas moradas eram constituídas (e destituídas) na rua e na família de origem, em um processo de apropriação de espaço, linguagem e redes de apoio. No entanto, os inúmeros riscos presentes na rua não são eliminados por este processo, o que torna esse *habitat* sempre, e inevitavelmente, precário, tendendo a se esvaír, ao não cumprir as funções de segurança e proteção também necessárias à sua constituição. Só a partir da análise das histórias, através dos tempos passado, presente e futuro, foi possível identificar respostas adaptativas ao risco.

Considerar diferentes instrumentos de análise permite, de acordo com Santos (2006), abarcar e vislumbrar a complexidade da problemática dos meninos de rua, em sua fluidez de vida e busca por fixação, pois é necessária a contextualização de suas vivências, a fim de perseguir suas possíveis particularidades. Em termos metodológicos, a utilização de diferentes instrumentos possibilitou o acesso a expectativas, crenças e valores dos adolescentes com relação a diferentes momentos do tempo. No entanto, destaca-se, ainda, que novos estudos são necessários para que se compreenda melhor processos tão complexos como a constituição do *habitat* e da resiliência. Deve-se destacar a importância de estudos qualitativos e longitudinais, que possam abarcar os micro-processos e as mudanças ao longo do tempo. Assim, pessoa, processos, contexto e tempo, intrinsecamente relacionados, permitirão uma análise ainda mais complexa dos fenômenos a



serem investigados.

### **Considerações Finais**

Os estudos acerca de situações de vulnerabilidade em que se encontram muitos adolescentes no Brasil, tanto em instituições de proteção como em situação de rua, demonstram conseqüências conjunturais de inúmeros fatores sociais, econômicos e familiares. Assim, esta realidade não pode ser ignorada pela sociedade e pelo meio científico, especialmente entre os profissionais que trabalham com populações em situação de risco. Desta forma, discute-se a necessidade de promover propostas de intervenção que incluam ações direcionadas a estes profissionais, capacitando-os para o trabalho junto a crianças e adolescentes, sejam as que vivem em instituições como as que se encontram em situação de rua. Também é necessária uma conscientização sobre a importância dos abrigos de proteção como espaço de desenvolvimento, sem perder seu caráter de medida provisória e temporária, conforme previsto no ECA (1990). Além disso, destaca-se também a necessidade de reformulação das políticas públicas voltadas a crianças, adolescentes e famílias em situação de risco no Brasil.

Outro aspecto que deve ser ressaltado é a questão das escolhas metodológicas para a pesquisa com populações em situação de vulnerabilidade. Para o estudo dos processos de risco e resiliência é importante que o pesquisador possa optar por estratégias metodológicas que permitam a inserção nos contextos estudados e uma investigação das percepções dos próprios adolescentes, para que seja possível uma compreensão mais qualitativa desses processos de superação frente à vulnerabilidade. É necessário que possam ser observados os fatores de proteção presentes, tais como o estabelecimento de relações afetivas nos novos contextos de desenvolvimento, a presença de uma rede de apoio social e afetivo e a inserção destes adolescentes nos espaços de sua comunidade, que trazem, em si, um sentido de adaptação positiva, constituindo processos de resiliência.

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# Simbolismo do corpo e intervenção comunitária: contribuições feministas para a investigação-ação participativa.

Aline Domício<sup>1</sup> e Conceição Nogueira<sup>2</sup>.

*Nosso trabalho é resultado da atuação em comunidades no município de Banabuiu, nordeste brasileiro, com mulheres vítimas de violência doméstica, considerando a interseção da psicologia social crítica e metodologias feministas. O objetivo é demonstrar a compreensão da tessitura social a partir da investigação-ação participativa com ênfase na simbologia do corpo. Realizamos ações em parceria com o poder público para levantamento de informações sobre os equipamentos sociais, formas de organização e modos de vida, além de promover a participação das famílias na discussão sobre a violência, através do fortalecimento do grupo de mulheres localmente estruturado. Ao utilizar o método de vivência e análise da atividade comunitária, os resultados sugerem a importância do olhar feminista para a mudança dos mecanismos da opressão patriarcal que não estão limitados à condição sócio-econômica, mas encontra no corpo campo fértil para perpetuação desde o ponto de vista intergeracional.*

**Palavras-chave:** investigação-ação participativa, simbolismo do corpo e feminismo.

## I - Introdução

As ações relatadas neste trabalho científico fazem parte da atuação da equipe do Centro de Referência Especializada da Assistência Social (CREAS) do município de Banabuiu (nordeste brasileiro). Para o início das atividades foi realizado um processo de diagnóstico-ação (GÓIS, C. 1995: p.43), cujo objetivo foi o conhecimento dos aspectos físicos, sócio-históricos e econômicos da comunidade. Esta ação encontrou ressonância no delineamento do perfil das mulheres atendidas no CREAS, que foi realizado a partir do estudo dos prontuários familiares, tornando possível a definição das estratégias de atuação da equipe em campo.

A intervenção proposta teve a investigação-ação participativa (IAP) como eixo estratégico para “popularizar las técnicas de investigación incorporando a las personas de las comunidades en la práctica de las mismas” (MONTERO, M. 2006: p.138). Tal metodologia contesta a noção positivista que dominou as ciências durante longos anos, assim como o caráter de neutralidade e pretensa objetividade, demonstrando claramente que a maneira como os/as investigadores/as delimitam suas experiências na realidade, encontram-se circunscritas nas suas ideologias e expectativas culturais.

Disto resulta a “utilização de múltiplas e variadas metodologias de análises na investigação dos fenômenos sociais de forma a evitar leituras simplistas” (NOGUEIRA, C. & NEVES, S.; 2004: p.1249). Isto nos levou a compreender as vozes do sofrimento físico e/ou psíquico das mulheres, vítimas de violência, não somente do ponto de vista individual, mas coletivo, cujo foco assumiu

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um papel de crítica à sociedade, desafiando a ordem social e os códigos culturais (MARQUES, C; MACEDO, E; CANOTILHO, P. 2003: p.111) para transformação das relações no domínio da investigação científica.

Aqui estão reflexões críticas realizada por mulheres nordestinas, compreendo a importância da mediação da simbologia corporal como forma de resgate dos processos de conscientização. Sendo esta uma linguagem teórica e metodológica que foi gerada no seio da emotividade e da *vivência plural dos feminismos* que deve abrir-se para a ligação íntima com os aspectos sociais e comunitários configurados na pós-modernidade, sobretudo, na América Latina.

## II – Compreendendo o trabalho com grupos de mulheres

Iniciamos nossa atuação no ano 2005 a partir do estabelecimento de parceria com o poder público municipal em Banabuiú, nordeste brasileiro, objetivando implantar uma rede sócio-assistencial de combate à violência. Através da Secretaria da Assistência Social foram contratados profissionais na área da psicologia social, pedagogia e serviço social que iniciaram o mapeamento das situações de risco para a violência doméstica nas principais regiões comunitárias da zona urbana e rural do município. Para tanto, foi estabelecida parceria entre prefeitura e Núcleo de Extensão e Pesquisa em Psicologia Social (NEPUC) da Faculdade Católica Rainha do Sertão, que contribuiu com a fase de diagnóstico-ação das comunidades.

Foram realizadas visitas domiciliares em parceria com agentes de saúde, reuniões com várias associações de moradores e cooperativas rurais sobre as questões de gênero e violência entre casais, incluindo ações intergeracionais, acompanhamento individual e familiar dos casos encaminhados ao Projeto Sentinela<sup>3</sup>, palestras e ações educativas nas escolas, entrevistas com mulheres vítimas de violência e assistência especializada para acompanhamento das crianças vitimadas. Disto resultou o mapeamento do município, nos indicando as áreas de maior incidência e prevalência da violência doméstica.

No ano 2006, realizamos várias oficinas comunitárias com objetivo de apresentar os dados aos munícipes e construir coletivamente um plano de atuação contando, ainda, com o apoio do poder público municipal, ações no âmbito estadual e co-financiamento federal, através da Lei Orgânica da Assistência Social (1993: p.14) que preconiza as diretrizes do Sistema Único da Assistência Social (2005: p.27) no Brasil.

Ao final, foram definidas três áreas de atuação: a comunidade de Pedras Brancas, localizada na zona rural, e as comunidades do Alto Alegre e do Conjunto Esperança, situadas na zona urbana. Neste mesmo ano, tivemos contato com a comunidade rural, tendo realizado cadastro das mulheres vítimas de violência doméstica e o início da atuação em parceria com a Associação dos Moradores<sup>4</sup> que se configurou através da realização do primeiro grupo de vivência feminina.

Em 2007, as ações foram intensificadas com vistas ao fortalecimento do grupo de mulheres estruturado no ano anterior. Durante este trabalho em campo foi utilizado o **método de vivência e análise da atividade comunitária**<sup>5</sup> (GÓIS, C.; 2004: p.83) para compreender o modo de vida

3 Nome dado ao início das ações contra a violência doméstica em todo o Brasil nos anos de 2005 e 2006.

4 O contato com as comunidades urbanas foi iniciado no ano seguinte.

5 Durante os encontros privilegiamos uma abordagem vivencial com a estruturação de várias oficinas de arte-identidade e exercícios de Biodança que possibilitaram às mulheres a compreensão vivencial dos melindres da exploração masculina no cotidiano. Trata-se da proposição de vivências e reflexões para o favorecimento da expressão criativa da corporeidade feminina, com objetivo de utilizar os sistemas simbólicos que edificam a violência doméstica como potencial de reinterpretção das práticas sociais

do lugar, além da forma como os moradores das principais regiões do município sobrevivem concreta e simbolicamente, imersos no cotidiano da violência, especialmente como se estruturam as relações de poder face à ordem social dominante, enfatizando a análise das práticas sociais daí resultantes sob o ponto de vista feminista<sup>6</sup>.

Já no ano 2008 foram promovidas atividades para a geração de emprego e renda com a parceria do poder local para que as mulheres vitimadas pudessem alcançar níveis de autonomia econômica com vistas à manutenção e sobrevivência familiar, sendo esta uma forma de romper com o círculo vicioso da violência doméstica. Além disto, foi dada continuidade as demais ações mencionadas e ampliada a participação do programa na zona urbana. Perspectiva também planejada para o ano 2009, onde ocorrerá mudança de gestão do poder público local devido o resultado das eleições no Brasil.

### **III - Centro de Referência Especializada da Assistência Social e a violência de gênero do ponto de vista feminista**

De acordo com o Guia de Orientação do Ministério de Desenvolvimento Social no Brasil (MDS, 2007: p.04), a proteção social especializada é realizada pelos CREAS que presta acolhimento e atenção sócio-assistencial às famílias com objetivo de possibilitar a reconstrução dos vínculos sociais e graus de autonomia dos indivíduos, defendendo a dignidade e os direitos humanos básicos.

Desse modo, o CREAS caracteriza-se como uma unidade pública estadual, com atuação municipal, com a missão de prestação de serviços continuados às famílias que possuem seus direitos violados, além da articulação com estratégias de proteção básica e especial, estruturadas localmente.

Isto se realiza a partir da formação de uma equipe multiprofissional composta por assistente social, psicólogo/a e mobilizador/a social que realizam as seguintes ações: visitas domiciliares, atendimento psicossocial individual e/ou grupal, referenciamento e encaminhamento<sup>7</sup> das situações graves de violação de direitos, vitimizações e agressões às demais instituições existentes no território, acolhida/escuta individual, atendimento sócio-familiar<sup>8</sup>.

As estratégias de atuação específicas do psicólogo referem-se ao estabelecimento de parcerias com lideranças para identificação dos casos, visitas domiciliares, realização de entrevistas individuais, descrição e análise do contexto psicossocial para pertinência dos temas nos grupos, fortalecimento do contato com as famílias, contribuindo para a redução das situações de agressão e violência intergeracional.

Nestes termos, acreditamos que conhecer o conceito de gênero e sua interface com a violência ajuda a equipe CREAS, especialmente ao/a psicólogo/a social, a perceber que não existem aspectos deterministas que implique na idéia dos indivíduos nascerem homens ou mulheres, pelo contrário, esta noção vai se formando a partir das relações sociais, ao lado de valores, opiniões e crenças que desde o contexto familiar moldam as atitudes e comportamentos da vida cotidiana que serve por sua vez para comparações entre realidades diferentes ou similares, mas não *únicas, nem mesmo verdadeiras*.

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(DOMÍCIO, A. & FERNANDES, J; 2007: p.23).

6 Fato importante nesse ano foi à adequação do município às exigências dos governos estadual e federal, passando as ações já descritas a integrarem as estratégias de atuação do CREAS.

7 Trabalho em parceria com a Promotoria de Justiça e Conselho Tutelar.

8 Além do monitoramento do trabalho infantil (negligência, abuso e exploração sexual).

Para GEBARA, I. (2000: p.47) gênero “condiciona um modo de ser educado/a e um modo de ser percebido/a que condiciona o ser e o agir de cada um diferente do fato de ser homem ou mulher”. Assim, falamos da diferença entre marcadores geracionais, ou seja, diferença que se institui não somente entre homens e mulheres, mas também entre várias mulheres e outras mulheres, entre homens e outros homens; quer dizer, uma diferença de multiplicidades baseada na aquisição e desempenho de papéis sociais.

Nos argumentos da autora SARTI, C. (2004: p.41) encontramos a idéia de que a contestação deste panorama encontra no desenvolvimento do movimento feminista ares de resposta às questões colocadas pela análise das relações de gênero.

Sobre isto, o feminismo questionou, já na década de 70, “as relações de poder no mundo naturalizado das relações entre homens e mulheres, assim como questionou o papel da mulher em todos os âmbitos da sociedade”. Em meio a conquistas e inúmeros impasses, concordamos com as autoras ALVES, B. M. & PITANGUY, J. (2003: p.70) quando dizem que:

“(…) talvez a força maior, mais importante e menos aparente do movimento feminista esteja na semente de questionamento e de reivindicação que surge na consciência das mulheres que, vivendo anonimamente no seu cotidiano, vêm tentando transformá-lo e recriar a sua relação com o mundo, com os companheiros, com os filhos, consegue mesmo”.

Implicando que o estudo científico ora apresentado concatena a idéia de que o fenômeno da violência doméstica é modulável, passando pela questão corporal, a partir da noção de gênero. Sendo assim, tal violência é uma ação cotidiana expressa nas atividades psíquicas que por sua vez “inclina-se ao corpo estabelecendo lógicas sociais e culturais que nele se propagam” (LE BRETON, D; 2006: p.98). Isto ocorrendo porque “o corpo está exposto ao risco da emoção, da ferida, do sofrimento, por vezes da morte (...) ele está apto a adquirir disposições que constituem elas mesmas abertura ao mundo” e as estruturas sociais que compõem elas mesmas a própria simbologia corporal.

#### **IV – Simbolismo do corpo e intervenção comunitária**

Sabemos que uma verdadeira explosão de estudos sobre o corpo tem invadido as ciências humanas e sociais nas últimas décadas com objetivo de envolver as pesquisas em novos temas. Importantes autores (JACQUES, 1998; ALMEIDA, 1996; REY, 2004; THOMPSON, 1995) compreendem que a subjetividade está localizada no corpo que por sua vez não estaria limitado a refletir somente temas da sociedade.

Quando se fala em corpo encontramos também diversas posições teóricas que o coloca como matéria-prima “que a cultura molda e inscreve de modo a criar diferenças sociais” (ALMEIDA, M., 1996: p.04). Isto implica dificilmente o encontrarmos no seu estado natural ou biológico propriamente dito, mas sempre em relação interpessoal ou social. Assim, a ordem social conforma marcas no corpo que refletem o modo como cada indivíduo se defronta com o ambiente cotidiano.

Trata-se de uma ferramenta que auxilia os homens a moldarem sua história, assim como é o cenário onde os homens percebem seu mundo de maneira concreta e apreciam seus mapeamentos sócio-culturais, inscrita, também, no tempo e no espaço. Talvez por isso ALMEIDA, M. *apud* GIDDENS, A. (idem, *ibidem*) afirma que:

*“O corpo é um terreno privilegiado das disputas em torno quer de novas*

*identidades pessoais, quer da preservação de identidades históricas, da assunção de híbridos culturais ou das recontextualizações locais de tendências globais”.*

Como temos visto, a compreensão da corporeidade humana envolve aspectos cotidianos no sentido das representações e motivos simbólicos que levam os indivíduos a vivenciarem sua existência corporal como fenômeno social e cultural. Até porque toda existência, antes de qualquer coisa, é corporal.

Através da materialidade do corpo os homens transmitem aos demais aquilo que são em essência, as ações que realizam no dia-a-dia, suas necessidades, seus desejos e seus limites. Transmitem, ainda, uma série de valores, crenças, ideologias e tradições que podem ser compartilhadas com a coletividade (LE BRETON, D. 2006: p.24).

Porém, cada gesto, cada sensação ou maneira de expressar os sentimentos do ponto de vista corporal, são moldadas socialmente, mesmo quando são vividos de modo individual. Não há nada na gênese corporal que não seja influenciado pela sociedade, ou seja, aprendemos uma determinada forma de expressão do corpo através do contato com as pessoas como um fator de individuação corporal.

Quando se fala do corpo nestes termos, dizemos também que toda existência e expressão corporal são aprendidas. Sendo o corpo alguma espécie de matéria-prima que vai moldando as ações humanas, e mais, lhes dá sentido e significados ao mesmo tempo em que é capaz de limitar a experiência física como construtora do psiquismo humano. Porém, as preocupações sobre o corpo não são recentes no desenvolvimento da ciência.

Existem registros históricos, muitos vinculados às concepções religiosas através dos tempos, que vão desde a concepção do corpo como invólucro imediato da alma, até uma variável fonte de interpretações culturais conforme as eras de desenvolvimento da humanidade. Nos dias atuais, PITANGUY, J. & ALVES, B. (2003: p.60) afirmam que:

*“O movimento feminista denuncia a manifestação do corpo da mulher e a violência a que é submetido tanto àquela que se atualiza na agressão física, como a que o coisifica enquanto objeto de desejo e de consumo”.*

De tudo isto resulta elementos etnológicos que nos auxilia na compreensão das formas de exploração do corpo feminino, posto que o corpo seja uma realidade mutante que se depara com valores simbólicos da sociedade, muitas vezes sem distinção entre o corpo-mercadoria e o corpo-humano. Daí vem o estigma de posse das mulheres que ao permitirem a agressão ou não impedirem que seus filhos sejam vitimados no ambiente familiar, contribuem para a perpetuação da mesma lógica patriarcal que na verdade as oprime.

Percebe-se a importância do tema família na perspectiva da violência de gênero que segundo AMARAL, C. (2001: p.28) não pode se furtar de incluir análises sobre a condição da mulher e as relações incutidas no trabalho doméstico e na vida cotidiana.

É justamente este enfoque que sedimentam as bases teóricas do nosso estudo e trazem revelações importantes sobre a reinterpretação do cotidiano das mulheres vítimas de violência física no contexto familiar. Estas, ao sofrerem a violência, a reproduzem na relação com seus filhos, ou são omissas diante da agressão dos pais/padrastos muitas vezes de modo mais intenso.

Há, sobretudo, um significado sociológico de co-dependência que indica o modo como cada pessoa depende de certa “alteridade” no contato com o outro para sentir autoconfiança, ou seja, a ligação viciada do ponto de vista afetivo faz com que o sentido existencial de um dependa



quase exclusivamente da satisfação das necessidades do outro.

Para GIDDENS, A. (1993: p.121) tal circunstância ocorre na expressão da idéia que existem “pais tóxicos” que abdicaram da responsabilidade para com seus filhos/as. Esta questão nos permite compreender que existem interconexões entre o cotidiano das mulheres e o significado que as mesmas atribuem as suas experiências no âmbito da esfera privada. Tornando, com isto, a intimidade da família uma revelação de emoções e ações impróprias que estão na realidade voltadas para a insegurança na constituição das relações de gênero.

Assim, a co-dependência afeta a vida das crianças devido o “estabelecimento de uma relação desigual no primeiro momento de desenvolvimento da sua identidade” (DALKA, C. & VECINA, T. 2002: p.31), não havendo meios de distanciamento destas circunstâncias viciadas, a família claramente falha no seu papel de protetora da prole e transmissora dos valores sócio-culturais do grupo no qual se encontra inserida.

Nesses casos, estabelecemos um olhar sobre as questões relacionadas à violência contra crianças e adolescentes do ponto de vista do desequilíbrio na relação entre os pais que não raro encontra-se também no desenvolvimento da sexualidade. Muitas vezes os filhos e filhas são envolvidos no cenário da violência estando a serviço, por assim dizer, das patologias do vínculo parental. O que torna grave a situação de vitimização, posto que seja fundamental a posição e mudanças de atitudes do adulto na família para que a violência tenha fim.

O trabalho da equipe de profissionais do CREAS é de fato fortalecer a visão crítica de que as situações de vulnerabilidade e violação dos direitos são fenômenos que adquirem uma complexidade histórica, embora gerados e/ou ampliados no seio da família são respaldadas no contexto social e comunitário.

Disto resulta que cada família atendida passa pela definição de *planos de trabalho* contendo as “estratégias de atendimento às mulheres, suas famílias, seus membros e indivíduos, os pactos de responsabilidades, os compromissos assumidos, os recursos a serem mobilizados para responder às necessidades e para desenvolver potencialidades e capacidades” (MDS, 2007: p.13).

Considera-se, esta, uma estratégia central e local para a resolução de conflitos e a transparência requerida na investigação-ação participativa que deseja uma mudança de paradigmas para a integração do conhecimento de base intelectual com as necessidades e potencialidades das populações alvo da investigação (MONTERO, M.; 2006: p.138) em um processo de contínua aprendizagem entre investigadores-profissionais da equipe CREAS e as próprias famílias, sobretudo, porque o desafio é enfocado a partir do corpo e das simbologias possíveis no eixo comunitário.

## **VI – Considerações Finais**

Após quatro anos de atuação em campo, nosso trabalho tem a particularidade de assumir as desigualdades de gênero como parâmetro para construir um modelo de ação comunitária baseado nas propostas feministas no interior da psicologia social crítica. Daí, nosso posicionamento que implica questionar as formas de conhecimento (teórico) consideradas “verdadeiras”. Implica, ainda, a compreensão das especificidades sociais e históricas, além de culturais e econômicas, da população parceira do nosso trabalho.

A utilização da investigação-ação participativa possuiu o objetivo de captar a maneira

como as mulheres reinterpretem seu cotidiano, bem como os aspectos corporais que elas assumem na teia de submissão e resignação diante do poder patriarcal. Sendo também possível um resgate da identidade e auto-estima dos seus filhos/filhas.

Para isto, a visão plural dos feminismos ocupa um lugar decisivo posto que esteja a serviço das mudanças sociais necessárias para romper o círculo vicioso da violência doméstica no nordeste do Brasil, que além do sofrimento corporal, traz a fome e a miséria como meio de sobrevivência emocional para milhares de homens e mulheres sertanejas.

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## El uso de la imagen en el trabajo comunitario.

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### Resumen

*Uno de los desafíos permanentes de la Psicología Comunitaria es el de facilitar el proceso de toma de conciencia de determinadas problemáticas sociales y el afrontamiento de las acciones encaminadas a la prevención o a la resolución de las mismas. Esta tarea de visibilización de los problemas resulta especialmente difícil en aquéllos ante los que se han construido resistencias sociales al reconocimiento de los mismos o a hablar espontánea y abiertamente de ellos.*

*En este trabajo resumimos el proceso y los resultados de dos experiencias en el uso de la imagen una herramienta para facilitar estos procesos de visibilización, señalamiento y expresión social de problemáticas y necesidades que permanecen latentes en determinadas comunidades que, por ello mismo, tardan en ser afrontadas activamente. En una de ellas, se utiliza la técnica del video antropológico como herramienta de investigación – intervención en el ámbito de la salud mental aplicada en comunidades de Río de Janeiro. En la otra, la imagen es utilizada en la fotointervención, que proporciona una base para la reflexión sobre las miradas y posturas que las personas pueden adoptar ante determinadas situaciones. Esta experiencia se desarrolla en el ámbito de la formación universitaria en la UAB de Barcelona.*

Palabras clave: Imagen, video antropológico, fotointervención, sensibilización, empoderamiento.

### Introducción

Entre los objetivos de la intervención comunitaria figura la *concienciación* de los problemas sociales y el *empoderamiento* de las personas y los grupos afectados por los mismos (Montero, 2000, Sánchez, 2007). Y, entre los de la formación de profesionales de la intervención en este ámbito, la sensibilización y toma de conciencia de los problemas sociales como condición previa para un trabajo orientado al cambio social.

El objetivo del presente trabajo consiste en la exposición y la ejemplificación mediante dos experiencias desarrolladas en Brasil y en España del uso de la imagen como herramienta facilitadora de procesos de sensibilización y de *empoderamiento*.

### Un trabajo de sensibilización comunitaria en Brasil

El trabajo comunitario en Brasil fue realizado en una comunidad descendiente de esclavos

africanos en la Región de Rasa del Municipio de Armação dos Búzios del estado de Rio de Janeiro. Esta participación en la comunidad fue, al inicio, parte de una investigación que articulaba la escuela de comunicación de la universidad Federal do Rio de Janeiro con el apoyo de la Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. El objetivo inicial era promover la salud mental y el bienestar de la comunidad enfocando principalmente la autoestima de sus integrantes, la valoración de la cultura local y la reelaboración de las identidades. Nuestra hipótesis era la de que si se trabajaba con las expresiones singulares de cada cultura esto funcionaría como un sistema informal de promoción de la salud, que a su vez contribuiría a la identificación propia con características particulares alejadas de una mirada masificadora dominante. De manera que al facilitar la visibilidad de culturas minoritarias estaríamos promoviendo la salud mental de sus integrantes. En suma, la salud mental entendida como la reafirmación de la vida y la búsqueda de cambios que faciliten el ser y el estar.

La metodología utilizada fue el *vídeo antropológico* para realizar un estudio etnográfico (Canevacci, 1990, Tatsch, 1997). El procedimiento seguido consistió en la realización de videos de la comunidad en su vida cotidiana por sus propios integrantes. Para facilitarlos, se les dio apoyo en el uso de la cámara. Fueron tomadas escenas diversas como debates en asambleas realizadas por la comunidad, situaciones cotidianas de vida en la calle, entrevistas con agentes-líderes de la comunidad, etc. La comunidad fue invitada a asistir a las proyecciones de los videos y a las discusiones sobre los mismos. Dicha actividad contribuía a visualizar aspectos varios como, por ejemplo, sus canciones, sus preocupaciones, los recursos que utilizaban para lograr sus metas, etc. Todo ello contribuyó a que entre 2005 y 2007 el proyecto de investigación denominado *Derecho al Trabajo y Desarrollo Humano y Social* contribuyera a preservar las características particulares de la comunidad aportando elementos positivos a la memoria de la calidad de vida de sus integrantes y promoviendo la solidaridad e integración grupal. La investigación mostró que era imposible mejorar la calidad de vida de esta población si no se tenía en cuenta la herencia cultural de los nativos de Búzio y no se incorporaba esa memoria, hasta ahora excluida, en el mercado de trabajo de ese municipio. Este reconocimiento y respeto de esta identidad iba a favorecer la autoestima colectiva y la motivación a ganar su sustento con dignidad.

Entre los resultados de la investigación-acción en la comunidad se constató que cuando se comenzó a convivir con otros miembros de la comunidad desde ese respeto y reconocimiento, se comenzó a articular un proyecto de turismo histórico-antropológico-ecológico que reúne a varios participantes pertenecientes a diversas asociaciones de la región como artesanos, pequeños agricultores, lideratos ligados a la ecología y preservación del medio ambiente, pescadores, etc. La propuesta es un turismo alternativo que permita la valorización de la historia y la cultura y a través de ello la revalorización e inclusión de la sociedad buziana como forma de solidaridad y afirmación identitaria.

La comunidad de Rasa, aún cuando mantenía formas auténticas de expresión (fruto de sus raíces históricas) y de su diversidad cultural, no mantenía la conciencia de las mismas ni la de su importancia para una sociedad plural. Tendía a ocultarlas, producto de años de invisibilización y ocultación por parte de la cultura dominante. Sus habitantes se encontraban excluidos de la vida social, cultural y económica reinante en el Municipio y en fase de una desintegración cultural y de su historia. Se logró modificar las relaciones de poder existentes dando paso a deliberaciones políticas más participativas. Con la experiencia descrita se avanzó hacia la conciencia y el

empoderamiento de las personas integrantes de dicha comunidad.

### **Experiencia en la formación universitaria en España**

En el marco de un master sobre y de una asignatura de grado sobre técnicas de evaluación e intervención psicosocial, se desarrolló una experiencia de *fotointervención* en la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, con el objetivo de facilitar, a través del uso de nuevas tecnologías, la observación del entorno cotidiano y un ejercicio de reflexión y crítica sobre los fenómenos y procesos analizados.

La técnica utilizada para ello fue la *fotointervención* que consiste en una herramienta de análisis y de acción psicosocial que articula la fotografía como medio de visibilización de realidades sociales problemáticas con los principios de investigación e intervención de la psicología social comunitaria comprometida con el cambio de estas realidades (Cantera, 2009).

El resumen esquemático del protocolo de aplicación de esta técnica incluye los siguientes pasos principales: entrega de una cámara fotográfica a las personas participantes en la experiencia, realización individual de fotos de acuerdo con las instrucciones recibidas, revelado de las fotos y presentación de las mismas ante el grupo, explicación individual y discusión grupal de los significados de los materiales fotográficos expuestos y de sus implicaciones, reflexión y debate sobre estrategias de afrontamiento y de acción ante las realidades observadas y criticadas (Cantera y Ávila, 2009).

Entre los resultados del proceso destacan la visualización y el cuestionamiento de situaciones problemáticas que habitualmente resultan invisibles e invisibilizadas, ignoradas y desatendidas; la concienciación individual y colectiva de los procesos de *naturalización* y de *normalización* a que las mismas han sido sometidas por el pensamiento socialmente dominante y la posible articulación de los niveles individual, interindividual y grupal de análisis de estas realidades y de actuación ante ellas.

A continuación mostramos algunas imágenes de la comunidad en Brasil donde se llevó a cabo el proyecto y algunas imágenes tomadas por el estudiantado del master sobre violencia en la pareja y a nivel de grado; como ejemplos del trabajo de identificación a través de las imágenes.

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# Community-Based Fire Preparedness Practice in High Density Area<sup>\*)</sup>

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## Abstract

*Fire is one of the common disasters in Indonesia especially in many big cities including capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta. Although it is considered as human error factor and happened incidentally but fire has become a disaster because its effect to many aspect of community life. It also usually happens in high density area with low social-economic status. Thus, this intervention intends to empower vulnerable community against fire hazard.*

*Research focuses at the aspect of preparedness based on social-cognitive model (Paton, 2006). It is used to elaborate the factors of intention to prepare including critical awareness, sense of community, action coping, and outcome expectancy of the community as the basic to design an intervention in order to develop a proper form of risk communication that match with local community need. Then, vulnerability and capacity assessment technique is used to obtain the whole picture about community's vulnerabilities and capacities. Intervention strategy was directed to organize community preparedness through local organization and enhance community capacity against fire hazard.*

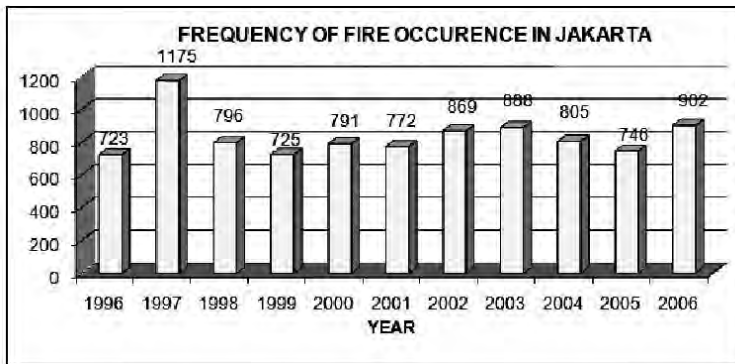
*Results from this intervention indicate that fire preparedness can be an effective way to improve community capacity. The results also show that intervention succeed to : 1) improve community knowledge about fire preparedness; 2) improve community outcome expectancy through specific behavior change; 3) build local community alertness team ; 4) form nonformal information sharing about fire preparedness within community. These results strengthen previous research stating that the success of community-based fire preparedness intervention program need to pay attention to locality aspect and the participation of community as primary source of support.*

Keyword : Fire hazards, preparedness, intention to prepare, risk communication

## Introduction

Jakarta has the highest occurrence of fire disaster in Indonesia (Suharso, 1999). It can be seen from the stable frequencies of fire disaster in Jakarta in the last 10 years which are very high.

Figure 1. Frequency of Fire Disaster Occurrence in the last 10 Years



Source: Jakarta Fire Department (2006)

The occurrence of fire disaster in Jakarta is spread almost evenly in all of its municipalities. According to Kristantio (2006), density affects the potential of fire occurrence, i.e., the higher the density of a given area, the higher the potential of fire occurrence in that area. This factor made community living in a high-density area susceptible to the danger of fire disaster.

Fire disaster can be classified into several of classifications according to the types of burnt object. According to the Jakarta Fire Department this classification can be divided into residential building, public building, industrial building, and vehicle. However, for the purpose of this intervention program, the focus is restricted to residential buildings especially those in the high-density area.

Based on the frequency of fire occurrence (an area is classified as fire-hazard spot if there were five cases or more of fire in that area), there are generally 53 fire-hazard spots in Jakarta. Besides being determined by the frequency of fire occurrence, the fire-hazard spot are also determined by other characteristics of those areas such as the high density, simple and flammable building or housing material, insufficient access to housing alley and the scarce of water supply (Kompas, 25 May 2005; Suharso, 1999). Even though incidents are often considered to have been caused by negligence, the impact and the complexity of fire problem has made it a form of society disaster.

In responding to the high rate of fire disaster in Jakarta, the government of the city of Jakarta through Jakarta Fire Department had done numerous attempts in order to resolve the occurrence of disaster. However, due to high rate of fire occurrence, the key in the process of preventing fire occurrence lies in the hand of the community. In order to get people to participate in this process, Jakarta Fire Department has made a couple community-based programs like the forming Sistem Ketahanan Lingkungan terhadap bahaya Kebakaran (SKLK or The Community's Resistance System Against Fire Hazard), the training of BALAKAR (Barisan Sukarela Kebakaran or The Front of Volunteer against Fire), and direct elucidation (in Kristantio, 2006).

Even so, the effectiveness of above programs needs to be examined. Until now there is no evaluation of the above mentioned programs and there is no master plan made about the continuance of the programs that are already implemented (Kristantio, 2006). As a result, the sustainability and community-enhancement aspects are still regarded inefficient for the long-



term target, such as the stability of the community's resistance against fire, has not been reached yet.

Strother & Buchbinder (1980) stated that public educational programs preventing fire will work if they were planned by taking into account two aspects. First, when the program is constructed, attention should be given to problems existed in that area. Second, the community living in the area must be involved both in the planning and in the implementation phase. It means that active involvement of the community is prerequisite in order to create an effective program.

Based on the study by Kristantio (2006) on the role of the community in fire prevention, it can be concluded that active participation of the society is an important aspect to make the program successful. Thus, community-based programs are one of the solutions that need to be a priority in solving the problems of fire disaster in Jakarta. Therefore, the focus and the priority of the program must be chosen by paying attention to the complexities and the localities of the problems.

The complexity of the problems is also affected by the vulnerabilities of the community. Fire problem could not be seen only as a behavioral problem, but it is also related to the physical, economical, and social aspect of the community. Behavior change toward safety behavior and environments cannot be induced directly without the support of other aspects, like economical and social aspects. Many previous studies on fire prevention programs in the United States (among them are those from Fahy & Norton, 1989; Gunther, 1981; Karter & Donner, 1978; Munson, 1976 in McConnell, Dwyer & Leeming, 1996) showed that communities with low social economical status have higher risk to be hit by the fire disaster. This is due to the fact that those communities have insufficient facility to prevent fire and other resources needed in changing their behavior.

The localities of the problem are also needed to be taken into consideration in the planning of an intervention program. Strother & Buchbinder's study (1980) on numerous educational programs in the United States concluded that solving of fire problem needed to focus on specific local problems, and the community in that area must be involved in the planning process. This showed that there is no single formula that can work in every situation for every class of the society. A workable intervention program is one that is suitable to the condition of the community that becomes the target of the intervention.

In respect to the above mentioned issues, we can assume that there are no strategy and program that can produce instant change. Therefore, the authors decided to focus on the preparedness aspect of the community in order to face fire-hazard situation. It is based on the thought that, in order to reduce the fire risk in an area, one of the ways that can be done is by increasing the preparedness of the community to face the hazard. The prevention and mitigation against fire require basic changes in the behavioral, economical, and physical aspects of the community, but since fire disaster can happen at any time, a short-term program can be done by preparing the community against fire.

Preparedness refers to any activity done in order to stop and to avoid the effect of a disaster that are dangerous to the community (Carter, 1991). According to Smith (1996) this process is a form of an adaptation that human has towards the danger that threatens his life. Activity in this level includes all acts aimed to reduce the loss that caused by the disaster by adapting the human to it.

According to Patton (2003), preparedness against hazard and disaster is important to reduce the risk of losing something. Preparedness can also facilitate the ability to cope in emergency when the disaster happens. This can shape the resiliency level of an individual against certain hazard. Smith (1996) said that preparedness can be increased by giving information and knowledge about the hazard to the community. However, in reality, this effort showed that it have not done any good to increase the preparedness level of the community against hazard (Ballantyne et al, 2000; Duval & Mullis, 1999; Lindel & Whitney, 2000; McClure et al, 1999 in Paton, 2003; Hurnen & McClure, 1997).

Paton (2003) then developed a theoretical model to explain the factors that influence preparedness. According to Patton this model can be implemented to create risk-reducing strategy. Paton et al (2006) then tried that hypothesis towards fire-hazard problem. By using factors in the social-cognitive model about preparedness, they found that in fire-hazard, factors such as; critical awareness, outcome expectancy, sense of community, and action coping are significant predictors to the intention to prepare. Factors which were not significant predictors are self-efficacy and the perception of risk.

Based on that finding, it can be concluded that critical awareness, outcome expectancy, sense of community, and action coping are the factors needed to be elaborated related to this study. By upgrading these factors, it can be expected that the community's intention to do the act of preparedness can also be increased.

In addition to this preparedness program, this intervention used Capacity Enhancement (CCE) strategy and the risk communication as approach to community. Community Capacity Enhancement is a strategy focusing on the effort to mobilize the community's asset in order to solve the problem in the community or to enhance the capacity of the community (Delgado, 2000). The authors used CCE to find community's assets that can be used to increase community capacity to solve the fire problem. One of these assets is social organizations found in the community.

Other technique is risk communication, which is a social process in order to give information about hazard and to influence the community to perform behavioral change and to participate in the issue mentioned above (Rohrmann, 2000). Risk communication is essential in designing and evaluating the spread of information of a certain hazard. The success of the risk communication is not only determined by the content and the context of the message, but also by the psychosocial factors which play a more significant role in the process of behavioral change.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this research-based intervention is to give the community knowledge to emerge first aid and to prevent the spread of fire, if fire occurs in community. The local social organizations must be involved in empowerment strategy to spread the knowledge to the community. Those organizations are not only expected to react effectively when the fire disaster happen, but in the long term becomes a rich resources in developing fire prevention plans via activities reducing the susceptibility in the community.

Building local preparedness also has its own obstacles. According to Paton, Kelly, Burglet, & Doherty (2006) preparedness against fire depended highly to the intention to prepare. Through increasing or reinforcing these factors of intention, it is expected that the community can in turn increased their preparedness.

## Methods

### Time and Location of the Intervention

For this research, the authors has chosen Manggarai district, to be exact at RW (Rukun Warga, sub district) 04 as the research location. RW 04 in the Manggarai district consists of 16 RTs (neighborhood units) with a population of more than 3727 people under 1031 head-of-family/households (according to RW 04 statistic data, dated August 2006). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of the South Jakarta municipality office, RW 04 has a wide slum area (54 hectare) in comparison with other RWs in Manggarai. Beside that, 2296 of the people from 669 households live in slum area, which make it more than 50% of the community living in the slum area. Most of the people living there are traders and laborers.

RW 04 has experienced several fire disasters (3 times between the years 1980-1986 and 4 times between the years 2003-2006). In the 2003 fire disaster, 800 households lost their houses. Here is the information about the fire disasters happened in the years 2003-2006.

*Table 1. Fire Disasters Happened in the Next-to-lowest administrative unit Number 04 between the years 2003-2006*

Date of incidents	Source of fire	Lost estimation/victims	Burned Area
July 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	short circuit	2 million rupiahs	6 m2
May 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	short circuit	10 million rupiahs	24.5 m2
July 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	cigarette bud	- 35 households lost its house - 875 households lost its house	3,500 m2
March 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	candle from child's play	- 800 house, 1 mosque, and 1 prayer house burned down - 10 people injured	80,000 m2

Source: South Jakarta Fire Department (2003-2006)

### Target Participants

Target participants of this study are members of the Tim Peduli Lingkungan (TPL, Care for the Neighborhood Team) which represent the community of RW 04 in Manggarai district and have the capacity in doing various social activities. TPL is a non-formal organization which was formed by several of the community's significant figures and by representatives of the RTs in RW 04. Initially, TPL was formed to solve various conflicts among the people and among the RTs which often occurred in RW 04. But as time went by, TPL was often involved to represent RW 04 in numerous social activities. Therefore, TPL has grown into a significantly important organization in RW 04. Currently there are 20 active members in TPL.

## Intervention Procedure

### 1. Baseline Study

The baseline to assess community intervention was created using the Vulnerabilities and Capacities Assessment (VCA). It used to help the researchers to comprehend the community's vulnerability to disaster. By apprehending the real condition, the program can be arranged according to what the community really needs in order to decrease the level of the vulnerability.

Several techniques of data gathering were used based on the participatory rural/urban appraisal activities, including:

**Secondary data gathering (November 2006 to February 2007)**

Semi-structured interview (December 2006 to March 2007) with 24 members of the society, including the Head of Community, community's public figures, and the staffs of the South Jakarta Fire Department.

Hazard Mapping to the area RW 04 of the Manggarai district which are highly fire-hazardous. This process was done simultaneously with Focus Group Discussion.

Focus Group Discussion. The discussion was divided into 2 groups according to gender. The first group was the male member of the TPL (discussion held in April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007) and the second group involving female group from PKK organization (Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/Women Association for the Education of Family Welfare, held in April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007). The reason for dividing the groups according to gender found from the interview. The researchers discovered that there were difference in the knowledge, perception, and the strategy to overcome fire disaster between the two groups. Females have lower knowledge to handle fire disaster when compared to males. This lack of knowledge often made female members of the community more emotional in handling fire disaster. The main topics of the discussion were the vulnerability of the community towards fire and the community's intention to form community preparedness in handling fire. Important findings from this discussion (besides the vulnerability aspects which will be explained in the next section) were the identification of factors which affect the intention of the community member to form community preparedness.

There were some problems which causes delay the assessment process, caused by flood that swiped the Manggarai district in February 2007.

The intervention program was arranged by analyzing the problem and making an objective tree in logical framework analysis (LFA). By giving attention to the cause factor of the problems and transfer it into objective tree, the researcher then focusing intervention program to the community's awareness about preparedness of the community against fire, by increasing the community's knowledge and skill needed in preventing and handling fire disaster, changing the outcome expectancy, and increasing the intensity of community's preparedness against fire. The pre-intervention indicators which served as a reference on the change in the intervention process can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Pre-intervention Indicators

Aspects	Pre-intervention Indicators
The intention towards the community's fire preparedness	- still no interest to form Fire Preparedness team
Knowledge about fire preparedness	- lack of specific preparation in order to face fire disaster
Outcome expectancy toward community-based preparedness against fire	- lack of knowledge and skill about how to face fire disaster
	- lack of knowledge about the benefit of the community's fire preparedness
	- having no information about preparedness

Based on the baseline result, the risk communication strategy that needed to be concerned are efforts to increase:

Knowledge on handling a disaster

Information on the benefits of community's preparedness against fire through training and practice on planning process.

## 2. Implementation and Evaluation of the Intervention Program

The phases of the intervention program are:

- Assessment and approach towards the community which was started from November 2006 to April 2007.
- Community Meeting/FGD held in April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- Fire preparedness training and extension working together with the South Jakarta Fire Department and Indonesian Red Crescent chapter Central Jakarta, in May 27<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2007.
- Community-based workshop about fire preparedness in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross chapter South Jakarta in June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007.
- Activity-planning guide in the 9<sup>th</sup>, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2007.

## Results

The results of the intervention program are:

The formation of the Fire Preparedness Team in the community as a new function of the TPL.

The increase in the community's knowledge about fire preparedness is indicated by the mean differences in t-tests from the pre-test and the post-test. The result of the t-test of paired-sample from pre-test and post-test indicated that the mean differences of 40.5263 (pre-test's mean = 51.05; post-test mean = 91.57). Based on this result, the score is significance with the value of  $t = -18.205$  ( $df = 18$ ; level of confidence 95%). Therefore, it can be concluded that the extension was quite effective in the increasing of the participant's knowledge.

2. The change in the outcome expectancy and the intention toward preparedness shown through the specific change in the attitude to prepare during post- intervention.

Facts were noted from questionnaires given before and after the workshop. The questionnaires contained statements of specific matters on what the individual is going to do in preparing him/herself when facing fire disaster (table 3)

Table 3. Items of Preparedness Behavior

Behavior	Before	After
Having wet towel/sack in the kitchen ready in use to extinguish fire	17%	94%
Drawing up emergency plan to be brought by the family in case a fire occur	17%	94%
Have first-aid medicines	94%	94%
Training fire extinguishing skills	0%	82%
To have special water supply serving only one purpose which is to extinguish fire	11%	47%

N = 17

3. The spread nonformal information about fire hazards awareness and fire preparedness

through stickers.

### **Discussion**

The very high-rate of fire occurrences in Jakarta is a problem which is need a comprehensive intervention. Placing the problem in the incidental category is no longer relevant knowing that, although there is no seasonal pattern of when it will happen there is a vulnerability pattern that can be identified. Looking at how big the loss it can inflict, the danger it produce, the vulnerability level, and the impact it causes to the lives of the society, fire disaster must be categorized as the disaster in the society. This resulted in an opportunity to resolve the fire disaster problem more comprehensively.

Community-based program is a strategy that has long been developed in countries with high frequency of fire disaster. It is proven to be an effective intervention in reducing fire occurrence frequency (Appy & Campton, 2003). According to Strother & Buchbinder (1980) choosing program which is appropriate with the needs of the community as well as enhancing their active participation is an important thing to do.

The success of community-based program in reducing the occurrence of fire was proven by the Kristantio (2006) in his study in Galur district, Central Jakarta. According to Kristantio (2006) Galur now has become a relatively save area from fire seen from the reduced frequency of the occurrence of fire disaster. In his study, Kristantio (2006) found that one of the main factors of the change in Galur is in the high participation of the community in handling the high frequency of fire. This showed that community-based program is an activity that needs to get further development and empowerment because it has been shown to be an effective program to solve fire problem.

On the other hand, based on the study by Kristantio (2006), perception is an important aspect in handling fire disaster. But speaking in terms of preparedness, the perception of the risk alone cannot be a strong predictor to the community's mobility to do the act of preparedness. According to Paton et al (2006) preparedness was determined by other factors, including, outcome expectancy, sense of community, and action coping. This can be seen in the community of RW 04 Manggarai district. According to the baseline, the community members of the RW 04 already have high critical awareness and the perception of risk. But those factors are not strong enough to initiate specific preparedness activity in facing fire disaster.

The absence of comprehensive study about the role of intentional factors within the society maybe become one of the cause of why the community-based programs against fire held by Jakarta Fire Department did not run optimally. In the study of Galur, participation and perception maybe become the dominant factors because those aspects are the ones being studied by Kristantio (2006). The programs usually executed without an extensive studies about the community being intervened although it was essentially important because the right model of risk communication can be determined only after we have a full understanding of the community.

The use of social-cognitive model towards preparedness also needs further much deeper investigation. In the intervention process of RW 04 Manggarai district, this model is used to elaborate intentional factors in the community. The assumption is, by activating the intentional factors which concluded as still weak, the intention to do preparedness acts will become more factual. However, the authors still have not found studies which used social-cognitive methods in community in Indonesia. Therefore, the use of this model will be better if preceded by quantitative

study to predict factors which are relevant in the study as well as in the community.

Basically, social-cognition is needed to help plan the suitable risk communication for the society. In RW 04 Manggarai district, risk communication is focused on the development of preparedness against hazard and to the management needed to build local preparedness team. In a wider context, a country which is highly vulnerable to disaster such as Indonesia really needed a suitable risk communication design so the intervention programs can work effectively. Finding an effective program is important regarding the limited fund available for the education about disaster.

The building of local preparedness team is an initial step from other activity needed to create a fire-disaster-free community. This team then needs to plan further activity for the prevention of disaster as well as for the continuation of the team. Therefore, in the future, the team is expected to be able to plan the preparedness management in the community, for example, creating the procedure of alarm-system for disaster and evacuation training.

Other intervention programs which were focused on structural change as in the physical and economical aspects are also needed to reduce the vulnerability level. Example of such program is the use of micro-hydro powered electricity to be the substitute of the electricity from the State Electricity Enterprise. The use of this technology can help in reducing financial expenses for the use of electricity and to prevent the unsafe and illegal use of electricity. But, the implementation of the programs also has to consider the acceptance of the society and the readiness of the technology requirement.

Appy & Compton (2003) mentioned the “Five E-s” as the main and comprehensive strategy in creating community involvement to handle fire problem. According to Appy & Compton (2003), fire problem can only be resolved comprehensively if it involves these five elements, education, empowerment, environment enhancement, enactment of the development of security standard by the maintenance of law, and evaluation with behavioral research. The integration of the five elements will give effective result in handling fire problems.

Comprehensive understanding also means that fire problems are not only the responsibility of the society and the fire department, but also the responsibility of the policy makers, academic scholars and interventionist to determine the appropriate program and behavioral target. It means that optimal result from intervention program needs planning of a long-term program through many deeper studies which was involved comprehensive studies.

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## **Program of Support and Attention to Families Who Live Socio Environmental Vulnerabilities in the South of Brazil**

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### **Abstract**

*This program has its origin in the partnership of the Center for the Studies of At-Risk Populations (CEP-RUA) and the Center for Children and Adolescents'Attention (CAIC) of the Fundação Universidade Federal do Rio Grande. Both centers joined efforts to potentialize actions towards interventions in order to better understand and assist families who live poverty in the surround areas of the Federal University, in the extreme south of Brazil. The program has been developing psychoeducational and social activities aiming to attend children, adolescents and their families as well as the social agents who work for the services in the social support network such as, teachers, community health agents, social youth counselors and community leaders of the neighborhoods. The families receive attention through different resources planned to assist either individuals or groups: organized and systematic meetings with health and educational professionals; projects to qualify individuals' abilities to types of work that improve family income; actions to prevent child abuse and domestic violence and still proposals to increase opportunities to discuss and participate in the political decisions of each community. All these activities are guided by the principles of the ecologic engagement methodology. This strategy mainly allows the participation and involvement of the researchers and families who attend the program. Some of the projects are: socio and environmental diagnostic of the areas to map the special needs of the neighborhoods; dialogic educational meetings with parents in their own places and systematic training seminars for the social agents. The results have shown that the interventions have been interfering positively in the belief systems of the participants that include the University researchers, the social agents and the families and community. The communicability of these two contexts, university and communities, offers the chance of opening discussion to search common proposals to empower either the population at risk and the professionals who feel freer to collaborate to public policies.*

Key words: psychoeducational programs; at risk families; family psychosocialeducation

O presente trabalho tem por objetivo apresentar a seqüência de ações realizadas no âmbito de um Programa de Atenção às Famílias em Situação de Vulnerabilidade Socioambiental no extremo sul do Brasil<sup>1</sup>. As propostas do projeto visavam a melhoria da qualidade de vida e a consolidação dos espaços de cidadania das comunidades. Este Programa se estabeleceu a partir da parceria firmada entre o Centro de Estudos Psicológicos Sobre Meninos e Meninas de Rua (CEP-Rua) e o Centro de Atenção Integral à Criança e ao Adolescente (Caic), ambos pertencentes à Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (Furg). O CEP-Rua/ Furg é um centro consolidado desde 1996. Este centro atua em diferentes contextos com propostas de trabalhos que visam o esclarecimento, discussão, intervenção e prevenção das situações de risco sob as quais vivem muitas famílias no município de Rio Grande, Rio Grande do Sul. Um dos núcleos vinculado ao referido centro, o NEAF (Núcleo de Estudos e Atenção às Famílias em Situação de Risco), oferece consultoria, assessoria e orientação conforme demandas das comunidades, subsidiando as ações dos órgãos e instituições que atendem as famílias. O Caic/ Furg é um Centro de Atenção Integral à Criança e Adolescente, que ao longo dos seus quatorze anos de funcionamento se constituiu num importante espaço de construção de saberes e fazeres envoltos em preceitos que primam pelo respeito à vivência de uma cidadania coletiva, bem como de mecanismos articuladores da consciência e prática democrática e participativa. Este centro atende necessidades de educação (funciona como uma escola de ensino fundamental) e saúde (abriga projetos de saúde) dos bairros e vilas circunvizinhos à Universidade.

Sabe-se através de diferentes estudos, que as contingências econômicas e sociais que castigam a maioria das famílias brasileiras podem por si só afetar de forma adversa o desenvolvimento de crianças, adultos e grupos. Entretanto, isso não pode ser considerado regra sem exceção já que muitas comunidades de baixa renda desenvolvem processos e mecanismos que garantem sua sobrevivência, não só física, mas perpetuam os valores de sua identidade cultural, e tornam-se o contexto essencial para o desenvolvimento saudável de seus membros (Yunes, 2001). Diante da multiplicidade de formas de organizações familiares encontradas na atualidade, das diferenças culturais e das forças de macro-variáveis que determinam as relações e dinâmica das famílias, os programas de atenção integral às famílias devem considerar as particularidades e especificidades das *famílias vividas* (Szymanski, 1998). Ou seja, a vida real das famílias deve ser priorizada no atendimento das necessidades destes grupos.

Nesse sentido, o Programa de Atenção às Famílias em Situação de Vulnerabilidade Socioambiental buscou o desenvolvimento de ações que promovessem o atendimento psicossocial e educativo de crianças, adolescentes e seus familiares, bem como dos trabalhadores constituintes da rede de apoio social (acadêmicos, professores, agentes comunitários de saúde, conselheiros tutelares, lideranças comunitárias), com vistas ao apoio, atendimento integral e desenvolvimento das famílias. A promoção e atenção de educação e saúde, geração de trabalho e renda, combate aos abusos e exploração sexual, bem como a participação cidadã de crianças, adolescentes e seus familiares foram as metas coadjuvantes dos trabalhos.

1 O termo vulnerabilidade socioambiental (LOUREIRO, 1997) faz referência a condicionantes sociais e ambientais que podem significar predisposições ao risco ou a desordem para determinados indivíduos ou grupos. O autor caracteriza como vulnerabilidade socioambiental a situação de grupos específicos que se encontram : "(1)em maior grau de dependência direta dos recursos naturais para produzir, trabalhar e melhorar as condições objetivas de vida; (2) excluídos do acesso aos bens públicos socialmente produzidos, (3) ausentes de participação legítima em processos decisórios no que se refere à definição de políticas públicas que interferem na qualidade do ambiente em que se vive".(p.48)

Este Programa teve ainda o sentido de potencializar os projetos existentes, bem como a formulação de novas ações, na busca da compreensão/ intervenção e mudança da situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental à qual estão submetidas as comunidades e bairros vizinhos ao Caic/Furg. Com desenvolvimento das ações buscou-se ainda ampliar a Atenção Integral às Famílias, fortalecendo as ações de ensino, pesquisa e extensão da Furg, no sentido de estreitar os vínculos entre Universidade e/ Comunidade. Foram ampliadas as ações de formação/ capacitação da rede de apoio social, na busca de uma ação conjunta, interdisciplinar, que possibilitasse a emancipação cidadã dos sujeitos envolvidos no processo. Buscou-se fazer ainda com que os participantes se sentissem integrantes dos espaços de discussão e formulação de políticas públicas que visavam atender suas demandas.

### **Ações Desenvolvidas pelo Programa de Atenção às Famílias**

O encaminhamento metodológico do Programa Atenção às Famílias em Situação de Vulnerabilidade Socioambiental foi organizado na forma de projetos e subprojetos com diferentes temáticas. Cada projeto possuía estratégias metodológicas apropriadas às suas particularidades. Entretanto, todas as ações desenvolvidas utilizaram-se dos princípios das metodologias qualitativas e participativas para proporcionar o envolvimento de todos os atores sociais nas atividades. A seguir serão relatados os principais projetos:

#### *1. Diagnóstico socioambiental das comunidades*

As primeiras ações desenvolvidas pelo programa partiram da realização de um diagnóstico socioambiental das comunidades atendidas pelo Caic. O objetivo foi mapear e diagnosticar as condições de infra-estrutura e serviços existentes nos bairros do entorno da Universidade Este diagnóstico foi planejado para identificar as condições sociais de vida (trabalho, renda, escolaridade, configurações familiares, etc.) das famílias a serem atendidas pelo programa. A proposta utilizou diferentes estratégias metodológicas para coleta de dados:

a) Inserção Ecológica (Cecconello & Koller, 2003): Partiu-se desta metodologia que propõe a imersão dos pesquisadores no contexto a ser pesquisado com a elaboração de um diário de campo através de um olhar cuidadoso dirigido para as pessoas, para os processos, para os ambientes em dimensão temporal. A base teórica desta metodologia é a abordagem bioecológica de desenvolvimento humano de Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996, 2005). Os bairros foram caracterizados a partir de alguns indicativos identificados pelos pesquisadores sobre as condições de vida nos bairros: 1) aspectos gerais (do tipo pavimentação, iluminação, postos policiais, telefones públicos, etc.); 2) ensino (creches, escolas, creches clandestinas, ensino fundamental e médio); 3) transporte e 4) infra-estrutura. Os locais foram sendo detalhados a partir de visitas frequentes e de dados de relatórios cedidos pelo IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) do censo de 2000 e da Secretaria Municipal de Saúde realizado em 2007. Além disso, foram mapeadas as associações, organizações e/ ou serviços de apoio social existentes nos quatro bairros eleitos durante as visitas e conversas informais com os moradores e representantes comunitários. Anotações significativas foram feitas durante as visitas e conversas informais com diferentes membros da comunidade.

b) Foram realizadas entrevistas individuais gravadas e transcritas na íntegra com os presidentes dos bairros selecionados para a pesquisa. Outras entrevistas individuais com os

agentes sociais e com as famílias - história de vida - foram realizadas na modalidade reflexiva (Szymanski, 2001, Yunes & Szymanski, 2005).

Conforme os relatórios de área do Programa Saúde da Família da cidade de Rio Grande e do IBGE, 9064 famílias constituídas por 31568 pessoas, compõe as comunidades pesquisadas, com 6372 crianças de 0 a 9 anos (20,19%) e 6334 adolescentes de 10 a 19 anos (20,07%).

Os resultados apreendidos pela combinação destas metodologias evidenciaram que as comunidades se diferenciam entre ocupações e loteamentos. Além da luta pela estabilidade de moradia, foi detectada a luta pela busca de geração alternativa de renda. Na maioria das famílias, os adultos apresentam baixa escolaridade. Quanto ao funcionamento da rede, fica evidente a carência de escolas de ensino médio. Os moradores que formam essas comunidades consistem basicamente famílias de baixa renda que vivem com poucos recursos e de forma bastante precária. As formas de emprego distribuem-se entre empregos formais e não formais. Os empregos informais são diversos, pelos quais pode-se citar: os vendedores de peixes, laranjas, os pedreiros, serventes, mas além desses existe uma maioria os catadores de lixo (aproximadamente 70%), que em alguns casos fazem seus trabalhos com o auxílio de carroças e outros a pé. Além disso, a maioria dos presidentes de bairros (65%) sublinhou sua preocupação quanto ao excesso de tempo livre dos adolescentes e alta probabilidade de uso de drogas para consumo e como alternativa de renda. As lideranças comunitárias anseiam por políticas públicas que atendam as necessidades das populações jovens, com foco para a implementação das condições de infra-estrutura desses bairros. Nessas temáticas que envolvem a adolescência, percebeu-se que os moradores são conscientes e críticos quanto às necessidades de um trabalho voltado para estes jovens e suas famílias. Isso sugere a necessidade de um trabalho psicossocial através de criação de um espaço educativo e específico para esta população.

Em relação à rede de apoio, as lideranças entrevistadas identificaram os seguintes serviços nas suas comunidades: Escola, Posto de Saúde e Creches. Para esses representantes esses serviços atuam de forma precária e são especialmente ineficientes em suas relações com as famílias. Este fato é percebido na relação existente entre a maneira de atuação e funcionamento tanto dos agentes sociais, como dos serviços prestados a esses bairros. Essa dificuldade é demonstrada quando algumas mães, que necessitam trabalhar para aumentar a renda familiar, tem filhos pequenos e não tem com quem contar, o que denuncia a inexistência de um serviço de apoio a essas famílias que acabam deixando essas crianças na responsabilidade de outras crianças um pouco maiores. Além disso, outro fator importante percebido neste diagnóstico é que as redes de apoio das comunidades não atuam de forma integrada entre elas, mas operam de formas independentes.

Ademais, pode-se dizer que os resultados deste subprojeto do Programa trouxeram o conhecimento e a compreensão das crenças e teorias implícitas que permeiam o trabalho dos líderes comunitários no que se refere às suas relações com as famílias de baixa renda dos bairros. Ficou claro o impacto destas crenças no desenvolvimento do trabalho social e comunitário dos agentes sociais, o que tem sido identificado em outras pesquisas desenvolvidas pelo grupo do CEP-Rua/Furg (Yunes, Garcia & Albuquerque, 2007)

2. Encontros dialógicos e reflexivos com famílias em situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental

A partir do contato e estudo das comunidades, surgiu a necessidade de promover encontros com vistas à atenção e orientação psicossocial e educacional de famílias. Em primeira instância, buscou-se identificar as necessidades e prioridades destes grupos, bem como possibilitar o espaço para a discussão de práticas parentais, através de plantões para atendimento e grupos de diálogo com os familiares. As famílias atendidas foram indicadas pelos Agentes Comunitários de Saúde, Conselhos Tutelares e escolas públicas do município. Encontros sistemáticos foram realizados com pais ou responsáveis pelo cuidado infantil no ambiente familiar (com avós, irmãos mais velhos, tios, etc).

Foram atendidas 32 famílias de diferentes configurações familiares, sendo destas 25% nucleares, 31,25% reconstituídas e 43,75% monoparentais. A maioria das famílias relatou conflitos na relação entre pais e filhos e dificuldades no cuidado e educação de crianças e adolescentes, principalmente em relação aos limites na infância e a drogadição na fase da adolescência. Estes resultados apontam para a relevância do atendimento psicoeducacional como um direito que deve ser garantido às famílias em situação de risco e do estabelecimento de parcerias que efetivamente atuem como uma rede de apoio social em busca de políticas públicas que assegurem a educação parental e o fortalecimento dos grupos para a resolução dos conflitos familiares.

### 3. Cursos de formação para os agentes da rede de apoio social

Foram realizados reuniões e cursos para promover a ação-reflexão das práticas de profissionais que fazem parte da rede de apoio social das famílias. Participaram: agentes comunitários de saúde, conselheiros tutelares, lideranças comunitárias e professores. O trabalho destes profissionais na atenção e educação das famílias de baixa-renda foi discutido de forma reflexiva e crítica com vistas à melhoria da qualidade do trabalho desses profissionais e da vida da população atendida.

#### a) Conselheiros tutelares<sup>2</sup>:

Um dos primeiros cursos de formação para rede de apoio social se dirigiu aos Conselheiros Tutelares e teve como tema: *“As políticas públicas de atendimento à população em situação de risco: ressignificando as ações e interações socioambientais dos conselheiros tutelares”*. Esse curso foi realizado no período de 8 dias consecutivos, totalizando 40h distribuídas em palestras, momentos de debate e discussões sobre temáticas relacionadas ao papel e a atuação dos conselheiros tutelares (antigos – já no cargo e novos – a serem empossados) na garantia dos direitos de crianças, adolescentes e suas famílias. Nestes encontros surgiram discussões relevantes que revelaram as posturas, por vezes assistencialistas e autoritárias dos conselheiros no atendimento à população. Em relação à postura e papel dos conselheiros tutelares, os antigos se mostravam mais pessimistas quanto às possibilidades de superação das dificuldades vivenciadas pelas famílias atendidas e limitavam suas formas de intervenção, culpando a falta de infra-estrutura dos conselhos e a pouca colaboração de outros serviços de apoio. No entanto, os trabalhadores “novos” no cargo, demonstraram ciência das dificuldades e da necessidade de buscar alternativas para melhorar o atendimento da população. Nesse sentido, estes “novos” conselheiros pareceram mais otimistas para assumir as adversidades advindas do trabalho. Em geral, os conselheiros tutelares antigos e novos, demonstraram dificuldades em compreender a função da rede de apoio social e não se

2 O Conselho Tutelar é um órgão permanente e autônomo, encarregado pela sociedade de zelar pelo cumprimento dos direitos da criança e do adolescente (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente - ECA, 1990).

percebiam parte desta rede.

b) Lideranças comunitárias:

O outro curso de formação foi dirigido às lideranças comunitárias: *“Curso de formação/reflexão para lideranças comunitárias: discutindo realidades”*. Foi realizada uma primeira reunião com os membros da União Riograndina das Associações de Bairros (URAB), oportunidade na qual os presidentes das associações foram convidados a relatar assuntos de seu interesse para serem discutidos durante a formação. Além disso, os participantes foram solicitados a preencher um questionário sobre as preferências de data, local e horários para a realização deste curso. A proposta teve como objetivo promover a reflexão e capacitação de lideranças comunitárias para o atendimento às famílias em situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental com foco na relevância do papel destes trabalhadores e representantes comunitários na rede de apoio social. A escolha das temáticas para este curso de formação foi fundamentada nas discussões e entrevistas realizadas junto a lideranças comunitárias, bem como nos resultados do diagnóstico socioambiental das comunidades citado acima (Projeto 1 deste programa). Participaram dos encontros: lideranças comunitárias (presidentes e vice-presidentes de bairros, agentes comunitárias de saúde, presidente da URAB, integrantes da equipe do CEP-Rua e Caic/Furg). Foram realizadas discussões sobre as situações de vulnerabilidade vivenciadas em diferentes bairros do município, o papel do líder comunitário, o atendimento às famílias e o fortalecimento das ações coletivas comunitárias. Diante das considerações dos líderes participantes dos encontros, ficaram evidentes as dificuldades enfrentadas na atuação desses agentes, como a ausência de participação comunitária, a falta de infra-estrutura dos bairros e a ineficiência de alguns serviços que fazem parte da rede de apoio social.

c) Professores:

Projetos de Formação continuada para os professores do Centro de Atenção Integral à Criança e ao Adolescente (Caic), foram realizados para discutir sobre a contribuição do papel deste profissional na relação família-escola e a formação de acadêmicos e profissionais para atuarem junto às famílias em situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental, através de uma Jornada de Estudos do Cep-Rua e de um Congresso do Caic/ Furg.

Um outro projeto mais específico, ainda para professores, intitulou-se: *Projeto de Intervenção Psicoeducacional com Professores do Ensino Fundamental: Construindo Estratégias para Denúncias de Abuso Sexual Contra Crianças e Adolescentes* (Pietro, 2008) e propõe uma intervenção que proteja as crianças, adolescentes, famílias e oriente os educadores em casos de abuso sexual e maltratos em geral. Participaram deste projeto 11 professores(as) sendo duas da educação infantil e nove professoras das segundas, terceiras e quartas séries do ensino fundamental. O trabalho foi dividido em dois momentos: no primeiro momento foi realizada a capacitação dos acadêmicos para o trabalho com as crianças, já que estes iriam substituir os docentes para que os mesmos pudessem participar da capacitação. O segundo momento consistiu na aplicação do Programa de Intervenção que teve como foco orientar os educadores para a construção de estratégias de denúncia de abuso sexual que legitimassem o papel protetor do professor e da escola. Os temas foram apresentados na seguinte ordem: Módulo 1 – Análise do Filme “Canto de Cicatriz”; Módulo 2 - Abuso Sexual: definições, sinais e vitimização da criança/adolescente; Módulo 3 – Leituras direcionadas sobre o tema; Módulo 4 - Família e violência: fatores determinantes; Módulo 5 - Aspectos legais e a Denúncia; Módulo 6 - Responsabilidade do educador e Estudos de caso;

## Módulo 7 – Avaliação e encaminhamentos.

Desde o princípio da intervenção, os docentes se mostraram motivados a estudar o tema solicitando bibliografia e estudos para um melhor acompanhamento. Foram utilizados como instrumentos de pesquisa: questionários, jogo de sentenças incompletas e relatos livres. Todos os encontros foram gravados e transcritos. Os dados coletados estão sendo analisados pela equipe de pesquisa e serão publicados *a posteriori*.

### d) Agentes Sociais da Rede Ampliada:

Atualmente, os cursos de formação para os agentes da rede de apoio social estão sendo realizados através de encontros com a “rede ampliada” (representantes dos serviços e órgãos governamentais e não-governamentais) de atendimento de crianças, adolescentes e famílias em situação de risco. Estes encontros estão contribuindo para o planejamento de cursos de formação com a “rede de apoio local” (serviços existentes nas comunidades). Estes encontros são denominados de “*Encontros de Educação Permanente da Rede Ampliada de Atendimento e Apoio Social*”, e tem como participantes os representantes e profissionais que atuam diretamente no atendimento e em serviços de apoio às crianças, adolescentes e famílias em situação de risco no município do Rio Grande. Contudo, esses encontros apresentam-se como estratégia necessária para a aproximação e comunicação entre os serviços e profissionais que fazem parte da rede ampliada de atendimento e apoio social. Pretende-se continuar realizando estes encontros mensais com a rede ampliada e, paralelamente, realizar cursos de formação que atendam as especificidades das áreas de atuação dos profissionais que atuam diretamente com famílias em situação de risco.

## 4. Oficinas de Geração de Trabalho e Renda

a) O Projeto “Oficina Permanente de Artesanato” recebeu 08 participantes advindos das comunidades atendidas pelo Programa, organizados em 01 turma, com carga horária de 06 horas semanais (dividida em dois encontros). Os participantes desta oficina eram familiares de alunos do Caic, que estavam em busca de novos conhecimentos, técnicas no trabalho de artesanato e qualificação profissional. No primeiro semestre foram realizados trabalhos de corte e costura (reforma e reutilização de peças de vestuário e confecção de peças pequenas, como cintos e bolsas de sobras de jeans e novelos de lã, almofadas de fuxico e retalhos de tecidos, aplicação de bordados para customizar peças de roupas e acessórios). Peças maiores como colchas, mantas e roupas de lã, casacos, sapatinhos e meias de lã para as crianças também foram temas de trabalhos manuais. O projeto contribuiu de forma efetiva para a construção de novos saberes, no que se refere à aprendizagem específica de técnicas de artesanato, a confecção de moldes, de peças de vestuário, a reforma e customização de roupas para promover a reciclagem de peças e também a possibilidade de utilização por mais tempo de uma peça de roupa. Além disso, deve-se ressaltar a importância da convivência em grupo, das relações entre os participantes e a possibilidade de aprendizagem conjunta.

b) O projeto “A informática como espaço de profissionalização e de inclusão digital” contou com a participação de 03 turmas (42 alunos) de 5ª a 8ª séries da Escola Cidade do Rio Grande, além de outras 02 turmas, com 28 participantes de pessoas da comunidade. Para estas cinco turmas, foi desenvolvido um curso de nível básico, partindo de noções gerais ligadas à informática, tais como o manejo com as máquinas e atividades nas seguintes abordagens: Curso de Windows XP;

Microsoft Word e Internet. Já no segundo semestre foram organizadas 03 novas turmas (42 de alunos) bem como 02 novas turmas de nível básico para a comunidade (com 28 participantes). Estas turmas tiveram o mesmo curso de nível básico que foi desenvolvido no primeiro semestre. Além disso, foi organizada mais 01 turma, com 14 participantes que já haviam concluído o curso de nível básico no primeiro semestre e tiveram interesse em aprofundar seus conhecimentos na área da informática. No curso de nível intermediário foram aprofundados os conhecimentos do curso básico, especialmente em Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Movie Maker e Internet. O processo de inclusão na cultura digital busca proporcionar condições de modificação de realidade, através da aquisição de conhecimentos na área de informática, bem como de interação com os colegas na construção de uma nova linguagem que favorece a resolução de situações cotidianas e contribui na busca de novas oportunidades de emprego e renda.

c) O projeto “Curso preparatório para garçons, garçonetes e atendentes” atendeu 12 pessoas da comunidade, que realizaram curso de qualificação profissional. As atividades buscaram favorecer a confiança, o respeito e a convivência em grupo através de 08 encontros mensais. As temáticas dos encontros iniciaram-se com temas genéricos tais como: cuidados com a aparência, asseio, organização, responsabilidade e, posteriormente foram sendo incorporadas os aspectos mais técnicos, como a aprendizagem de etiqueta e boas maneiras, serviço de recepção, postura corporal do atendente, tipos de mesas, tipos de serviço, manuseio de talheres, manuseio de bandejas, etc. Entende-se que este projeto é muito importante, pois favorece a formação e a qualificação profissional de pessoas da comunidade, além de colaborar como alternativa para inserção no mercado de trabalho.

##### 5. Projetos Culturais e Educativos para Crianças e Adolescentes

a) O projeto “A Dança como expressão da Arte-Educação” teve dois públicos-alvo distintos: funcionários do Centro/acadêmicos da Furg e alunos da comunidade escolar. As aulas de Dança de Salão foram ministradas por um acadêmico da FURG, que se disponibilizou a ampliar esta atividade que já era oferecida apenas para os alunos de cursos de graduação da Universidade. Assim, foi possível promover um espaço de convivência, para os profissionais que atuam no Caic (professores, técnicos, acadêmicos, bolsistas, voluntários, funcionários de empresas terceirizadas e demais participantes da comunidade). Nestes encontros semanais com duração de 02 horas/aula, foram trabalhados passos básicos de ritmos musicais como o forró, salsa, samba, vanera, bolero, calipso, chamamé, dentre outros. Esta proposta não buscou em nenhum momento criar um grupo de dançarinos, mas mantinha o prazer de dançar, integração e incentivo à alegria da convivência grupal.

b) A segunda atividade foi: “Street Dance” destinada aos alunos do Caic. Nesta atividade os alunos participantes foram construindo, em conjunto com a professora as coreografias e os ritmos das apresentações. Este projeto contribuiu de forma efetiva para a construção de novos saberes junto aos alunos do Caic, oportunizando uma aprendizagem criadora que desenvolveu a capacidade de pensar, refletir, analisar, sentir e reagir artisticamente, percebendo o corpo e os princípios gerais do movimento como Arte e como Educação.

c) O projeto “A Arte-Reciclagem como espaço de aprendizagem e de produção de novas culturas socioambientais” teve como objetivos: propiciar o desenvolvimento artístico, cultural e ecológico; instrumentalizar os participantes com os conhecimentos básicos que permitissem criar



conteúdos referentes às artes e as ciências ambientais; ajudar a expressar a criatividade, preservar o meio ambiente e recuperar os valores humanos. Durante o período de execução foi possível atender todas as turmas de Educação Infantil e Anos Iniciais da Escola Cidade do Rio Grande, totalizando 487 alunos subdivididos em 24 turmas. Cada turma participou de 04 encontros, realizados em horário de aula e que foram estruturados e planejados conjuntamente entre o responsável pela atividade, professores e coordenação pedagógica da Escola Cidade do Rio Grande. Nesta atividade que passou a integrar o currículo da educação infantil e dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental, os pequenos participantes puderam realizar a sua primeira experiência com relação à reciclagem de papel, oportunidade na qual fizeram muitos questionamentos e tiraram dúvidas, assim como realizaram trabalhos em sala de aula sobre reciclagem de diferentes materiais como papel, plástico e alimentos. Além desta atividade com as turmas de Educação Infantil e Anos Iniciais, tivemos a participação de uma turma fixa com 10 alunos de 5ª a 8ª séries. Nos encontros semanais, realizados em horário oposto ao das aulas, com 02 horas de duração, os alunos desenvolveram relações de convivência saudável, respeito, solidariedade e cooperação, realizaram discussões sobre educação ambiental, problematizações acerca do modelo atual de sociedade, além de promover o domínio de técnicas de reciclagem de papel. Esta turma colaborou na produção de papel para os certificados de cursos e projetos, cadernos e blocos de anotações para os participantes dos demais projetos.

d) O projeto “A Musicalização como forma de expressão artística e cultural” que nos anos anteriores era desenvolvida somente com as aulas de canto coral, foi enriquecido com uma nova atividade de aulas de violão, que atendeu alunos das escolas municipais da vizinhança. A Oficina de Violão, buscou o ensino das técnicas específicas de violão e a expansão da musicalidade para crianças e adolescentes a partir da quinta série do ensino fundamental. Consideramos que a educação musical é possível a todos por ser um aspecto natural do ser humano e indissociável a formação plena do indivíduo bem como fundamental para o desenvolvimento pedagógico. Entende-se que a música é uma das expressões mais humanas, uma das muitas linguagens utilizadas pelo homem para falar de si, do seu grupo social e de suas impressões sobre o mundo. Assim, a música não existe por si mesma, mas inserida num contexto sociocultural.

e) O projeto “O Hip Hop como manifestação da cultura comunitária local” buscou valorizar as suas diferentes manifestações, como o canto (MC), dança (Street Dance e B-Boy) e também o grafitti (Grafiteiro). As ações foram desenvolvidas em horário oposto ao das aulas com encontros semanais de 03 horas/aula de duração. Houve 12 alunos participantes com idade a partir de 14 anos. Nas aulas de grafitti, os adolescentes realizaram a confecção de moldes e apreenderam técnicas de desenho e do stencil. Realizaram a grafiteagem de painéis, confeccionaram portfólios e também a pintura, com a técnica do stencil e do muro de uma residência nas proximidades da escola. Esta atividade ocorreu com o intuito de favorecer a valorização da cultura Hip Hop, promover um espaço e envolver os participantes em discussões pertinentes a sua realidade, contribuindo para a capacidade de aprendizagem dos alunos e de suas relações sociais.

f) O projeto “Oficina de Teatro” teve suas atividades realizadas durante todo o ano letivo, com encontros semanais com duração de 03 horas/aula, em horário oposto ao das atividades escolares. Participaram 12 adolescentes das 5ª a 8ª séries, que obtiveram o conhecimento sobre as técnicas básicas do teatro através da expressão corporal e do conhecimento das escolas teatrais. Estas atividades foram realizadas no intuito de ampliar a capacidade de organização

e auto-gestão dos participantes, favorecer o respeito mútuo e a convivência em grupo além da manutenção de um grupo teatral permanente.

#### 6. Projeto Direito Solidário

O Projeto Direito Solidário surgiu com a proposta de acadêmicos do curso de direito da FURG, cujos anseios eram de trabalhar com as comunidades periféricas da cidade do Rio Grande no âmbito jurídico. Foram atendidas famílias residentes no entorno da Universidade que buscavam orientações jurídicas. Os processos foram encaminhados e estão sendo acompanhados pelo Serviço de Assistência Judiciária da FURG. Este atendimento deu maior efetividade à prestação do serviço e contribuiu para a formação social de futuros operadores do Direito para o contato e compreensão da realidade destas populações. Os atendimentos judiciais ou extrajudiciais foram realizados pelos alunos envolvidos com o projeto, com o acompanhamento e orientação direta dos professores responsáveis e feitos de conformidade com a demanda surgida no decorrer das interações realizadas junto a comunidade. O atendimento judicial e extrajudicial visava a atender as demandas jurídicas surgidas na comunidade atendida e, de outra sorte, visam ainda a iniciar o aluno de direito no contato com a realidade com a qual irá se defrontar no decorrer da carreira.

Diante dos resultados apresentados, foi possível perceber a necessidade efetiva de intervenções diretas e pontuais dos profissionais do Direito junto à comunidade, para alcançar o atendimento às demandas judiciais bem como acompanhar os conflitos e possibilitar o enfrentamento sadio dos mesmos pela população alvo do projeto. Assim, a dinâmica inicialmente pensada para a execução do projeto, tornou-se incompatível com a estrutura ainda pequena do mesmo, o que revelou a necessidade de que a mesma fosse repensada.

Atualmente, o projeto Direito Solidário está sendo reformulado e direcionado para o atendimento à comunidade pobre, para esclarecer seus direitos e atuar na condução dos conflitos existentes nas mais diversas áreas do conhecimento jurídico. O referido projeto tem em sua pauta a idéia da transformação na forma de atuação dos acadêmicos do curso de Direito, tendo em vista sua participação ativa nas comunidades e o foco na mudança de atitudes não somente na condução dos conflitos, mas, sobretudo, na trajetória pessoal dos acadêmicos que contam com a possibilidade efetiva de participar de atividades humanizantes. Nas palavras de Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996), estas experiências de cuidado relacionadas aos ambientes educativos são fundamentais para a formação de qualquer pessoa. As atividades sociais para o pesquisador e o extensionista são extremamente relevantes para seu próprio desenvolvimento como ser humano. Aproximar o acadêmico dos sonhos desta comunidade, suas pretensões, suas batalhas diárias, sua alegria, sua maneira própria de enfrentamento de todas as dificuldades têm sido a tônica desta proposta. Sabe-se que tão somente "*ensinar procedimentos*" sobre o atendimento, não é tão eficaz como possibilitar que os próprios acadêmicos sintam, visualizem e empenhem-se na busca de alternativas para cada caso. Este envolvimento proporciona ao aluno uma visão ecológica dos problemas jurídicos ao mesmo tempo em que propicia ao mesmo a experiência da solidariedade, atributo com importância fundamental na vida de todos os profissionais.

#### Considerações Finais

Tendo em vista as ações que foram e estão sendo desenvolvidas pelo Programa de Atenção às Famílias em situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental, pode-se afirmar que os

projetos têm buscado oportunizar a ampliação dos processos de educação e saúde, e que se pretende em última instância propor aos sujeitos participantes desse projetos, a possibilidade de vislumbrar sua situação existencial, concreta, presente/passada e futura. Olhar os problemas e dificuldades como desafios possíveis de serem enfrentados têm sido um dos lemas de construção das ações em pauta, para os participantes e executores das propostas. A integração dos diversos projetos com ações e intervenções sociais de ensino e aprendizagens, têm gerado a reciclagem de conceitos, preconceitos e formado “tomadores de decisões” que aprimoram conhecimentos e favorecem o domínio de técnicas de “viver – bem”. Todos os projetos e subprojetos buscam desta forma, desenvolver a consciência social, política e ecológica, aprofundando o interesse por si mesmo e pelo outro como ser humano e parceiro/companheiro em seus diferentes ambientes. Incentiva-se ainda a vontade de participar ativamente na melhoria pessoal e coletiva, na proteção das comunidades e de suas identidades. Nesse sentido, entende-se que um Programa desta dimensão e com as características descritas pode contribuir para a melhoria da qualidade de vida e para a consolidação de espaços de convivência gentil e solidária entre comunidades diversas.

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# Social cohesion, perceived safety and immigration in a run-down district in Reggio Emilia

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## Abstract

*The aim of this study is to analyze the representations and perceptions of people living in five streets of districts 6 and 7 of Reggio Emilia (Italy), in terms of perceived safety and specific problems related to the immigration process and to intergroup relations. In this part of the city, called “railway station zone”, about 70% of the residents are foreigners. Reggio Emilia is the Italian city included in the 12 Intercultural Cities Program of the European Commission Project on immigration and best practices.*

*Particularly, we put our attention on: 1) the attitudes expressed by people living and/or working in the two districts as well as by other involved actors: Italians and immigrants, shopkeepers, public administrators, police force, cultural associations, labour union representatives, civic committees, voluntary associations, religious groups; 2) the specific problems of both Italian and immigrant residents; 3) the existent intercultural and intergroup dynamics; 4) the quality of the relationships between Italians and foreigners.*

**Key words:** immigration, perceived safety, social cohesion, intergroup relations, shared cohabitation rules.

## 1. The sense of safety

Many psycho-sociological studies examined the concepts of sense of safety related to concerns for crime and of social cohesion. The common feeling is that the perception of safety among the Italian citizens decreases constantly, due to increasing levels of crime, and characterizes more and more their experience of the urban environment. In the last years, the crime rate has brought the institutions to pay more and more attention to the problem of safety. This crime rate is connected, at least in the common perception, to the increasing number of immigrants, above all non regulars.

The initial psychosocial studies concerning safety perceptions started around the Sixties. In many of them, safety was studied as a product of real crimes (see, for instance, Block & Long, 1973). In such studies, the central idea was that the sense of safety depended on the objective characteristics of the society, and not on the subjective perceptions of the individuals. Subsequently, since various studies showed that the crime rates were poorly associated to the sense of safety, the latter has been investigated as a consequence of psychosocial factors.

Furstenberg (1971) proposed that the concept of sense of safety is multi-determined. In particular, the author distinguished two aspects: on the one hand “fear of crime”, that is fear to be victim of crimes, and on the other hand “worry”, defined as the perception of the degree in which

crime represents a problem for one's own country. The idea that fear of crime is a multidimensional concept is shared by many authors (e.g., Garofalo, 1981; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987).

Starting from the multidimensional nature of the concept of sense of safety, some authors prefer to analyze separately its various dimensions. In particular, some researches distinguished among "personal safety" and "community safety". Considering these two dimensions as distinct, in fact, allows to distinguish among them the factors that determine the various aspects of safety perceptions and their consequences.

The concepts of sense of safety and of fear of crime were considered by many authors as synonymous. Nevertheless, the two concepts are theoretically and empirically distinct. We will now review some among the most relevant determinants and consequences of the sense of safety, that are analyzed by the psychosocial literature.

### 1.1. Antecedents of the sense of safety

Besides the socio-demographic factors, the psychological literature identified a number of potential antecedents of the sense of safety. Some of them mainly refer to personal characteristics. Van der Wurff, Van Staaldunen, and Stringer (1989), for instance, tested a model with four antecedents of fear of crime, measured as the degree of perceived danger imagining to be in some hypothetical dangerous situations: a) attraction (intended as the degree in which one perceives himself/herself and his/her own goods as potential target for criminals); b) power (sense of control on the potential dangerous situations); c) attribution of criminal intentions to other individuals or groups; d) degree of prudence in avoiding potential dangerous situations.

Another factor that can potentially determine the sense of safety is the personal level of prejudice. Prejudice and negative stereotypes toward members of other groups could increase negative expectations and exaggerate the potential risks of being victim of criminal actions by outgroup members (see Vander Ven, 1998).

A very important predictor of sense of safety is represented by sense of community or, in other terms, by social cohesion. This variable will be considered below. Victimization, that is the perception of being a potential victim of a crime, is another factor much studied in literature that can influence the sense of safety (Garofalo, 1979).

Intuitively, the factors that make more or less probable the perception of being victim of crimes influence, indirectly, also the sense of safety. Such factors can be defined as contextual, rather than individual, since they refer to aspects associated to the environment and not to personal characteristics. Some of these contextual variables are connected to daily activities and to the personal situation (Rountree & Land, 1996).

Some variables are related to the context (for instance, the district) in which people live. Also factors that underline the urban decay, consequent to the incivilities, might reduce the sense of safety (e.g., Lewis & Salem, 1981; Rountree & Land, 1996).

In general, it is possible to say that also the information provided by the mass media represent a contextual factor that can potentially influence the sense of safety. It was found, for instance, that news concerning serious local crimes brought by media decreased the perceived safety (e.g., Liska & Baccaglini, 1990).

### 1.2. Consequences of the sense of safety

One of the most remarkable consequences of the sense of safety is the quality of the perceived life, that can be defined as a general concept referred to personal comfort and satisfaction for one's own existence, derived from positive experiences in one's own environment. Few studies considered the relationship between perceived safety and quality of life. In one of these studies, Michalos and Zumbo (2000) examined a sample of adults in Canada and found that measures referred to perceived safety were associated to measures of happiness, variation in the satisfaction for one's own life and quality of life.

Fear of crime and anticipation of the risk of being victim of crimes can involve notable costs for people. Doland and Peasgood (2006) distinguish the costs related to the health from those not linked to it; for both such categories it is possible to distinguish the quantifiable from the non-quantifiable costs. The amount of costs that are not associated to health can be of several types. They include, for instance, the costs concerning the increase of safety measures (like alarms). The reduction of the quality of life represents a clear example of non-quantifiable cost not (at least not directly) associated to health.

The non-quantifiable costs not associated to health include, for example, the stress and the anxiety provoked by a low sense of safety. In certain cases, high levels of fear of crime could worsen, at least indirectly, the psychophysical state of people and their mental health and reduce the behaviours directed to lower the risks for health (e.g., Dowdell & Santucci, 2003). Other costs associated to the sense of safety include worse psychophysical conditions derived from repeated exposure to threatening stimuli (Ross & Mirowski, 2001), reduced physical activity (Kilgour, 2003), reduced participation to social activities (Kennelly, O'Shea, & Garvey, 2003). Finally, the quantifiable costs associated to health can be, for example, those for medical expenses as a consequence of feelings of lack of safety.

The sense of safety was showed to have a consistent influence on people's behaviour. The effects on the behaviour can be positive or negative. Some behaviours, in fact, can be facilitated, others inhibited. The individuals can, for example, try to avoid risk situations or adopt measures that reduce victimization. The relationship between fear of crime and behaviours of precaution was found in numerous studies carried out in different contexts, as, for instance, the scholastic one (Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007).

The behaviours aimed to increase the sense of safety also include active participation to social activities, as for example groups aimed to improve the safety of the area of residence (e.g., Hope & Steven, 2001).

## **2. The role of social cohesion**

Social cohesion is often associated, in the studies related to its effects on the urban environment, to sense of community. The sense of community refers to the processes that make a group of individuals members of a community, and consists in the perception of similarity and interdependence with respect to other members, the idea of belonging to a reliable group (Sarason, 1974).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) elaborated a very influential model of the sense of community, according to which this sense is composed by four dimensions: a) membership, constituted by possibility of emotional attachment, identification with one's own group, personal investment in material or symbolic terms, shared symbols; b) influence, exerted by the individual toward

the community and, vice versa, the influence that the community has toward the individual; c) fulfilment of both personal and collective needs; d) shared emotional connection, when the interactions among members, the shared history and the investments of people in their own community are taken into consideration. Social cohesion can likewise be defined as the resultant of the attraction forces that tie a number of people as members of a group and not as single individuals (Turner, 1987).

There are various aspects, connected to social cohesion, that influence the reduction of people's lack of safety. A fundamental role is played, for instance, by perceived social support. This factor can be associated to the community in general, but also to specific people. In general, the strength of social ties reduces the vulnerability perceived by individuals, who do not need to face singularly the risks related to criminality (DeLisi & Regoli, 2000). Another variable associated to the perception of social support, that attracted the attention of scholars, is represented by social bonds with one's own neighbours. Generally, the spatial proximity, by increasing the occasions of meeting, allows the development of positive and cooperative relationships among neighbours that, independently from their intensity, reduce the feelings of lack of safety (Kennedy & Silverman, 1985).

### **3. Content analysis of the in-depth interviews with key witnesses**

Twelve privileged witnesses were interviewed. They were institutional subjects, social workers and representatives of non-profit associations and of social centres that operate in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> districts of the city. The interviews were de-recorded and the content was analyzed applying the Grounded Theory method. The most relevant aspects emerged during the interviews are presented below.

#### **3.1. The railway station zone**

There is a general agreement on the fact that the district was born as residential area. The proximity to the historical town centre, to the railway station and to several facilities contributed to increase its value and to characterize its destination for buyers of the middle-upper class. During the Nineties, due to the arrival of more and more immigrants, things began to change.

At present the zone, above all Turri street, is characterized by an overcrowding of immigrants belonging to different ethnic groups, such to determine a completely different social context. The "Reggiani" (people born and still living in Reggio Emilia) are for the most part elderly people, together with few families with young components that decided to remain.

The change concerns also the attachment to the district, that is no longer felt as an element of identification, because the Reggiani feel foreigners at home.

#### **3.2. Immigrants and Italian residents**

The shared perception is of a thick presence of immigrants, especially in Turri street, that determines conditions of low quality of life. This is due first of all to the overcrowding in the apartments, the precarious economic conditions in which the immigrants are and the lack of recognition of the cultural habits and the rights of the immigrants. The interviewed emphasize that many immigrants do not have a regular residence permission and therefore it is likely that they have illegal activities and that they are non regular sublessees .

The interviews put in evidence that the Italian residents do not accept the situations in which the rules of cohabitation are not respected. They also feel a resentment that is translated into a progressive loss of attachment to the district of residence.

The interviewed have the perception that the presence of Italian residents is limited to elderly people and few families that still live in the zone. After the arrival of the immigrants, many Italians sold their apartments below price. Many of those people who are still owners tried to take advantage of the situation, subleasing without regard for the living conditions of the immigrants, and this contributed to determine the current situation and condition of uneasiness, described in the preceding paragraph.

### 3.3. The sense of safety and integration among groups

According to interviewed people, integration among the groups who live in the zone seems still distant. There is a sort of appropriation of the housing, commercial and recreational spaces, perceived above all as an invasion of the different ethnic groups. Each immigrant has primarily social relations inside his/her own ethnic group. Nevertheless, there are many attempts to realize meetings among the residents, as well as moments and spaces that allow mutual knowledge.

The scarce sense of safety is not perceived in relation to real criminal actions, that seem to constitute sporadic events and are emphasized by the media to give more importance to some news; moreover, there is no media communication about the positive events organized in the district. The lack of shared common rules both in the condominiums and in the public places and the lack of mutual knowledge are the background of the perception of insecurity.

The feeling of fear seems also to increase in virtue of the media news, that give a distorted vision of the events, in particular for what concerns Turri street: it appears as if all negative events happen in that zone. Interviewed people, on the contrary, say that the railway station zone presents crime levels similar to those in other parts of Reggio Emilia.

The activities developed to face the negative situations in the zone are aimed at the improvement of the quality of life and of the cohabitation, in the attempt, above all, to manage the emergent conflicts and the irregularities. The citizenry takes part into different events, for instance the feasts of the district, that are an occasion of mutual knowledge.

Even if various groups and organizations exist on the territory, the experience of the last years did not satisfy the needs of the zone. To answer to these needs and to the present problem list, many of the interviewed people expressed the intent to improve the level of dialogue as a means of aggregation. These claims are related to the reconstruction and to the search for a sense of affiliation and of emotional connection, through which it is possible to satisfy and to integrate the needs of the people.

## 4. In-depth interviews with native residents

Through 14 in-depth interviews with key witnesses living in five streets of the railway station zone we wanted to take into account the point of view of the "Reggiani". The interviews were de-recorded and the analysis of the thematic contents allowed us to individualize some cross categories. Particularly, these interviews show some aspects connected to the feeling of the Reggiani to be "ghettoized", their representations of the immigration and the intergroup conflicts. Moreover, the most representative problems of the district and the lack of respect of the



cohabitation rules emerge, together with the feelings about a multiethnic district characterized by a low level of integration.

#### 4.1. Feeling to be in a “ghetto”

The first aspect emerging from the interviews is connected to the minority condition of the Reggiani in comparison to the foreigners, both resident in the railway station zone. Interviewed people perceive that zone as a ghetto-zone in comparison to the rest of the city and as populated by an indistinct mass of foreigners. The feeling is that the real ghettoized are the Reggiani themselves, who are in numerical disadvantage.

The interviews show the perceived uneasiness of those who have to interact with an “other” and strongly variegated majority. The social transformations, that have characterized and deeply modified this zone, are perceived by the residents with feelings of discomfort and extraneousness.

#### 4.2. Social categorization and representation of immigrants

Interviews show a sense of affiliation to a cultural group, “us, the Reggiani”, which is very different from other groups, “them, the foreigners.” The resident Reggiani almost always refer to the foreigners as a shapeless mass, “them”, and when they talk about known people they use the ethnic affiliation to define them, not their name, clearly defining them as a Chinese, Moroccan, Ghaneese.

In general, the opinion is that the foreigners submerge the country and are taking the overhand. The Chinese are seen as little ants, hunting dogs, an enigma, invaders, strategists who buy everything, but also ill people. In other cases, they are perceived as “mafiosi” and very dangerous because nobody knows what they do. Nevertheless, the shared opinion is that they do not disturb, they are busy workers well caring their children. The North Africans are perceived as the worst ones, pestiferous people, quarrelsome, uncivil, drug distributors and drunkards. Moreover they are felt to be the dominant group. The Muslims are seen as touchy people, who are sensible to the offenses and aggressive. People from Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria are considered by almost the majority of the interviewed as good, busy workers, with a high education level, who really take care of their children. Moreover they have the tendency to defend their territory.

#### 4.3. The problems of cohabitation and the lack of respect of the rules

Focussing on the hierarchy of problems of the railway station zone emerged during the interviews, drug-dealing and cohabitation in the condominiums seem to be the most important ones.

Dealing is perceived as a problem of degrade and safety by many people in the district, nevertheless, many recognize that this phenomenon can be observed also in other zones of the city and, therefore, does not characterize the railway station zone in particular.

For what concerns the problems related to the condominium, people consider two different situations. First, many difficulties of coexistence emerge and the attitudes of the immigrants are often described as disrespectful of the basic rules of daily life. Uncivil behaviours are associated to the foreign residents as well as precarious hygienic conditions inside the lodgings and hardly tolerable lifestyles like the overcrowding of the lodgings, the bivouacs in the staircases

and troublesome noises up to late night.

This description gives an idea of the real difficulties that flow in situations of discomfort and serious uneasiness in daily cohabitation, more accentuated as the number of foreign residents in a condominium is large. For these reasons every condominium has its own history and different problems. These difficulties seem to explain the representations that the resident Reggiani have of the immigrants. It is obvious that living in such exasperated situations leads to stereotypes, prejudices and attitudes of intolerance.

All the opinions of the interviewed about the principal problems of the district concern the lack of respect of the fundamental rules of civil cohabitation, rather than themes related to safety, intended as the fear to be victims of a crime.

#### 4.4. Mediatic stigmatization and place-identity

Interviews highlight the topic of mediatic instrumentalization, that leads to a negative image that stigmatizes the railway station zone. Nevertheless, a disarming ambivalence emerges: in fact, many residents believe that on the one hand the attention of the media is necessary to report the degrade of the district, on the other hand, it should be avoided in order to build a new, positive and attractive image. The determinants of this ambivalence must be sought both in the uneasiness that the residents experience and that forces them to ask for help and attention, and in the need to protect their own image.

An important relationship exists between the individual and the place; there are several concepts that specifically define this identity. Twigger-Rooss, and Uzzell (1996) refer to two concepts to explain the connection between place and identity. The first one is place identification and it refers to the identification expressed by a person to a place. In this sense it is considered a social category, therefore it is subject to the same rules that govern social identification according to the classical theory of social identity. Therefore place identification is a kind of social identification that derives from a feeling of affiliation to a well delineated physical space. The second concept refers to place-identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983) and it underlines how the physical environment contributes to the formation of the most complex personal identity. The place plays an important role in the satisfaction of the biological, psychological, social and cultural needs and, therefore, it contributes to the definition of the identity.

Starting from these assumptions the consequences related to self-esteem and to the evaluation of oneself of those persons who live in devalued and stigmatized contexts. Moreover, the mediatic propaganda makes the district seem dangerous to those who do not live in it: a place where anything can happen. This increments the prejudice against immigrants. At the same time the fears of those who live in the railway station zone are confirmed: residents feel less safe.

#### 4.5. The real estate devaluation

The real estate devaluation represents a recurrent theme in the interviews. The resident Reggiani of the railway station zone have feelings of regret toward their own investments, the apartments are devalued, and it is hard to find buyers willing to purchase them, in fact, walking down the streets of the zone you can see "for sale" on many houses.

It is difficult not to understand the resentment of these people, many of whom have invested the savings of a life in the purchase of their own house, and it is possible to hypothesize

that this factor affects the perception and the construction of stereotypes and prejudices. Some interviewed do not directly attribute the degrade of the district to the presence of the foreigners, but to a careless and myopic local policy, incapable to govern the migratory phenomenon that has interested the area. Nevertheless, they recognize that something today is changing and that finally the municipality is present with proposals and concrete actions.

### **5. Some comment as conclusions**

Acculturation is a process of social change that involves both the immigrant and the local society. To move to a new environment implicates important changes in the life of a person that leaves consolidated habits and family environments and has to deal with new values, rules and lifestyles. On the other hand also the members of the local society have to deal with the novelties brought by the new residents and to get used to their different practices and beliefs, to new ways to dress, to eat and to behave. For these reasons also their environment becomes “not familiar” (Chrysochoou, 2006), and cultural and social control conflicts can emerge.

To perceive someone as “foreigner”, other and contrasted, from one’s own group is fruit of a process of social categorization (Tajfel, 1971), through which the social world is simplified. This process allows to build a net of similarities and differences that reduces the multiform variety of the experience and helps accentuating the negative characters of those who are out of the group. As they feel this difference and do not really know the “others”, the Reggiani tend to depict them using these social categories that sometimes have not human or ontological characteristics, as shown by the affirmations characterized in terms of prejudice, as the terms uncivil, without culture, beasts, little ants, hunting dogs used to represent and define foreign people.

When the minorities are associated to the nature, they are also considered out of the borders of civilization and in an intermediary condition between men and animals. On the other hand, to perceive the “others” as a threat can lead to such extreme reactions. When the own vision of the world is put again in discussion, identity is upset and problems related to justice rise, people can perceive fear and insecurity.

Dialogue and cooperation are the most emphasized needs highlighted by the interviewed key witnesses. The mostly underlined proposals can be summarized in the possibility to be involved in best practice projects that let people be active participants for a common job with a time perspective. This kind of actions would help resident people of the railway station zone to develop a sense of affiliation, through which the personal and social wellbeing would be increased, in contradiction to the sense of loneliness and isolation that addresses people toward purely personal purposes.

For the interviewed it is important to activate a force of associationism that has the purpose to take care of places and relationships and to promote cultural activities for all residents. Such a proposal leans on the need to share interests and purposes with other citizens, and to develop a sense of affiliation and therefore a sense of safety toward the territorial community, through the exploitation of the history that characterizes this community.

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# The role of leadership on Child Protective Services

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## Abstract

*Recent research shows that team's reflexivity upon their objectives, strategies and processes enhances team effectiveness. However, the role that leaders play in this process needs to be clarified. The present study aims to investigate the mediation role of leadership in the relationship between team reflexivity and perceived performance in child protection teams. In Child and Youth Protection Commissions (CPCJ), their presidents' legal competencies are defined in law, but not their specific leadership competencies. CPCJ have functional autonomy to apply promotion and protection actions for children and young in danger, which demands a manifest complexity and they can also have a strong impact in child's life projects. Participants consisted of 593 elements of 109 CPCJ teams, from the total of the 282 CPCJ exists in Continental Portugal and Islands. Members answered a survey designed for this purpose. Individual survey answers were aggregated to the team level for analyses. Results from hierarchical regression analyses show that leadership total mediates the relationship between team reflexivity and perceived performance. Practical implications for Child and Youth Services will be discussed, giving special attention to the role of team leaders.*

**Keywords:** team leadership, reflexivity, performance, CPCJ.

A liderança constitui uma área de investigação muito vasta, existindo vários modelos teóricos e estudos empíricos sobre o tema. Jago (1982) procurou sistematizar os modelos existentes na literatura, propondo uma tipologia que agrupa os estudos sobre a liderança em conjuntos, constituindo cada um, uma fase distinta no estudo científico da liderança. Subjacente a este agrupamento insere-se a necessidade de avaliar cada tipo de liderança pelos resultados que proporciona, em termos de eficácia organizacional.

Em menor número são os estudos e modelos conceptuais que se focam especificamente na liderança de equipas. De facto, apesar do conhecimento que a liderança influencia o desempenho das equipas, e apesar da quantidade de estudos tanto sobre liderança, como sobre as dinâmicas das equipas, pouco se sabe sobre como os líderes criam e gerem equipas eficazes (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001).

De acordo com Hackman & Walton (1986), é pertinente analisar a liderança a partir de uma perspectiva funcional, isto é, a partir das funções dos líderes para promover a eficácia da equipa. Para tal, será necessário identificar quais as condições críticas para o desempenho eficaz de um grupo numa organização e integrar quais as funções dos líderes que podem melhorar estas condições (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Para a eficácia do trabalho em equipa, o contexto e o tipo de tarefa são factores críticos; a perspectiva funcional reconhece a relevância do líder para as equipas mas não especifica as condições críticas para o desempenho eficaz, nem as relaciona com o tipo de tarefas da equipa.

A maioria das teorias anteriores de liderança tendem a focar-se na forma como os líderes

influenciam os subordinados, sem atender a como os líderes podem promover os processos da equipa (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Além disso, focam-se na estrutura e não no processo de liderança, e são predominantemente estáticas (Kozlowski, Watola, Kim & Botero, no prelo). É no intuito de contribuir para colmatar estas insuficiências que se pretende nesta dissertação estudar o papel da liderança na eficácia e desempenho das equipas, tendo em conta os processos e dinâmicas inerentes às equipas.

Outro contributo deste estudo é ser conduzido num contexto específico, nomeadamente, de equipas de intervenção com crianças e jovens em risco. A protecção das crianças e jovens em risco é fundamental para garantir os direitos deste público-alvo. A eficácia das equipas que intervêm com estas problemáticas, mais propriamente, as equipas das Comissões de Protecção das Crianças e Jovens (CPCJ), tem impacto a nível das crianças, famílias e sociedade em geral, motivo pelo qual é pertinente analisar o funcionamento e os processos inerentes a estas equipas, numa procura de melhoria da sua intervenção. No que respeita à liderança, as competências dos presidentes destas instituições estão definidas na lei. Não obstante, as competências de liderança essenciais para qualquer gestão de uma equipa devem ser também consideradas quando se analisa este cargo. As equipas das CPCJ têm uma composição multidisciplinar, a maioria dos seus membros não exerce funções a tempo inteiro nestas organizações e, principalmente, lidam com casos cuja decisão pode alterar completamente a vida das crianças, pais, instituições e famílias de acolhimento e a comunidade em geral. O número de estudos publicados acerca destas equipas específicas e/ou dos seus presidentes é praticamente inexistente.

Este estudo procurou assim, colmatar o número reduzido de estudos empíricos na literatura acerca do papel da liderança de equipas para o desempenho das mesmas, tendo em conta os seus processos. O processo de equipa estudado consistiu na reflexividade da equipa, definida por West (1996) como “quanto os membros da equipa reflectem colectivamente sobre os objectivos, estratégias e processos da equipa, e os adaptam às circunstâncias endógenas ou ambientais, actuais ou previstas” (p. 559).”

Foram utilizadas como amostra as equipas das CPCJ, que estão distribuídas a nível nacional.

No que respeita à liderança, os presidentes das CPCJ são eleitos pelo plenário da comissão alargada de entre todos os seus membros<sup>1</sup>. Compete ao presidente<sup>2</sup>: representar a CPCJ; presidir às reuniões da comissão alargada e da comissão restrita e orientar e coordenar as suas actividades; promover a execução das deliberações da CPCJ; elaborar o relatório anual de actividades e avaliação e submetê-lo à aprovação da comissão alargada; autorizar a consulta dos processos de promoção dos direitos e de protecção; proceder às comunicações (a outras entidades) previstas na lei. Verificamos que o papel do presidente das CPCJ caracteriza-se por ser formal e burocrático e as suas competências de liderança não estão especificadas. Por não existirem critérios de selecção definidos para o presidente, ele é representante de uma entidade, tal como todos os outros membros da CPCJ, o que poderá potenciar uma indefinição do papel de líder do presidente, ocorrendo uma separação entre o papel do presidente e o reconhecimento como líder.

Partindo destas questões e da especificidade das equipas das CPCJ, propomos um modelo alternativo àqueles encontrados na literatura, nos quais a liderança influencia o desempenho da equipa através da reflexividade. Devido a não ser claro que o presidente tenha um papel de

1 Cf. n.º 1 do art.º 23º da Lei nº 147/99, de 1 de Setembro - LPP.

2 Cf. art.º 24º da Lei nº 147/99, de 1 de Setembro - LPP.

liderança, sugerimos que a própria equipa no seu conjunto, e não somente o seu presidente, estimula a reflexividade da equipa, que por sua vez terá impacto no desempenho. Assim, poderá ser o facto de os membros da equipa reflectirem sobre os seus objectivos e métodos de trabalho que estimula as competências de liderança, que por sua vez aumentam o desempenho da equipa.

A hipótese 1 do estudo foi: A reflexividade está positivamente relacionada com o desempenho.

A hipótese 2 foi: A liderança medeia a relação entre a reflexividade e o desempenho.

Para medir as variáveis deste estudo correlacional, foram utilizadas escalas adaptadas de Wageman, Hackman, & Lehrman (2005) para a liderança, de West (1994) para a reflexividade e de Passos & Caetano (2005) para o desempenho.

Os resultados forneceram suporte para as nossas hipóteses nos três tipos de desempenho encontrados, confirmando as nossas propostas para um novo modelo de liderança de equipas.

No que respeita à hipótese 1, verificou-se que a reflexividade teve efeitos significativos no desempenho. Este resultado sugere que as equipas reflexivas têm maior probabilidade de questionar as suas estratégias e processos e de responder aos desafios do ambiente, e por isso, as suas acções baseadas na reflexão conduzem a um melhor desempenho (West, 1996). O mesmo resultado é consistente com estudos anteriores (Hirst et al., 2004; Hoegl & Parboteah, 2006; Schippers et al., 2007).

Relativamente à hipótese 2, a liderança mediou a relação entre a reflexividade e o desempenho, sendo que foi encontrada uma mediação parcial para o desempenho da gestão e eficácia e mediações totais para o desempenho da relação com outras entidades e o desempenho dos princípios de intervenção. Estes constructos não são referidos na literatura anterior, sendo que desconhecemos a existência de estudos realizados com estas equipas específicas.

Uma possível explicação para este resultado pode ser o facto de a gestão e critérios de eficácia não serem actividades da total responsabilidade das CPCJ, e possam assim existir outros factores para além da liderança que influenciam este tipo de desempenho. Quanto às mediações totais, é notório o papel do líder para a influência da reflexividade nos outros dois tipos de desempenho. O desempenho da relação com outras entidades poderá caracterizar o papel mais formal do presidente das CPCJ, de representação destas equipas perante outras entidades. O desempenho dos princípios de intervenção pode ser explicado pelo facto do presidente ter de promover execuções das deliberações sobre as medidas de protecção a aplicar às crianças e jovens, e portanto, ser muitas vezes ele/a que toma a decisão final, quando não exista unanimidade ou maioria de votos. Estas são apenas explicações alternativas possíveis, por isso futuros estudos poderão analisar estas questões, relativamente a estas equipas de modo a chegarem a resultados que nos permitam perceber melhor o papel deste tipo de Presidente, tendo em conta o seu contexto e funções específicas.

Os resultados deste estudo sugerem que a investigação sobre liderança de equipas deverá ter em consideração certos aspectos. De facto, propomos um modelo cujo papel da liderança contradiz os modelos anteriores e deriva do contexto específico no qual as equipas estudadas operam.

Na maioria dos modelos de liderança de equipas propostos, o papel da liderança é de input



da reflexividade e do desempenho da equipa (Hirst et al., 2004; Schippers et al., 2007; Zaccaro et al., 2001) ou de moderadora entre os inputs e processos e os processos e o desempenho (Hackman & Walton, 1986). Em geral, os autores adoptam uma perspectiva sem se preocuparem em estudar as razões pelas quais se verificam estas discrepâncias. Como já referido, neste estudo propomos que o contexto possa diferenciar estes papéis e inclusive sugerir um novo. De facto, o conceito de liderança tem pouca utilidade teórica e prática se não for aplicado a determinados contextos (Kozlowski et al., 1996).

Devido à especificidade das equipas das CPCJ, e ao papel mais formal do líder, sugerimos que a própria equipa fomenta a reflexividade, e esta reflexão sobre os processos de trabalho em equipa, conduzirá a uma maior preocupação com a coordenação e liderança da equipa. Outra característica da forma de organização das CPCJ poderá espelhar estes resultados: a rotatividade dos membros. De facto, os membros das CPCJ estão em constante rotação, o que faz com que o presidente também esteja. Segundo Kozlowski et al. (no prelo), o ciclo de vida da equipa pode ser fortemente afectado se o líder for alvo de mudança. Contudo, à medida que as equipas se desenvolvem, o conhecimento institucional da equipa não permanece apenas com o líder mas com os membros da equipa nos seus modelos mentais partilhados. O sucesso da relação líder-equipa pode consistir na capacidade da equipa orientar o líder para o grupo, na mesma medida que um líder socializaria um novo membro.

Sugerimos assim, que em futuros estudos com estas variáveis, os investigadores tenham em consideração o contexto onde as equipas operam, no sentido de uma formulação mais cuidada de modelos teóricos e propostas acerca do papel do líder em relação aos processos e desempenhos da equipa.

Este estudo de natureza correlacional procurou ter em consideração o contexto das equipas estudadas. Por isso, os instrumentos incluíram alguns itens adaptados especificamente para aquele contexto. Verificámos por exemplo que apesar dos itens de liderança se referirem a competências diferenciadas de liderança do presidente, a análise em componentes principais só extraiu uma componente. Este facto poderá estar relacionado com a falta de compreensão de alguns itens ou a sua falta de adequação ao contexto. Os instrumentos utilizados na maioria dos estudos são compostos por itens de carácter mais geral, por isso seria importante validar escalas que se referem a tipos de equipas específicas para permitir uma melhor compreensão dos seus itens.

No sentido de aprofundar a percepção de reflexividade, liderança e desempenho destas equipas, poderia utilizar-se uma triangulação metodológica com recurso a métodos quantitativos (questionários), mas também a métodos qualitativos, como realização de entrevistas e estudos de caso, de modo a compreender melhor as dinâmicas e os comportamentos de liderança nestas equipas.

Já foi referida a importância do contexto atribuída neste estudo para identificar o papel da liderança na eficácia do trabalho em equipa. Neste estudo, foi tido em consideração apenas um contexto e tipo de equipas. Futuros estudos poderão analisar o papel da liderança comparando-o em contextos distintos, de modo a verificar se existem diferentes influências da liderança nos modelos input-processo-ouput de desempenho.

Este estudo transmitiu a importância da reflexividade da equipa em aumentar as competências de liderança e promover o desempenho em equipas muito específicas.

A eficácia das CPCJ, devido às suas características, e como já referido, tem um forte impacto a nível das crianças, jovens, famílias com quem intervêm, assim como as entidades e instituições que dela fazem parte e que nela estão representadas. Por isso, é de extrema importância repensar no papel do presidente destas organizações.

Os presidentes das CPCJ nem sempre estão a tempo inteiro e são representantes de outras entidades, tal como todos os restantes elementos, não existindo critérios de selecção para o cargo. Em simultâneo, as sessões de formação acerca da liderança para coordenar estas equipas são em número reduzido. Assim, para além das competências formais já designadas e a regulamentação acerca da lei de protecção, os comportamentos e competências de liderança devem ser considerados tanto na selecção do presidente, como em futuras sessões de formação.

Os resultados do estudo sugerem também que a reflexividade está relacionada positivamente com o desempenho da equipa, o que é interessante para os líderes e membros de equipas. Contudo, a falta de momentos de reflexão de muitas equipas e a ênfase na acção em muitas organizações fazem com que as equipas não tenham tempo para reflectir e aprender a partir das actividades passadas. Será necessário apostar na formação para as equipas criarem hábitos e fomentarem práticas reflexivas. Esta reflexividade reproduzir-se-á na procura da melhoria do comportamento dos líderes e consequentemente no desempenho mais eficaz da equipa.

# **Training service users to become community researchers for effective engagement within a Participatory action research (PAR) framework**

Jo Hobbs

The paper is a work in progress, presented by Jo Hobbs on behalf of all the people who participated and are involved in the project. When the paper goes to publication all those who participated will be formally acknowledged as co-authors. This presentation will highlight: facilitating collaborative working and community capacity building whilst simultaneously empowering and encouraging greater participation and employment of community researchers. This paper seeks to contribute to the wider remit around engaging service user researchers within health and social care services by focusing on detailing the delivery of high quality context specific as well as broad based training for a group of community researchers recruited by Manchester Metropolitan University.

In addition this paper will draw together the significance of inclusive interagency collaboration, recognising how this strengthens the relationship between university researchers and community researchers and facilitates the synthesis of a collaborative network of researchers working towards creating innovative approaches to research within community research agendas.

Participatory action research is a method of research in which creating positive social change is the predominant driving force. PAR grew out of social and educational research and exists today as one of the few research methods which embrace's principles of participation and reflection, and empowerment and emancipation of groups seeking to improve their social situation. Kurt Lewin is credited with the creation of action research (AR) 'Participatory Action Research: Getting the Job done' (Seymour-Rolls & Hughes, 1995, P.10)

Participatory action research stresses the 'political aspects of knowledge production' (Reason, 1998, p. 268), as orientated towards understanding concerns for power and control, and powerlessness associated with the role, production and ownership of knowledge.

It values the knowledge gained through people's lived experiences and aims to empower them, through a process of true collaboration, to co-construct knowledge to produce further knowledge and action that will benefit them directly (Reason, 1994).

Service user involvement is recognised as integral to useful health research, particularly as an activity that can have positive outcomes for individuals, research and service provision. Providing research training is fundamental and a key principle of successful involvement ensuring that community researchers are encouraged and supported to gain the specific skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to be actively involved and work effectively within the PAR process.

I am a researcher working on a project titled 'The impact of changing services for people with long term neurological conditions'. This research is primarily concerned with gauging the impact of current service delivery in terms of the health and wellbeing of people who have a brain

or spine condition, which ranges from epilepsy to Parkinson's disease.

It was always part of the project's agenda to involve users of services throughout the research processes and PAR represents an approach which effectively supports the development of inter-professional working between academic researchers, health and social care professionals, service providers and service users as community researchers.

The research engagement principles we sought to work with in this respect were:

- equality of all stakeholders within the process
- open communication on all aspects of the research
- commitment to social justice for all
- development of a partnership with shared vision and expectations
- A willingness by all concerned to allow the PAR process to facilitate change both in themselves and in service delivery.

To ensure users of services played a full and active role in the research process from beginning to end, my first action was to bring on board 3 users of services as co researchers and co advisors. The project steering group agreed that it would be pertinent to expand the numbers of service users involved as there were times when the existing co researchers were either too ill to contribute, attending hospital appointments or unable to commit themselves .

In order for the project to deliver within a PAR framework, it was important that service users should be enabled to use effectively the skills gained in this collaboration to work on other projects Therefore it was proposed that those brought on board would be assisted to organise themselves into an association of co-researchers and advisors and given appropriate training.

It was agreed that funding for the training would be provided by Manchester City Council, Manchester Primary Care Trust and Manchester Metropolitan University as a collaborative venture which would lay the foundations for establishing a network of multi-agency researchers who would then be available to contribute to future University and community based projects, particularly in the areas of environmental change, health and social care research. This would encourage the growth and development of more community led research projects within the context of knowledge and skills transfer.

Contact was made and established with 2 service users who have neurological condition's and 2 community campaigners working with local urban regeneration contexts as it was felt this would strengthen the breadth and depth of experiences and perspectives. Electronic communication with those brought on board identified the need for them to meet to foster and encourage a team spirit and to put together an agenda for their professional development thus an open day was organised at Manchester Metropolitan University.

At the open day introductions were made and those in attendance to spoke briefly about why they were interested in becoming involved in research projects. There were many different reasons but they grouped around an interest in research as a means of engendering change, remaining active, being involved in society, making a positive impact on services and living environment and remaining personally motivated.

All participants felt that this was an opportunity for them to:

- Widen their experiences and understanding of the world around them
- Widen their experiences and understanding of the formulation of policies
- Present opportunities for them to meet different people

- Present opportunities to get involved with different ventures
- Provide them with opportunities to broaden their knowledge and that of the people they met.

This seemed particularly pertinent as the 2 community campaigners working within the regeneration field expressed themselves as feeling dispirited and alienated from service involvement whilst those from the physical disability and neurological service field felt confident and optimistic about their involvement and contribution to service delivery.

The opportunity to form an association of cross disciplinary researchers and advisors was seen as a great opportunity for information and knowledge exchange.

To facilitate their ability to work within a PAR framework it was formally agreed that they would need to access suitable training. Training requirements were identified and it was felt that two half days of training should be attended solely by the users of services partly because the community activists were reluctant to work alongside professionals and that two half days of training should be attended jointly by themselves and health and social care professionals. The joint training days will focus on an agenda around challenging the barriers which impede service user's engagement, the inherent power differential and inclusive interagency collaborative working.

The open day ended with a discussion around how the group would like their roles to be referred to, eventually they resolved to refer to themselves as Community researchers and advisors, which they considered to be an empowering term of reference and hence the use of this term throughout this presentation and in all subsequent papers.

Prior to training taking place, I consulted with the community researchers and read widely around service user's involvement in research projects, from their input and my reading I established those principles which would guide the training sessions. The training agenda recognises the importance of empowering community researchers through encouraging their participation within research and also in providing a level of training which builds confidence and capacity to conduct research successfully and which are fundamental to the PAR agenda. These are:

- 1) That the trainer is well-informed and aware of service user involvement within research
- 2) That they well versed with service user participation and what it entails.
- 3) That the service users involved are consulted with regard to planning the training agenda and the means of its delivery.
- 4) That the learning environment allows trainees to feel relaxed and equipped to gain the requisite knowledge
- 5) That the training methods employed ensure trainees take on board factual information and hands on practical research skills.
- 6) Ensuring that the training environment provides trainees with informal learning opportunities and the time and space for people to share their experiences with each other
- 7) That training is tailored to the roles that the trainees will be undertaking upon completion of training
- 8) That the language used during training is unambiguous, uncomplicated, and jargon free.

- 9) That the trainees are aware of and agree with the aims and objectives of the training programme.
- 10) That the training schedule should help generate a cooperative learning forum that encourages personal and professional development, seeks to enhance confidence and self-esteem, build up critical thinking and reflective practice.

### **Aims and objectives of the training session**

#### **AIMS:**

- 1) To establish an association of community researchers and advisors and assist them to build a rapport amongst themselves.
- 2) To empower them as individuals and build community capacity
- 3) To equip them with the necessary research skills to be able to work alongside university and practitioner researchers on diverse projects.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To generate greater understanding about the role of research in bringing about changes in the provision of services.
- 2) To highlight the role of community researchers in the context of research and community advisors as members of steering committees which oversee research projects.
- 3) To generate greater communication about the different understandings and experiences that community researchers and advisors can bring to existing research practices and procedures.

### **Reflections**

Community researcher reflections on the training sessions was highly positive

Bringing on board a trainer from mental health, a service industry area at the fore front in conducting needs-led, user-controlled services involvement in redesigning services was a positive factor in the success of the training sessions.

“I really enjoyed the training sessions. A (the trainer) can take the credit for that.

He wasn't patronising, know it all or boring, his own experience I found were very valuable to the sessions and to us the trainees and I learned a lot.”

The trainer had himself been a user of mental health services and thus had an appreciation of the problems that users of services from other areas may have experienced and thus could talk with knowledge and awareness of issues within user involvement around power differential, input into changing services and challenging health and social care professionals.

“Since taking part in the training sessions I've questioned my own little prejudices which previously I wasn't aware of, prejudices that relate to gender and or disability. It's raised my awareness of how part of me has been 'closed off' and that I'm not as open minded as I thought I was. It's certainly been a learning curve for me and made me aware of the need for my own self development. I am please to be part of – however small- this project and hope to develop the skills needed to become a community researcher.”

Informal and formal communication with the Community researchers and advisors with regard to evaluating the usefulness of the training sessions

has identified that the training enabled people to:

- Work closely together
- Allowed them all the opportunity to share their experiences
- Enable them to consider their positioning within a broader research context
- Enable them to think beyond their previous horizons
- Enable them to share aspects of their understandings and experiences. Began the process whereby they learnt to appreciate the listening skills required by researchers
- Encourage an acceptance of and sensitivity towards other people's views.

Community researchers and advisors also began to appreciate the fundamental aspect of PAR, which is being able to learn through personal reflection as well as in discussion with other co-researchers. They felt this had helped them to derive insights for future development both as a people and as members of the association of Community researchers and advisors.

As the association progresses, the extent to which personal, social and professional development encourages a mutually co-operative and understanding environment will be assessed as part of group development activity. It is to be hoped that the experience and understanding they have gained as a user of services will be acknowledged as a strength that they bring to the research process.

### **Conclusion**

Training community researchers for effective engagement within a PAR framework requires us as training providers, commissioners and consultants who are likely to be working alongside those recipients of the training to be more aware of and to draw up training agendas that strive to implement research which tends more towards needs-led, user-controlled services.

In order to address the problem of bringing on board people from hard to reach and diverse backgrounds the training agenda needs to acknowledge that trainee's knowledge may differ from other forms of knowledge acquisition being based as it is on lived experience rather than research findings and is likely to have been amassed through informal exchanges of ideas. Training must also take into account the potentially diverse nature of trainee's capabilities in terms of levels of awareness, understanding, familiarity with research agenda's, and must also take into consideration age, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, class, gender, disability, etc.

The training process therefore needs to be inclusive and take into account access requirements which ensure that training engages and reaches out to those people who services might otherwise fail to take account of. In this way the research process will endeavour to explore future opportunities for their assimilation and involvement within service re-design and facilitate collaborative working and capacity building within both the research community and service provision.

Whilst service users may feel confident that they are experts on their own experiences, and that what they know is equally valid as professional knowledge, if they are placed in a research situation for which they are ill-equipped by training they are likely to become disengaged from the process.

When considering the training requirements of users of services we need to be more aware of and use methods which will encourage and inspire more needs-led user-controlled services. In order for service provision to incorporate community researcher's experiences and understandings

into service planning, their knowledge must be given the accord which professionals accord their own knowledge. This process needs to be inclusive and take account those requirements which will ensure it reaches and engages as many of the hard to reach users of services as possible.

These measures should help to strengthen the relationship between university, practitioner and community researchers and facilitate the synthesis of a collaborative network of researchers working towards creating innovative approaches to research within community research agendas.



# Parejas mixtas e inmigración: Análisis del apoyo social

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## Abstract

*Uno de los fenómenos más relevantes por su dimensión, complejidad y actualidad, causado principalmente por los procesos migratorios, es el que se denomina matrimonio mixto. En el presente estudio entendemos por pareja mixta, aquella unión entre individuos que pertenecen a contextos culturales, nacionales, y/o religiosos diferentes. Nos planteamos analizar las características psicosociales de las parejas mixtas y la percepción de apoyo social como un elemento fundamental para facilitar la integración social de las familias multiculturales. Participaron en este estudio 102 sujetos elegidos entre los extranjeros que conviven o están casados con españoles. Los resultados del trabajo nos permiten analizar las características psicosociales de esta población, y arrojan interesantes datos sobre las redes de apoyo y la percepción de apoyo respecto a la pareja, las redes de amigos y las instituciones.*

Palabras clave: parejas mixtas, inmigración y apoyo social.

## Definición de parejas interculturales.

En la literatura revisada en este estudio se considera una unión como “mixta” de manera muy variada, según el prisma de observación utilizado. Cada etiqueta se puede referir a distintas características de la pareja más o menos objetivas y observables, así que se habla de *matrimonios interraciales* cuando se hace referencia a las características biológicas y fenotípicas; *matrimonios interétnicos* cuando se toma en consideración la identidad étnica, considerada como la conciencia de cada individuo de pertenecer a un determinado grupo étnico y la importancia que a ella se atribuye (Tajfel, 1981). *Matrimonio interreligioso* cuando el matrimonio sigue a cultos religiosos diferentes, *matrimonios binacionales* (o internacionales) en el caso de los matrimonios donde individuos proceden de distintas naciones, o simplemente *matrimonios interculturales* donde los cónyuges comparten distintas culturas. Considerando la cultura, según los distintos autores citados por Valenzuela (2007), como la totalidad de los conocimientos y significados aprendidos y mantenidos por el ser humano, o como continúa la autora, como el conjunto de ideales, creencias, habilidades, vestimenta e instituciones. Otros autores amplían el concepto de cultura, considerando también como elementos culturales las normas, los valores y artificios que se transmiten de generación en generación (Hoult, 1974), incluyendo la historia, las tradiciones, las actitudes y los comportamientos (Fu, Tora, Kendall, 2001).

En el presente estudio entendemos por pareja mixta, de manera más general, aquella unión entre individuos que pertenecen a contextos culturales, nacionales, y/o religiosos diferentes (Waldman y Rubalcaba, 2005). De acuerdo con Tognetti (1996) ampliamos la definición de parejas mixtas considerando también las diferencias en los patrones de socialización, los diferentes

modelos de atribución de roles, las diferentes concepciones de la familia y la pertenencia a distintos grupos sociales significativamente diferentes. Pero sobre todo, como en el presente trabajo, un requisito fundamental para definir dichas uniones como mixtas es la implicación de uno de los miembros de la pareja en el proceso migratorio.

En el presente trabajo se utilizará sobre todo el término *matrimonio mixto* (o parejas mixtas), muy común en la literatura Europea, o *matrimonio/pareja intercultural* teniendo en cuenta que en la mayoría de las uniones consideradas en la presente investigación coinciden varias características de internacionalización (sociales, culturales, religiosas, etc.).

### **Pareja mixta: un fenómeno en continua evolución**

El creciente y constante flujo de inmigrantes que llegan en España y su progresiva estabilización, conjuntamente a otros factores (mayor interacción entre extranjeros y autóctonos, reducción de la distancia social entre grupos raciales, menor peso de las familias sobre la elección de la pareja, disminución del prejuicio racial, etc.), ha permitido crear aquellas condiciones que facilitan a los individuos de distintas nacionalidades decidir formar una familia. Que convencionalmente hemos llamado "mixtas".

En el caso de este estudio se tendrán en consideración aquellas uniones mixtas donde uno de los dos se enfrentó en primera persona a la experiencia migratoria. Entre los motivos implicados en la constitución de las parejas interculturales, y probablemente menos relacionado con la migración está, según Milk (2000), Internet, que a través de su desarrollo ha facilitado el crecimiento del negocio a nivel internacional y ha contribuido al incremento de los matrimonios transnacionales.

En relación a los datos estadísticos respecto al fenómeno migratorio y a las parejas mixtas, se ha comprobado que con el aumento de la inmigración se está produciendo un crecimiento exponencial de los matrimonios interculturales. Hecho que nos lleva a considerar que existe una íntima conexión entre los dos fenómenos.

Analizando los datos relativos a los matrimonios mixtos, considerando solo los matrimonios entre españoles y extranjeros, se puede apreciar un progresivo aumento. En el 1996 estas bodas internacionales representaban solo el 4,3% del total de las bodas, mientras 10 años más tarde (2006) representaban ya el 11,5% del total de los matrimonios. Ese dato debería hacernos reflexionar sobre la dimensión que tiene este fenómeno, especialmente si no consideramos las convivencias entre españoles y extranjeros, ni los matrimonios mixtos entre extranjeros de distintas nacionalidades, especialmente si pensamos que los estudios realizados sobre este fenómeno no son proporcionales a su crecimiento. Especialmente en relación con las convivencias, resulta interesante comentar que en un estudio realizado en Italia (País de reciente inmigración igual que España y con el mismo aumento del "fenómeno" parejas mixtas") a partir de los datos relativos al censo de la población del 1991, se ha comprobado que las uniones informales representan el 15% del total de las uniones mixtas, dato bastante elevado si se piensa que en el mismo año las convivencias entre italianos rondaba el 1%. (Maffioli, 1996). En el gráfico n.1 se puede notar la progresión del fenómeno desde el 1996 al 2006, donde se han considerado solo los matrimonios entre españoles y extranjeros. En los gráficos n.2 y n.3 se puede observar, siempre respecto a la misma década, respectivamente la progresión de los matrimonios entre españoles y mujeres extranjeras y entre hombres extranjeros y mujeres españolas.

Grafico 1. Total de matrimonios entre españoles y extranjeros.

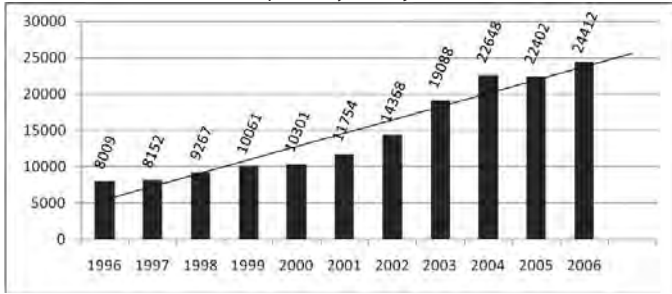


Grafico 2: Matrimonios entre españoles y mujeres extranjeras

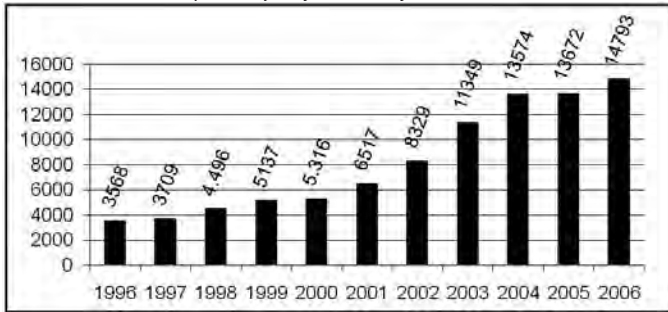
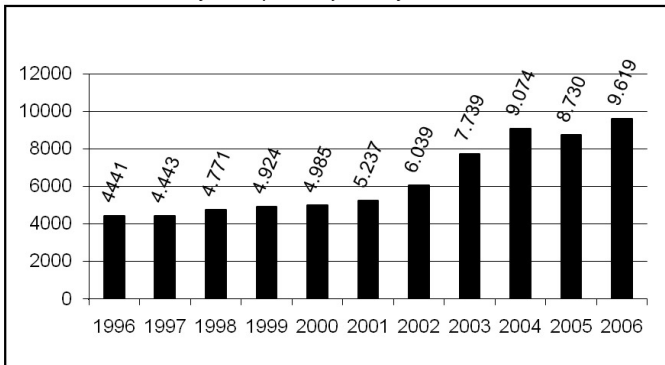


Grafico 3: Matrimonios entre mujeres españolas y extranjeros



### Apoyo social

A partir aproximadamente de los años 70 hay un gran interés por estudiar las redes sociales y los sistemas de apoyo social, especialmente en las personas que sufren problemas psicosociales. Son muchos los estudios que han demostrado la efectividad del apoyo social a la hora de afrontar los problemas y conflictos de la vida cotidiana.

De acuerdo con Lin, Dean y Ensel (1986), el apoyo social se define como *provisiones instrumentales y/o expresivas, reales y percibidas, aportadas por la comunidad, redes sociales y amigos íntimos.*

El apoyo social, Francescato y Ghirelli (1997) lo entienden como una ayuda interpersonal, emotiva, informativa e intercambiable a través de las redes sociales.

Han sido demostrados los efectos positivos del apoyo social sobre la salud y el bienestar, aunque, según Barrón (1996), no se ha demostrado plenamente cuales son los mecanismos específicos de esta relación. Han sido postulados dos formas de funcionamiento de apoyo: efecto directo y efecto indirecto o amortiguador. El primero tiene un efecto directo sobre el bienestar independientemente del nivel de estrés. A mayor apoyo corresponde mayor bienestar psicológico (y a menor apoyo más incidencia de trastornos). Según el efecto indirecto, el apoyo social funciona como moderador de los eventos que inciden sobre el bienestar; por ejemplo, sobre los acontecimientos estresantes. Según este paradigma el efecto indirecto es un factor de protección que puede intervenir en dos puntos: a) durante la evolución de los eventos estresantes, ayudando la persona a redefinir la percepción del estrés, y b) puede intervenir entre la experiencia de estrés y el comienzo del resultado patológico, reduciendo los efectos del estrés.

En los estudios sobre apoyo social se suelen distinguir tres principales perspectivas:

**Perspectiva estructural:** Esa perspectiva analiza las condiciones objetivas y la estructura de las relaciones sociales, es decir, las redes de apoyos utilizadas y el tipo de red que proporciona apoyo. El tamaño de la red (número de personas que la componen), la densidad de la misma (interconexión entre los miembros), y su homogeneidad (red formada principalmente por familiares, amigos, etc.).

**Perspectiva funcional:** Esa perspectiva se refiere sobre todo a los aspectos cualitativos del apoyo. Aquí se suelen destacar 3 grandes funciones que tiene el apoyo social: a) el apoyo emocional que comprende la empatía, el cuidado, el amor, la confianza, etc., y asume particular importancia la experiencia de sentirse amado y aceptado. b) el apoyo material, se trata de acciones o materiales proporcionado por otra persona que directamente ayudan a quien lo necesita. Por ejemplo cuidados de niños, prestar dinero, acompañar al médico, ayudar en un trabajo etc. c) Apoyo informacional, nos referimos en este caso a la información que se ofrece a otras personas para que estas puedan usarla para hacer frente a las situaciones problemáticas. Por ejemplo dar consejos e informaciones útiles para el sujeto que las recibe. Se diferencia del apoyo instrumental porque la información o el consejo no es la solución, sino que permite a la persona que la recibe ayudarse a sí mismo.

**Perspectiva contextual:** aquí se tiene en cuenta el contexto socioambiental en que el apoyo social es percibido, aportado y/o recibido. Según la perspectiva contextual es importante tener en consideración aspectos como el momento en que se da el apoyo, su fuente, la duración, etc.

Enfatizando la relevancia del apoyo social, Bruna Zani (1996) afirma que este asume una importancia estratégica en cuanto *es el interfaz entre el individuo y el social, evidenciando la relación existente entre la persona y sus comunidades* (p.81).

En relación al proceso migratorio, hay que subrayar los importantes cambios que un inmigrante padece: cambios geográficos, normas, culturales, lingüístico, de estatus social y económico, condiciones de vida en general, padeciendo también una pérdida, y en un segundo momento, una transformación y reestructuración de las redes interpersonales en el País acogedor.

Un importante apoyo social deriva de las redes que un inmigrante va formando. Las redes (formales y informales) proporcionan apoyo muy importante para la supervivencia (ayuda en la búsqueda de un trabajo, de la vivienda, informaciones sobre servicios legales, sanitarios, educativo, etc.). Podemos razonablemente afirmar que la reestructuración de aquel sistema de redes sociales e interpersonales, en general, juega un papel importante como fuente de recurso psicosocial para

el inmigrante (Hernández, Pozo, Alonso y Martos; 2005). En este proceso de restablecimiento de las redes de apoyo dentro del nuevo tejido social, cabe la posibilidad de contraer matrimonio con un autóctono dando vida, así, a la formación de una pareja intercultural, y consecuentemente a todos los beneficios y/o obstáculos que pueden brotar en esta relación. Muchas investigaciones han comprobado los efectos positivos del apoyo social en el contexto migratorio, sobre el bienestar y la salud mental de los extranjeros.

La pareja intercultural, probablemente más que la autóctona, necesita mayor apoyo por parte de la red social, así, como mayor apoyo institucional. Esta reflexión está motivada por las características propias de la pareja mixta, que está obligada a mediar constantemente las diferencias culturales en relación a la educación de los hijos, la religión, la gestión económica, la alimentación, tipo de comunicación familiar, etc., tanto en su interior como con las familias de origen (que pueden obstaculizar la relación, especialmente cuando la pareja se constituye), como por la comunidad de acogida (a causa de los prejuicios y de las discriminaciones, que por su naturaleza interracial o interreligiosa, estas familias padecen).

La familia mixta es parte integrante de la sociedad y se encuentra en continua interrelación con las familias de origen, con las redes de amigos y con las instituciones (escuelas, centros culturales, familiares, sociales, sanitarios, etc.). El bienestar de cada conyugue, la satisfacción con la relación de pareja y la estabilidad del matrimonio dependen de manera importante del grado de apoyo que tanto las familias de origen como las redes sociales y las instituciones pueden proporcionar.

A propósito de apoyo social en las familias interétnica, Tognetti (1996) afirma que el apoyo asume una importancia central en estas parejas, explicando que a veces estas parejas se rompen porque la red de apoyo está menos presente.

## **Método**

### **Objetivos generales.**

En esta investigación pretendemos explorar un fenómeno que está directamente relacionado con la emigración. En concreto consideramos la formación de familias interculturales como un importante fenómeno de cambio social y como un factor de integración para los extranjeros que componen estas uniones. Por ello en nuestro estudio han participado solamente los extranjeros que son integrantes de las familias interculturales, ya que nos interesa conocer sus necesidades, sus redes de apoyo social y su percepción con el mismo.

Los extranjeros participantes son sujetos que, voluntariamente o involuntariamente, y por distintos motivos han decidido emprender un camino migratorio que muchas veces es sin retorno, abandonando su País, su familia, sus amigos y su cultura.

Por tanto en este estudio nos planteamos analizar las características psicosociales de las parejas mixtas y la percepción de apoyo social como un elemento fundamental para facilitar la integración social de las familias multiculturales.

## **Participantes**

Participaron en este estudio 102 sujetos elegidos entre los extranjeros que conviven o están casados con españoles. La muestra está compuesta por un 52% de mujeres y un 48% por hombres, de los cuales el 54,9% están casados y el 45,1% conviven. La edad media de los sujetos

es de 36,6 años. Considerando los rangos de edad, se ha detectado que el 48% de los extranjeros entrevistados tienen una edad comprendida entre 23 y 33 años, y que el 70,6% de la muestra está compuesto por sujetos entre 19 y 40 años.

### **Instrumentos**

**Cuestionario sociodemográfico:** Este cuestionario se ha utilizado para explorar algunos datos relativos al extranjero entrevistado y a su pareja. Dándonos, de esa manera, la posibilidad de comparar algunos de estos datos interesantes en relación a los aspectos relativos con la formación de las parejas interculturales. Estos datos nos ayudan a comprender por ejemplo algunos de los factores sociológicos relativos a la elección de la pareja (edad, instrucción, diferencia étnica). En particular se preguntó en este apartado los siguientes datos relativos al sujeto y a su pareja: género, edad, estudios terminados, tipo de trabajo y religión.

Estos datos se integraron con: la nacionalidad del sujeto, la ciudad de residencia de la pareja, el estado civil, los años de estancia en España, los años de relación con la actual pareja, donde se han conocido (en España o antes de venir a España) y en que circunstancia, la presencia de hijos y su respectiva edad. Este cuestionario se completó con tres preguntas relativas a la red social: a) Tamaño de la red familiar presente en la ciudad de residencia; b) Presencia de amigos españoles; c) Presencia de amigos extranjeros (de la misma nacionalidad u otros extranjeros).

**Cuestionario de Apoyo Social (A.S.O.R.P.E.),** elaborado por García y Hombrados (2003), en su versión original, tiene en cuenta los aspectos relativos a la función que cumple el apoyo social, así como la satisfacción percibida por el mismo. El instrumento analiza 3 tipos de apoyo: apoyo emocional, instrumental e informacional

El cuestionario utiliza una escala tipo Likert de 1 a 5 puntos, tanto para la frecuencia de apoyo recibido (1 = rara vez y 5 = siempre que lo necesito), así como para medir el grado de satisfacción con el mismo apoyo (1 = insatisfecho y 5 = muy satisfecho). El índice de consistencia interna es ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Cuestionario de apoyo institucional,** el planteamiento general durante la construcción del instrumento ha sido, por un lado poder medir el grado de apoyo institucional percibido por la familia intercultural, y por otra la satisfacción con el mismo. La escala explica el 52,9% del total de la varianza y discrimina con claridad los dos factores. Para el análisis factorial se utilizó el método de rotación Varimax con Kaiser. El factor sobre apoyo institucional consta de 7 ítems (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) y tiene una consistencia interna ( $\alpha = .90$ ), mientras el factor satisfacción tiene una fiabilidad interna de  $\alpha = .74$ . La modalidad de respuesta de la escala es de tipo Likert a 5 puntos (1 = muy en desacuerdo y 5 = muy de acuerdo).

El cuestionario sobre *Detección de necesidades y mejora socio-familiar:*

Este cuestionario se emplea para detectar los posibles ámbitos de intervención social y comunitaria que según el entrevistado pudieran aportar elementos de mejoras a las familias y/o parejas interculturales. El cuestionario está integrado por 7 ítems que indagan la opinión del sujeto en relación a algunas de las principales áreas de interés para las familias interculturales, en particular los programas de mediación familiar y religiosos, asesoramiento jurídico, servicios de prestación social en general, reducción de la burocracia (que puede obstaculizar la relación), programas de sensibilización sobre prejuicios y discriminación, y finalmente la promoción de programas de mediación intercultural en las escuelas. Así como en el anterior cuestionario, se dio

a los entrevistados la posibilidad de añadir otros 2 posibles ámbitos de mejoras que considerasen necesarios.

### **Procedimiento**

Se utilizó la técnica *snow ball* (bola de nieve) para muestreo de los sujetos. Se trata de un muestreo no probabilístico ya que no es posible establecer a priori la probabilidad que tienen los miembros del universo de ser seleccionados como parte de la muestra. Los criterios utilizados para la selección de la muestra han sido: a) Extranjeros casados o que conviven con ciudadanos españoles con al menos un año de convivencia; b) Extranjeros nacidos fuera de España y posteriormente emigrados en el territorio español y c) Residentes en el territorio español

Se contó con la colaboración de asociaciones de inmigrantes, del Hospital Clínico y se crearon dos foros en Internet.

### **Resultados**

A partir de los primeros análisis descriptivos emerge que el nivel de estudio de los entrevistados es más bien alto, especialmente si lo comparamos con los estudios terminados por el miembro español de la pareja. En particular, el 50% de los extranjeros tiene una licenciatura en contra del 38,2% de sus parejas españolas, apoyando en este caso, la hipótesis de que la variable instrucción puede ser un factor mitigador de la diferencia étnica.

Respecto a los años de relación con la actual pareja, hay una tendencia similar al aumento del fenómeno a nivel nacional (que en los 6 últimos años ha crecido un 172%), en efecto el 63,7% de las parejas lleva entre 1 y 6 años de relación, con una media de 9,9 años. Respecto a la religión, la cristiana es la más representada (65,7%), seguida por la islámica (20,6%) y la ortodoxa (6,9%). Mientras las parejas interreligiosas alcanzan el 34,3% del total de la muestra.

Se ha detectado que, respecto al tamaño de la red familiar, la media de familiares presentes en la misma ciudad es de 2,7. Este dato es algo inferior al tamaño de la red de apoyo detectada por Martínez y cols. (1996) entre los inmigrantes Africanos residentes en Andalucía que ha sido de 3,75 sujetos. Pero si nos centramos sobre la frecuencia de familiares presente en la misma ciudad, resalta que el 44,1% de los entrevistados no tiene ningún familiar presente en su ciudad de residencia, el 15,7% declara tener solo un familiar, y el 10,8% declara tener dos. También respecto a la percepción del tamaño de la red social compuesta por los amigos resulta ser más bien escasa. El 31,4% de nuestros sujetos afirman tener bastantes amigos españoles, mientras el 40,2% declara tener pocos o muy pocos amigos autóctonos. La misma tendencia se verifica respecto a los amigos de su País u otros extranjeros.

Cuando se les pregunta a estos representantes de la familia intercultural, que es lo que deberían de mejorar los políticos para que su familia alcanzase una mayor integración socio-familiar, se revelan algunos ámbitos muy cruciales que se indican a continuación:

## ÁMBITOS DE ACTUACIÓN PARA LA MEJORA SOCIO-FAMILIAR

Elementos de mejora	De acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	Total
Programas de sensibilización sobre prejuicio y discriminación	31,70%	44,10%	<b>75,80%</b>
Programas de mediación intercultural en las escuelas	40,20%	32,40%	<b>72,60%</b>
Reducir la burocracia (visados, reagrupación familiar, etc.)	26,50%	46,10%	<b>72,6%</b>
Asesoramiento jurídico	37,30%	27,50%	<b>64,80%</b>
Servicios de prestación social	48%	16,70%	<b>64,7%</b>
Programas de mediación familiar especializados	38,20%	22,50%	<b>60,70%</b>
Programas de mediación en temas religiosos	26,50%	21,60%	<b>48,10%</b>

La frecuencia de apoyo emocional recibido por la pareja es mayor en los hombres (Media= 4,57) que en las mujeres (Media= 3,88). Así encontramos diferencias significativas en la frecuencia de apoyo emocional recibido por hombres y mujeres, siendo los hombres lo que reciben más apoyo emocional que las mujeres,  $F= 8,05$ ,  $p< .005$ . En cuanto a la satisfacción con el apoyo recibido encontramos diferencias significativas en la satisfacción con el apoyo emocional recibido por la pareja atendiendo a la variable sexo. Siendo los hombres (Media=4,61) los que en general están más satisfechos que las mujeres (Media=3,83) en la recepción de apoyo emocional,  $F=8,32$ ,  $p<.005$ . También hemos encontrado diferencias significativas en la satisfacción con el apoyo instrumental, siendo los hombres (Media=4,61) los que muestran mas satisfacción que las mujeres (Media=3,90),  $F= 11,8$ ,  $p<.001$ . Los hombres (Media=4) se sienten significativamente más satisfechos que las mujeres (Media=3,39) en la recepción de apoyo instrumental,  $F=3,7$ ,  $p< .005$ .

En cuanto a la frecuencia y satisfacción del apoyo recibido de los amigos compatriotas y autóctonos hemos encontrado diferencias significativas para la satisfacción con el apoyo recibido tanto de los amigos autóctonos y compatriotas en las mujeres latinas, ya que muestran las puntuaciones más altas tanto en la satisfacción del apoyo instrumental (Media=4),  $F=2,25$ ,  $p<.13$  como emocional (Media=3,93)  $F=2,58$ ,  $p<.08$  por parte de los amigos compatriotas. También es mayor la satisfacción del apoyo emocional de los amigos españoles en las mujeres latinas (Media=4),  $F=2,63$ ,  $p<.07$ .

En cuanto al apoyo institucional hemos encontrado que los latinoamericanos son los que muestran mayores diferencias respecto al apoyo social (Media=3,22),  $F=3,23$ ,  $p<.044$ , en el sentido de que son los que perciben más apoyo institucional.

### Discusión y conclusiones

El fenómeno de las uniones interculturales es bastante reciente en España, y existe un vacío importante de estudios sobre este tipo de familia, por ello hemos considerado necesario investigar algunos de los principales factores psicosociales relacionados con dicha unión intercultural con el fin de proporcionar un marco general del fenómeno y contribuir a ampliar los conocimientos respecto a este tipo de configuración familiar que está en constante crecimiento.



En nuestro estudio hemos comprobado que la formación de las uniones interculturales es un fenómeno que está creciendo en los últimos años, tratándose en particular de uniones constituidas recientemente, en efecto el 63,7% de las uniones lleva entre 1 y 6 años de relación (coherentemente con el crecimiento de la población inmigrante en la última década), y se trata de una población bastante joven, si consideramos que casi la mitad (48%) tiene una edad comprendida entre 23 y 33 años.

Respecto al grado de instrucción, que se considera como un equilibrador de la diferencia étnica (Streiff-Fenart, 1998 y 1999; Maffioli, 1996), hemos comprobado que los extranjeros entrevistados tienen generalmente un grado de instrucción más alto que su pareja española, en particular el 50% declara tener una licenciatura en contra del 38,2% de sus parejas españolas. Apoyando, así, los datos que señalan que la variable instrucción puede ser un factor mitigador de la diferencia étnica.

Los sujetos entrevistados se caracterizan por tener una escasa red familiar, potencialmente proveedora de apoyo, comprobando que la presencia de familiares es de 2,7, siendo más baja respecto a otro estudio realizado con inmigrantes en Andalucía, que en este caso rondaba los 3.75 familiares (Martínez et al. 1996). Cabe destacar que el 44,1% no tiene ningún familiar en la ciudad donde vive, subrayando la dificultad de recibir apoyo por sus familiares.

En relación al apoyo social se ha comprobado que generalmente el hombre percibe más apoyo social que la mujer. Hemos encontrado, también en este caso, que generalmente son los varones los que perciben más apoyo social, sobre todo apoyo emocional. Los varones también se encuentran más satisfechos que las mujeres con el apoyo instrumental. También cuando la fuente de apoyo es la familia de origen, son los hombres los que se siguen sintiendo más satisfechos con el apoyo instrumental. Lo mismo se manifiesta cuando la fuente de apoyo instrumental son los amigos compatriotas.

Respecto a la percepción de apoyo en el ámbito comunitario son los latinoamericanos los que perciben más apoyo institucional. Probablemente este colectivo se identifica más con las instituciones españolas o es el idioma el que juega un papel importante a la hora de considerar el apoyo institucional.

A modo de conclusión, consideramos necesario subrayar que las parejas interculturales son un interesante laboratorio donde se experimenta una nueva manera de ser familia, donde el encuentro de distintos valores, idiomas, religiones, tradiciones y cultura en general, obliga a estas parejas a reflexionar más que las autóctonas sobre su configuración familiar y sobre las expectativas que la misma unión intercultural genera.

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# Espacio técnico de la Psicología Comunitaria en el contexto del Sistema de Servicios Sociales españoles: Sondeo exploratorio de tres Servicios Sociales Generales

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## Resumen

*Este estudio, en curso, tiene como Antecedentes : 1) La participación de psicólogos en políticas sociales es un hecho nuevo, de gran relevancia para la construcción de los diversos campos de intervención social desarrollados en Psicología (Psicología Comunitaria, Psicología de la Intervención Social, Intervención Psicosocial, Psicología Social Aplicada); 2) La escasa literatura disponible muestra la presencia de importantes grados de tensión y desencuentro, entre las orientaciones técnicas y paradigmáticas de las distintas especialidades de la Psicología relacionadas, y las estrategias de las políticas sociales; 3) Los estudios disponibles utilizan básicamente perspectivas conceptuales “etic” o normativo-externas a estos desempeños, siendo relevante la realización de investigaciones basadas en una perspectiva “emic”.*

*Se establece como Problema de Estudio el describir el campo técnico potencial que tiene el quehacer de los psicólogos comunitarios en los sistemas de políticas sociales, definiendo específicamente como Pregunta de Investigación: ¿Cuál es la presencia y potencial aporte de las estrategias de intervención comunitaria que hacen parte de la Psicología Comunitaria y cuáles son los factores condicionantes que permiten comprender su estructuración en el contexto de tres Servicios Sociales Generales españoles?*

*El Diseño Metodológico es de base Cualitativa (Grounded Theory) / Estudio de Casos.*

*Los Resultados preliminares de este estudio señalan que: 1) En los Servicios Sociales Generales observados, la intervención comunitaria está presente como estrategia de trabajo, aunque de manera acotada. Siendo entendida ésta como intervención en relaciones y procesos comunitarios (la Comunidad como Objeto de Intervención), no considerando necesariamente procesos de participación comunitaria; 2) En la interfase asociada a la presencia o no de la estrategia comunitaria en los Servicios Sociales tendrían importancia los Esquemas Referenciales que poseen los equipos técnicos de nivel intermedio y/o de nivel local. Así como también la presencia, aumento o reducción de la estrategia comunitaria no tendría que ver directamente con los marcos normativos legales o de financiamiento de nivel estatal central, o de nivel autonómico; 3) La contribución de la Psicología Comunitaria y de las Estrategias Comunitarias en general, tienen un espacio potencial en relación con el énfasis que ponen los Servicios en una estrategia de Desarrollo de Potencialidades, de Fomento de Autonomía, y de evitación de relaciones asistenciales; 4) La relación entre Servicios Sociales Generales y Psicología va más allá de sólo la Psicología Comunitaria y se extiende a otras áreas de especialidad profesional de la Psicología, tales como la Psicología de la Intervención Social, Psicología de los Grupos, entre otras. De igual forma, el campo técnico ocupado por los psicólogos(as) en los Servicios Sociales Generales observados se relaciona con diversas áreas de competencias y de especialidad profesional de la Psicología, tales como Gestión de Programas, Evaluación de Necesidades y de Programas, Intervención Grupal, Intervención en Redes, entre otras; 5) La intervención en los Servicios Sociales es transversalmente*

*interdisciplinaria, en cada uno de los niveles en que se implementa, siendo el equipo interprofesional basado en una perspectiva interdisciplinaria la principal referencia técnica de las intervenciones.*

Palabras Clave: Psicología Comunitaria; Políticas Sociales; Servicios Sociales; Psicología de la Intervención Social.

### **Antecedentes del problema de estudio**

La inserción y participación de psicólogos en programas sociales derivados de políticas sociales se constituye como hecho nuevo y de relevancia para el desarrollo profesional de la Psicología.

Desde la década de los años setenta se han generado cambios en las lógicas que organizan las políticas sociales, en relación a que adquieren importancia, tanto social como técnica, las dimensiones subjetivas y psicosociales en las estrategias de desarrollo social y en la comprensión y abordaje de los problemas sociales (López-Cabanas y Chacón, 1997; Casas, 1996), como resultado y efecto del desarrollo de nuevas problemáticas sociales y nuevas nociones para entenderlas y conceptualizarlas (Galende, 1990, 1998; Musitu y Castillo, 1992; Casas, 2006).

En relación a ello, durante los últimos veinte años el quehacer de los psicólogos en el ámbito de programas derivados de políticas sociales ha adquirido relevancia tanto cualitativa como cuantitativa, en cuanto campo de ejercicio profesional, así como también como área de interés académico (técnico y conceptual) derivado de lo anterior. Ello en España (Luque, 1988; Musitu y Castillo, 1992; López-Cabanas y Chacón, 1997; Huerta, 1998; Casas, 2006; Sánchez, 2007), así como también en otras realidades nacionales, contándose con antecedentes de ello en Estados Unidos (Prilleltensky, 2006), Brasil (Scaparo y Guareschi, 2007), Argentina (Lapalma, 2006), Venezuela (Montero, 2006) Chile (Krause, 1998; Alfaro, 2000) Uruguay (Correa, 2006; Giménez, 2006). Se inicia, de esta manera, el desarrollo de un nuevo ámbito de actuación especializada de los psicólogos, en España hacia fines de los años ochenta (Luque, 1988; Casas y Beltri, 1989; Berdullas, Chacón, López-Cabanas & Sanz, 1989; Rubio & Plumed, 1995; López-Cabanas & Chacón, 1997; Hernández, 1998), en donde ha ocupado un cuarto lugar como campo de desempeño laboral de los psicólogos (Quintanilla & Díaz, 1992).

Ello integrado con los avances que produjo la Psicología Comunitaria desde su surgimiento durante los años sesenta, junto al despliegue del interés aplicado de la Psicología Social en los setenta (Hernández & Valera, 2001). Unido, además, a los desarrollos conceptuales de la Psicología Social en las últimas décadas, han sido la base técnica y conceptual para el reconocimiento y legitimación de la Psicología de la Intervención Social (Rueda, 1991; Garau & Rubio, 1994), o también llamada genéricamente Intervención Psicosocial (Casas, 1996, 2006; Sánchez & Morales, 2002).

En España, la demanda social por la incorporación intensiva de profesionales psicólogos en programas derivados desde políticas sociales se vincula a cambios en el Sistema Público de Bienestar Social, ocurridos durante la década de los años ochenta y que generan una red de Servicios Sociales como instrumentos básicos para la atención personalizada y la realización de actuaciones de carácter comunitario, de prevención y promoción social, los llamados Servicios Sociales Generales, y Servicios Sociales Especializados (Berdullas, Chacón, López-Cabanas & Sanz, 1989; Rubio & Plumed, 1995; López-Cabanas & Chacón, 1997).

Las políticas sociales establecen marcos técnicos e institucionales que generan límites y posibilidades, particulares y distintivos, para las actuaciones posibles de desarrollar en su contexto, relevantes de tener en cuenta para comprender la forma y alternativas de acción de los psicólogos en estos escenarios.

De un modo genérico, podemos señalar que las políticas sociales siempre se inscriben en un paradigma de desarrollo particular, desde donde se definen la formas de concebir los horizontes hacia los que se debe conducir la sociedad para mejorar las condiciones de vida de las personas y el rol esperado de los actores técnicos en esta tarea y los mecanismos o estrategias que debieran emplearse para lograr este propósito. Dando cuenta, de esta manera, necesariamente de relaciones y equilibrios de poder propios de un período histórico particular. De tal manera que una política social no es un acto aislado, aleatorio, sino que existe en un marco general al que se integra ese acto, con un contenido particular expresado en un programa y, aunque este no esté definido explícitamente, es posible develar una articulación con una estructura de orientación o referencia que forma un denominador común con: el sector de intervención, el problema tratado y la orientación normativa del decidor en sus opciones técnicas (Meny & Thoening, 1992; Aguilar, 1993).

Así, la intervención social realizada en el marco de un programa social se conforma y despliega vinculada estrechamente a la producción de nuevos problemas o demandas, surgidos y vinculados con prácticas profesionales (saberes, instituciones y técnicas) situados en el marco de las formas de organización de una sociedad en un determinado momento histórico-social, no siendo ello un mero “telón de fondo” para entender los desarrollos y posibilidades de estas intervenciones, sino que más bien siendo un plano que establece las condiciones de posibilidad, tendencias y proyecciones de crecimiento de las prácticas interventivas (Galende, 1990).

A su vez, los Sistemas de Protección Social derivados desde estas políticas sociales, en donde se insertan los psicólogos, están directamente relacionados con los tipos de Estados de Bienestar en que se sustenten, los cuales en la actualidad se pueden diferenciar en tres tipos, como nos señala Esping-Andersen (1993): los liberales o residuales, socialdemócratas y conservador o corporativo, según la clasificación ya clásica de este autor. De tal manera como podemos suponer, en cuanto los Sistemas de Protección Social surgen frente a las inseguridades y riesgos que sufren las personas a lo largo del ciclo vital, el identificar cuáles son estos riesgos y precisar su grado previsible de ocurrencia permite reconocer las vulnerabilidades que existen y detectar a los sectores sociales que las experimentan, requiriendo de acuerdos y consensos políticos y sociales que den soporte a una estructura institucional, y entregue las bases o plataformas a la definición de derechos que se aplican, cómo se garantizan y cómo se viabilizan estos, lo que supone instituciones, normas, programas y recursos, pero también delimitar los roles del Estado, del mercado, de las personas y las familias (Esping-Andersen, 1993).

Los antecedentes disponibles muestran la presencia en distintos contextos nacionales de tensión (obstáculos, “ruidos”) y desencuentro entre las orientaciones de estrategia valoradas desde la genérica Psicología de la Intervención Social y las orientaciones que siguen las actuaciones profesionales en el marco de los programas de políticas sociales.

Los cuerpos técnicos y académicos muestran preocupación y reflexión crítica respecto de los énfasis que tendrían las actuaciones que realizan los profesionales, básicamente en relación a los ejes de: intervención curativa-preventiva; intervención asistencial-promocional; intervención

individual-colectiva; intervención participativa-dirigida.

En el proceso español el análisis de estos nuevos desempeños ha sido abordado en relación al rol profesional (Luque, 1988; Rueda, 1991; Quintanilla & Díaz, 1992; Garau & Rubio, 1994; Garau, 1995). Desde donde los estudios en los Servicios Sociales españoles, hacia fines de los años 80, han puesto de manifiesto la ausencia de una clarificación conceptual y operativa de las funciones y desempeños de rol del profesional psicólogo que hace parte de los equipo de trabajo (Navarro, Peiro & Luque, 1989). De tal forma, que en el marco interdisciplinario que supone un programa de esta naturaleza, no se logra complementariedad de tareas, si no más bien, cierta confusión conceptual y solapamiento en los desempeños de rol de los profesionales que intervienen (Navarro, Peiro & Luque, 1989).

De igual forma, a mediado de los años noventa, como señalan Garau y Rubio (1994), seguiría existiendo desconocimiento sobre las tareas, actividades y funciones que puede desempeñar el psicólogo en la intervención social, tanto de parte de las instituciones relacionadas, como de los equipos profesionales que trabajan en los Servicios Sociales, lo que tendría importantes efectos sobre la valoración de la imagen profesional del psicólogo, y sobre el perfil de demandas y de posibilidades de desempeño que éste encuentra en esos contextos.

Como señalan López-Cabanas, Barriga, Camarero, Casas, Chacon, Gallegos, et al. (1993) en un texto fruto del trabajo del Comité Técnico el Área de Psicología y Servicios Sociales del II Congreso del Colegio de Psicólogos Español (por tanto de gran representatividad en cuanto recoge la contribución de un panel de especialistas de gran amplitud), se produciría una gran dificultad para la plena incorporación del psicólogo en estos nuevos escenarios debido a la escasa clarificación conceptual y metodológica de las funciones que el psicólogo debe asumir y que interactúa con una falta de definición de los objetivos de trabajo de los Servicios Sociales.

Se señala en este informe que uno de los obstáculos que enfrenta la inserción de los psicólogos en los nuevos sistemas sería el predominio del trabajo sobre el caso individual desde una estrategia en donde el énfasis está puesto, como señala el texto, en “un funcionamiento tradicional basado en la intervención clínica y un modelo asistencial pasivo”, alejado de un encuadre metodológico de cambio social y de la participación comunitaria.

Esto tendría importante repercusión para los programas de acción social y la incorporación de psicólogos a este ámbito, según observa Huerta y Porta (1992), en cuanto se generarían formas restringidas y asistenciales de entender las necesidades que motivan la acción de los servicios, entendidas estas básicamente como privación o escasez de medios, convirtiéndolas en necesidades de diferentes tipos de prestaciones, ayudas y subvenciones, alejándose de esta manera de una comprensión de las necesidades como partes o sólo componentes de una compleja malla de relaciones entre la persona y su entorno –orientación ecológica-, las cuales deben ser intervenidas de manera preventiva dando mayores competencias al sujeto, considerándolo como ente activo, superando de esta manera el énfasis en la carencia y aportando habilidades y estrategias a las personas o grupos para que sean capaces de responder a las exigencias que les plantea su entorno.

En ese sentido también señalan Musitu y Castillo (1992) es que las políticas debieran orientarse hacia la provisión de servicios básicos sólo en un primer momento, paliando las carencias más agobiantes y básicas, para luego avanzar hacia procesos de mejora de Calidad de Vida de forma más integral, considerando el conjunto de dimensiones, económicas, materiales

y socio afectivas relacionadas con ello, de manera de no circunscribirse, tal cual ocurre, a la provisión de servicios y acceso a los recursos, olvidando la acción destinada a producir cambio en dimensiones sociales y relacionales, en procesos de potenciación de capacidades y desarrollo humano desde aproximaciones participativas.

Esta misma observación la hace Huerta (1993) quien señala que para hacer efectivo el desarrollo de sistemas de atención desde los Servicios Sociales Generales, que superen los modelos benéficos asistenciales, tal cual está en la base de su constitución y estrategia, se requiere un giro y una flexibilización en la estructura de estos servicios y también de los profesionales, que modifique una actitud de espera frente a la peticiones o demandas que les formulan los usuarios, orientando el enfoque hacia un trabajo con los recursos de la comunidad y con las potencialidades de las personas, evitando de esta manera reducir los servicios sociales a un sistema de prestaciones orientado sólo a compensar estados de necesidad.

De manera que, según plantea este autor, en ese período, 1993, sigue vigente la necesidad de orientar los sistemas de atención hacia una estrategia que: 1) permita una atención integral basada en el refuerzo de la autodeterminación y potenciación de los propios recursos y los del entorno familiar y comunitario; 2) que permita la implicación de la participación de la población en el conocimiento y resolución de sus problemas; 3) que requiere generar sistemas de coordinación de los servicios y recursos de un área determinada, de manera que permitan asegurar bienestar social y que sean alternativa a la institucionalización de la atención y elemento de integración comunitaria.

Por su parte Valera (1996) señala que las orientaciones de políticas sociales son demandadas por una imperiosa necesidad de resolver situaciones de precariedad y conflicto, lo cual lleva a valorar como estrategia adecuada la atención hacia aspectos negativos, más que hacia la optimización de los positivos, restringiendo y limitando las potencialidades y posibilidades de uso efectivo y operacional de nociones como la de Calidad de Vida.

La incorporación del discurso de la Calidad de Vida, según señala Casas (2006), permitiría: 1) la incorporación de una perspectiva claramente positiva en un campo profesional lleno de nociones negativas referidas a los problemas y carencias; 2) permitiría mejorar los grados de clarificación de las posibles y necesarias aportaciones de los profesionales psicólogos, en cuanto esta noción tiene un claro raigambre psicosocial; 3) permitiría sacar a los profesionales desde nociones pesimistas que pueden ser transmitidas a los destinatarios de las acciones, evitando con ello el riesgo de que estos organicen defensas ante los profesionales; 4) permite la articulación y vinculación de los aspectos psicológicos y sociales que integran las dimensiones psicosociales en el bienestar psicológico; y 5) en cuanto se sitúa claramente en el campo de la promoción y la prevención en su sentido más amplio, permitiría también un abordaje de los fenómenos desde una perspectiva comunitaria y desde un encuadre interdisciplinario.

Así, en términos de síntesis, como plantea Sánchez (2007), se puede señalar que el proceso de institucionalización de las prácticas de intervención psicosocial y comunitarias en contextos de políticas sociales, ha generado dificultades en la necesaria compatibilidad que debe haber entre las lógicas interventivas implicadas, sin que se olviden las bases éticas y políticas ineludibles al ejercicio colectivo de una praxis con poder de influir a la gente y transformar ciertas dinámicas y realidades sociales. Ello hace necesario, según señala Sánchez (2007), el desarrollo de una teoría de la acción social que incorpore las dimensiones o lógicas propias del trabajo comunitario, que

ponga énfasis por tanto en los procesos locales y considere una estrategia de trabajo que parta “desde abajo”, junto con –y no sustituyendo a- las dimensiones técnicas y estratégicas centrales en la acción interventiva.

Una puntualización que no podemos dejar de hacer es que las observaciones respecto del proceso español de inserción de psicólogos en Servicios Sociales, que esta revisión considera y a los cuales le ha sido posible acceder, han sido formuladas hace ya más de una década, sobre todo aquellas que consideran evidencias empíricas, dejando dudas sobre la situación actual, ya pasada la mitad de los años 2000, y además ésta está referida básicamente a los Servicios Generales, y no contempla, explícitamente al menos, a los Servicios Especializados.

A modo de complementar esta revisión centrada en España es relevante tener en cuenta lo producido respecto de esto en otras realidades nacionales.

Según señala Prilleltensky (2006), mirando la situación de las prácticas interventivas en Estados Unidos desde la Psicología Comunitaria, que en la actualidad, especialmente desde los años noventa en adelante, se habría generado una tensión a raíz del apoyo que entrega el Estado a las líneas de intervención centradas en la promoción de la salud, física y mental, básicamente a través del desarrollo de destrezas individuales, desde métodos no participativos, de carácter asistencial con centro en el daño y que no se basan en análisis ecológicos que conecta los problemas y sus intervenciones con los orígenes de estos en las condiciones sociales. Generándose así distanciamiento respecto de valores como empoderamiento, participación, auto-determinación, colaboración, inclusividad, y apoyo social que consideran simultáneamente el cambio en los niveles del bienestar personal, interpersonal, grupal, organizativo, comunitario y social.

El debate que en América Latina se da respecto de la relación entre la intervención social desde la Psicología (específicamente desde la Psicología Comunitaria) y políticas sociales nos señala, por una parte, que las políticas sociales en la medida que crecientemente han ido valorando dimensiones relativas a la subjetividad (tales como capital humano, capital social, empoderamiento, relaciones interpersonales y sociales) para entender problemas sociales como son la pobreza, la infancia en riesgo, los problemas de juventud, entre otros, ha permitido, sobre todo desde los años noventa en adelante, el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de una rama profesional de la Psicología Comunitaria, en la medida que estas nuevas políticas han permitido ampliar los espacios laborales y las demandas técnicas hechas a los profesionales de la psicología (Zambrano & Alfaro, 2006; Giménez, 2006).

Así también los trabajos latinoamericanos generados desde Venezuela (Montero, 2006), Brasil (Scaparo & Guareschi, 2007), Uruguay (Correa, 2006) y Chile (Alfaro, Zambrano, Sandoval & Pérez-Luco, 2007) nos muestran que el ámbito al que mayor importancia asignan tanto técnicos como académicos y en donde más atención se pone, tiene que ver con los aportes potenciales que tendría la Psicología Comunitaria en el desarrollo de programas sociales con énfasis en procesos de participación de los actores afectados y vinculados, así como también énfasis en estrategias centradas en procesos colectivos y de nivel comunitario. Así, un tema que transversalmente se aborda es la crítica de aquellos programas que tienden a desarrollarse en los marcos de políticas sociales, centrados predominantemente en dinámicas de nivel individual, familiar y en menor medida, en algunos casos, en procesos grupales, postergando o no resaltando el foco de intervención en dinámicas colectivas y desde estrategias participativas.



## **Pregunta de Investigación**

Desde los antecedentes expuestos se fundamenta como Problema de Estudio el describir el campo técnico potencial que tiene el quehacer de los psicólogos comunitarios en los sistemas de políticas sociales, definiendo específicamente como Pregunta de Investigación: ¿Cuál es la presencia y potencial aporte de las estrategias de intervención comunitaria que hacen parte de la Psicología Comunitaria y cuáles son los factores condicionantes que permiten comprender su estructuración en el contexto de tres Servicios Sociales Generales españoles?

## **Objetivos**

Objetivo General:

Describir la presencia y potencial aporte de las estrategias de intervención comunitaria que hacen parte de la Psicología Comunitaria y los factores condicionantes que permiten comprender su estructuración en el contexto de tres Servicios Sociales Generales españoles.

Objetivos específicos:

1) Describir el aporte potencial de las estrategias de intervención comunitaria en las orientaciones técnicas que presentan las prácticas de intervención social que realizan los profesionales psicólogos en el marco de tres Servicios Sociales Generales pertenecientes a tres distintas Comunidades Autónomas españolas.

2) Describir los factores condicionantes que afectan el uso de estrategias de intervención comunitaria en los contextos situacionales de tres Servicios Sociales Generales españoles.

## **Metodología**

El Enfoque Metodológico es la Grounded Theory (Strauss y Corbin, 2002). Entendiendo por ello un encuadre sistemático de base epistemológica post positivista, de carácter inductivo y recursivo que guía la exploración, codificación, síntesis, análisis y conceptualización de datos cualitativos, orientado al desarrollo teorías y modelos que permitan la comprensión y explicación objetiva, fiable y contextualizada de los fenómenos de investigación (López & Scandroglio, 2007).

El Diseño Metodológico es del tipo Cualitativo Ideográfico, y específicamente Estudio de Casos Múltiples Multidimensional (Stake, 2000; Coller, 2000; Sandoval, 2002).

La Definición del Caso siguiendo la clasificación propuesta por Coller (2000), es de tipo Genérico – Típico, del de tipo Casos Múltiples – Similares, en cuanto al número de casos.

La Estrategia Muestral siguió el procedimiento de Muestreo Teóricamente Guiado (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), siendo la Muestra de arranque 3 Servicios Sociales Generales de tres autonomías diferentes (Cataluña; Comunidad Valenciana; Andalucía) según criterio de variabilidad. Los Sujetos de la muestra en cada uno de los casos fueron: Psicólogos (as) de SSG; Miembro del equipo profesional (Trabajador(a) Social y Educador(a) Social); Encargado (a) Programa; Responsables a nivel de Ayuntamiento. Responsables nivel intermedio.

Para la recogida de datos se utilizará la técnica Entrevista en Profundidad No Estructurada (Riba, 2007). El Instrumento de Producción de Datos fue un guión temático, referido a cada uno de los aspectos centrales que definen la pregunta de investigación y los objetivos, que siguiendo las orientaciones descritas por el modelo de la Grounded Theory que se fue precisando y focalizando gradualmente en las fases consecutivas de análisis y producción.

El Modelo y Plan de Análisis siguió el procedimiento de Método Comparativo Constante propuesto por la Grounded Theory que integra a su vez los procedimientos específicos de: 1) Niveles de Codificación (Codificación Abierta, Codificación Axial, Codificación Selectiva); 2) Paradigma de Codificación; 3) Muestreo Teórico. Se utiliza este procedimiento analítico como método adecuado de análisis para ser utilizado en los Estudios de Caso, según indica Coller (2000). Finalmente, para la implementación del análisis y de sus distintas fases de codificación se utilizará el software de análisis cualitativo Atlas ti., en su versión 5.0

Criterios de Calidad del conocimiento generado: Para efectos de asegurar la calidad del conocimiento generado desde este estudio, y específicamente para aumentar los grados de Validez, se siguió el procedimiento de Triangulación (Flick, 2004; Sandoval, 2002), específicamente Triangulación de Fuente. De igual forma, para efectos de asegurar niveles adecuados de Confiabilidad, se siguió el procedimiento de Validación Comunicativa y de Auditorías, distinguidos por Flick (2004). Por último, se tuvieron en consideración permanente resguardos éticos (Sánchez, 1999), en la forma de Consentimiento Informado.

### **Resultados preliminares**

En los Servicios Sociales Generales observados la intervención comunitaria está presente como estrategia de trabajo, aunque de manera acotada.

El trabajo de nivel comunitario, entendido como intervención en colectivos, está presente en la estrategia utilizada en los Servicios Sociales Generales observados.

En estos casos el énfasis está puesto en la valoración e intervención en relaciones y procesos comunitarios (la Comunidad como Objeto de Intervención), no considerando necesariamente proceso de participación comunitaria.

Durante el proceso de desarrollo del Sistema de Servicios Sociales en los tres casos, el nivel y la estrategia de Intervención Comunitario ha tenido fases o períodos en que ha ocupado mayor relevancia. Reportándose períodos en que esta estrategia ha sido predominante.

En la actualidad, el nivel de intervención predominante es el individual, habiendo realidades locales y autonómicas (regionales) en donde el nivel individual se combina, con énfasis distintos, con el nivel grupal y con el nivel comunitario.

En una de las realidades regionales (Casos) observadas se están iniciando una nueva línea de servicios sociales especializados en intervención en Desarrollo Comunitario.

Siempre se observa que lo comunitario tiene más presencia a nivel de la declaración de principios y orientaciones, que a nivel de las prácticas de implementación concreta y operacional.

La interfase relacionada o asociada a la presencia o no de la estrategia comunitaria en los Servicios Sociales tendría importancia los Esquemas Referenciales que poseen los equipos técnicos de nivel intermedio y/o de nivel local.

La presencia, aumento o reducción de la estrategia comunitaria, no tendría que ver directamente con los marcos normativos legales o de financiamiento de nivel estatal central o de nivel autonómico expresado en el Plan Concertado de Financiación, ni con los contenidos declarados en las correspondientes leyes de servicios sociales que regulan los programas.

Existiendo un marco de financiamiento común y compartido por las diferentes autonomías (regiones) y leyes autonómicas que de distintas formas consideran en términos generales, niveles

de intervención diferentes que incluyen estrategias comunitarias, las diferentes realidades locales / regionales han implementado estrategias relativamente similares, con énfasis en los modelos comunitarios.

Se observa que las opciones técnicas y políticas que hacen los agentes / actores institucionales, a nivel de Ayuntamiento o de Autonomía, operarían como un factor importante que condiciona la presencia o no de este nivel de intervención o de esta estrategia.

También se observa como un factor relevante en la presencia de estrategias comunitarias las opciones técnicas, de trayectoria formativa y de alianzas que tenga y haga el profesional psicólogo.

En esto último, las referencias, orientaciones y apoyos que presten las asociaciones gremiales, así como los referentes académicos y universitarios, parecieran ser un factor que influye en que el psicólogo busque y se esfuerce en implementar estrategias comunitarias y que éstas sean reconocidas institucionalmente.

La contribución de la Psicología Comunitaria y de las Estrategias Comunitarias, en general, tiene un espacio potencial en relación con el énfasis que ponen los Servicios en una estrategia de Desarrollo de Potencialidades, de Fomento de Autonomía, y de evitación de relaciones asistenciales.

Desde la observación de las prácticas, pareciera que en materia de la estrategia y en particular en relación a la superación del asistencialismo y el desarrollo de autonomía, los Servicios Sociales tienen un propósito permanente y que supone constante preocupación institucional y técnica.

La Psicología Comunitaria tendría un valioso aporte que entregar en esta materia a partir de sus desarrollos en Empoderamiento (personal, grupal y comunitario) así como también en su larga experiencia y acumulado en materia de Desarrollo / Activación de Capacidades Propias, el desarrollo de Sentido de Comunidad.

Respecto de estos marcos técnicos es posible visualizar un área de gran relevancia en el aporte potencial que podría realizar la Psicología Comunitaria a las estrategias de trabajo desarrolladas desde los servicios sociales estudiados y en particular respecto el abordaje eficaz y eficiente de los fenómenos/problemas sociales.

No se observa un puente vigente y fluido de relación entre Psicología Comunitaria y las orientaciones técnicas de los servicios. Los desarrollos en Psicología Comunitaria parecieran no tener presencia en los debates y análisis de las Estrategias de Trabajo en Servicios Sociales.

La relación entre Servicios Sociales Generales (Atención Primaria) y Psicología va más allá de sólo la Psicología Comunitaria y se extiende a otras áreas de especialidad profesional de la Psicología relativas a la gestión de programas.

El campo técnico ocupado por los psicólogos(as) en los Servicios Sociales Generales observados se relaciona con diversas áreas de competencias y de especialidad profesional de la Psicología, tales como Gestión de Programas, Evaluación de Necesidades y de Programas, Intervención Grupal, Intervención en Redes, entre otras.

El quehacer de los psicólogos (as) se relaciona muy estrechamente con campos como los de la Psicología de la Intervención Social en general, la intervención Grupal, la Psicología de la Interculturalidad, la Salud Mental, además de la Psicología de la Salud, la Psicología Jurídica, e incluso la Psicología Clínica, entre otras.

La figura del psicólogo se vincula no sólo a la de interventor, si no que contiene como un ámbito de competencia muy importantes tareas de asesoría en procesos de intervención social en general, en donde la Evaluación/diseño de intervenciones y el análisis de relaciones/interacciones entre Interventor/intervenido ocupan un lugar central.

La contribución que hacen los psicólogos a la Intervención social en Servicios Sociales, tiene una base, se sostiene y se ha visto incrementada en buena medida, en el aporte que ellos hacen a la Gestión y Asesoría a los procesos de intervención (análisis e intervención en el Sistema Interviniente), y al Diseño y Evaluación de acciones.

La intervención en los Servicios Sociales es transversalmente interdisciplinaria, en cada uno de los niveles en que se implementa, siendo el equipo interprofesional basado en una perspectiva interdisciplinaria la principal referencia técnica de las intervenciones.

La razón de fondo que justifica y fundamenta la incorporación de los psicólogos (as) a los programas de intervención en problemas sociales tiene que ver con la complejidad y multidimensionalidad que caracteriza a los problemas sociales contemporáneos (algunos de ellos emergentes) y la necesidad de comprenderlos e intervenirlos interdisciplinariamente.

De esta manera, en las estrategias de intervención comunitarias son convocados y participan distintas y diferentes especialidades profesionales en general y también distintas ramas de especialidad profesional de la Psicología.

Podemos suponer que la inserción que tienen los psicólogos en general y los psicólogos comunitarios en particular tiene que ver con la valoración y uso que se hace desde los encuadres técnicos de los servicios, de perspectivas de análisis y de intervención interdisciplinarias, valoradas como formas imprescindibles y necesarias para el abordaje de las complejidades propias de las problemáticas sociales contemporáneas que se deben intervenir.

Ello requiere la definición precisa y sustantiva de la contribución de la Psicología Comunitaria y la visibilización de los ámbitos, estrategias y nociones en donde se hace más relevante, y en donde el aporte de ésta tiene mayor potencialidad de contribución a las estrategias de las actuales políticas sociales.

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# Shifting borders - Exploring the relationship between women's mobility and place belonging

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## Abstract

*The complex relationship between homeland and host-society reveals new forms of belonging and self-representation, which are related to migrant's uncertain conditions of existence and multiple interconnections (Iuliano, 2007). The present work aims to preliminary explore the dynamics of place attachment and identity redefinition among foreign women in Italy. The research has been carried out combining complementary methods: documentary research, observation, in-depth interviews and narrative accounts. The main part of the fieldwork took place in Naples, Italy - by means of in-depth interviews with women from Latin America, Eastern-Europe, Balkans and Africa. As revealed by content and thematic analysis of the verbatim transcripts, variables such as time of permanence in the site and geo-cultural context of origin, connote in different ways the emerging of a transitional space of belonging and of an 'in-between identity' (Bhabha, 1994).*

**Keywords :** gender - migration - identity - place belonging

## Introduction

*"What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to [...] focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity". H.K. Bhabha*

Since the first 90s, Castles and Miller identified the feminisation of international flows as one of the key trends of the new "age of migration". In this context, women migrate increasingly on their own, and on their own initiative. In line with feminist approach, the gendered space of transnational mobility affects the migrant's identity within everyday practices and migration becomes a production of a subjective space of power. Migration and dislocation have been used, in temporal and spatial narratives of modernity, to naturalise the construction of space-time in terms of dichotomous notions of "host-society" versus "homeland" (Moallem, 2000). The ways in which belonging may involve both attachment and movement, as well as the puncturing and the reshaping of boundaries is one of the approaches that we are going to take into account to develop this work.

From a theoretical perspective, attachment represents a positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place (Giuliani and Feldman, 1993; Williams and Patterson, 1999).

Close to this construct, we find the concept of "Place-identity", which refers to the symbolic importance of a place as a repository for emotions and relationships that give meaning and purpose to life (Williams and Roggenbuck, 1989; Giuliani and Feldman, 1993). Adopting a general and inclusive definition, Proshansky et al. describe place-identity as a "pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings" (1983, p. 60). As a distinctive substructure of the self, they argue, place-identity might function to underwrite personal identities, render actions or activities intelligible, express tastes and preferences and mediate efforts to change environments. As such, place identity enhances self-esteem (Korpela, 1989) increases feelings of belonging to one's community (Tuan, 1980), and is an important component of communications about environmental values and policies (Cantrill, 1998). Place-identity is not necessarily a direct result of any particular experience with the place (Proshansky et al. 1983), though it generally involves a psychological investment with the place that tends to develop over time (Giuliani and Feldman, 1993). The importance of belonging to the processes of self-definition has been stressed by researchers working in cross-cultural research, confirming Korpela's claim that it is a central feature of place-identity (see e.g. Cuba & Hummon, 1993 ;Tuan, 1980).

On this basis (within the wider context of my PhD research project), I've explored the different dimensions which could influence migrants' rootedness into destination countries.

### **Aim**

This paper attempts to preliminarily explore the dynamics of place attachment and identity redefinition among foreign skilled women in Italy through a narrative approach.

It pays particular attention to skilled women, who are usually marginalised in migration research, but who are central actors in the ongoing migrations to Mediterranean countries<sup>1</sup>.

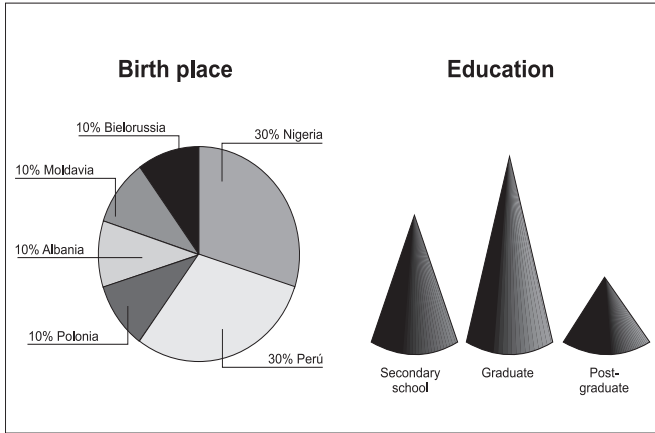
### **Participants**

12 skilled female migrants, between 25 and 40, coming from Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Balkans - engaged in social development projects and linguistic mediation. In order to guarantee that they have had time to build some form of attachment, migrants with more than 2 years residing in the host site have been preferably interviewed. Participants have been recruited through their own institutions (associations, social cooperatives, governmental services). A snowball approach has been used to meet other migrants such as professionals and social entrepreneurs.

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1 See Kofman, E "The invisibility of female skilled migrants and gender relations in studies of skilled migration in Europe" International Journal of Population Geography 2000, 6(1)45-59. *"The choice of research agendas has played a major part in rendering women invisible. The emphasis has generally been on transnational corporations, which, especially in their higher ranks, remain resolutely male-dominated. The presence of migrants in welfare sectors (i.e. education, health and social services), which are strongly feminised, has been ignored. Feminist research has also tended to obscure the role of skilled migrants in its emphasis on the unskilled. Theoretical and methodological developments in studies of migration have also made few inroads into our understanding of skilled migration"*.





Tab.1 – Participants

### Approach and methodology

The research has been carried out developing a qualitative approach that combines different as well as complementary methods (triangulation): documentary research, observation, in-depth interviews and narrative accounts of migrants. The fieldwork took place in Naples, Italy.

The data collected through documentary research and interviews have been complemented by an ethnographic study realized by means of observation, that took place in migrants' workplace.

Qualitative data collected through generative questions helped to elicit personal narratives of migration and rootedness from each participant. Data gathered from the interviews have been analyzed using thematic narrative analysis. The interviews have been transcribed and coded, line by line, under the major themes.

A content analysis has been realized extracting 5 key dimensions related to the themes. The information and findings obtained with the above methods has been constantly tested against each other in order to ensure more reliable and valid results.

### Narrative accounts

In order to clarify the changing contours of the relationships between gender, mobility and shifting identity, the research employed women's personal narratives. These accounts illuminate the spatial processes of migration as essential for the repositioning of self into networks of family, workplace, local and global relationships.

By examining the production of narratives of the self, both some of the processes involved in taking up different subject positions and the impact on the sense of the self became accessible. Place and autobiography are effortlessly united through language.

A discursive approach, as Danziger (1997) has explained, entails a psychology that shifts individual mental processes from inside the head into 'the interpersonal space of the conversation'. It thereby reconstitutes place-identity as something that people create together through talk: a social construction that allows them to make sense of their connectivity to place and to guide their actions and projects accordingly. One advantage of this approach is that it recovers the irreducibly social origins of place identification. Not only does it acknowledge the relevance of

places to their collective senses of self, but it also highlights the collective practices through which specific place identities are formed, reproduced and modified. Language becomes the force that binds people to places (cf. Tuan, 1991). It is through language that the everyday experiences of self-in-place form and mutate.

In this theoretical framework, in-depth interviews were conducted, through a main 'generative question', related to their job. This approach permits to explore their life-histories in a no compelling way and to gain access to the following areas:

- Personal Dimension
- Social Dimension
- Spatial / Temporal Dimension with specific regard to migration
- Interconnectedness of the Dimensions

### **Data Analysis**

In order to carry out a content and thematic analysis, the set of texts has been explored with the Atlas.ti software, a linguistic and statistical instrument for text analysis.

This software provides different kinds of tools for the analysis of narratives:

develops hypertext to perform complex model building;

manages data;

combines narratives and observations into a hermeneutic unit;

explicates conceptual constructs from linked relationships, facilitate the development of conceptual frameworks.

### **Preliminary results**

#### Narrative Themes

The texts analysis has defined three main narrative themes related to migration topic:

a) the future is here

*"I bought a car, I have a good contract ..., I'm going to apply for citizenship. (int. B)*

b) the return myth

*"I spend a lot of time thinking in coming back ... (int. A)*

*"I hope to come back, meanwhile, I work in Italy (int. F)*

c) between two sides

*"I'm always happy to come back home. Sometimes I ask myself: why have I decided to migrate? But when I'm there, in my birth country, after few days, I feel me uncomfortable. My life is here, now (int. C).*

The main part of the foregoing extracts might be seen as reflecting a dis-location of identity brought about by a relocation. From this perspective, the sense of loss that they express is not only a loss of place but also, more profoundly, a loss of Self. For as Krupat (1983) insists: *"The concept of place-identity makes explicit the key role that a person's relationship to the environment plays not simply in terms of a context for action or in facilitating certain forms of behaviour, but in becoming 'part of the person', of being incorporated into one's concept of Self"* (p. 343).

A wide literature describes the first two narrative subjects, while the third lacks in a psychological theoretical synthesis. According to Clifford anthropological approach to contemporary culture, we are specifically interested in the emerging of the third narrative theme,

which is strictly connected (in the accounts) with the Self: migration and relocation can generate the perception of an “in between” space of presence (Bhabha, 1994).

*“When I’m there, I’d like to come back. And vice versa [...] My heart always lays on the wrong side of the border” (int. M)*

**Key Dimensions Identified**

The content analysis of the verbatim transcripts reveals the emerging of 5 key dimensions that imply at different level the type of place attachment:

- 1) Geo-cultural context of origin;
- 2) Time of permanence;
- 3) Social/familiar network;
- 4) Second generation;
- 5) Gender dimension .

With regard to the Gender Dimension, the most interesting findings are related to the role played by women both into the original and the new context.

In short, we identify a potential range between Gender Emancipation and Regression.

As detailed in tab. 2, an emancipator role played by women in the destination country determines a sense of Self-Efficacy.

*“A new life gave me the opportunity to start a lot of positive changes” (int. G)*

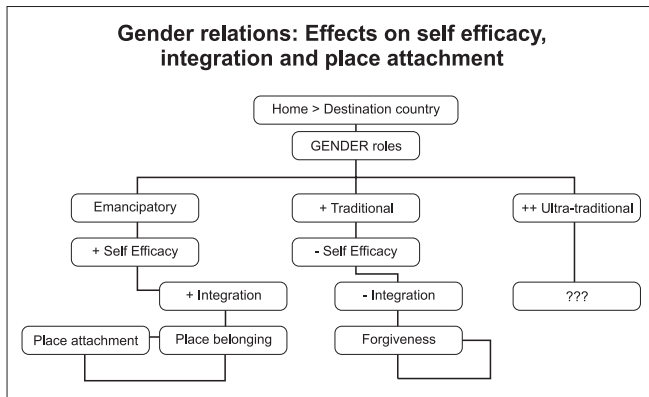
*“... After my arrival in Italy, I’ve experienced some troubles with my husband. As a consequence, we have been separated since 2001. I’ve found the courage to revolt at him, because in my culture it is very hard to leave the husband. I gave valour to my clients, finding it in myself. We have done so much, with all the courage of the life” (int. B)*

Self-Efficacy is correlated with a better integration.

*“ I think to grow professionally, not just like mediator, but also like professional trainer. To improve my skills, to learn more. Here, in my new city” (int. D)*

*“In my country I had a well defined job, because I was mechanical engineer. Completely different from my ongoing work! I came in Italy following my husband” (int. A)*

Both integration and Self-efficacy promote the emerging of a place attachment.



Tab. 2

### **Open answers**

According with Per Gustafson (2001), we don't consider place attachment and mobility as opposite and mutually exclusive phenomena. The preliminary findings from this qualitative study suggest that women may regard place attachment and mobility, and the reflections between them on the Self, in several different ways. This approach tries to highlight a dimension of self-definition often neglected by social psychologists, the dimension of location. It also implies a gendered vision of place attachment.

The restrictions of a situated and ecological approach to research, do not permit to generalize the first outcomes, specifically related to the "in-between identity".

This concept displaces the researchers' attention from a static vision of the location of the self (in terms of homeland Vs destination place) to a dynamic interaction between the subject and his/her environment.

In order to develop a productive implication for the practice, we still need to answer to a number of open questions, first of all, related to:

- Differences between female and male in place belonging;
- Cultural variables (e.g. ethnicity, religion);
- Trans-national families and place attachment;
- Belonging and ultra traditional gender roles.

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# Adaptive and Engaging Leadership With Purpose in a Shifting World

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## Abstract

*The uncertainty of changing times will lead to new global realities for all communities during the present era and globalization journey that will continue as will the shifting and changing of national leaders, human crises, the ups and downs of commerce and innovation, and community and public desires for solutions and outcomes that are both found and missed as time comes and time moves on forward. In this vein, there is the daily reality of survival in many communities while considering how and why and when to engage the state of what already is and the factors to consider for what is possible to happen locally, regionally and because of the rapid and far reaching influence of world events that will undoubtedly present challenges from which there will also rise opportunity as evidenced by informal and formal gatherings such as the World Economic Forum, United Nations activities, European Union activities and other forums in future years to come. As such, the current time provides context and background for several coexisting trends that are impacting everybody living on the planet directly through the advent of raging human crises, sovereign wealth funds now pouring into the United States to offer financial stability to linked world markets that are being shaken by collateralized debt obligations (CDO's) that are fueling a global credit and financial crisis. At the same time there is the continued rise money remittances, a further expansion of Hip-Hop as culture exchange and business that began in the United States continues to go global into many lands and across many cultures from New York, Atlanta and Los Angeles to Buenos Aires, Mumbai, Shanghai, Moscow and Paris. Moreover, the trend to transportable knowledge and skills continues to heighten as education and knowledge parity between East and West is becoming more common and practical. Still, there are serious conflicts with some conflict situations being cataclysmic in scope in a growing number of places and regions in the world in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and other places as countries, racial, ethnic and cultural groups are engaged in deadly conflict.*

*Moreover, the interrelated questions of adaptive leadership in finding and pursuing purpose in communities that are newly adapting to arising life circumstances and situations spanning business, economic and social infrastructures and networks to manage into the future given the aforementioned situations and others still to arise. Thus, the expressed voices of Amartya Sen in Rationality and Freedom (2002) Percy Miller also known as Master P in Guaranteed Success, 2007, Alan Greenspan in The Age of Turbulence (2007), Ronald Heifetz & Marty Linsky in Leadership on the Line (2002), Niall Ferguson in The War of the World (Twentieth Century Conflict and the Descent of the West, 2006), Frances Hesselbein & Marshall Goldsmith in The Leader of the Future (Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the New Era, 2006) among others have been brought together as foundation building elements and thought resources for this view that seeks to encourage future thinking and the engaging of multiple options for multi-cultural human groups and societies that can grasp*

*and apply adaptive, cultural and leader and follower ideation for shaping individual and group engagement perspectives toward community level pursuits and future attainment in the years to come.*

In doing so this author will further draw on The Hong Kong Declaration, the Yaounde Declaration and the Budapest Declaration from IACD to provide further illumination on the overarching question and utility of identifying, growing and supporting adaptive and engaging leadership with a purpose during shifting times. In brief, the introduction, advancement, and seeing future community through new eyes is to spur leadership involvement and growth in order to collaborate is fundamental to discovering and seeing inventive ways to work with others as the pace of human systems and natural systems adaptation, conflict, and change continues to intensify, is driven by increasing global competitiveness and the complexities of managing the complexities of life by being able to distinguish and meet technical challenges and adaptive challenges.

Secondly, there is the possibility of erecting scaffolding and the building of new frameworks to begin to gauge the impact and potential of extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors when managing change in a shifting natural environment, overcoming being risk adverse, taking active positions on change, understanding the importance of different mindsets, acting on the criticality of awareness of self and environment, and recognizing that learning is an essential tool and technique for developing a personal adaptive leadership strategy and practice through which others can be engaged in renewable strategies, approaches and ways involving family and community as a system, and diverse business and organization environments around the globe.

Again, the challenges and opportunity for promoting new future-oriented adaptive and engagement behaviors as sustainable practice at the community level and extending and connecting to other levels and in the places where community desires, interest and goals overlap and interconnect is arriving constantly in the view of this author through the coming together of voices that choose to share and communicate practical and useful globally adaptive engagement processes and tools as resources for advancing, recognizing, replenishing and sustaining individual and collective future efforts to come.

This leadership and community development researcher and practitioner will discuss first hand ideas, exchange and share approaches, and suggest trends and practices that are emerging in Africa, Europe, Asia, Canada and the United States through the work of the International Association of Community Development (IACD), The World Bank, The United Nations and other groups, associations and bodies doing work and supporting essential adaptive leadership and transformative work in communities.

## Games for participation and conscientisation

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### Abstract

*Information sharing and group processes are dominated by words - spoken and written words. This session will explore how different kinds of games can be used to stimulate ideas, encourage participation and discussion and lead to awareness. We will offer session participants the opportunity to take part in 2 games and share experiences about their strengths and weaknesses for community engagement and conscientisation. Each game has been developed by the community psychology team at Manchester Metropolitan University from collaborative projects on community cohesion and health inequalities. The games can be played by 4-10 players. They are not simulations and will not require role playing, although they will be fun and participative!*

Key words: urban regeneration; community cohesion; participatory games; conscientisation

### Introduction

The interest in university-community engagement is growing worldwide (Gaffakin and Morrisey, 2008; Watson, 2007). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded a four-university collaborative project exploring community engagement by Universities in the context of urban regeneration and across four themes: community cohesion, crime, health and wellbeing, and enterprise. Each University was responsible for one theme and supported projects which:

- Combined academics from two or more of the universities;
- were developed with a community partner;
- driven by the needs of the community partner;
- were interdisciplinary;
- had clear outputs and provided value for money.

We, at Manchester Metropolitan University, were responsible for projects supported under the Community Cohesion Theme. Within this theme, there was a focus on projects reflecting community psychology, sport and physical activity and urban education. In total 17 projects received funding and these included development, training and research projects (Kagan 2008), working with residents associations, community groups, development trusts, schools, voluntary associations and cooperatives.

### What is community cohesion?

Community cohesion is a policy platform which originated in civic disturbances in Northern



towns in England in 2001 (Home Office, 2005). These disturbances were largely between different ethnic groups with low life opportunities. The delivery Plan of the overall project suggested a role for Universities in developing community cohesion (URMAD, 2006:8):

*Partnership working between the HE sector and their public and voluntary sector partners will encourage a sense of identity and belonging through participation in education, work and social activities, and through mutual understanding of cultural difference.*

Our understanding of Community Cohesion is somewhat broader (Duggan and Kagan, 2007). We go along with the definition of a cohesive community as one, that is in a state of wellbeing, harmony and stability. (IdeA 2006, [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) )

The Local Government Association (LGA, 2004:7) considered, in its guidance to Local Authorities for how to support the development of cohesive communities, the following characteristics of a cohesive community:

A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods

They go on to describe what is involved in creating community cohesion:

Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. Community cohesion is closely linked to integration as it aims to build communities where people feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others, particularly people from different racial backgrounds or people of a different faith. Diversity is, then at the heart of community cohesion, and schisms can occur in and between any areas of diversity, fracturing cohesion. The Audit Commission (2006) identified 10 areas of diversity in communities, of relevance to community cohesion. These include:

- Age equality: older people
- Age equality: young people
- Community engagement
- Customer focus
- Disability
- Gender
- Human rights
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

All of the projects worked in conjunction with community groups and they also explored

different ways of engaging communities. The methods used ranged from ethnographic research with migrant groups; the use of creative methods such as film and magazine making; website development; narrative workshops; film and other creative methods; training workshop; more conventional qualitative research methods (such as interviewing – including the training of community researchers in interviewing so they collected and analysed their own data); video diaries; and world cafe discussion events.

As community psychology was one of the themes of the overall project, we, as project managers, took a community psychological perspective on the dynamics of project development and implementation (Duggan and Kagan, (2007). One of the things that emerged at a meta level from all the projects was the need for awareness raising – of professionals, students, community residents – about the antecedents and consequences of fractures in community cohesion as well as quality of life and wellbeing in areas of urban regeneration. The furtherance of critical consciousness, or ‘conscientisation’ ( see Freire and Faundez, 1989) is one of the central strategies of community psychological interventions at MMU (Kagan and Burton, 2001). As they say (p. 11):

*Community psychologists can work to develop dialogic relationships, which enable group conscientization and possibilities for change. They must be prepared to share their ‘expert’ voice and remain open to learning.*

Through dialogic practice, the learner assumes the role of knowing subject in dialogue with the educator, so reality is demythologised: those who have been submerged in oppressive social relations begin to understand these relations and the ideology that hides them (Burton and Kagan, 2001).

How best to achieve critical consciousness is one of the dilemmas facing community psychologists and a number of strategies have been advanced, including those based on creativity and games of different sorts.

### **Games as a process for the development of critical consciousness.**

Simulations and games have been used in training and development activities in a number of different arenas, including the development of interpersonal skills, youth work and community development, policy development. They are an important means of not only raising self and group awareness but also of developing skills and vary in terms of their duration and active involvement (see Saunders and Severn, 1999). Large scale simulations employ role play and scenario building to enable participants to become involved and learn through doing and experiencing. Similarly, experiential learning techniques encourage, through different means, the integration of experience with learning. Board games and small group games do not involve role play and are not meant to mimic the real world. They do, instead, use culturally familiar formats to pose questions and identify issues of importance as well as encourage discussion and the identification of strategies for change. Eisenack (2006) identifies a number of factors contributing to the effectiveness of board games that are well facilitated, including enhanced motivation, increased interest,, opening up dynamic participation, lessening resistance to accepting novel ideas and supporting group discussion. Although there is less evidence for this, he also suggests they can be useful for enhancing declarative knowledge, and are particularly useful for

interdisciplinary learning.

We were interested in seeing if we could develop some board games to encourage reflection, discussion, knowledge and emotional learning about issues to do with urban regeneration, community cohesion and inequality of opportunity – themes arising from the community engagement projects.

We were also interested in testing out the extent to which these board games might have relevance beyond England, where they originated, and if it were possible to devise games of international relevance.

### **The games**

We facilitated an innovation session wherein each participant could experience two different games. Three games were used in total.

#### *Building Social Capital, Community Cohesion and Health*

This game follows a route around a board familiar to players of monopoly. However property is not traded: social capital credits are. All participants in the workshop played this game. The game aimed to address knowledge and understanding, values, insight into stakeholder perspectives and conflicts and contradictions in social policies.

#### *Community Psychological Solutions to Problems*

This game was based on simple matching card games, wherein players identified community psychological solutions to real life dilemmas and discussed their relevance. Half the participants played this game. The game aimed to address knowledge and understanding, values, insight into stakeholder perspectives, and problem solving.

#### *Moving Towards Cohesive Communities*

This game was also a card game wherein explanations for the events presented in different real life scenarios were scored for their appropriateness, following group discussion. Half the participants played this game. The game aimed to address knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values, and problem solving.

Each game gave opportunities for discussion and manipulated 'scoring' and winning' in order to highlight the ease with which progressive stances can be distorted. Each game was accompanied by a set of 'rules' and discussion points addressing community psychological themes, although the workshop was not long enough for these to be fully explored.

### **Feedback from workshop participants**

Participants came from a number of different countries, covering each continent. They were invited to complete written feedback and to give the facilitators verbal feedback as well.

Overall, participants enjoyed the session, which stimulated interaction, although over time the intensity of engagement changed.

*This session was great – congratulations. (Portugal)*

*Great interaction from the social capital game.*

*Very interesting and focused game. Thank you for the good time (Italy)*

*It was stimulating to explore causes and find solutions. Noise levels were high and the game got more intense in the middle. (Germany, England, Portugal, USA)*

Some found the experiences stimulating ideas and reflection at different levels:

*I found the game with E-cards and solutions stimulating because it invited to bring in several solutions at different stages and levels of the problem. (Norway)*

*Encourages discussion and reflection – makes you think outside the box. (Germany, England, Portugal, USA)*

They were thought to be less useful for those already working together on an issue, but good for general use:

*I thought the games were great for stimulating reflection and conversation. But I thought they were a little too general for people that are already working on a topic or a group that has been working together solving some particular issue. ... However these are great for students and professionals that want to reflect and discuss about such broad topics. (Chile)*

Participants adapted the games as they played them, introducing additional complexity. We used the teams to come up with their own solutions when we found that solutions offered were not 'adequate' enough.

Some participants did not like some of the features, particularly of the one in which social capital could be gained (sometimes at other people's expense)

*Not fair to gain social capital if someone else gives it up. We should have been able to gain more credits for better explorations (Germany, Portugal, England, USA)*

This might illustrate the limits to which a game can be stretched to fit real world experiences, although could point to some amendments needed. The impact of the games depended in part on their timing and group dynamics.

*Interesting games. The one like Monopoly (the Beans game) – better to start with a group because if it's more similar to traditional games. (Italy)*

*Experiences of the games reflected the dynamics of the group – some groups changed rules. They also raised issues of competition and cooperation. (Germany, England, Portugal, USA)*

How might they be improved?

*Perhaps some more detailed instructions for how the experience/solution game worked. (Portugal)*

*Maintain some flexibility in the games' rules. (Chile, Portugal)*

*I would like to know a little bit more about the principles behind the objectives of the games. I think if you put it in the instructions cards it would help more to access to the objectives because I think people playing take too much time in trying to understand why you put in these rules. Since the target population is professionals and activists, it can be done. (Mexico)*

*Process (Experiences/solutions) games is difficult to follow. Content is good but hard to know what we are trying to do. (Australia)*

*Solutions game: encourage people to discuss a solution each and then decide the best one, or how different solutions might be interwoven? (Australia)*

*You could use pictures or symbols on the cards. (Norway)*

*Very time-focused – in place and time. May date quickly? (Australia)*

*I think that it would be a good idea to make them about some specific topics as well – e.g. education, health (like the board game), adolescence, elderly, neighbourhoods and so on. (Chile)*

Follow on – some participants offered further support in developing the games in anticipation of their utility.

*If you need any help to think about how to make them a little more generic for other countries and realities, I would be more than glad to help (Chile)*

*I would like to buy the games.. and I would like to try in Mexico the one about solutions. (Mexico)*

## **Discussion**

The experiences, then of a workshop made up of participants from different countries and with different experiences within community practice and with community psychological ideas was encouraging. The games did, indeed offer interest, and stimulation and provide conditions for interaction, fun and reflection.

The extent to which they increased declarative knowledge or influenced values and attitudes was less clear, but this is not surprising, given the nature of the participants. It did seem as if participants gained in understanding the perspectives of different stakeholders, and that the complexity of understanding social dilemmas and of problem solving from a community psychological stance was examined. Thus the potential of the games for raising awareness and understanding was suggested. Further work will now be carried out to refine the games for use with students and with community residents and professionals beyond community psychology.

Giroux (1981:118), in the context of radical pedagogy in schools, argues that the concept of the dialectic could be useful insofar as it

*links critical reasoning with a critical intervention in the world; is a process of critique and praxis that under different historical conditions takes different forms ; necessitates human agents acting collectively to transform the world in which they live; links historical and critical sensibilities as modes of reasoning that inform and enrich each other; not value free but rests on interests that opposes oppression in all its forms.*

This perspective resonates with the aspirations of community psychology and the games clearly make a contribution towards such a position.

Reflection is the core to critical praxis as has been argued elsewhere (Kagan, 2007). Freire (1972:131) in an early work suggested that real criticality arises from praxis:

*that is if their action encompasses a critical reflection which increasingly organises their thinking and thus leads them to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a higher level, one which enables them to perceive the causes of reality.*

It is possible that the games help people move towards this kind of criticality, although there are different degrees of reflectivity. Yip (2006:398) identifies four levels of reflective practice:

Level 0 – absence of reflectivity

Level 1: basic practical reflectivity in which the worker begins to be conscious of his or her performance in the process of intervention;

Level 2: Reflectivity in action where the worker begins to be conscious of his or her performance in the process of intervention;

Level 3: Critical practical reflectivity in which{there is} a highly multidimensional, critical interact[ion] [between the] worker's own beliefs and background [and that of the] client's own needs and background.

Bristow builds on this scheme to suggest a distinction between “practical” and “political” reflectivity, wherein critical political reflectivity is required for conscientisation, and critical practical reflectivity for perspective transformation. It is too early to say whether or not the games contribute to both conscientisation and perspective transformation, but the potential is clearly there. Perhaps the most useful dynamic within the games is that of awareness through interaction rather than through information giving. Leonard (1975:59) puts this well:

*..radical change can only come from consciousness developed as a result of exchange rather than imposition .*

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## Intergenerational work, social capital and wellbeing

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### Introduction

We will report on two intergenerational projects. The first is a School based project, wherein older people work as volunteers in primary and secondary schools in three different localities of the outer city of Manchester. The second is a project with Families in the community, involving older and younger men within families of Somali and Yemeni communities in the inner city (Liverpool). For the Schools project we were asked to evaluate a project that had been going for some time. However, the Families project was a piece of action research which involved implementing intergenerational activities and researching their impact on the participants. We were interested in examining the projects with a view to exploring their impact on participants in terms of wellbeing, as well the contribution they made to social capital and community cohesion.

### Intergenerational work

An international, comparative research programme about intergenerational initiatives adopted the following definition of intergenerational programmes:

*Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations* Bostrum, Hatton-Yeo, Oshako, and Sawano, (2000:3)

Drawing together experience across different countries, Bostrum et al. argue that intergenerational programmes can act as instruments for:

- Uniting separated generations
- Recapturing and reassessing the transmission of traditional culture
- Encouraging active cross-generational working and social life
- Sharing resources across generations
- Challenging social problems cross-generationally and contributing to lifelong learning.

Furthermore, Hatton-Yeo, Klerq, Oshako and Newman (2000) suggest that intergenerational programmes have an impact on: the economy and employment; society; on lifelong learning; and health. Extending these benefits, Rain (2005: 5) highlights the important role that intergenerational relations play in identity, with implications for community cohesion.

*“Intergenerational relations are a part of our social identity. They have material effects on the experiences and quality of life of older and young people in particular*



*settings, and important implications for community cohesion”.*

Indeed, Patel (2007) suggests that intergenerational tensions created schisms at the heart of community cohesion, not just within families but more generally.

### **Community Cohesion**

Community Cohesion in English social policy is closely linked to inter-racial disturbances in the Northern towns in 2001, and the Government’s strategy is to focus on addressing the cross-government (targets) aimed at reducing race inequality and building community cohesion (Home Office, 2005)

A broader understanding of community cohesion, though, is needed for consideration of both intergenerational projects. Duggan and Kagan (2007) have argued for a definition of a cohesive community as one, that is in a state of wellbeing, harmony and stability. (IdeA 2006, [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) )

The Local Government Association (LGA, 2004:7), offered guidance to Local Authorities for how to support the development of cohesive communities. They suggested that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.....

They went on to describe what is involved in creating community cohesion:

*Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. Community cohesion is closely linked to integration as it aims to build communities where people feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others, particularly people from different racial backgrounds or people of a different faith.*

Diversity is, then at the heart of community cohesion, and schisms can occur in and between any areas of diversity, fracturing cohesion. The audit commission (2007) sees community cohesion as key to sustainable communities, beyond race and faith, and identified 10 areas of diversity in communities, of relevance to community cohesion. These include:

- Age equality: older people
- Age equality: young people
- Community engagement
- Customer focus

- Disability
- Gender
- Human rights
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

The Families project includes a number of dimensions relevant to cohesion, including faith, ethnic identity and the experience of migrancy, as well as age. The Schools project, however, focuses more on age as the salient dimension of cohesion. Both, however, are concerned with facilitating social capital across the generations and with enhancing the wellbeing of both older and younger people.

### **Social Capital**

It is the work of Putnam (1993, 1995) that has underpinned most discussion of social capital in the UK. Putnam (1995: 67) describes social capital thus:

*By analogy with physical capital and human capital - tools and training that enhance individual productivity - "social capital" refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.....Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved...(Such) dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we"...*

The main elements of social capital, then, from Putnam's perspective are trust and co-operation and social networks based on norms of reciprocity.

Jack and Jordan, 1999, spell it out further:

*Social capital consists of cultural practices, norms, networks, links, know-how and tradition, through which people conduct informal interactions of all kinds. For instance, social capital is the trust that enables people to make contracts, rather than the contracts themselves; the teamwork that makes groups function effectively, rather than the roles and structures of the groups; the culture through which citizens understand and participate in politics, rather than the processes of government or elections; and the expectations that people will be friendly and reciprocal towards their neighbours, rather than the physical buildings and spaces they inhabit. ...(Jack and Jordan, 1999 p. 243)*

They go on to outline who might benefit from strong social capital, and to issue a warning that it may not necessarily work for the common good.

*Social capital is produced through specific human interactions, and thus available only to members who share in certain ways of life (Jordan 1998a) and is freely available for the benefit of all members who take part in the community's interactions.... the beneficial effects of norms, traditions and networks of trust and co-operation are as accessible to rogues and confidence tricksters, fraudsters and felons, as they are to the sociable, active or altruistic members of that society whose interactions sustain it. (Jack and Jordan, 1999 p.243)*

A distinction is often made between bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 1995). Bonding refers to homogeneous horizontal ties with actors who share overlapping boundaries and similar moral values. Such networks enhance cohesion through a strong community-based environment and frequent face-to-face communication which enables social support to flourish. Bridging refers to open networks characterised by 'extra community' links across diverse social cleavages, facilitating inter-group understanding and relations. The more recent concept of linking social capital refers to those external resources that can be harnessed in support of strengthening bridging and bonding capital, and is central to health and wellbeing (Putnam, 2004).

The existence of social capital within a neighbourhood is one way in which families are regulated and sanctions applied to family members if they transgress local norms. Migrant families are particularly at risk of what Coleman (2000) describes as failing to achieve 'intergenerational closure', resulting in family conflict. Similarly in areas of rapidly increasing diversity i.e. both the localities of these projects), social capital and thereby social trust is threatened (Putnam, 2007) weakening community cohesion and threatening health.

Stores of social capital are said to enhance not only community cohesion but also health and wellbeing.

### **Wellbeing**

Kilroy (2005:7) draws on Ryff and Singer's work (1998) to suggest that well-being is best described as the "*presence of wellness, it is what it means to flourish and is about having a sense of purpose and direction in life, good quality relationships with others and opportunities to realise ones potential*" "By wellbeing, then, we mean more than satisfaction with life. Shah and Peck (2005:2) remind us:

.. people also want to be leading rich and fulfilling lives - developing their capabilities and fulfilling their potential.

For Shah and Peck, then, eudemonic wellbeing (personal development and fulfilment) is as important as hedonic wellbeing (satisfaction and happiness). Indeed this two dimensional approach to personal wellbeing forms the core of an influential *wellbeing manifesto for a flourishing society* (Shah and Marks, 2004).

Hedonic and eudemonic well being of people who live in urban areas are inseparable from

historical factors as well as people's economic positions, the environmental conditions in which they live and the political and ideological messages that define their life stages whilst enjoining them to break free and be active in their own lives. For both older people and young people, social responsibilities are closely linked to relevant social institutions (schools, pensions, public services etc). In other words, well-being in and of communities must be viewed in terms of human systems, not just as individual responses to circumstances.

### **Community wellbeing**

The concept of well-being *in* the community, and *of* the community is multifaceted (Kagan and Kilroy 2007). It variously includes those environmental factors that contribute to good standards of living, such as clean water, clean air and so on; demographic issues such as population decline or changes in divorce rates; economic issues such as poverty, loss of employment or income, or rapid social change leading to the development of new jobs; the provision and/or retrenchment of public services; educational opportunities and achievements; levels of crime and fear of crime; alcohol and drug use; significant life events; diet, food poverty and levels of obesity; perceived happiness, depression, stress and sense of fun. It is also closely linked to stigma and discrimination - for our purposes this might be due to skin colour, faith, migrant status, senior citizen or child status (Modood, 1997; Modood et al., 1997).

### **The Projects**

#### ***School project***

This project deploys older volunteers into schools to undertake a variety of different activities. A school based co-ordinator works in close liaison with community based volunteer co-ordinators in the same locality who in turn recruits and supports volunteers. One community co-ordinator will work with a clutch of schools - primary and secondary- in the locality. Volunteers in the schools take part in academic activities (hearing children read, helping with maths) as well as extra curricular activities (such as teaching new skills, running clubs) and other things in school (such as taking a school assembly). The benefits are to the pupils, the schools, the volunteers, the teachers, the school culture and to the schools' public engagement targets.

#### ***Families Project***

The families project arose out of previous work with families under stress and conflicts between African Muslim men and their sons was an emergent concern. Father and sons were brought together over a meal to take part in narrative workshops (Somali and Yemeni communities separately). Following this, the men and the boys identified further actions which included parenting workshops for fathers and the making of a magazine and a DVD for the sons. The benefits were anticipated to be for participating fathers and sons, as well as wider family and community members. In addition, community workers took part and it was expected that they too would benefit from participating.

### **Evaluation**

Each project underwent a mixed method qualitative evaluations, and details of the methods are available on request from the first author. Illustrations from interviews and focus

group discussions, as well as summaries of groupwork, undertaken as part of the evaluations form the basis of the extracts presented below.

## **Findings**

### **Family Project**

#### **Bonding social capital:**

*"I felt sad...it is hard for fathers" (S, flipchart content, concern narrative)*

*"the cultural and psychological effects struck me – I felt sympathetic and frustrated listening to sons story and how difficult his life was. It is painful to hear, I felt touched not realising how much the children suffer." (F, Yemeni Narrative Workshop)*

#### **Bridging social capital**

*"We could Visit the 'gap year' model – committing organisations to work with funding opportunities (maybe British Council) to send a group of young people to Yemen so they can contribute to Yemeni culture and learn from it" (Fathers, Yemeni Narrative Workshop).*

*"the lesson for me was that its encouraging to see young people not having these problems, are enabled to pass on this information to other young people. Conferences like these are like a mentor. Those people might not be here but young people can affect them with this information, this awareness" (Son, Yemeni Workshop).*

*"(Organising a) forum for fathers and sons ....if it does go well, we would like to follow up (around) the UK maybe even in the EU" (Sons, Somali Workshop)*

*"We are actually thinking of going to visit other Somali boys and Somali communities in Sheffield, Cardiff, and London and tell them what we've done!" (Sons during Magazine Group meeting)*

*"The idea of organising an awareness day for the social services is a good idea" (Son, Somali Workshop)*

*"Sons prefer class sessions with mainstream to learn Arabic in local areas rather to be segregated in Arabic school" (Father, Yemeni Workshop).*

#### **Linking social capital:**

*"Thank you for inviting me in this conference. I hope there will be many more including other cultures who are here (living in the UK) as well".*

*"It is an advantage to live in Liverpool – culture, history, It is an important city." (Yemeni Workshop)*

*in helping 'younger' generation to understand Somali culture, lots of work could be done." (Son, Narrative Workshop)*

*"Just as adults refer to their friends, so can young people refer to their friends when they have problems". (Son, Yemeni Narrative Workshop)*

### **Eudemonic well being**

*"Sons educated in UK a valuable resource to Yemen" (Father, Yemeni Narrative Workshop)*

*"....what tools fathers use (are) important..but maybe there is not enough education: ....a father may be pushing his son using the wrong tools." (F, flipchart content, concern narrative)*

*"(It is) important to follow up those ideas.We (would) be disappointed if these ideas (are) not implement(ed)" (Sons, Somali Narrative Workshop)*

*"This story is for a man who has been in the uk for 20 years but even people who have been here longer say 50 years can identify with it. The stories are very important for us as they highlight the values/challenges that fathers face. We hope that this is not the first or the last meeting" (Father, Yemeni Narrative Workshop).*

*"Parents have a duty in bring up their children& offer them different possibilities.....as I listened, I thought: am I an ideal father/parent?"*

*(Father, Yemeni Narrative Workshop)*

*"there is a lot to do....to build on today (visibly very emotional)" (Father, Yemeni Narrative Workshop)*

*"It was very useful to learn and to take this forward." (Father, Narrative Yemeni Workshop)*

### **Hedonic well being**

*"recognition from our sons for our hard work makes us feel appreciated"*

*(F, flipchart content, concern narrative)*

*"it.....brings hope because children understand us and respects and value what we are trying to do"(F, flipchart contents, solution focused narrative)*

### **Schools Project**

#### **Bonding Social capital**

Time with the volunteers gives children the opportunity to get on with and talk with their

friends as well as to get to know other children from other classes.

*Just getting to know other people as well because sometimes different people come from different classes so it's nice to sit down and talk to them as well. Because it's a quiet activity so then it's good to talk to different people as well so you feel more friendly. JS C*

*Also you get on with your friends because you can't argue in front of her or argue who's done the best cross stitch, so you can get on with your friends without having a row about who won and who didn't win and stuff. JS C*

*Volunteers enjoyed being recognised outside school.*

*Seeing children out of school (is good). Very often you see them giving you a big beaming smile as they're going past. V*

They benefited from the relationships more generally.

*I think you gain an awful lot, you're contributing. You're making little friends you're making some big friends. V*

*I would say the social interaction with the children. They like the children, they like going, it gets them out of the house, they feel as they're useful and we've never heard anybody who's said 'don't like it I'm not doing it' (Volunteer Coordinator talking of benefits to volunteers)*

### **Bridging capital - Breaking stereotypes -**

Children were able to tell how they changed their minds about older people as a result of their time with Intergen volunteers.

*I changed my mind [about older people] because I normally see old people very old so I didn't think of old people as Mrs X and Mrs Y. But when I saw them I changed my mind. ISc*

*I changed my mind because when I came to school and I saw them [the volunteers] I thought that if they're nice every old person could be nice and I changed my mind about [older people]. Isc*

Children were also to see things from older people's perspectives.

*I think they (volunteers) feel like they're on holiday and they just come here because everybody has to be very nice to them, not nice to the teachers, but sometimes they are. But every single time we are nice to them and I think they feel happy. ISc*

*(Volunteers) are very happy because they have a smile on their face...excited*



*because they like working with us...we're really kind to them ISc*

Volunteers would continue, the children said, 'because they want to continue having fun with us' and 'we make them happy'.

Teachers gained from the links and connections.

*It helps them (teachers) I think they feel they're not alone.. They're getting help from outside they're getting some support that encourages them., SC*

*They're so stressed. I think the teachers are so stressed with all the different things they've got to do, apart from teaching its the form filling and all this lot. Sometimes if they've got somebody to day 'come on you'll be alright'. We mother them! V.*

*Volunteers also brought in resources for schools to use (Linking capital).*

*The teacher's always so very busy that if you've time to spend with one child. I mean sometimes I've spent nearly half a day with one child. We had a little Ghanaian boy and he couldn't speak a word of English and so I spent the whole afternoon with pictures and telling him what they were. V*

*they haven't got the time to listen to the children read they've asked us to step in and do reading, like you do. V*

### **Eudeamonic wellbeing**

When asked what kept her going this volunteer talked of the challenge and being needed as well as the satisfaction gained.

I think now the kids need me and I don't want to let them down. It is a challenge you give something, it cost something but you get so much back and you just think its right to take part and contribute. The more you do, I do the week by week, you understand it more why you're there what you're doing and why its happening. V

Infant's school children, when asked about what they had learnt, generally referred directly to the activity such as 'how to make cakes and how to weigh'; how to weave and how to knit'. However some children also understood the broader implications of what they were being taught. When asked why the volunteers carried out their activities the following responses were obtained:

*To help us make things.*

*Because they might want to make us learn or making stuff.*

*They might want to be fun.*

*To make us get a bit more clever.*

*To make us know how you do things when you get older.*

#### **How?**

*When you get older you have to do stuff like that.*

#### **Like what?**

*Like to cook and you might you have different things that are broken like my teddy got broken.*

Junior school children identified a number of things they had learnt from their time with volunteers, including: communication; how to cross stitch; help with maths; cooking;

In addition to general satisfaction, volunteers learn and sometimes this can be transformative.

*You get satisfaction and so much change. I've come out even after an hour or half an hour and I've come out and I've been a different person than when I went in. It's almost sort of a bit of a challenge really. Because we get old and cynical, you do change. V*

*We forget the child that's inside us sometimes. You know the honesty and the innocence and the straightforwardness and that sort of point of view. V*

Volunteers learn new skills and new insights into their own capabilities, As one volunteer said, in relation to helping with class work:

The children like having me, I love having them. I love being with them.

*I've learnt an awful lot how to teach children numeracy. I did A'level maths but I couldn't ever remember how I first learnt any number work which changed anyway. So now I know lots of different ways of helping and teaching children. V*

### **Hedonic wellbeing**

Infants' school children enjoyed the activities with the Intergen volunteers, which included baking cakes, making chocolate crispies, bookmarks and friendship bracelets, doing sewing and holding a tea party.

#### ***What do you like best about things she does with you?***

*A: The thing I like the best is when they made like fairy cakes and crispy cakes with you and we had tea parties. I like everything about them!*

*B: Fun stuff.*

*C: Every single things!*

*D: The crispy cakes and the butterfly cakes because I like cakes!*

Furthermore the infant's school children said that they would feel 'sad', 'miserable', 'bored', 'lonely', 'unexcited', 'angry' if the volunteers were not in their classroom. When asked why they would feel like this, they said:

*A: I would feel sad because you'd have to do work all day in stead of doing really fun things on Tuesdays and Mrs – has lots of nice things like baking and cakes.*

*B: Because they were really helpful and nice to us.*

C: *Because I like working with them.*

D: *Because you can't make interesting stuff [if they're not in our class].*

*Secondary age children also gained a sense of pride and satisfaction in their achievements with the older volunteers.*

*You can do it for you parents if their birthday or its mothers' day...because when you finish it you feel really proud and you want to tell everybody. JS C*

Volunteers were thought to have gained in enjoyment and satisfaction according to a volunteer co-ordinator.

*I imagine all I would say is probably now,[there are] seventeen or eighteen happier, more contented, sounds a bit corny really, older people. Who are now doing things they didn't think they could do and they really enjoy it. VC1*

*let's look at the volunteers. I mean definitely an impact on their wellbeing. ... there was a volunteer who said, she wasn't in my area but she said to me because I met her socially, I said to her 'I hear that your working for [the p[roject] now as a volunteer' and she said 'yes, it's the best day of the week, I just love going in and helping with these young children'... there's no doubt that ... the impact ... on volunteers is very, very positive. VC3*

**How do intergenerational projects enhance community cohesion with social capital and wellbeing**

In both projects wellbeing and social capital was enhanced. It is clear though, that the particular intergenerational activities had a specific part to play in generating both social capital and wellbeing. The activities enabled participants to gain INSIGHT. Insight, that is, into self , the 'other' and self in relation to the other. We suggest a process through which wellbeing and social capital are both generated and linked together by insight into self and the other (see Figure 1). It is the intergenerational activities that have stimulated insight: without this insight there would be nothing to link wellbeing and social capital, and no clear indication that the intergenerational work had contributed to cohesion.

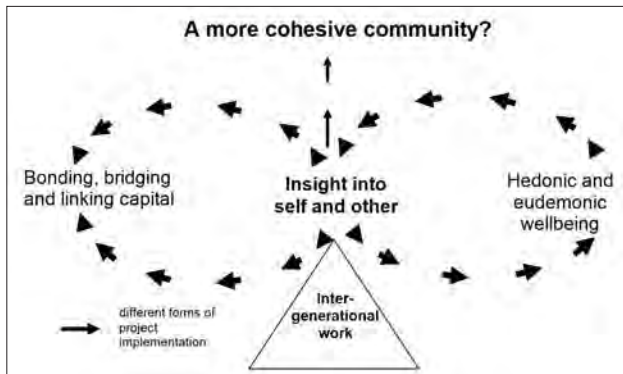


Figure 1: Intergenerational work and the stimulation of wellbeing, social capital and community cohesion

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## On the spirit of community psychology: One personal story

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I believe there is some value in thinking about how to create emotional and intellectual resources to anchor, enhance and evolve our spirit when doing the work of community psychology.

When beginning our careers our families, social networks, mentors and senior colleagues often are sources of strength, support and feedback that are fundamental for us to keep our spirits. When we begin our newly created professional roles, to make our way, it is largely up to us to create our own support systems to sustain our spirit. Our family and social networks, colleagues and students may be at our side but it is ourselves who are challenged to experience personally the places in which we work.

To the extent that being a community psychologist is a marginal activity within the larger profession of psychology there maybe fewer opportunities to receive validation and the respect we appreciate from colleagues. Creating personal resources for myself has been pivotal to my own efforts to maintain and enlarge my spirit.

These five people through their words and deeds helped me to continue on my search for what I believed was my emerging career. They inspired me to keep at it. They still do.

Personal resources and constraints within your own communities maybe quite different from mine. So, I am very pleased that there will be contemporary voices contributing to this discussion.

First, something of the context of my graduate education. When I was in graduate school at the University of Texas in the mid 1950's, most faculty, both explicitly and implicitly, communicated that the good and true psychologist did experiments and basic research and did not do applied investigations or work directly with citizens as equal participants. There were some notable exceptions like Ira Iscoe, Lou Moran and Wayne Holtzman who told me that a psychologist did not need to restrict oneself to be only the detached observer. I COULD be accepted among psychologists when I worked directly with citizens as co investigators.

As I thought of myself as a different psychologist I did not begin this developmental process with much clarity or self-confidence. I had a silent angst that I would be perceived as incorrect, second-class, deviant or an embarrassment to my self or my former teachers.

This process of identifying personal resources became a life long expedition.

These five persons' writings and presence made a substantial impact on my spirit. They are a psychiatrist, anthropologist, psychologist, philosopher, and a poet.

I have had the very good fortune to meet some of these persons. Others I know only from their writings.

### **Erich Lindemann, Psychiatrist (1900-1974)**

In 1958 I began a post-doctoral fellowship with Erich Lindemann of Harvard Medical School. Ten years before he had created a multidisciplinary mental health clinic in the town of

Wellesley Massachusetts which became a pioneering preventive service, fourteen years before the national community mental health movement. Both the model and Erich's own informal style and personality of being creative without being pompous and being a great listener and supportive person encouraged me to believe that I could develop a career as a psychologist working in the community.

The presence of active people from different professions in Wellesley and Boston excited me about the prospects of working collaboratively with citizens. I was fortunate to have this watershed experience immediately after receiving the PhD.

Those two years were essential years for I discovered a new paradigm in public health with its preventive and community based traditions. My spirit was soaring. I found an intellectual home that was far beyond the niches of psychology at the time. It is not only Erich alone but also the settings he created in Wellesley and the Medical School that congealed my identity.

I was at the right place at the right time and had the rare privilege of being mentored by a creative and supportive person who encouraged me to create my own ideas.

30 years later in talking with his widow I learned of the political and personal costs he suffered within his medical and psychiatric community because of his steadfast values to work collaboratively with social scientists and citizens. At the time to do this was heresy. This knowledge endeared him even more.

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### **Ed Wellin, Anthropologist (1917-)**

In the spring of 1960, during the second post-doctoral year at the Harvard School of Public Health I enrolled in a course taught by the anthropologist Ben Paul (1911-2005). We read "Water Boiling in a Peruvian Town" a report of a two-year research project by the anthropologist Ed Wellin published in 1955. Wellin presented a beautiful example of how it was necessary for Wellin and a rural hygiene worker to immerse themselves into the village to understand the complexities of the social fabric of this small community of 200 households. He wanted to understand why certain persons took the health-engendering step to boil water to lower the incidence of typhoid fever while others did not. Wellin was an active listener and intrepid participant in the cultures of the smaller sub communities within this already small community.

One of his findings was that in this Peruvian town children were the most frequent water carriers from the nearest stream. Males and females of courtship age and married men did not carry water according to local norms and traditions. Wellin also learned that the acceptable times to boil water was after breakfast and after the noon meal; another ecological constraint.

I learned that, there was a complexity within small communities that could not be understood if one was pre-occupied with being an objective, detached, uninvolved scientist.

Understanding class and heritage was learned AFTER respect from the various sub communities was obtained.

The improvised methods employed by Wellin were inspiring. He revealed the nascent quality of the town. My spirit was up lifted when I read about the insights of Wellin's immersion and the processes of his building trust.

One of his major findings was that when stimulating an innovation in a community it is essential to create cordial and trusting personal relationships between the researcher and the community. This was essential! Today, this is a truism but back then it was a very provocative and even radical insight.

The significance of Wellin's work was that although the efforts to have citizens boil water had limited success it was the elegant analysis of the villagers and their various contexts that helped explain the determinants of their behavior. Wellin grappled directly to understand the everyday issues of people.

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### **Roger Barker, Psychologist (1903-1990)**

Barker spent his entire career (1947-1972) documenting the social settings of a small Kansas town, Oskaloosa by name. What he did was document the places where the residents spent their lives. He discovered that places taken for granted and not thought about much were in fact the primary ways in which the town was a viable social system. Settings like "Household Auction Sale" and "High School Boys Basketball Game", "Restaurants & Diners", "Drugstores" & "Garages" defined the town. He and his colleagues' convictions and ingenuity to create methods to document these settings plus his unyielding courage to document places, not people alone, had an inspiring impact. I hoped that I too could move beyond the psychopathology of persons.

One of his later achievements was to conduct a comparative study of the public settings of Oskaloosa and a comparative town in North Yorkshire England ten years apart. One of the stimulating findings was that over the ten-year period Oskaloosa was expanding the number of settings for adolescents; Oskaloosa was more involved in generating activities for adolescents. In Yordale, in contrast, settings were found to be often on the streets and sidewalks. This type of analysis encouraged me to think about the qualities of settings and their influence on community life.

Barker was not one to publish discrete studies but waited until he had a grasp of the complexities of the town of then some 1,000 people. He lived in the town. No doubt he and his wife's presence as residents helped his research to be accepted and added to the clarity of his interpretations of the richness of the settings.



Barker's work was a compelling example of actually studying places and raising the then novel idea that not only qualities of individuals but qualities of places gave insights and knowledge not thought about before.

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### **Ludwig wittgenstein (1889-1951)**

The writings of Wittgenstein were like finding a soul mate.

He had written a book in the trenches of World War I that was quickly revered by the newly forming logical positivists. Logical Positivists had much influence on psychology especially during the 1920's through 1950's. Their premise was that if a concept could not be empirically verified it did not exist.

As soon as Wittgenstein was going to be greeted as an intellectual leader for the group he rejected their tribute and refuted his earlier work. He then went on a constant journey throughout his life to develop another perspective that questioned his own prior work. The content of his ideas and his intellectual toughness, courage and conscience impressed me.

I also liked his way of living. He did not accept his part of the family fortune and was not enamored by professional philosophy. I liked the creative independence of his ideas and his spirit. A remark that he made when referring to someone who was notably generous or kind or honest was "He is a HUMAN being".

I noted that he could whistle long passages of music from Memory. I aspired to do that. He designed a house for his sister down to the doorknobs. I could not do that.

He believed that the meaning of concepts was due to the forms of life in which they were embedded. An ecological premise. He also believed that a result of philosophical thinking was: NOT a truth discovered but a confusion dissolved.

He was a fresh voice that encouraged my hope to create my own work and not be trapped by tradition or custom or the dominant paradigm. He fueled my hopes to continue on my own journey to break new ground. He became a favorite invisible uncle.

On my home page I have a Wittgenstein quote:

"We feel that even when all POSSIBLE scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched".

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### **William Stafford (1914-1993)**

When I was at the University of Oregon in the mid 1970's I went to a meeting of professors

advocating more community involvement. The poet William Stafford was there. He did not speak except a few words at the very end when he wondered out loud if it was not also important to stay at home and be with family and kin. I was surprised. He then read a poem. After the meeting I told him that it was a wonderful poem. Could I have a copy? He handed me the hand written lines as a gift. I was stunned. It was then that I began to learn about this Poet Laureate of Oregon who was on the faculty of Lewis and Clark College in Portland.

He was a conscientious objector during World War II. He wrote over fifteen books in his poetry career. He said " I think you create a good poem by revising your life."

I will read the first four lines of one of his poems: "A Ritual To Read To Each Other". It was included in his first published book of poems "West of Your City" in 1960 when he was 46 years old.

"If you don't know the kind of person I am  
and I don't know the kind of person you are  
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world  
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star".

Those four lines anchored my search for a collaborative research style especially for the ten years of work with African American community leaders in Chicago in the 1990's. That poem affirmed my inchoate conviction to listen, learn and try to understand the concerns and hopes of these leaders .I was sustained by the commitment of the community leaders and retained in my memory Stafford's poem.

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## **Conclusion**

These five persons were mighty sources for my spirit.

Through their work, their persistence, their courage and their willingness to go beyond tradition inspired my own efforts to set out in my own direction. They each were persons who made a big difference in how I thought and how I proceeded and how I then made my way.

They are specific of course to my being born and coming of age when I did. They helped me in my varied settings and in my travails to keep exploring my ideas and testing them when there was often small support for them until later in my career. Without these people and others like them it is uncertain if I could have continued my work with élan and if my spirit could have been buoyant enough to carry through what has become a most satisfying series of expeditions in community psychology.

I very much look forward to hear from others on your efforts to contain and enhance your own spirit for community psychology.

# Homeless and community-less: an action-research

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## Abstract

*The major reasons and causes for homelessness as documented by many reports and studies (Main, 1998; Acosta, Toro, 2000) include: lack of affordable housing; substance abuse and lack of needed services; mental illness and lack of needed services; domestic violence; poverty, caused by many factors; prison release and re-entry into society; lack of affordable healthcare; natural disaster.*

*The project "La strada non è sola via" (The street is not the only way) realized one comprehensive system to manage the services for the homeless, their benefits, and their reintegration in to society. We recommend move towards a fully integrated system which would make delivering benefits and getting people off the streets more cost effective.*

*It has been reported that the types of assistance homeless adults felt they needed most were help finding a job, help finding affordable housing, and help paying for housing. However, the main types of assistance they usually received were clothing, transportation and help with public benefits.*

*Most people become homeless specifically because they are having a housing crisis, even though they may have other needs for services and increased incomes. It's important to realize that their needs are best met once the family is in permanent housing - not while they are in transitional housing or shelters. Housing must be first if they are expected to develop a sustainable, healthy lifestyle.*

*Key words:* homelessness, street, intervention, empowerment.

## 1. Introduction

There are several terms used in literature nowadays to indicate people without house and living on the street, such as tramp, clochard, homeless; these terms that even if referring to the same subject, spread however a different meaning. The difference between the English expressions houseless and homeless is also interesting. With the term "houseless", we usually refer to the lack of a house; with "homeless" instead we refer not only to the lack of a house but also to the lack of an environment of life, a shelter and the subsequent development of the self and own affective relationships.

An interesting result comes out from different researches (Bates, Toro, 1999; Dunlap, Fogel, 1998): homelessness is a mainly urban phenomenon. In fact, while in the country the stronger presence of solidarity networks and social control diminishes the emergence of kinds of anomy and deviance, the city itself causes poverty and the losing of social relationships (Augè, 1992; Barnao, 2004). In particular, as in the Italian context, most of homeless are in the big cities of the centre and northern Italy, while in the small and medium centres of southern Italy, they would be few.

General traits of such phenomenon, measured on an international dimension and those

more specific relevant to the Italian case are: a general tendency to the subject's self-isolation with particular regard to the primary social network; a strong correlation among the lack of a home, unemployment and the impact of chronic-degenerative diseases; a progressive departure from productive reality, a widespread marginality (Bonadonna, 2005; Caritas Ambrosiana, 1996).

In the homeless' perception we can find an alteration both the time and the space.

Regarding the time, the daily time seems a fight, a continuous struggle to obtain the minimum necessary conditions for survival. Maybe this can be explained because in the homeless' life the day is the only temporal scanning; for all of us, on the contrary, there are working hours, weekly timetables, yearly deadlines, spare time, and so on. Time in the street is made up of boredom, apathy, empty moments or long waitings (waiting for the dormitory to open, waiting for a bench to be free, waiting to gather something to eat). For this reason, boundaries between past and present fade away, memories mix with present experiences, and without a chronological order, the sense of own history is lost.

As regards the space, instead the urban space is mapped according to the distribution of supplies, so creates itineraries that will be walked down cyclically every day. Further more, these people act in public places as in a private one, showing a total lack of decency.

The reality of interventions in Italy can be summarized into three kinds of services (Guidicini, Pieretti, Bergamaschi, 2000; Lavanco, Romano, Messina, Croce, 2007).

A first typology of services concerns the satisfaction of primary needs such as food or a shelter for the night.

A second typology is oriented to the homeless' mental health, with the intent to provide a pharmacological therapy.

A third type of services intends to offer both help for primary needs and a psychiatric treatment; the aim is to contribute both improving the homeless' mental health and favoring the social integration in a general project of social rehabilitation.

## **2. The street is not the only way**

The project "The street is not the only way" was realized in Palermo in the years 2004-2007 by some social private associations. The project originates from an experience of nightly community service, of relief aid for homeless people; this experience, born to satisfy primary needs in the coldest months, offered to welcomed people meaningful relationships with operators and the possibility to suppose together with them some ways of change.

Considering the homeless ones don't use to go to the community services, because they have many difficulties linked to a lack of information or to mistrust, we supposed and testify a project of "Street psychology" addressed to homeless people with mental disorders. To carry out this project, operators used to go to the train-stations and to the streets where they could have met potential users.

The project develops towards the building of a street-unit, which is the expression of the effort of going towards users and not just waiting for their arrival. It was also possible to realize a descriptive research to understand the needs of homeless people, to develop a systematic list of needs.

### 3. Participants

During the project operators met 126 homeless people. 15 were women, 38 were immigrants (11 of them were found without residence permits). The period of “contact” ranged from 3 days to 14 months, with obvious differences both in collecting information and in the real configuration of needs. For this reason we decided to use the information about only 66 individuals, whose period of contact was included between 3 and 14 months.

The average age of the involved group is about 47 with a standard deviation of 8,3 years. The 21,1% are single, 65,4% are married, 4,5% are separated or divorced, 4,5% are widows; for the remaining 4,5% it wasn't possible to gather precise information. 44 of them declared to have children. As regards the educational level, only 13 gave indications on the primary school course, 8 gave indications on the lower middle school course, 4 gave indications about the completion of upper secondary school, 1 stated he had got a degree in philosophy (as confirmed by the family); 51 stated they had done some jobs even if they didn't always have a working contract.

### 4. Results and conclusions

The project mapped the different approaches to help homeless, to move of refuges for the homeless: *Outdoors*: On the ground or in a sleeping bag, tent, or improvised shelter, such as a large cardboard box, in a park or vacant lot; *Shantytowns*: Ad hoc campsites of improvised shelters and shacks, usually near rail yards; *Derelict structures*: abandoned or condemned houses or buildings, abandoned cars, and beached boats, generally referred to as squatting; *Vehicles*: cars or trucks are used as a temporary or sometimes long-term living refuge; *Public places*: parks, bus or train stations, airports, public transportation vehicles, hospital lobbies or waiting areas, college campuses, and 24-hour businesses such as coffee shops; *City run homeless shelters* such as emergency cold-weather shelters opened by churches or community agencies.

A psychological health care for the homeless is topic of project with integrate system outdoor and indoor.

The researcher attempts to make a distinction between: 1) why homelessness exists, in general, and 2) who is at-risk of homelessness, in specific. Homelessness has always existed since urbanization and industrialization.

Various assertive outreach approaches, including a mental health treatment approach known as community treatment, have shown promise in the prevention of homelessness among people with serious mental illness.

Table 1 briefly describes the users' typology.

**Table 1** – *Users' typology.*

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Nr of Subjects</b>	<b>Requests</b>	<b>Resistances</b>
Users with records of documented psycho-pathologic troubles.	16	Food-clothes-pharmacological help.	Spend the night in the centre; telling one's own story.
Users with records of self-ascribed psychopathological troubles.	5	Food-Clothes	Spend the night in the centre give indications on one's availability.
Users with alcohol addiction	14	Food-Clothes-Liqueurs- Money to buy them	Comply with the request of abstinence if they sleep in the centre.
Users with tobacco addiction.	41	Food-Cigarettes- Money to buy them.	Fix periodical meetings.
Users with no family –units.	49	Food- Clothes- Looking after	Spend the night in the centre; fix periodical meetings.
Users with records of drug addiction.	7	Food- Pharmacological help	Fix periodical meetings; telling one's own story.
Users with alternation of admission to hospital	45	Food-Clothes-Help during admission to hospital.Pharmacological help.	None
Users with records of detention and crimes against the person.	9	Food-Money-Help	Fix periodical meetings.
Users with unused domicile.	6	Food-Clothes- To be left on the street.	Give indications on one's availability.
Users with no domicile entrusted to Social services.	36	Food-Clothes- Being accompanied to services-pharmacological help.	None
Migrant users with no fixed abode because sent away from their birthplace..	22	Food Clothes Not to be sent to their birthplace.	Spend the night in the centre- Telling their own story.
Users meeting family members occasionally.	10	Being able to wash and dress before the meeting- Food-Have a space where they can meet them.	Give indications on one's availability.
Users refusing to meet their family.	35	Food-Clothes-To be left alone- No mortification of the family- No organization of meetings.	Spend the night in the centre- Socialization Telling one's own story.
Users living in the railway station or thereabouts.	20	Food-Clothes-Cartons	Confrontation with others- Refusal of involving their fellow creatures.
Users living in the street, far from the railway-station.	37	Food-Clothes ( particularly shoes )-Possibility of temporary admission.	Fix periodical meetings- Give indications on one's availability.
Users living in public parks.	6	Food- Second-hand clothes- A warm place during particularly cold nights.	Spend the night in the centre- Telling one's own story.
Users living together with others with no fixed abode.	4	Food- Pharmacological help	Telling one's own story-

Requests often regard food, clothes, and other material things. While, as regards resistances, participants show resistances to give indications about their availability, to meet their family, to talk about themselves, socialization.

In the future it will be better to investigate further these variables in order to plan useful strategies of intervention.

We conclude with a summarizing outline of suggestions which came out of the action-research. To better understand homeless needs, we asked themselves operative indications.

Consistently to previous results, as the table 2 shows, the main demands concerned the distribution of medicine and clothes, but also psychological help, such as more occasions to be listened, talking about own history. The highest percentage regards more help on the street; this result shows that the intervention on the street is the best one to diminish the distance between services and homeless people.

**Table 2** - Operative indications emerged from the research-intervention<sup>1</sup>

Indications of improvement	%
Enhancement of personal story	18
More information	13,5
More help on the street	40,5
Greater presence during cold nights	4,5
More numerous collection and help-points	9
Shorter distance between the centre and some areas	4,5
More distribution of clothes	13,5
More distribution of medicines	36
More numerous occasions of listening	18

A first step towards homeless' empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990) confirmed by our contribution should be to avoid labelling homeless people using a negative term like homeless and so to understand that the loss of the house is an experience attributing common traits to these individuals. The improving of empowerment in these individuals doesn't mean to persuade them to change completely their life (Tsemberis, 1999; Friedman, Levine-Holdowsky, (1997); they could rather continue to stay on the street, but to increase their own personal power and their possibility of being "nomadic people" within shared spaces.

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# Experiencias colaborativas de movilización hacia la responsabilidad social universitaria

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## Resumen

*La realidad social contemporánea evidencia la necesidad de desarrollar propuestas teórico-metodológicas que contribuyan a resolver problemáticas sociales y promuevan el bienestar. Particularmente, las universidades requieren estrategias para el trabajo con grupos rurales y urbanos mediante programas promotores de nuevos profesionales que funjan como facilitadores del desarrollo social. El objetivo del presente trabajo es presentar una experiencia colaborativa e interdisciplinaria de coordinadores de las unidades universitarias de inserción social (UUIS) de la Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY), para construir un modelo de trabajo en comunidad. Ello deriva de un proyecto de Investigación Acción Participativa enfocado a construir una propuesta teórico-metodológica para el trabajo de las UUIS. Los resultados evidencian que el trabajo interdisciplinario construye espacios para compartir experiencias, discutir las fortalezas/debilidades y el potencial e impacto social de la universidad, establece necesidades de capacitación, así como acciones y estrategias de difusión en cumplimiento de la integración de las funciones sustantivas universitarias.*

Palabras clave: interdisciplina, trabajo colaborativo, praxis comunitaria

## Introducción

La realidad social contemporánea evidencia la necesidad de desarrollar propuestas teórico-metodológicas que contribuyan a la resolución de problemáticas sociales y la promoción del bienestar. En este contexto, el papel de las universidades y los profesionales que en ellas laboran cobra gran importancia para el logro de la formación integral de futuros profesionales, la generación y aplicación del conocimiento pertinente socialmente y el cumplimiento de la responsabilidad social universitaria.

Así, el carácter profesional de la educación implica un proceso formativo que incorpore el avance y actualización a través de la generación y validación de nuevos conocimientos y su aplicación a los campos profesionales en evolución continua. El carácter abierto a todos los campos del conocimiento y a todos los sectores de la sociedad implica la complementariedad y la dilución de fronteras entre profesiones y la expansión de la oferta educativa, así como la necesidad de cubrir el horizonte social en la aplicación del propio conocimiento. Esto debido a que el desarrollo equitativo de la sociedad requiere del concurso de todas las profesiones y su dirección prioritaria hacia los sectores menos favorecidos.

Por otra parte, los programas y proyectos de praxis comunitaria pueden representar

espacios en los que los diversos actores universitarios pueden establecer diversas modalidades de interacción con actores sociales extra universitarios. En estas interacciones se incide en dos dimensiones del hacer universitario: en primer término, la cobertura de sus funciones rebasa sus fronteras físicas y sociales, definiendo y ocupando escenarios reales en la ejecución de sus tareas académicas. En segundo lugar, promueve desarrollo con acciones sociales específicas de las que derivan, además de aprendizajes y productos académicos, diagnósticos, proyectos y actividades comunitarias con grupos en situación de vulnerabilidad. Por añadidura, las interacciones sociales que se desarrollan en los programas y proyectos de praxis comunitaria pueden constituir demostraciones vivas de la pertinencia de los programas y de la universidad misma, en la definición de necesidades de grupos sociales claramente identificados, en el diseño y ejecución de acciones de intervención y evaluación de programas sociales.

En este sentido y en respuesta a estas necesidades, la Ley Orgánica de la Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán [UADY] (01/09/84, *Título 2, art. 5, Título 4, art. 15, fracc. III*) establece que su finalidad es educar formando profesionales, investigadores y maestros universitarios de acuerdo con las necesidades económicas, sociales y políticas de la entidad, región y nación. También debe generar conocimiento mediante el fomento y la realización de investigación científica y humanística y difundir cultura mediante la extensión de los beneficios de la cultura a la sociedad. Dentro de este marco institucional, existe la preocupación universitaria de contribuir a elaborar e implementar propuestas alternativas de desarrollo humano sustentable, con metas de largo plazo, para lo cual concibe a la educación dentro de un modelo de desarrollo sustentable que implica garantizar la calidad de sus procesos y productos, respetar la diversidad cultural, establecer nuevas relaciones del hombre con la naturaleza y tener sensibilidad a los problemas de pobreza (material, intelectual y ética). Para ello, no puede pensarse en la formación académica como algo puramente profesional; es preciso proporcionar una formación integral y humanista que debe balancear aprendizajes que permitan el desarrollo individual, social, económico y ecológico.

Es así que la UADY tiene un reto: ha de enfrentar su responsabilidad social como universidad pública mediante acciones universitarias de calidad: *pertinentes* (que exista relación entre el proceso formativo y las necesidades y demandas de grupos sociales definidos), *eficientes* y encaminadas a lograr el *impacto educativo* (formación integral) y la *trascendencia de la institución* (desarrollo humano sustentable). Para tener éxito en este expresa académica como universidad pública ha desarrollado una estrategia: las UNIDADES UNIVERSITARIAS DE INSERCIÓN SOCIAL (UUIS) ubicadas en diferentes puntos del estado de Yucatán, que buscan contribuir a dicha labor mediante el trabajo en sustentabilidad, educación y salud con grupos comunitarios, rurales y urbanos, en situación de vulnerabilidad y que en un principio han sido definidas por una comisión del Colegio de Directores de la universidad como:

“Escenarios reales de aprendizaje para el desarrollo de competencias profesionales y personales que permitan la operacionalización del modelo educativo y académico en ambientes que propicien el análisis interdisciplinario y se realice investigación participativa en torno a las necesidades sociales”.

A la fecha existe la necesidad de desarrollar acciones que promuevan y faciliten el trabajo de dichos espacios, de manera que su labor verdaderamente impacte y contribuya al desarrollo sustentable de la región. Como parte de este proceso de desarrollo se ha trabajado en un proyecto de investigación aplicada, bajo un enfoque de Investigación Acción Participativa (Ander-Egg, 1990;

Balcazar, Taylor, Kielhofner, Tamley, Benzinger, Carlin & Johnson, 2006) denominado Propuesta metodológica para el desarrollo de las Unidades Universitarias de Inserción Social, que tiene como objetivos específicos construir un concepto colectivo y plural de las UUIS, establecer las consideraciones operativas, las características académico-administrativas, así como los recursos existentes y necesarios para el desarrollo de las UUIS. Su primera fase consistió en la elaboración del diagnóstico situacional de cinco UUIS y dos de los principales programas de praxis comunitaria que desarrolla la UADY; todo ello con la finalidad de que a partir de la experiencia existente se conceptualice de manera colectiva y plural lo que deben ser las UUIS con el propósito último de construir una propuesta metodológica para su desarrollo como una opción para contribuir a la formación integral y promover la responsabilidad social universitaria. Son algunos de los resultados obtenidos en la fase diagnóstica los que se presentan en el presente trabajo.

### **Método**

Así, de manera particular, este trabajo tiene como objetivo presentar parte de la experiencia de investigación diagnóstica consistente en la realización del diagnóstico comunitario participativo con coordinadores de las UUIS y de los programas de praxis comunitaria y discutir su experiencia de trabajo colaborativo interdisciplinario, desarrollado con la finalidad de construir un modelo de trabajo colaborativo promotor de la responsabilidad social y la formación integral de acción y propuestas de trabajo colectivas.

De manera general, en la fase diagnóstica se utilizaron técnicas como entrevistas semiestructuradas, visitas *in situ*, grupos focales, análisis documentales y talleres participativos, siendo particularmente de éstos últimos de los cuales derivan los resultados aquí presentados. De manera específica, este tipo de talleres pretenden la reflexión de un tema de manera sencilla, simple y entretenida (CEDEPO, 1996). Se realizan mediante actividades con grupos pequeños en las cuales se posibilita que las personas participantes expresen sus opiniones y/o formas de sentir respecto a la temática abordada, en un clima relajado, divertido y libre de evaluación. Esto significa partir de lo que la gente sabe, vive y siente, procurando conocer situaciones de su vida que ejemplifiquen lo compartido. Es un proceso sistemático y progresivo que va al ritmo de los participantes y en el que lo que más se valora es la participación, la habilidad para negociar y resolver problemas de la mejor manera y con el menor riesgo de pérdida de la estabilidad emocional. El proceso permite teorizar sobre las prácticas con la idea de poder regresar a ella para mejorarla (CEDEPO, 1996). Es importante recordar que este tipo de técnica no es una herramienta de uso aislado, que se aplican mecánicamente pues de hacerlo así es posible que se generen conflictos entre los participantes, o que se vuelva un espacio de mera diversión, no logrando así los objetivos propuestos (Vargas Vargas y Bustillos, 1997). Es por ello que se procura su uso como un todo integrado a partir de un eje rector que permita darle coherencia; además, suele acompañarse con técnicas adicionales como la entrevista y el análisis documental, como fue en el caso del presente proyecto.

En un primer taller participativo se utilizaron técnicas como el mapeo (cómo conciben su escenario actual de praxis), priorizadora (principales preocupaciones y problemas en el trabajo cotidiano por importancia y frecuencia), telaraña (fortalezas y debilidades) y la elaboración de la UUIS ideal (caracterización ideal de un programa de praxis comunitaria). Los siguientes talleres estuvieron constituidos por sesiones colectivas de trabajo donde se elaboró un FODA (fortalezas, oportunidades, debilidades y amenazas) común, delimitación de líneas de acción y ejes de

trabajo conjunto. El objetivo general del trabajo colaborativo fue analizar y discutir las líneas teóricas-metodológicas de cada UUI con la finalidad de construir un modelo de trabajo común, integrado, universitario, con líneas de acción que faciliten el avance de todas ellas, aprovechando las fortalezas y las experiencias de cada programa; así como operacionalizar acciones que permitan el cumplimiento e integración de las funciones sustantivas en diferentes escenarios, con impacto social a nivel estatal. La metodología empleada permitió desarrollar un trabajo colectivo-participativo continuo que ha favorecido el reconocimiento, la identidad y compromiso grupal, el compartir saberes generados en las comunidades, así como plantear líneas de acción y propuestas de trabajo colectivas.

### **Resultados**

Los principales resultados descritos a continuación apuntan a que si bien los y las participantes han tenido experiencias de praxis comunitaria distintas espacial y temporalmente, comparten diversos elementos y circunstancias sobre los cuales es preciso trabajar de manera consciente ya sea para fortalecerlas o modificarlas, según sea el caso, sobre todo considerando la existencia de un genuino interés por el trabajo colaborativo.

En cuanto a la forma como conciben su escenario actual de praxis, el mapeo reportó que los diferentes programas cuentan con espacios muy diversos. Unos cuentan con dos escenarios para su desempeño; esto es, un lugar para la planeación y otro, en comunidades, donde se realiza el trabajo de acción. Estos están, en su mayoría, ubicados en zonas del interior del Estado o en poblaciones con características que presentan pobreza o cierto grado de marginación. Otros programas, en cambio, cuentan con escenarios que tienen las dos funciones: de planeación y de intervención; es decir, es en el mismo sitio donde se llevan a cabo ambas actividades.

Respecto a los espacios de trabajo la mayoría de los programas señalaron que la infraestructura con la que cuentan y los recursos materiales y físicos que tienen son en mínimo suficientes para llevar a cabo las actividades de planeación, retroalimentación y evaluación del programa. Sin embargo, en el escenario de acción esto varía, pues algunos cuentan con espacios definidos para trabajar; es decir, tienen el lugar, los recursos y los espacios necesarios para realizar sus actividades. Sin embargo, para otros los espacios son muy variables dada la misma naturaleza de sus actividades o las características propias de las comunidades donde se insertan.

Es importante señalar que todos los programas señalaron la existencia de espacios significativos que les permiten interacción, intercambio y convivencia entre estudiantes de diversas disciplinas, docentes y la misma comunidad. Estos espacios son aquellos lugares formales de reunión tales como las salas de junta y salas de organización y los espacios informales como los parques, pasillos y la cocina del lugar donde tienen su base de trabajo. Explicaron que son significativos debido a que consideran que son espacios en donde se comparten las experiencias de trabajo, se intercambian opiniones, se discuten y analizan propuestas, se toman decisiones, se da retroalimentación o simplemente se mantienen conversaciones informales que también son sumamente productivas pues repercuten en aspectos de trabajo o en la integración social del grupo.

Las principales preocupaciones y problemas en el trabajo cotidiano (por importancia y frecuencia) fue posible averiguarlas mediante la herramienta priorizadora. En términos generales destacaron como necesidades más severas el lograr contar con planes de estudio para diferentes disciplinas que realmente incluyan aspectos de trabajo comunitario pues éste se presenta de

manera muy incipiente en los contenidos académicos. De este modo, no existe una congruencia entre la formación en el aula y lo que requieren aplicar los y las estudiantes en el contexto de trabajo comunitario. Además, la estructura académica de enseñanza es muy disciplinar por lo que el trabajo interdisciplinario se dificulta y son pocos los espacios para que los y las estudiantes puedan reflexionar y analizar de manera compartida los aprendizajes y experiencias que están adquiriendo de la comunidad de modo que puedan construir un trabajo colaborativo. Otro problema importante es la falta de involucramiento y reconocimiento institucional que deriva en que la institución se mantenga al margen del trabajo realizado y se tiene poca comunicación con las facultades. Todo esto deriva en el poco interés de los y las docentes y estudiantes en cuanto al trabajo comunitario pues tiene poca o nula retribución académica.

Por otro lado, entre los problemas más frecuentes destacan la insuficiencia de personal para el trabajo comunitario y se tienen pocos asesores académicos que supervisen o retroalimenten el trabajo realizado en campo. Se requiere mayor capacitación para el personal existente. Además, existe la falta de tiempo para realizar acciones de vinculación intra e interinstitucional del programa, es poca la difusión de los programas, los recursos económicos para financiar estudiantes son escasos, y éstos estudiantes carecen de tiempo para realizar las actividades en escenarios reales dadas las características de currícula poco flexibles que obstaculizan la posibilidad del trabajo *in situ*.

La telaraña y el análisis FODA evidenciaron que las fortalezas comunes a todos los programas son fundamentalmente el conocimiento que tienen de las comunidades, el compromiso y la experiencia por parte de los equipos de trabajo. Sin embargo, se evidencian diferencias en cuanto a otras fortalezas. Así, existen programas que cuentan con un modelo teórico-metodológico de trabajo, capacitación continua, infraestructura, equipamiento, liderazgo regional, vinculación y reconocimiento nacional e internacional, mientras que otros todavía tienen que trabajar al respecto.

En cuanto a las debilidades, la más frecuente y común ha sido la falta de personal o la inestabilidad laboral del mismo, además de la falta de un trabajo conjunto y comunicación entre los diferentes programas, así como la falta de difusión de sus resultados. Por otro lado, la falta de sistematización de los programas es una debilidad común que se produce ante el desconocimiento de cómo llevar a cabo esta tarea y la falta de asesoría para desarrollar el trabajo. Otras de las debilidades que han impactado el trabajo de praxis comunitaria realizada por algunos de los programas ha sido la falta de recursos económicos para el mantenimiento de equipos y el desarrollo de actividades, la falta de mecanismos de evaluación, así como la falta de capacitaciones administrativas y programas sistematizados de actividades.

Con toda la información generada mediante la telaraña, análisis FODA y priorizadora, se concentraron las fortalezas y debilidades en las siguientes áreas: equipo de trabajo, capacitación, funciones sustantivas, desarrollo de competencias profesionales, gestión y vinculación, infraestructura, estructura organizacional, evaluación y sistematización e impacto en el desarrollo comunitario, cuyo resumen se presenta en la tabla 1

Tabla 1. Fortalezas y debilidades por área

	<b>Fortalezas</b>	<b>Debilidades</b>
Equipo de trabajo	Equipo coordinador con experiencia en el área. Equipo interdisciplinario comprometido y satisfecho. Participación de estudiantes a través de diversas modalidades.	Insuficiente personal, inestabilidad laboral, exceso de trabajo y falta de reconocimiento institucional. Falta de asesores-académicos comprometidos y capacitados. Dificultades para el trabajo interdisciplinario. Falta de perfiles profesionales para el trabajo comunitario.
Capacitación	Personal capaz de generar procesos de capacitación en: IAP, Planeación Estratégica, Desarrollo comunitario, entre otros.	Limitaciones en la comunicación con las comunidades, al no hablar maya. Faltan programas de inducción y capacitación. Falta información acerca del Modelo Educativo y Académico.
Funciones sustantivas	Se realizan actividades de docencia y de extensión.	No se dan las condiciones políticas académicas- administrativas para integrar las tres funciones sustantivas (docencia-investigación-extensión)
Desarrollo de competencias profesionales	Es un escenario propicio para nuevos aprendizajes y el desarrollo de habilidades específicas.	Baja participación de los estudiantes. Incompatibilidad entre los horarios escolares, programas y comunidades.
Gestión y vinculación	Capacidad de gestión y vinculación. Vínculos con licenciaturas y otras instituciones educativas. Experiencia exitosa en premios y financiamientos externos.	Falta de tiempo para realizar actividades de difusión y vinculación. Dificultades para la vinculación con algunas facultades.
Infraestructura	Espacios, instalaciones amplias, equipo y materiales propios.	Se requiere de mayor financiamiento. Los recursos y espacios físicos son inadecuados e insuficientes.
Estructura organizacional		Falta de un programa de trabajo a mediano y largo plazo. Falta de organización interna-externa para la realización de las actividades. Falta redefinir los perfiles de puesto. Falta socialización, interacción y comunicación entre los equipos.
Impacto en el desarrollo comunitario	Se realiza una atención integral multidisciplinaria, basada en los diagnósticos de salud, a bajo costo. Los participantes establecen relaciones positivas con el equipo.	El tiempo de trabajo de campo es insuficiente para generar un impacto más allá de lo familiar. La demanda del servicio rebasa la formación universitaria. La comunidad percibe que el trabajo realizado es para ciertos grupos y no con toda la comunidad.
Evaluación y sistematización	Se cuenta con procesos formales de sistematización.	No se han realizado procesos formales de evaluación.

En cuanto a la elaboración de la UUIS ideal, cada programa planteó su propuesta. A pesar de la diversidad de opciones presentadas, entre ellas comparten que las UUIS deben ser espacios donde se logre la integración de las funciones universitarias de docencia, investigación y extensión, que sean reconocidas institucionalmente, que cuenten con un modelo teórico-metodológico general que facilite el intercambio de experiencias entre las diversas unidades, que cuente con personal que cumpla el perfil y que sea constantemente capacitado, que se tenga la infraestructura física y el equipo necesario así como sistemas de seguimiento, evaluación y sistematización del trabajo realizado.

Sobre las líneas de acción y estrategias para poder lograr la implementación de este tipo de escenarios con las características propuestas, señalaron contar con una coordinación general de todas las UUIS, elaborar el marco teórico-metodológico que aborde aspectos como globalización, cultura de colaboración, participación ciudadana, redefinición del poder, ética para la sustentabilidad, interdisciplina, investigación acción participativa, sustentabilidad, desarrollo local, interculturalidad, perspectiva de género, desarrollo humano y capacidades comunitarias, entre otros aspectos. Así también, se propuso realizar una planeación estratégica, contar con un grupo asesor técnico/operativo y un cuerpo académico que favorezca la integración de funciones, establecer un fondo patrimonial, mecanismos de reconocimiento institucional, estrategias de difusión, sistemas de comunicación, programas de capacitación, diversas formas de inserción en comunidad, redes interinstitucionales y trabajo multisectorial que promuevan el desarrollo local sustentable, así como revisar los planes de estudios de las diversas licenciaturas que se imparte en la universidad, el desarrollo de investigación participativa y aplicada, maximizar recursos, involucrar a docentes y contar con promotores comunitarios.

Finalmente, a partir de todo lo anteriormente mencionado, este grupo de coordinadores de UUIS y programas de praxis comunitaria han continuado su trabajo colaborativo y para ello han establecido los siguientes ejes de trabajo, con tareas a corto mediano y largo plazo. Así a corto plazo están trabajando en la identificación de necesidades de capacitación. Al momento se ha identificado una falta de conocimiento en políticas institucionales y del Modelo Educativo y Académico de la UADY, así como de mecanismos de procuración de fondos, y de sistemas de sistematización y evaluación, especialmente de impacto. Para resolver esta necesidad han establecido una serie de talleres que están siendo realizados mediante dos mecanismos: por un lado, los capacitadores surgen de entre ellos mismos si cuentan con la experiencia previa en su trabajo cotidiano, o bien se ubica a personas que puedan servir de capacitadores por su conocimiento del tema en caso de que ninguno de ellos pueda hacerlo. Estos espacios de capacitación se consideran también como una estrategia para disminuir el trabajo aislado que ha caracterizado la labor de las UUIS, que han tenido poca comunicación entre ellas.

A corto plazo están trabajando también en el establecimiento de mecanismos de difusión de las UUIS (seminarios, foros y otros eventos curriculares y extracurriculares), la definición de los recursos humanos, materiales y financieros que realmente se necesitan y en el establecimiento de una infraestructura común y mecanismos formales de relación que permita mayor trabajo colaborativo entre ellos y la mayor participación de académicos y estudiantes. Preparan una presentación para los directivos con el fin de promover la revaloración institucional del trabajo en el área de desarrollo comunitario y están diseñando diferentes acciones que permitan incrementar la relación con los cuerpos académicos y con las líneas de investigación ya establecidas

institucionalmente

A mediano plazo se trabaja en diseñar mecanismos que permitan garantizar la estabilidad laboral del personal que cumpla con los requisitos de trabajo en las UUIS, de modo que con ello se contribuya a disminuir la rotación de personal existente. Para ello se está haciendo una revisión del perfil idóneo del personal y se están elaborando propuestas específicas para los tabuladores de ingreso y promoción del Reglamento del Personal Académico y del Reglamento de Estímulos Académicos que permitan reconocer el trabajo de las UUIS.

También se trabaja en la procuración de fondos tanto de manera interna como externa que garantice la continuidad de los programas y que permita realizar las actividades de manera adecuada. Así a nivel interno se trabaja en conseguir financiamiento que permita contar con un presupuesto para alojamiento y equipamiento básico, profesores adscritos a las facultades que funjan como asesores y/o supervisores y financiamiento base para el trabajo operativo. De manera externa se requiere trabajar en la búsqueda de financiamientos de organismos nacionales e internacionales que permitan apoyar a proyectos específicos especialmente en cuanto a becas para estudiantes, equipo, transporte y viáticos.

Finalmente, a mediano/largo plazo se están estableciendo mecanismos para favorecer la revisión de los planes de estudio de modo que las licenciaturas preparen a sus estudiantes para el trabajo comunitario con asignaturas obligatorias y optativas. Se busca también incorporar a las UUIS al trabajo institucional de manera que favorezca la integración de funciones, por ejemplo mediante el diseño y elaboración de modelos teóricos-metodológicos y el trabajo en el desarrollo de propuestas de políticas públicas que pudieran tener mayor impacto en la sociedad.

### **Discusión**

Los resultados evidencian cómo el trabajo en equipo interdisciplinario logrado permitió construir un espacio para compartir las experiencias de trabajo comunitario y la socialización de experiencias particulares lo cual constituye un proceso de beneficio colectivo que genera espacios de reflexión que permiten que los programas de praxis comunitaria se contextualicen desde perspectivas diferentes. Pero también se evidencia la necesidad de contar con un marco teórico metodológico que sustente el trabajo colectivo e interdisciplinario, así como tener una planeación estratégica, una estructura organizacional redefinida que incluya una coordinación general de las UUIS, procesos de evaluación y sistematización de las experiencias, mayor difusión, más relaciones interinstitucionales e intersectoriales, capacitación en diversas áreas que permita tener recursos humanos que cumplan un perfil adecuado, mejores sistemas de comunicación que permitan el intercambio entre los diferentes actores, ser autosustentables y lograr la revalorización del significado del servicio social a nivel institucional, así como lograr mayor compromiso institucional y de las dependencias universitarias, entre otros. Se requiere aprovechar las experiencias de las UUIS y los programas de praxis comunitaria existentes para construir un modelo compartido que integre las funciones sustantivas universitarias y en esta labor es indispensable recrear el papel de las estructuras universitarias y las relaciones de poder imperantes, de tal manera que se logre el respaldo, reconocimiento y apoyo económico por parte de las autoridades universitarias.

Por otra parte, consideramos esta experiencia como un ejemplo de la integración de conocimientos de diversas áreas de la psicología con un fin práctico. Es común que los psicólogos consideren que ejercicio en un área de la psicología requiere de competencias desarrolladas en específico de modo que los conocimientos y habilidades adquiridas o propias de otras áreas son



distantes, ajenas incluso inservibles. En esta experiencia hemos requerido de todos los recursos con los que contábamos en competencias de investigación, psicología organizacional, psicología educativa, psicología comunitaria e incluso de otras áreas disciplinares al tener un peso tan importante aspectos como la sustentabilidad, la interculturalidad, entre otros.

Hemos podido comprobar nuevamente la importancia de desarrollar procesos de consulta participativos, en los que se compartan y reflexionen experiencias como estrategia para poder desarrollar grandes proyectos. Además, trabajar de esta manera permite cumplir con varios objetivos a la vez: generar propuestas diversas y creativas, socializar información, generar involucramiento y compromiso, entre otros. Por último, vemos la importancia de realizar experiencias colectivas de este tipo que favorezcan el diseño de nuevas opciones de praxis comunitaria que impacten de manera favorable en diversos sectores de la sociedad como una forma de contribuir a la formación integral y la responsabilidad social y con ello lograr su pertinencia y trascendencia social como Universidad.

Finalmente, la propuesta completa sobre el desarrollo de las UUIS deberá continuar con su proceso de análisis, reflexión y retro-alimentación mediante la devolución de información analizada a los y las participantes con la finalidad de que la propuesta sea enriquecida para posteriormente trabajar en la socialización de los resultados finales a toda la comunidad universitaria. El fin último es generar una propuesta viable de ser implementada y apropiada por parte de la universidad, como institución pero también por parte de sus diversos actores, de modo que contribuya al desarrollo del bienestar social en nuestro estado y región en cumplimiento de la pertinencia, responsabilidad y trascendencia social que nos corresponde como universitarios.

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# Análisis de competencias. Una propuesta metodológica de selección de promotores comunitarios

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## Resumen

*El Programa Sistemas Agroforestales Escolares y Comunitarios (PSAFEC) tiene como propósito la conservación de la biodiversidad empleando técnicas agroecológicas, con la finalidad de favorecer la seguridad alimentaria de seis comunidades rurales en Yucatán, México. Para alcanzar sus objetivos realiza diversas acciones como el desarrollo de solares escolares en Secundarias Técnicas Agropecuarias. Para ésta y otras acciones el programa requiere contar con la participación de diversos actores. Los(as) promotores(as) comunitarios(as) tienen un rol crítico para lograr los objetivos del programa pues deben ser capaces de trabajar en conjunto con todos los y las participantes para promover el programa, así como difundir los conocimientos y habilidades relacionados con prácticas agroecológicas en beneficio de la comunidad. Este trabajo presenta una propuesta metodológica para la definición y elección de promotores(as) comunitarios(as), a partir del desarrollo de un perfil de puesto considerando las competencias pertinentes que posibiliten un reclutamiento y una selección adecuada al puesto.*

Palabras clave: perfil de puesto, promotor comunitario, procesos de reclutamiento y selección

## Introducción

Los procesos de modernización y desarrollo actualmente imperantes han hecho que el sistema campesino mexicano se encuentre hoy día en crisis. Esta situación que ha traído como consecuencia el desuso de prácticas agrícolas tradicionales como la milpa y el traspatio o solar como ejemplos de sistemas tradicionales de producción de alimentos en la península de Yucatán, en México. En esta zona, y durante muchos años, la producción de alimentos en el traspatio fue complementaria a la milpa, siendo base de la economía de las familias campesinas. Sin embargo, actualmente existe una pérdida del conocimiento de las prácticas tradicionales de aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales disponibles, ante la llegada de sistemas de producción basados en el libre mercado, lo que implica, adicionalmente, el olvido de rasgos sociales de gran significado cultural, como son la cohesión familiar y comunitaria, el enriqueciendo y difusión del conocimiento sobre fenómenos biológicos y las prácticas culturales asociadas a ellos (Guerra-Mokul 2005).

Esta situación es lamentable dado que el empleo de estas prácticas resultaba pertinente, pues por ejemplo, la producción de traspatio es idónea por la diversidad biológica que en

él se maneja. Además, Gliessman (1990, 1998) señala que el uso del traspatio o solar como agroecosistema tradicional, sirve como un modelo de sostenibilidad por lo que resulta importante su conservación.

Es dentro de este contexto que el PSAFEC propone la recuperación del uso de estrategias alternativas para el manejo, producción y conservación de los recursos naturales mediante la promoción del empleo de técnicas de producción tradicionales y agroecológicas como el *ka'anché*, la composta, la cría de especies animales locales y la producción de especies vegetales propias de la región. La finalidad del programa es impactar en la seguridad alimentaria de las comunidades participantes y actualmente se trabaja en seis comunidades del interior del estado de Yucatán pero próximamente se incorporarán cinco comunidades más. En ellas se está trabajando en el desarrollo de solares escolares que sirvan como laboratorios vivos para los y las estudiantes de manera que luego extiendan estos conocimientos a sus familias y otros habitantes de la comunidad de modo que se incremente el uso de solares o traspatio en los hogares de la región.

En este tipo de acciones que realiza el PSAFEC se requiere la participación comunitaria, donde el/la promotor(a) local es pieza clave en el proceso para alcanzar los objetivos. Sin embargo, un problema constante ha sido el ineficiente desempeño de algunos promotores comunitarios, lo que impactaba en dificultades con la continuidad del programa y el logro de sus objetivos. Las personas que dirigen el programa han reconocido en su equipo la falta de experiencia y de conocimientos teórico – metodológicos para intervenir en este problema. De ahí que se dieron a la tarea de buscar una solución encontrándose que existen pocas propuestas con un enfoque teórico – metodológica adecuado que indiquen cómo elegir promotores locales en zonas rurales que cuenten con las características idóneas para este trabajo.

Es a partir de la necesidad anterior que surge el proyecto de desarrollar una propuesta metodológica para definir el perfil del promotor comunitario para el trabajo en el manejo y conservación de recursos naturales mediante el empleo de técnicas agroecológicas, así como las estrategias para su reclutamiento y selección. Son los resultados de dicho esfuerzo los que presentan en el presente trabajo.

## **Metodo**

La propuesta metodológica se trabajó desde un enfoque de Investigación Acción Participativa (IAP) (Ander Egg, 1990; Balcazar, Taylor, Kielhofner, Tamley, Benzinger, Carlin & Johnson, 2006). La investigación la entendemos como un proceso sistemático y crítico que busca comprender algún aspecto de la realidad con una expresa finalidad práctica. La acción, asume la forma de realizar el estudio como un modo de intervención pues es una investigación orientada a la acción. La participación implica un proceso de construcción social en el cual están involucrados tanto los y las investigadoras como la gente destinataria del proyecto como personas activas que conocen y son capaces de transformar su realidad.

El trabajo ha incluido las tres fases de este tipo de investigación: el diagnóstico, la intervención y la evaluación. En la fase diagnóstica se utilizaron técnicas como la entrevista semi estructurada, cuestionarios, talleres comunitarios participativos, mesas de discusión y revisión documental, con la participación del equipo responsable del programa, personal directivo y docente de cada una de las escuelas secundarias técnicas participantes, promotores(as) comunitarios(as) que colaboran y habitantes de la comunidad, teniendo un total de 100 participantes durante el

diagnostico.

### **Resultados**

A continuación presentamos los principales resultados en cada una de las fases de la IAP realizada.

#### El Diagnóstico.

Entre otros aspectos se trabajó en la identificación del significado de la participación social y comunitaria para los y las participantes. Para todas las personas involucradas la participación social implica, básicamente, la reunión y el involucramiento por parte de los diferentes grupos sociales en un proyecto o trabajo, con un fin o propósito común, el cual lleve consigo una serie de resultados y productos. Sin embargo, la mayoría de los y las participantes señalan que a través del tiempo, la participación social se ha visto envuelta en problemáticas de diferentes tipos: Unas asociadas a las estrategias utilizadas por parte del gobierno y los partidos políticos para promover la participación social de sus pobladores y otras relacionadas con la diversidad de intereses personales y la supremacía de éstos en detrimento de los intereses colectivos; otras más asociadas a características de sus poblaciones y pobladores.

Otro aspecto fundamental que fue abordado en la fase de diagnóstico fue el concepto de líder o promotor comunitario. Al respecto, algunos participantes señalaron que existen diferencias entre lo que es ser líder y ser promotor. En primer lugar, se relaciona líder con el que ordena, hace grilla o mala política mientras que el promotor procura involucrar a los diversos participantes y siempre trabaja en la solución de los problemas buscando el bienestar colectivo:

*“Un líder es el que dice las cosas sin tomar en cuenta a los demás, el promotor es el que tiene idea pero lo pone a los demás, qué se va a hacer, qué se puede hacer y opiniones de los demás”.*

*“...[promotor es] el que va a involucrar a todos los integrantes, los va motivar hacia un fin común, él que trata de manejar para bien alguna situación; es el que representa, solucionador de problemas, es aquel que tiene la facilidad de palabra, es aquel que trae programas sin interés, y que los desarrolla y que tienen su beneficio, el líder comunitario es aquel que le dan para dar y el otro es el que trae para mejorar, toma la opinión de los demás y tiene el don de convencer a la gente”.*

Otros entrevistados consideraron que un promotor es alguien que puede mover gente, dirigirla, que puede convencer y tiene seguidores, pone el ejemplo, trabaja con la verdad y que orienta a partir de su experiencia. Involucra a todos los integrantes en las actividades pues los motiva y guía hacia un fin común, se preocupa por promover y organizar actividades que deriven en beneficios para la comunidad.

En cuanto a las funciones y actividades del promotor, señalaron que la función principal del promotor debe ser el trabajo con las familias, promoviendo el proyecto del cual son promotores. Otra función sería la de orientación y asesoría. También debería ser alguien que no solo ejecute sino que intervenga en el desarrollo del proyecto y que sea el principal difusor del mismo en la comunidad.

Particularmente dentro del PSAFEC, la mayoría enfatiza la importancia de la vinculación del trabajo realizado en la escuela con la comunidad que incluye actividades como las visitas domiciliarias, concretizar a la gente, tomar su opinión, planear actividades y organizar los grupos para realizarlas, darles seguimiento, apoyar cuando algo esté fallando, vender productos del solar, animar la participación de las personas de la comunidad y proporcionar informes del trabajo

realizado, como señala un participante: *“Pues, el papel de Doña Nelly, es que siga siendo promotora, no abandonarlos, constantemente, o cada mes digamos, mínimo cada mes, que reúna a los padres de familia y que les pregunte más o menos cómo sigue el proyecto, cómo están sus animales como estos.”*

Para poder cumplir adecuadamente con sus funciones el promotor o promotora comunitario(a) debe poseer ciertas características consideradas como deseables. Al respecto, los y las participantes señalaron diversas características que idealmente debe tener un promotor comunitario para poder cumplir con sus funciones y actividades. Al organizarlas es posible categorizarlas de la siguiente manera:

#### *personales*

Entre las principales características personales mencionadas por los y las participantes se destacan vivir en el sitio donde se desarrolla el proyecto del cual va a ser promotor, seguir sus costumbres, que sea conocido y bien visto por la comunidad, con buenas relaciones con diferentes personas. Debe ser alguien sin vicios, con buena conducta y que de un buen ejemplo. Se sugiere que no pertenezca a ningún partido político y que tenga disponibilidad de tiempo. No es determinante el que sea hombre o mujer, ni la edad, siempre y cuando tenga las actitudes, habilidades y conocimientos necesarios para desempeñar su labor. Por último, señalaron la importancia de hablar el idioma comúnmente hablado en la comunidad, en este caso la maya.

#### *actitudes*

Ser participativo, activo, dinámico, positivo, bueno, honesto, confiable, conciliador, sensible, paciente, comprensivo, amable, independiente, creativo, extrovertido (sociable), accesible, abierto, con buen carácter, ánimo e iniciativa y con ideales y don de servicio. Debe tomar en serio lo que se le está encomendando, querer hacerlo, ser responsable, comprometido, correcto, puntual, que no tienda a favorecer solo a algunas personas (equitativo) y con interés en el proyecto del cual forma parte.

#### *habilidades*

Debe ser hábil para manejar diversas situaciones, conflictos y resolución de problemas, capacidad de mando y manejo de grupos, buena comunicación (facilidad de palabra) y capacidad de relacionarse con los demás. Poder mover gente, convencer a los demás e involucrarlos, saber escuchar, con tacto para tratar a la gente, capaz de establecer confianza con otros, organizado, capaz de trabajar en equipo, así como poder transmitir conocimientos y ser capaz de pedir ayudar.

#### *conocimientos*

Debe tener un perfil mínimo de conocimientos sobre el proyecto al que se incorpora, saber leer, escribir y sacar cuentas. Tener conocimiento de su comunidad, en términos de los que tienen y lo que hace falta. En el caso particular del PSAFEC es importante el conocimiento en técnicas agroecológicas.

Finalmente, como parte del diagnóstico, fueron identificadas algunas problemáticas especialmente importantes respecto de los diferentes actores del programa. Por un lado, fue evidente que los(as) promotores(as) actuales desconocen los objetivos del programa, desconocen algunas de sus funciones y reportan poco seguimiento y asesoría para desempeñar su trabajo. En cuanto al personal de las escuelas, éste conoce de manera parcial los objetivos y alcances del programa, desconocen sus funciones en el programa y manifiesta no entender cómo el promotor

debe trabajar en vinculación con la escuela y la comunidad. Por último, los responsables del programa asignan funciones y actividades que no corresponden a los promotores y carecen de estrategias adecuadas para el reclutamiento y selección de promotores comunitarios.

La Intervención.

El diagnóstico permitió conocer las características necesarias que debe tener el promotor(a) comunitario(a) para trabajar eficientemente en el manejo y conservación de recursos naturales dentro del PSAFEC. A partir de lo anterior se elaboró la propuesta metodológica para el reclutamiento y selección de un promotor(a) comunitario(a). Esta incluye un perfil de competencias, definidas como los indicios generales de aptitudes, rasgos de personalidad y conocimientos adquiridos que son observables en la vida cotidiana e igualmente en situaciones de evaluación (Claude Levy-Leboyer, 1992, en Alles, 2004). Así, el perfil de puesto por competencias es entendido como un modelo conciso, fiable y válido para predecir el éxito en un puesto y consiste en una descripción de los conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes que debe poseer el candidato(a) a ocupar un puesto y que son necesarios para cumplir adecuadamente con las actividades y lograr los resultados que le son requeridos. Asimismo, se diseñó el descriptivo de puesto del promotor(a) comunitaria en el que se plantean las tareas y obligaciones a realizar en el trabajo. Todo ello permite reclutar y seleccionar de mejor manera a las y los futuros promotores, evaluar su desempeño y detectar necesidades de capacitación relacionadas con el puesto.

El proceso de intervención se desarrolló en cinco pasos:

*1.- Desarrollo del perfil y el descriptivo de puesto por competencias*

Como primera tarea se definieron las funciones más importantes que debe realizar un(a) promotor(a) dentro del PSAFEC. Las sesiones de discusión en grupo permitieron determinar que las funciones esenciales son:

**Promoción y coordinación de la participación:** facilitar las condiciones que permitan a los habitantes y distintos grupos (de la escuela y de la comunidad) involucrarse y participar en las distintas actividades a realizar dentro del PSAFEC, así como coordinar dicha participación.

**Asesoría y seguimiento:** ofrecer orientación y retroalimentación a las personas y grupos involucrados en el PSAFEC en relación a las actividades que realicen dentro del mismo.

**Difusión:** colaborar en diversas actividades para la transmisión de información que permita dar a conocer los objetivos, alcances y avances del PSAFEC.

**Vinculación y gestión:** promover y establecer apoyos y estrategias de trabajo conjunto con instituciones de la comunidad y autoridades municipales que favorezcan el mantenimiento y uso eficiente de los recursos dentro del PSAFEC.

*2.- Establecimiento de las competencias necesarias para el puesto y definirlas*

De todas las características deseables anteriormente mencionadas se escogieron aquellas más directamente relacionadas con las funciones que finalmente se consideraron como las más pertinentes en el trabajo de un(a) promotor(a) comunitario(a)

*3.- Diseño del perfil de puesto del promotor*

Este se elaboró mediante la clasificación de las características deseables escogidas en el paso anterior en términos de conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes, quedando de la siguiente manera:

Perfil de Puesto del Promotor(a) Comunitario(a)
Requisitos en...
<b>A. CONOCIMIENTOS</b>
Conocimiento de la comunidad
Conocimientos básicos en técnicas agroecológicas y tecnológicas.
Sacar cuentas
Hablar maya y español (lectura y escritura).
<b>B. HABILIDADES</b>
Planificación y organización
Creativo – práctico - innovador
Liderazgo (Conciliador, Comunicación, Sensibilidad interpersonal)
<b>C. ACTITUDES</b>
Responsabilidad
Confianza en sí mismo – iniciativa
Flexibilidad – adaptabilidad

Para cada una de estas competencias se elaboró una descripción de su contenido específico. Por ejemplo, para liderazgo, esta habilidad fue descrita como la capacidad de orientar la acción de los grupos humanos en una dirección determinada, fijando objetivos, inspirando adhesión, compromiso y fidelidad para seguirlos y anticipando escenarios de desarrollo de la acción de ese grupo. Además, puede escuchar atentamente, comprende y hace preguntas, integrando la opinión de los otros, expresando conceptos claramente, exponiendo aspectos positivos y negativos. Es capaz de dirigir o manejar una discusión utilizando técnicas ganar – ganar proponiendo alternativas para negociar los mejores acuerdos, centrándose en el problema y no en la persona. Finalmente, puede establecer y mantener un ambiente propicio para relaciones cordiales, recíprocas, cálidas y de colaboración con distintas personas, preocupándose por su bienestar personal, con el fin de lograr compromisos duraderos que fortalezcan la relación.

#### *4.- Diseño de la entrevista por competencias para promotores*

El objetivo de este tipo de entrevista (Alles, 1999) es conocer los conocimientos, las habilidades y las actitudes que posee la persona con relación al puesto. Se realizó mediante una guía de preguntas que indagaban sobre comportamientos e incidentes críticos en el pasado de una persona que evidencien las competencias que poseen de modo que sirvieran como predictores del desempeño actual o futuro para el puesto en específico.

#### *5.- Reclutamiento y valoración de candidatos:*

Posteriormente, con base en este perfil se reclutó y seleccionó a promotores en tres comunidades de las comunidades participantes que no contaban con un promotor en ese momento. Particularmente, el reclutamiento consistió en realizar un conjunto de procedimientos que estuvieron encaminados a atraer un número suficiente de candidatos(as) potencialmente cualificado y capaz para ocupar los puestos vacantes. En este programa utilizamos el voceo, los carteles en lugares públicos y las circulares escolares.

Para la selección se utilizó primero una entrevista inicial para elegir a aquellos(as) candidatos(as) más idóneos para continuar con el proceso. A estos últimos se les aplicó la entrevista

por competencias diseñada. Para cada una de las competencias se valoró a cada candidato en términos si era elegible, con potencial o no elegible. La valoración consistió en interpretar la información, sopesando los diversos factores relacionados con el individuo, el puesto y la organización. En cuanto a las características del candidato(a) se debieron equilibrar los méritos y deficiencias frente a las demandas del puesto; además, las necesidades de la organización y las del candidato(a) tienen que compararse. Finalmente, el bienestar y la satisfacción probables de ambos deben determinarse con base en las contribuciones totales que cada uno hace al otro (Richino, 2000). La presentación de esta información se realizó mediante la redacción de un informe de cada candidato(a) que contaba con el potencial o era elegible para desempeñar el puesto y de ahí se procedió a sesiones grupales por comunidad para decidir quién era el candidato o candidata más viable.

#### La Evaluación.

El trabajo del promotor(a) comunitario(a) se considera central para la ejecución y éxito del PSAFEC. Dada la multiplicidad de sus funciones y tareas, resulta necesario generar estrategias de seguimiento y la evaluación (Aguilar y Ander Egg, 1992; Alles, 2002, 2003, 2004) que garanticen su participación eficiente y eficaz. La finalidad del seguimiento y la evaluación del trabajo del/la promotor(a) comunitario(a) se fundamenta, de manera directa, en la importancia de evidenciar los principales logros y avances, detectar las necesidades de capacitación de las y los promotores, así como en la identificación y reconocimiento de sus principales fortalezas en el trabajo cotidiano dentro del PSAFEC. De manera indirecta permite conocer las dudas e inquietudes del/la promotor(a) respecto de su labor, así como identificar problemas que se presenten en el ejercicio de su trabajo (p.ej. problemas de comunicación, uso de recursos, de ejecución del proyecto o relacionados con la comunidad). Además, es una fuente de información para determinar el impacto de la implementación de la propuesta metodológica para la selección de promotores(as) comunitarios(as), entre otros aspectos.

Este proceso se encuentra actualmente en proceso de diseño e implementación. Considera el seguimiento continuo de la labor del promotor(a) mediante la elaboración de planes semestrales de trabajo con un seguimiento mensual de las actividades realizadas mediante la elaboración de diarios de campo. Incluye también evaluaciones semestrales en las cuales participan diversos actores a través de entrevistas sobre las competencias del promotor y sesiones grupales sobre las actividades realizadas.

#### **Comentarios finales**

El trabajo realizado evidencia la importancia de que en el contexto del trabajo comunitario de cuenten con procesos de acción tanto informales como formales y que las metodologías desarrolladas sean adecuadas a las características de la población. Esta experiencia de trabajo interdisciplinario en diferentes comunidades rurales ha funcionado exitosamente pues el trabajo colaborativo entre los actores sociales permitió el desarrollo de esta propuesta metodológica que puede extenderse como un modelo de abordaje en proyectos similares.

A partir de esta experiencia corroboramos nuevamente la necesidad fundamental de promover nuevas formas de participación social en las que no se promueva el paternalismo y por el contrario se favorezca el reconocimiento de la responsabilidad y participación social. En este sentido es fundamental que los gobiernos y los partidos políticos desarrollen acciones participativas



verdaderamente comprometidas con las diversas realidades sociales, generando mecanismos que favorezcan el bienestar social mediante procesos de facilitación y seguimiento. Dentro de las formas de participación social que se promuevan resulta importante la persona encargada de dirigir las actividades programadas dentro de un proyecto. Se evidencia el importante papel que puede tener un(a) promotor(a) comunitario(a) al ser percibido como diferente de un líder. Así, se enfatiza la necesidad de trabajar más en lograr involucrar y guiar a los y las participantes que en ordenar o dirigir verticalmente. Esto difícilmente se logra si no se conoce a la comunidad y su gente y si no se tienen características y habilidades que posibiliten el trabajo en equipo.

Considerar lo anterior significa concebir al promotor(a) como un gestor, pero también como alguien en contacto continuo con la gente, capaz de convencer y ser verdaderamente el enlace entre los proyectos desarrollados y la comunidades pudiendo ser incluso considerado como un agente de cambio dado que debe ser más que un mero difusor o reproductor de acciones. Debe tener un papel importante en la toma de decisiones del desarrollo del proyecto de manera que las acciones realizadas sean de beneficio y contribuyan al desarrollo social de la comunidad.

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# Entre la felicidad y la disciplina: Dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar de personas con padecimientos crónicos

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## Resumen

*Objetivo.* Explorar las dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar de personas con padecimientos crónicos de la ciudad de Guadalajara, México, a fin de generar propuestas de intervención educativa en salud en materia de enfermedades crónicas.

*Metodología.* Estudio transversal exploratorio realizado entre marzo y mayo de 2006 con 40 personas con Diabetes Mellitus e Hipertensión Arterial que participan en grupos de apoyo en Centros de Salud de la ciudad de Guadalajara, México, seleccionadas por muestreo propositivo. Se aplicaron entrevistas semiestructuradas mediante técnicas de listados libres y sorteo de montones. Se indagaron términos asociados al concepto de bienestar y grupos de dimensiones conceptuales. Se aplicó análisis de consenso mediante factorización de componentes principales y análisis dimensional, mediante conglomerados jerárquicos y escalas multidimensionales.

*Resultados.* El modelo de consenso mostró alta homogeneidad en las concepciones del bienestar (valor de 8.22). Las dimensiones comunes en las concepciones fueron: ser responsable, la felicidad (con las subdimensiones de tranquilidad, tener fe y tener salud), la disciplina (subdimensiones: desarrollo y mantenimiento así como prolongar la vida) y el vivir a gusto (valor de verosimilitud:  $stress < 0.28$ ).

*Conclusiones.* Las personas participantes mostraron en dichas dimensiones una visión holística del concepto de bienestar. Las dimensiones de responsabilidad y disciplina hacen referencia decisiones voluntarias de tipo más bien personal, donde la familia y el aspecto comunitario no son incluidos. La segunda dimensión es sobre elementos de tipo mental y social donde se incluyó a la felicidad y el vivir a gusto. Ello implica la práctica de acciones y cuidados de la salud mental, la vida espiritual y social. Se encontró además asociación del concepto de bienestar con el de salud mental.

Palabras clave: bienestar, enfermedad crónica, concepciones culturales

## Introducción

En *Informe sobre la salud en el mundo 2002* se calculó que 7,1 millones de defunciones en el mundo se podían atribuir a la hipertensión arterial, 4,4 millones a la hipercolesterolemia y 2,6 millones al exceso de peso. De acuerdo con el Banco Mundial la diabetes mellitus está aumentando en todas partes, habiendo alcanzado una prevalencia de 5,1% en 2003; la prevalencia es mayor en

países de ingreso alto, donde alcanza 7,8%, y en países en desarrollo fluctúa desde 2,4 en África al sur del Sahara en su extremo más bajo, a una cifra máxima de 7,6% en Europa oriental y Asia central. A pesar de que la prevalencia de esta enfermedad es más alta en los países de ingreso alto, la mayor parte de la carga de morbilidad (que es más de 70%), se encuentra en las regiones en desarrollo debido a su mayor población (1).

En México las afecciones crónico-degenerativas han cobrado creciente importancia no sólo como causa de muerte sino también, de manera muy importante, de discapacidad. Los padecimientos que han recibido mayor atención son los de origen cardiovascular y metabólico: la aterosclerosis y la diabetes. Sin embargo, la artrosis, la enfermedad pulmonar obstructiva crónica y las afecciones que comprometen la salud mental merecen atención particular, pues contribuyen también al deterioro funcional y a la merma de la calidad de vida de manera muy significativa. La inequidad en el ingreso económico también influye en la prevalencia de estas afecciones (2). Las enfermedades cardiovasculares ocuparon el primer lugar como causa de muerte (71 X 100 mil habitantes) de la población adulta en el año 2000, mientras que la diabetes mellitus ocupó el segundo lugar (47 X 100 mil habitantes) (3). En el Estado de Jalisco la Hipertensión arterial tiene el 7º lugar en la frecuencia de enfermedades mientras que la diabetes mellitus ocupa el 9º lugar en el mismo estado (4).

Con estas cifras se visualiza a las enfermedades crónicas como un problema de salud en el mundo. Esta visión epidemiológica sin embargo, no puede dar cuenta en forma integral de la problemática que implica el tener este padecimiento crónico, como tampoco lo proporciona sólo el aspecto médico del tratamiento y control de la enfermedad.

Los diversos estudios sobre las enfermedades crónicas pueden agruparse en dos grandes perspectivas: el punto de vista tradicional o *etic*; y el de los sujetos enfermos o *emic*<sup>1</sup>. El segundo punto de vista es el que resalta la vivencia del padecimiento, el de la persona como actor, que tiene que vérselas todos los días de su vida con la dolencia y su atención. El partir de las concepciones culturales propias de las personas con padecimientos crónicos permiten un acercamiento de mayor calidad por parte de los profesionales de la salud hacia éstas personas.

Un estudio que consideró el punto de vista de los directamente implicados en la situación de las enfermedades crónicas tuvo como objetivo identificar la construcción de la identidad como enfermo crónico. Se encontró que las personas que ya se han identificado con una forma de vida donde aceptan su padecimiento, destacan la integración del conocimiento que se deriva de las diversas fuentes de información a las que tiene acceso, incluyendo el ello la experiencia propia. En el cual, se encuentra involucrado el desarrollo de nuevas formas de concebir su bienestar, entre las cuales se destaca la tranquilidad emocional y la vida espiritual (6).

También desde el enfoque de la Psicología positiva se ha criticado el hecho de que ha habido un énfasis en el estudio de la enfermedad, mientras que se han descuidado aspectos positivos, tales como el bienestar, la satisfacción, el optimismo y la felicidad entre otros, ignorándose los beneficios que éstos presentan para las personas (7).

En particular el concepto de bienestar ha sido objeto de estudio desde diversas perspectivas

1 En el campo de la antropología la diferenciación de los conceptos *emic* y *etic* hace referencia al punto de vista del investigador, en la visión *emic* o *visión desde dentro*. Permite acceder a información que se encuentra más allá de las apariencias que presentan las pautas de interacción, las costumbres y las creencias, lo cual permite entender el sentido que éstas pueden tener para la gente que las vive. En contraste, el término *etic* que designa la *visión desde afuera* (5).

teóricas, ya que ha sido identificado como bienestar psicológico, bienestar subjetivo, equilibrio emocional y como uno de los principales componentes de la calidad de vida y de la salud mental positiva.

El bienestar subjetivo esta compuesto de aspectos afectivo-emocionales (referidos a los estados de ánimo del sujeto) y otra centrada en los aspectos cognitivo valorativos (referidos a la evaluación de satisfacción que el sujeto hace de su propia vida). Se incluye también a la felicidad como otro componente del bienestar donde la vida espiritual tiene un lugar importante (7).

En las concepciones de salud integral se hace énfasis en el refuerzo de las evaluaciones positivas del entorno por parte del sujeto, que le permitan una participación activa con una alta cuota de bienestar subjetivo. Así, existen determinantes macro sociales y micro sociales del bienestar subjetivo. Entre los primeros se destaca el factor económico y la influencia de vivir en contextos individualistas o colectivistas. En lo micro social se incluye el estado civil, la satisfacción de la necesidades personales, los éxitos profesionales y personales, el apoyo y la participación sociales. Esto último es un fuerte predictor de bienestar entre las personas jubiladas, mientras que la satisfacción en el trabajo los es entre los que se encuentran en edad laboral (8).

Los estudios empíricos en torno al concepto de bienestar han sido abordados principalmente con el uso de escalas diseñadas para su medición los cuales parten de diversas modalidades de la elaborada por Denier (9,10,11) la cual mide las dimensiones de satisfacción global de vida, satisfacción con diversos dominios como es el trabajo, el afecto positivo y afecto negativo.

La afectividad positiva está asociada a medidas de motivación de logro y de dominación social, a indicadores de conducta social, incluyendo la frecuencia de contactos, la satisfacción con amigos y las relaciones familiares, la implicación en organizaciones sociales y el establecimiento de relaciones nuevas (12).

Un estudio sobre bienestar subjetivo y salud con personas mayores de edad de la ciudad de La Habana, Cuba, fue realizado por Fernández et al. (13), donde se encontró que una percepción positiva de la salud se relacionó con niveles más altos de satisfacción con la vida y de bienestar.

Sin embargo, podemos reconocer que al igual del concepto de salud mental, el de bienestar es un término ambiguo ya que no es ajeno al sistema de creencias y valores sociales, así como a su construcción simbólica a través del lenguaje. Por ello se planteo partir las conceptualizaciones culturales propias de las personas con padecimientos crónicos a fin de conocer su punto de vista sobre este tema. El objetivo de este estudio fue explorar las dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar de personas con padecimientos crónicos de la ciudad de Guadalajara, México, a fin de generar propuestas de intervención educativa en salud en materia de enfermedades crónicas.

## **Metodología**

El estudio se realizó en la ciudad de Guadalajara, México con dos grupos de personas con Diabetes Mellitus e Hipertensión Arterial que participan en grupos de apoyo de dos Centros de Salud de la Secretaría de Salud, ubicados en dos colonias populares del oriente de la ciudad, cuya población tiene un nivel socioeconómico medio bajo. La atención que se proporciona en estos Centros a las personas con éstos padecimientos crónicos es de dos tipos: una en forma de consulta para llevar el control de la enfermedad y otra con la participación en un grupo de apoyo. En éstos últimos se llevan a cabo actividades físicas una vez por semana, pláticas educativas, talleres de

cocina para preparar alimentos especiales para su dieta y otras actividades de tipo recreativo y cultural como son paseos, fiestas, etc.

La prevalencia de éstas enfermedades en la ciudad de Guadalajara para junio de 2006 era de 257 casos de personas con Diabetes tipo I (106 hombres y 151 mujeres), 5 389 con Diabetes Mellitus (2145 hombres y 3244 mujeres) y 7 900 con Hipertensión Arterial (2640 hombres y 5260 mujeres). Mientras que para ese mismo mes y año se registraron en el estado de Jalisco 440 casos con Diabetes tipo I, 16 720 con Diabetes Mellitus y 24 007 con Hipertensión Arterial (14)

Se realizó un trabajo de recolección sistemática de datos bajo el enfoque de la antropología cognitiva que estudia cómo los sujetos de diferentes culturas adquieren información y la procesan para generar decisiones y actuar de acuerdo a los valores normativos de su entorno (15). El diseño del estudio fue transversal exploratorio con niveles de análisis descriptivo y correlacional. En una primera etapa de entrevistas se aplicó la técnica de listados libres, a fin de obtener un repertorio de términos con los cuales se habilitó, posteriormente, la aplicación de las técnicas de sorteo de montones, a fin de describir la organización de las distintas dimensiones conceptuales que los informantes elaboran en torno al término bienestar.

El trabajo tuvo dos recolecciones sucesivas de datos, entre marzo y mayo de 2006: una con la técnica de listados libres y otra con las técnicas de sorteo de montones. En ambas recolecciones se entrevistaron 20 informantes, siendo un total de 40. El tamaño de la muestra en cada contexto se basó en el supuesto del modelo de consenso cultural de Romney et al. (16) para el estudio de patrones culturales. El supuesto plantea que, en estudios de descripción cultural, el tamaño de muestra no debe ser grande, debido a que la correlación promedio entre informantes tiende a ser alta (0.5 ó más). En ese sentido, Weller y Romney (17) sugieren un tamaño mínimo de 17 informantes para clasificar el 95% de las preguntas correctamente, bajo un promedio de competencia cultural esperada (concordancia entre las respuestas individuales y el patrón estimado de respuestas correctas del grupo) de 0.5 y un nivel de confianza de 0.95.

La estrategia de muestreo para la selección de entrevistados fue no probabilística propositiva (18), orientada a encontrar cierta variación en algunas características de los informantes: sexo, edad y diferentes enfermedades crónicas

En todas las localidades las entrevistas se efectuaron en el Centro de Salud, durante o después de las actividades cotidianas del grupo. Antes de cada entrevista se explicaron los objetivos del estudio y se obtuvo el consentimiento informado verbal, garantizándose a los informantes la confidencialidad y anonimato en la recolección y el análisis de la información. La participación de los entrevistados se sujetó a su aceptación voluntaria.

Las técnicas de recolección de datos se orientaron a la descripción del dominio cultural del concepto de bienestar. En la antropología cognitiva se entiende por dominio cultural al conjunto organizado de palabras o frases que, en distintos niveles cognitivos, hacen referencia a una esfera conceptual específica (19). En ese sentido, en la primera fase del estudio se aplicó la técnica de *listados libres*. Esta técnica consiste en pedir a los informantes un listado escrito de términos o frases relacionados con una esfera conceptual particular en este caso la palabra: bienestar. Luego de obtenidas las listas de palabras, se tabularon los términos por frecuencia de mención, lo que permitió escoger 18 términos de cada listado, a fin de generar instrumentos de recolección de sorteo de montones que se aplicaron en la segunda fase del estudio. Esta técnica consiste en elaborar tarjetas para cada término y pedir a los informantes que formen grupos de cartas que

contengan los términos más parecidos, sin importar el número de grupos generados. Después se les pide que etiqueten a cada montón con una palabra que identifique el conjunto de las tarjetas seleccionadas.

Los datos generados en las dos fases de recolección fueron tabulados en matrices de palabra por palabra y sus valores fueron transformados a proporciones de similitudes. Las matrices resultantes fueron analizadas por separado para los valores agregados y los valores individuales. En el caso de los valores agregados, las matrices fueron analizadas mediante conglomerados jerárquicos. Este método asigna palabras a dimensiones conceptuales de acuerdo a la similitud percibida por los informantes. El grado de similitud entre palabras se expresó en una gráfica de diagrama de árbol con niveles de correlación. En forma complementaria, se hizo la representación espacial en dos dimensiones de las similitudes de las palabras representadas en los árboles de conglomerados, mediante escalas multidimensionales no métricas. Con esta técnica se calculó el valor de *stress* como medida de bondad de ajuste de la representación de los conglomerados. Esta medida se define como la suma de correspondencias entre pares de objetos dentro de la representación espacial. En el trabajo se siguió la propuesta de Sturrock y Rocha (20), quienes sugieren para una representación de 20 términos un valor de corte de *stress* menor a 0.28 y para 15 términos un valor menor de 0.23.

En el caso de los valores individuales, las matrices fueron analizadas mediante un modelo de consenso cultural ajustado a respuestas ordinales (21). Este modelo estima la verosimilitud de que un sistema homogéneo de conocimientos predomine en una cultura, a partir de la correspondencia entre los conocimientos del grupo y los del individuo. Para el efecto, se corrieron análisis factoriales de componentes principales que agrupan a los individuos en función de sus respuestas. El criterio de bondad de ajuste para la obtención del consenso en los modelos implica que el primer factor alcance una razón tres veces mayor a la del segundo factor, lo cual significaría que hay una alta concordancia en las respuestas de los informantes. Los distintos análisis se procesaron con el paquete ANTHROPAC v. 4.1.

## **Resultados**

### ***Características de los informantes***

En la fase de listados libres se entrevistó a 20 informantes, 19 del sexo femenino y uno de masculino, sus edades fluctuaban de 31 a 80 años (promedio 56.5 años), todos ellos con Hipertensión arterial, dicho padecimiento tenía un periodo de evolución de uno a 20 años (promedio de 5.7 años). Y en la segunda de sorteo de montones a 20 informantes, 15 del sexo femenino y 5 del masculino, sus edades fluctuaban de 37 a 74 años (promedio de 61 años), todas ellas con padecimientos crónicos predominando la Diabetes Mellitus y la Hipertensión arterial, padecían dichas enfermedades desde uno a 25 años (en promedio 11.15 años).

#### Listados Libres

Las palabras mencionadas por los informantes con mayor frecuencia en la aplicación de los listados libres se clasificaron en tres categorías: elementos descriptivos del concepto de bienestar (a su vez clasificados en léxico = sinónimos del término, composición = elementos que conforman el concepto de bienestar y vecindad = otras palabras relacionadas), prácticas (clasificadas en acciones y funciones del bienestar) y atributos (adjetivos o calificativos), y se describen en el cuadro 1.

CUADRO NO. 1 Palabras de mayor frecuencia obtenidas en los Listados Libres sobre el concepto de Bienestar

Clasificación de términos	Bienestar
Descriptivos Léxico  - Composición  Vecindad	Salud Energía Paz  Estar activo Estar contento Estar bien espiritual, mental y moralmente No enojarse No estar nerviosa (o) No tener dolor No tener vicios  Buena alimentación Tener dinero Sin problemas familiares Dormir bien
Practicas Acciones  - Funciones	Aceptar lo que le pasa Controlar presión y azúcar Convivir con amigos Cuidarse Hacer ejercicio Escuchar música Evitar excesos Tomar agua Tomar medicamentos Trabajar  Tranquilidad Estar satisfecho con lo que hace Estar libre de culpa

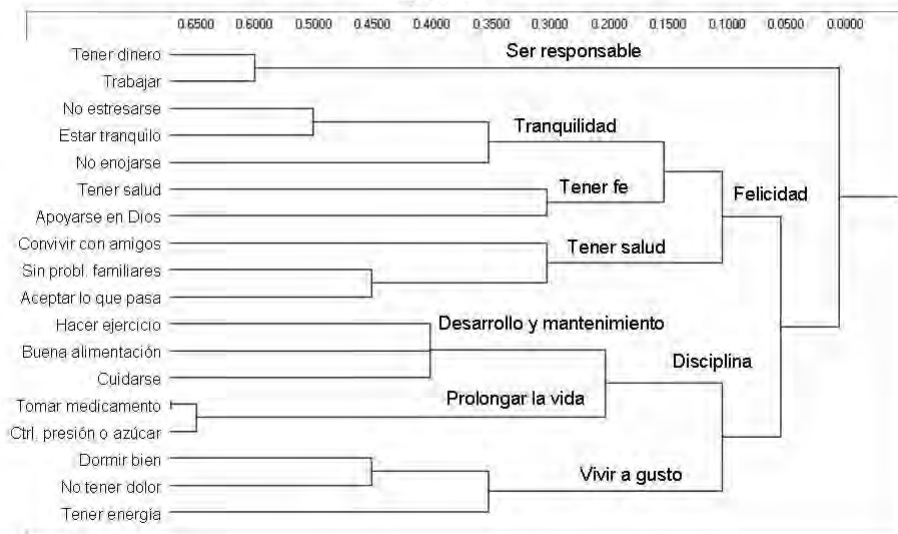
Fuente: Listados Libres

Se presentaron igual número de términos en los elementos descriptivos y en prácticas, mientras que no hubo términos clasificados como atributos. Los términos ubicados en léxico o sinónimos de bienestar fueron: salud (una de las mujeres participantes indicó: "tratando de estar bien de salud se puede estar en bienestar, es vivir saludable"), energía (un hombre dijo: "se siente uno lleno de vitalidad") y paz. Los ubicados en composición son estados que involucran un proceso permanente de cuidados para la salud no sólo en lo físico sino también en lo mental y emocional: estar activo, contento, no enojarse, no estar nerviosa (o), no tener dolor, no tener vicios y estar bien en lo espiritual, mental y moral. Otras palabras asociadas son las de: tener dinero, buena alimentación, sin problemas familiares y dormir bien.

En cuanto a las prácticas referidas a las acciones se ubican los términos relacionados con formas de cuidado a la salud (*controlar presión y azúcar, tomar medicamentos, cuidarse, hacer ejercicio, evitar excesos*) otras hacia el logro de un estado de bienestar mental (*aceptar lo que pasa, convivir con los amigos, escuchar música*) así como una actividad productiva como lo es el *trabajar*. En cuanto a las funciones del bienestar se encuentran la *tranquilidad, estar satisfecho con lo que se hace y estar libre de culpa*.

## Dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar

Figura No. 1  
Dimensiones del concepto de bienestar por conglomerados jerárquicos  
mayo 2006



En la figura 1 se muestran las dimensiones conceptuales encontradas mediante análisis de conglomerados fueron ser responsable, la felicidad (con las subdimensiones de tranquilidad, tener fe, tener salud), la disciplina (subdimensiones: desarrollo y mantenimiento y prolongar la vida) y el vivir a gusto.

En la dimensión de *ser responsable* se encuentran los términos tener dinero (*"no se siente presionado si no tiene estos problemas, no hay preocupaciones"*, *"los que le rodean pueden estar bien"*) y trabajar (los participantes comentaron: *"se distrae y le permite estar activo"*, *"lo activa"*, *"le da vigor"*).

En la dimensión de felicidad que incluye la subdimensiones de tranquilidad, la cual se compone de las palabras no estresarse (una mujer dijo: *"no estresarse para que los problemas no le afecten mucho"*), estar tranquilo (otra mujer comentó: *"si está tranquilo no se le sube la presión"*) y no enojarse (ya que enojarse *"puede ocasionarse problemas mas graves"*). Otra subdimensión de la felicidad es tener fe la cual incluye tener salud y apoyarse en Dios (una mujer mayor indicó: *"debe uno encomendarse a Dios para que todo el día esté bien"*). Y por último la subdimensión tener salud incluyo términos relacionados con la salud mental, como son convivir con los amigos (ya que ello *"mejora su autoestima"*, *"le da alegría"*, *"lo pone alegre"*), no tener problemas familiares (ya que *"con la familia unida uno se siente mejor"*, *"da tranquilidad y apoyo"*) y aceptar lo que pasa (en esto se mencionó: *"aceptar su enfermedad"* y *"no alterarse demasiado con lo que pasa"*).

En la dimensión de disciplina se incluyeron las subdimensiones: desarrollo y mantenimiento, además de prolongar la vida. En la primera se consideró el hacer ejercicio (*"le permite al cuerpo estar bien"*, *"se relaja y le da buen humor"*, *"le da tranquilidad física y mental"* y *"le da salud al controlar su"*



enfermedad”), tener buena alimentación (“no va a tener otras enfermedades”; la buena alimentación da salud “uno puede salir adelante sin enfermarse”) y cuidarse (“ir al médico, si no se cuida uno es malo”). En prolongar la vida se incluyó a tomar el medicamento y controlar la presión arterial o los niveles de azúcar.

Finalmente la dimensión vivir a gusto incluyo el dormir bien (“no hay como dormir bien para estar bien y de buenas”; “cuando uno duerme bien no amanece nervioso”), no tener dolor (“si no te aflige nada puedes estar bien”; se pueden hacer las cosas con facilidad”) y tener energía.

Las dimensiones descritas por los árboles de conglomerados tuvieron valores de bondad de ajuste adecuados (stress < 0.28 al obtener 0.213), en el análisis de escala multidimensional no métrica.

### Consenso cultural sobre la concepción del bienestar

La organización conceptual de las distintas dimensiones del bienestar tuvo consenso cultural. Alcanzó un nivel de razón = 8.221. Como ya se mencionó antes la regla es que este factor debe calificar más de tres veces la varianza del segundo factor, lo cual sucedió en este caso (fue 16.36 veces mayor). El porcentaje acumulado de la varianza para el factor ratio 1 fue mayor a 70% y la media de la competencia cultural individual fue mayor a 0.6, confirmando esos valores el consenso cultural. Los valores mayores a 0.3 en la medida de acuerdo grupal describen homogeneidad en la organización conceptual de las dimensiones y validan también el consenso.

#### CUADRO No. 2

Nivel de consenso cultural del concepto de bienestar

(expresado en razones factoriales y varianza acumulada de factores, promedio de competencias culturales y concordancia grupal), mayo de 2006

Personas participantes (n = 20)	Razón del Factor 1 (F1)	Varianza Acumulada %	Razón del Factor 2 (F2)	Varianza Acumulada %	Razón F1:F2	Competencia Cultural*		Concordancia grupal**
						Media	DE	
	8.221	90.1	0.502	95.6	16.36	0.62	0.15	0.38

DE: desviación estándar

\*\* Competencia Cultural: media aritmética grupal del grado de acuerdo individual con las respuestas promedio.

\*\* Concordancia grupal: promedio de Competencia Cultural elevado al cuadrado

Fuente: Análisis de consenso del sorteo de montones

### DISCUSION

El objetivo planteado para este estudio de explorar las dimensiones conceptuales del bienestar de personas con padecimientos crónicos de la ciudad de Guadalajara, México, fue cubierto. En dichas dimensiones las personas participantes mostraron una visión holística del concepto de bienestar. Ello se encuentra en concordancia con estudios anteriores referidos a las representaciones sociales de la diabetes y de la salud en general (22), donde las personas con padecimientos crónicos consideran una multiplicidad de factores en la conceptualización de sus padecimientos donde se manifestó una perspectiva global del mismo. Así se presenta en su idea de bienestar la implicación de la totalidad de su ser como persona, de sus relaciones familiares, laborales y sociales, y no exclusivamente en lo físico o fisiológico.

Las dos grandes dimensiones que conforman el concepto de bienestar tienen que ver por

un lado con la responsabilidad y la disciplina, es decir, con la atención de aspectos de tipo físico y mental, lo cual llevaría al desarrollo y mantenimiento del cuerpo así como a prolongar la vida. Las dimensiones conceptuales implicadas en esta parte hacen referencia a decisiones voluntarias de tipo más bien personal, donde la familia y el aspecto comunitario no son incluidos. Con ello se resalta el carácter de autocontrol de la propia conducta en detrimento de la participación social como sería el apoyo social que pidieran proporcionar las redes sociales.

La segunda dimensión es sobre elementos de tipo mental y social donde se incluyó a la felicidad y el vivir a gusto. Ello implica la práctica de acciones y cuidados de la salud mental, la vida espiritual y social. Esto se encuentra en estrecha relación con lo encontrado por Alcántara (23) en personas que participan en forma frecuente con los grupos de autoayuda para personas con enfermedades crónicas de los Centros de Salud, ya que éstos favorecen en los participantes el fomento de su salud mental. Lo mismo fue encontrado por Díaz (24) y Fernández et al. (25) donde la participación grupal es considerada como una fuente de satisfacción. Así una de las aportaciones más relevante radica en la asociación del concepto de bienestar con el de salud mental.

Los resultados obtenidos permiten generar propuestas de intervención educativa en salud en materia de enfermedades crónicas con mayor fundamento. Dichas propuestas se presentan enfocadas tanto a las personas con dichos padecimientos, a sus familias, a los profesionales de a salud, las instituciones del sector salud y a la población en general.

En cuanto a los profesionales de salud y las instituciones de salud señalar que la atención de estas enfermedades debería ser en forma integral, ya que esta es la visión que manifiestan los participantes, en lo cual se incluye el respeto y apoyo de creencias religiosas, formas de control emocional, cuidados generales, satisfacción de necesidades materiales, además de la atención médica. Así de identificar el desarrollo de nuevas formas de concebir su bienestar.

En el caso de los enfermos y sus familias, se debe reforzar los elementos de tipo cognoscitivo. Al parecer las formas de atención y cuidado de salud en el nivel informativo es suficiente y muestra un consenso aceptable, ello tiene implicaciones en la actitud positiva que se toma hacia diferentes formas de vivir con dichos padecimientos, la aceptación de su situación de salud y en la construcción de la identidad como enfermo crónico. Cabe mencionar que esto se presenta en personas que participan en grupos de autoayuda, queda pendiente explorar estos conocimientos en el caso de las personas que no acuden a este tipo de servicios.

Sin embargo, el nivel informativo no es suficiente ya que los elementos comunitarios no han sido considerados por las personas con padecimientos crónicos, o al menos no fueron enunciados en este estudio. Ello implica fomentar en las personas que les rodean, su participación en el fomento de los cuidados y en la disciplina que ha sido identificada como una obligación que sólo concierne al enfermo. La involucración de la familia en las actividades de los grupos de autoayuda y en otras actividades para llevar a la toma de conciencia sobre la situación de sus familiares podría ser un buen apoyo.

Los medios de comunicación masiva también tendrían que ser implicados en este proceso. Ya que la difusión de medidas de prevención secundaria y terciaria favorecería una mejor calidad de vida para las personas con padecimientos crónicos, máxime cuando éstos se encuentra en constante aumento.

Este trabajo muestra las limitaciones propias sobre los estudios del enfoque cognitivo

donde se enfatiza los elementos cognoscitivos, mientras que los niveles de análisis grupal, las prácticas y los procesos participativos no son considerados, con lo cual se limita la participación de la comunidad en el apoyo que pudiera existir entre personas con padecimientos crónicos, con sus familiares y cuidadores. Por ello anterior se surgen las siguientes preguntas: ¿Cuáles son las prácticas de apoyo social que existe hacia la población con padecimientos crónicos? ¿Cuál es la participación de la familia en el mantenimiento y fomento del estado de bienestar de las dichas personas? ¿Cuáles son las prácticas que la población con padecimientos crónicos lleva a cabo para desarrollar su estado de bienestar? Estas y otras más podrían responderse en estudios posteriores.

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# La Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán como parte del motor de cambio de una zona con necesidades de transformación social.

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## Resumen

*En esta presentación se pretende dar a conocer una iniciativa nacida en el seno de la Universidad Pablo de Olavide por contribuir al cambio y a la transformación de una de las zonas más deprimidas de la ciudad de Sevilla. La Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán surge como un proyecto social que pretende ser parte del motor de cambio de una comunidad. El edificio se ubica en el Polígono Sur, barrio identificado como zona con necesidades de transformación social. Entre los objetivos del proyecto está modificar las percepciones de los propios vecinos del barrio, insertando en él a una población diferente que hasta ahora no había formado parte de él. Otro de los objetivos es colaborar en el Plan Integral de transformación del barrio mediante la colaboración y el trabajo de los estudiantes en diferentes entidades y asociaciones que trabajan en el barrio. Al mismo tiempo se pretende que estas colaboraciones, que realizan los estudiantes en forma de becas, sean parte fundamental de su formación universitaria en valores y en la generación de conciencia de ciudadanía. Con estos objetivos se pretende ser parte de una transformación social que abarca, no sólo al propio barrio y a la autoconciencia que los vecinos tienen de él como zona deprimida, sino que además ofrece a los estudiantes la posibilidad de convivir con realidades en la mayoría de los casos diferentes a las suyas, siendo parte activa en esta labor de transformación.*

Palabras clave: Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán, Polígono Sur, transformación social, conciencia social.

Según refleja el artículo nº 3 de los Estatutos de la Universidad Pablo de Olavide: "... como espacio educativo de formación superior, la Universidad Pablo de Olavide está al servicio de la sociedad y se define como un lugar de reflexión y pensamiento crítico comprometido con la contribución al progreso, con la enseñanza del respeto a los derechos fundamentales y libertades públicas, con el fomento de la solidaridad y los valores humanos y con la respuesta a las necesidades y problemas de la sociedad contemporánea. La Universidad procurará la más amplia proyección social de sus actividades, estableciendo al efecto cauces de colaboración y asistencia a la sociedad para contribuir y apoyar el progreso social, económico y cultural".

Tomando este artículo como punto de partida, el proyecto de la Universidad ha consistido en ubicar una Residencia para estudiantes en una de las áreas metropolitanas más problemáticas de la ciudad de Sevilla, el Polígono Sur, más conocido peyorativamente como "Las Tres Mil Viviendas". Esta parte de la ciudad está considerada una zona con grandes necesidades de reestructuración y de transformación social, donde encontramos uno de los mayores focos de población marginal de toda la ciudad.

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Es en este escenario donde se decide iniciar un trabajo cuyo principal objetivo es doble. Por una parte, apoyar al cambio de una comunidad deprimida y con necesidades especiales y, por otra, ofrecer a los estudiantes que en ella residen la posibilidad de aprender de la realidad con la que conviven, alentándolos a implicarse con el vecindario y haciéndolos partícipes del proceso de cambio social que se está llevando a cabo.

A continuación trazaremos una breve descripción del Polígono Sur con el objeto de situarnos en la zona en la que desarrollamos este trabajo. Seguidamente presentaremos los procesos de transformación que se están dando en el barrio, y con mayor detalle la labor desarrollada desde la Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán.

### **Una breve descripción del barrio**

El Polígono Sur es un barrio ubicado al sur de la ciudad de Sevilla. Este barrio está compuesto por 6 barriadas, de las cuales 2 son consideradas zonas de alta vulnerabilidad social debido a las características especiales de su población. En estas barriadas se encuentran los mercados de drogas y armas más importantes de la ciudad de Sevilla.

La población del Polígono Sur es de aproximadamente 50.000 personas, aunque únicamente se encuentran censadas las dos terceras partes. Es en este barrio donde se localiza el nivel de paro más elevado de Sevilla, alcanzando en algunas barriadas al 40% de la población, que mantiene su economía debido al mercado negro de drogas y armas. En este barrio nos encontramos además con un 62% de población sin estudios; con una elevada tasa de analfabetismo del 5,71%; y con únicamente el 7% de titulados profesionales o universitarios. A todo esto se añade que el índice de absentismo escolar supera en algunas zonas el 30% del total del alumnado.

Sumados a estos indicadores nos encontramos también con otros índices de vulnerabilidad social y marginalidad que empeoran el panorama, como el índice de mortalidad, que supera con creces el del conjunto de la ciudad, destacando especialmente los casos de muerte con Sida. Igualmente el número de embarazos adolescentes es superior al del conjunto de la ciudad.

A estas características, que ya de por sí definen al barrio como zona marginal y de aislamiento social, se unen una serie de fronteras físicas que lo delimitan territorialmente, contribuyendo aún más a la condición de "isla" marginal de la ciudad de Sevilla. El barrio se encuentra flanqueado por la vía de tren, que lo separa de otra barriada de Sevilla; al sur limita con solares degradados y por la autopista; al noreste nos encontramos un polígono industrial; y cerrando el contorno, se encuentra un parque urbano y la única barriada que linda con la parte más normalizada del barrio.

Estas barreras se unen a los grandes espacios deteriorados, la falta de mantenimiento de las pocas zonas verdes que existen, la invasión de los espacios públicos por edificaciones ilegales de algunos vecinos, así como al deterioro y las malas condiciones de algunos de los edificios. Todo esto hace que el barrio sea considerado como una de las zonas con mayor necesidad de transformación social de la ciudad de Sevilla. Y es en esta zona donde se ubica la Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán.

### **El proceso de transformación del barrio. El Comisionado para el Polígono Sur.**

Antes de presentar las labores que está desempeñando la Residencia Universitaria en el Polígono Sur, vamos a referirnos a un hecho clave que ha marcado el principio de este proceso de transformación del barrio.

En 2003, la Junta de Andalucía crea la figura del Comisionado para el Polígono Sur como una iniciativa para integrar todas las actuaciones que se estaban llevando a cabo en el barrio por parte de las diferentes Administraciones Públicas –Central, Autonómica y Local-. El Comisionado se compromete con el encargo único y exclusivo de la elaboración, puesta en marcha y seguimiento de un Plan Integral para el barrio que permita atajar los problemas de marginalidad, seguridad, empleo, vivienda, educación, salud... y que además permita la normalización y la convivencia ciudadana en una zona con grandes problemas de exclusión social.

El Plan Integral supone un compromiso de las Administraciones Públicas con el Polígono Sur con el que se pretende transformar las áreas de mayor vulnerabilidad, tratando de responder a las necesidades del vecindario, y manteniendo el objetivo de abrir el barrio al resto de la ciudad.

En el Plan Integral nos encontramos con cuatro grandes áreas de intervención: urbanismo y convivencia; inserción sociolaboral y promoción de la iniciativa económica; salud comunitaria e intervención socioeducativa y familiar. Estas áreas trabajan por comisiones en las que se integran tanto los profesionales que están trabajando con el Comisionado, como los vecinos y vecinas del barrio que tengan interés por trabajar y aportar soluciones. Se trata de que la comunidad se haga cargo de sus problemas y se organice para resolverlos, guiándolos al principio, pero con el objetivo final de conseguir una autonomía cada vez mayor, que les permita desarrollar sus propios recursos y potencialidades. En definitiva, y como señala Montero (2004), se pretende una intervención para la transformación social que facilite y fortalezca los procesos psicosociales que posibiliten el desarrollo de comunidades autogestoras para la solución de sus propios problemas.

Y es en este escenario en el que se desarrolla la vida de la Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán, donde los residentes participan de muy diferentes maneras. Por una parte participando y colaborando como vecinos en estos procesos de transformación del barrio; y por otro, mediante colaboraciones específicas con entidades y asociaciones vecinales, a las que más adelante nos referiremos.

### **El papel de la Residencia Universitaria Flora Tristán en el Polígono Sur**

Partiendo de la idea de que las sociedades pueden ser transformadas por efecto de las acciones de los individuos que en ellas participan, la Universidad Pablo de Olavide, y más concretamente desde la Residencia desde Flora Tristán, nos planteamos la intervención a nivel local con el objeto de cambiar realidades con un alto nivel de vulnerabilidad.

Entre uno de los planteamientos de base que sostienen el proyecto de la Residencia Flora Tristán se encuentra el de modificar las percepciones que se tienen sobre el barrio, tanto las que posee la gente de fuera de él, como las que el propio vecindario tiene de su propia comunidad. La entrada de la Universidad en el barrio, y más concretamente de estudiantes universitarios, de una población de 205 jóvenes que poco o nada tiene que ver con los que actualmente se encuentran residiendo en el barrio –el porcentaje de jóvenes que acceden a la Universidad procedentes de los centros de secundaria de este barrio es prácticamente inexistente- está suponiendo un aire nuevo al vecindario.

A esto se une el interés de la propia Universidad por realizar actos académicos en el barrio, igualmente se realizan colaboraciones con diferentes servicios universitarios, como es el Servicio de Deportes o el Vicerrectorado de Participación Social, que realizan charlas o actividades en la zona, así como organizan cursos y conferencias en las instalaciones de la propia universidad para

vecinos del Polígono Sur. A esto se añaden también los recursos que ofrece la propia Residencia al barrio, como son zonas comunes para reuniones, salas de informática, biblioteca, salas de exposiciones, salón de actos y salas de usos múltiples. Todo esto ofrece una idea del interés de la Universidad por acercar el barrio a la Universidad y la Universidad al barrio, por romper y desterrar los estigmas con los que el Polígono Sur está cargado, intentando que no destaquen únicamente los aspectos desfavorecedores, sino que se cambien las percepciones y se comience a hablar de la normalización del mismo. Este aporte de población y actividades universitarias en el vecindario constituye una forma de fortalecimiento de la comunidad, que Ornelas (2008) destaca como uno de los valores fundamentales de la Psicología Comunitaria, y por ende, de la intervención en comunidades.

Por otro lado, la acción más señalada que realizamos en el barrio es la colaboración activa en diferentes entidades y asociaciones del barrio. Para ello contamos con una subvención de la Consejería de Igualdad y Bienestar Social, unida a otra de Cáritas Diocesana, que nos permite ofrecer 52 becas de alojamiento a los estudiantes a cambio de participar en estas colaboraciones durante todo el curso académico. Con estas colaboraciones perseguimos varios objetivos. Por una parte apoyar el trabajo que se viene realizando en el Polígono Sur desde hace algunos años, trabajando en coordinación con el Comisionado y apoyando en las diferentes áreas de trabajo del Plan Integral; colaborando con pequeñas asociaciones y entidades vecinales que necesitan apoyos para seguir adelante. Por otra parte complementar la formación universitaria de los estudiantes en valores, aspectos sociales, cívicos y de conciencia ciudadana.

### **Las colaboraciones y el desarrollo de una conciencia social.**

Las becas de la Consejería nos permiten ofertar becas de alojamiento a los y las estudiantes que deseen colaborar con el trabajo en el barrio. Estas becas les cubren la totalidad de la renta a cambio de 8 horas de colaboración semanales. Los y las estudiantes eligen sus ámbitos de colaboración, generalmente acordes con los estudios universitarios que están realizando. Así podemos encontrarnos colaboraciones de estudiantes de Ciencias Ambientales en huertos escolares, estudiantes de Relaciones Laborales en asesorías de empleo, estudiantes de Ciencias del Deporte organizando eventos deportivos para el barrio, o futuros Educadores Sociales o Trabajadores Sociales colaborando en trabajos comunitarios.

De entre las colaboraciones tienen especial relevancia las realizadas en el área educativa. En ella es de enorme importancia el apoyo que estamos prestando con el alumnado de los centros de primaria, especialmente por el alto índice de absentismo que tienen lugar en ellos, con las lógicas consecuencias que esto desencadena como problemas de aprendizaje, problemas de lectoescritura, importantes lagunas de conocimiento... Además, estamos apoyando iniciativas educativas novedosas puestas en marcha en uno de los colegios de la zona con mayor población gitana, el trabajo en Comunidades de Aprendizaje. Es igualmente destacable la colaboración con centros de secundaria, donde estamos poniendo en marcha talleres de mediación de conflictos, así como grupos de apoyo a los pocos estudiantes de bachillerato que alcanzan este nivel, a los que se asignan tutores de entre los estudiantes universitarios de la Residencia. Las colaboraciones con el centro de educación de personas adultas es altamente valorada por las propias alumnas, ya que es aquí donde se han puesto en marcha algunas de las iniciativas más exitosas, como ha sido el Grupo de teatro "No nos duele ná", o los grupos de Tertulias Musicales y Tertulias Literarias



Dialógicas, que han tenido un éxito tal que en este mes de noviembre se han celebrado aquí en el barrio las V Jornadas Nacionales de Tertulias Literarias Dialógicas.

Igualmente colaboramos con otras entidades, como el Grupo Juvenil Boom, ubicado en la parte más marginal de todo el barrio, donde casi el total de la población es gitana y procedente de asentamientos chabolistas; o las colaboraciones en otras asociaciones gitanas, asociaciones vecinales, asociaciones de mujeres... La colaboración con entidades que trabajan en intervención comunitaria, o con la parroquia, en asesoramiento laboral a parados e inmigrantes, que cada vez son más numerosos en la zona, o las colaboraciones con asociaciones deportivas, organizando torneos y equipos de fútbol o baloncesto, también se encuentran entre las labores que realizan los estudiantes de la Residencia.

Por último, desde la Residencia también colaboramos en todas aquellas actividades que se organizan en el barrio y que abogan por el estrechamiento de las redes sociales y la formación de una conciencia colectiva de comunidad.

Sin embargo, y como hemos apuntado anteriormente, las acciones encaminadas a la transformación del barrio no suponen el único objetivo que nos planteamos desde la Residencia. Otro de los fines que buscamos es que estas experiencias se conviertan en un aprendizaje fundamental en el proceso formativo universitario. Una formación universitaria alejada de las aulas y de los conocimientos disciplinares, en muchos casos ajenos a la realidad. Esto es, una formación en valores, una generación de conciencia de ciudadanía.

En este sentido, y como aclara Montero (1984), la acción transformadora que se está poniendo en marcha en el barrio está actuando en varios sentidos, teniendo lugar una "relación dialéctica de transformaciones mutuas". Esto implica que tanto la comunidad como los intervinientes están sujetos a cambios relacionados con la participación en el proceso, desarrollándose en los individuos participantes un crecimiento personal que se desarrolla positivamente (Montero, 1996), además del crecimiento que supone para aquéllos que reciben la participación, e incluso para la sociedad, ya que como efecto político forma ciudadanía, desarrolla y fortalece la sociedad civil, a la vez que aumenta la responsabilidad social (Clary y Snider, 2002).

Así, y a modo de conclusión, podemos exponer que en la Residencia estamos interviniendo a varios niveles. Por una parte, trabajando en el barrio como comunidad, formando parte de su tejido social y colaborando puntualmente en diversos ámbitos; participando en el proceso de transformación social que está permitiendo modificar las condiciones de vida de los vecinos, así como transformando las percepciones y colaborando en la eliminación de los estigmas que tanto marcan al Polígono Sur. Por otra parte, poniendo nuestro aporte en la conformación de una conciencia social en los estudiantes que pasan por la Residencia, ofreciendo experiencias de convivencia muy diferentes a las que suelen estar acostumbrados, fomentando el análisis objetivo de las diferentes realidades de la zona, permitiéndoles plantear iniciativas de cambio que los impliquen activamente en la labor de transformación del barrio, y en definitiva, tratando de que crezcan como ciudadanos, comprometidos con los demás y con la sociedad.

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# Prevalência, significações e prevenção da violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade: um projecto integrado de investigação<sup>1</sup>

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## Resumo

*O interesse social e científico pelo problema da violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade é muito recente em Portugal, ainda que a informação disponível indique que os adolescentes frequentemente perpetraram e sofrem comportamentos violentos nestas relações, à semelhança do que ocorre em casais adultos. Os estudos atitudinais conduzidos junto de jovens evidenciam ainda que, apesar da aceitação da violência em contextos de intimidade ser reduzida, muitos adolescentes subscrevem mitos que legitimam a violência. Estes resultados estimularam um interesse mais aprofundado na implementação de esforços preventivos em Portugal pelo que, recentemente, diversos investigadores e instituições desenvolveram e implementaram programas de prevenção da violência nas relações de intimidade direccionados à população juvenil. Neste artigo iremos apresentar os principais resultados de um projecto de investigação em curso sobre a violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade. Começaremos por caracterizar os comportamentos, atitudes e discursos dos jovens que motivaram o desenvolvimento destes esforços preventivos, apresentando de seguida os resultados de uma pesquisa sobre os programas de prevenção conduzidos pelas principais instituições operativas na área da violência na intimidade. Serão apresentadas sugestões com o intuito de aperfeiçoar estes esforços preventivos, bem como um programa de prevenção que procura ultrapassar alguns dos problemas previamente identificados.*

**Palavras-chave:** adolescentes; relações de intimidade; namoro; violência; prevenção.

## 1. Introdução

Os estudos subordinados ao tema da violência nas relações de intimidade têm privilegiado o casamento/união de facto enquanto objecto de investigação e negligenciado relações de namoro e ocasionais, bem como casais homossexuais. Apenas recentemente se tem verificado um maior investimento na compreensão das prevalências e dinâmicas violentas subjacentes a estes relacionamentos sendo que, desde a década de 80, houve um aumento progressivo na quantidade de estudos acerca da violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade (cf. Howard, Wang, & Yan, 2007; Jackson, 1999; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001).

Este cenário reproduz-se no contexto científico português, onde começam já a surgir estudos sobre a violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade, nomeadamente direccionados

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à caracterização das prevalências de vitimação e perpetração e variáveis associadas ao comportamento violento (Caridade & Machado, 2006; Lucas, 2005; Paiva & Figueiredo, 2004), ao conhecimento das consequências da violência (Paiva & Figueiredo, 2005) e à prevenção desta forma de violência (Matos, Machado, Caridade, & Silva, 2006).

É neste contexto que surge o projecto “*Violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade*” que se encontra a decorrer na Universidade do Minho (PTDC/PSI/65852/2006) e cujos objectivos consistem na identificação da prevalência da violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade; na caracterização das atitudes, crenças e discursos dos jovens sobre a violência; no levantamento e avaliação crítica dos programas de prevenção da violência na intimidade juvenil conduzidos em Portugal; e no desenvolvimento, aplicação e avaliação da eficácia de programas de prevenção neste âmbito. Apresentaremos de seguida os principais resultados obtidos até ao momento pelos diferentes estudos desenvolvidos no âmbito deste projecto de investigação.

## **2. Estudos de prevalência**

Embora já outros estudos tivessem sido desenvolvidos no nosso país sobre a prevalência da violência nas relações de intimidade juvenis (Lucas, 2005; Paiva & Figueiredo, 2004), o estudo de Caridade (em preparação) foi o primeiro a recorrer a uma amostra que compreende o território nacional e integra jovens de diferentes níveis de ensino. A amostra final deste estudo integrou 4667 jovens com idades compreendidas entre os 13 e os 29 anos, que se encontravam a frequentar o ensino secundário, profissional ou universitário (Machado, Caridade, & Martins, no prelo).

Embora tenha sido necessário excluir deste estudo uma parte da amostra devido ao preenchimento incompleto do instrumento de avaliação, verificou-se que 25.4% dos jovens envolvidos em relacionamentos amorosos tinham sido vítimas durante o ano anterior ao estudo e 30.6% tinham apresentado comportamentos violentos face ao seu parceiro actual (Machado et al., no prelo). Resultados semelhantes foram obtidos na avaliação dos comportamentos de violência ocorridos em relações amorosas anteriores, em que 27.3% e 28.0% dos jovens relataram ter sido vítimas e perpetradores de violência, respectivamente (Caridade, em preparação).

Ainda no mesmo estudo, foram avaliados os diferentes tipos de violência perpetrados e sofridos pelos jovens nos seus relacionamentos íntimos, tendo-se verificado que nas relações actuais, 19.5% foram vitimados emocionalmente, 13.4% fisicamente e 6.7% sofreram violência física severa; por outro lado, 22.4% admitiram ter exercido violência emocional sobre os seus parceiros, 18.1% perpetraram violência física e 7.3% violência física severa. Constatou-se que, apesar de o nível socioeconómico dos jovens não influenciar os seus comportamentos de vitimação e perpetração, o mesmo não se verificava quando avaliado o efeito das variáveis género, idade e escolaridade. De facto, os elementos do sexo feminino evidenciavam níveis mais elevados de perpetração global, física e emocional, sofrendo, por outro lado, maior vitimação física. Eram os grupos etários mais velhos e que frequentavam o ensino superior aqueles que mais perpetravam e eram alvo de violência global e emocional, enquanto a perpetração a nível físico e a vitimação a nível físico e físico severo predominavam entre os jovens do ensino profissional (Machado, et al., no prelo).

Por outro lado, considerando as suas relações passadas, 22.7% dos jovens foram alvo de violência emocional, 15.4% sofreram violência física e 7.5% violência física severa, enquanto 19.3%, 17.0% e 6.2% perpetraram violência emocional, física e física severa, respectivamente. A análise

do efeito das variáveis demográficas neste âmbito assinalou a existência de maior vitimação física e perpetração física severa entre indivíduos do sexo masculino, enquanto as jovens do sexo feminino eram mais vitimadas a nível emocional, perpetrando mais violência global e física. Relativamente ao papel da idade, verifica-se a reprodução do padrão existente nas relações actuais, ao que acresce a predominância de perpetração e vitimação física pelos grupos etários mais velhos e de perpetração física severa pelos mais novos. Mais uma vez, não existem diferenças relativamente à vitimação e perpetração associadas ao nível socioeconómico dos jovens. Por outro lado, a nível global, físico e emocional, os comportamentos de perpetração e vitimação eram mais elevados entre estudantes do ensino profissional, sendo que a perpetração emocional era mais reduzida nos estudantes do ensino secundário, quando comparados com aqueles que frequentam o ensino superior e profissional (Caridade, em preparação).

Com o intuito de aprofundar o conhecimento da violência na intimidade juvenil, verificou-se a necessidade de abordar também a dimensão sexual, que no estudo anterior apenas era avaliada de forma superficial. Num estudo exploratório sobre o tema, Martins e Machado (2008), recorrendo a uma amostra de 362 estudantes universitários com idades compreendidas entre os 18 e os 30 anos, constataram que 6.9% foram vitimados sexualmente durante o último ano, sendo que em 7.2% dos casos a vítima conhecia o seu agressor. Relativamente à perpetração, 2.2% dos jovens admitiram ter cometido violência sexual, que em 2.8% dos casos teve como alvo pessoas conhecidas do perpetrador. Não foram encontradas diferenças de género quanto à vitimação, ao contrário do que ocorreu ao nível da perpetração, que é superior entre elementos do sexo masculino. Neste estudo exploratório, não foi ainda possível discriminar as situações em que a violência ocorria em contexto de relações de intimidade, prevendo-se que numa fase posterior da investigação essa informação esteja já disponível.

Por fim, e considerando a possibilidade de ocorrência de comportamentos intrusivos, ou mesmo violentos, em situações de amor não correspondido e rejeição, Grangeia, Matos e Machado (2008) analisaram uma amostra de 295 estudantes universitários, sendo que destes 72.4% já tinha sido alvo de estratégias relacionais de conquista que surgiam na ausência de uma relação de intimidade ou após a ruptura de uma relação de intimidade. Os resultados preliminares indicam que os principais alvos destes comportamentos eram jovens do sexo feminino e que, ainda que a maioria destas estratégias fosse de aproximação/comunicação, verificou-se também o recurso a comportamentos de vigilância/perseguição, intimidação/ invasão, ameaça/coerção e, em menor grau, agressão/violência, estando reunidos os critérios para a definição dos comportamentos como *stalking* em 7.5% da amostra total.

A intimidade juvenil abarca ainda relações de carácter ocasional, que não envolvem durabilidade nem compromisso, bem como relações homossexuais, encontrando-se a decorrer investigações sobre a violência nestes contextos relacionais, no âmbito do projecto "*Violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade*", cujos resultados não se encontram ainda disponíveis.

### 3. Estudos atitudinais e análise de discursos

Os estudos abrangidos pelo projecto "*Violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade*" têm também procurado investigar as atitudes dos jovens acerca desta temática, tendo-se constatado uma tendência geral para a reprovação da violência física, emocional e sexual em contextos de intimidade (Machado et al., no prelo; Martins & Machado, 2008).

Não obstante, no que concerne à violência física e emocional, verifica-se uma maior tolerância por parte dos elementos do sexo masculino, de faixas etárias mais jovens, com menor escolaridade, de níveis socioeconómicos mais desfavorecidos e com menos experiências a nível romântico (Machado et al., no prelo). Ao nível das atitudes acerca da violência sexual verifica-se um padrão semelhante, com os jovens do sexo masculino e com menor escolaridade a evidenciarem uma maior legitimação dos comportamentos sexualmente abusivos (Martins & Machado, 2008).

Com o intuito de aprofundar as significações dos jovens acerca da violência em relações de intimidade, procedeu-se ainda a diversos estudos de carácter qualitativo no âmbito do projecto que temos vindo a descrever, quer através de *focus-group*, quer de entrevistas individuais.

Assim, foram realizados nove *focus-group* com jovens, três em cada nível de formação em análise (ensino secundário, profissional e superior). Em cada nível de ensino, um grupo era exclusivamente masculino, outro exclusivamente feminino e o outro misto. Em termos gerais, os discursos dos jovens revelaram-se congruentes com as suas atitudes, exprimindo a condenação dos diferentes tipos de violência e considerando esta problemática relevante na medida em que os comportamentos violentos no namoro são avaliados como comuns e precursores da violência em relações de intimidade futuras (Caridade, em preparação). No entanto, uma análise mais detalhada depara-se com a existência de discrepâncias entre esta posição geral e a consideração da violência como aceitável ou desculpável em certos contextos específicos. Assim, verifica-se uma tendência para a avaliação da violência sexual como rara e para a banalização da violência emocional e de alguns actos de violência sexual entendidos como menos graves. Acresce que a conceptualização que os jovens fazem do abuso está dependente da intenção do agressor, do contexto da agressão e do impacto causado, procedendo-se a uma maior desculpabilização do comportamento violento quando aquele é atribuído à impulsividade e descontrolo do agressor, quando este manifesta arrependimento, quando o abuso não ocorre em público e quando daí não decorrem consequências físicas graves (Caridade, em preparação).

Apesar de os jovens reconhecerem a existência de padrões de poder genderizados associados à violência, tendem a enfatizar factores familiares, do grupo e do meio (e.g. experiência e/ou exposição à violência na família, influência do grupo de amigos), e características intrapessoais (e.g. impulsividade, falta de auto-controlo, consumo de substâncias) como causas da violência, prevalecendo também discursos culpabilizadores da vítima em função da sua tolerância à violência ou da precipitação da mesma através de comportamentos actuais e/ou prévios (e.g. vestuário, infidelidade).

Considerando a possibilidade de os discursos juvenis sobre a violência na intimidade estarem enquadrados em discursos mais abrangentes sobre o amor, Dias (em preparação) procederam à realização de entrevistas individuais sobre as narrativas românticas de 14 jovens (7 rapazes e 7 raparigas), tendo emergido repertórios interpretativos para o amor tipificados pela autora em: "amor romântico", "amor apaixonado", "amor companheiro" e "amor desencantado".

Em particular, o repertório do "amor romântico", encontrado maioritariamente entre raparigas e que representa o amor como único, verdadeiro e eterno, promove uma construção relacional da identidade que conduz à dependência emocional e que responsabiliza os elementos do sexo feminino pela qualidade e manutenção da relação. É ainda de salientar que por vezes, e exclusivamente nas raparigas entrevistadas, surge a noção do amor como um factor de transformação e facilitador da resolução de problemas pelo casal, o que poderá fomentar a

tolerância/permanência em relações abusivas com o fundamento de que o amor será um motor de mudança. Por outro lado, o repertório do “amor apaixonado” traduz-se numa compreensão do amor como “cego”, sendo comumente utilizado para justificar a permanência em relações violentas. Nos rapazes, este discurso está associado à percepção da infidelidade feminina como um motivo legítimo para a violência, enquanto as raparigas consideram os ciúmes uma prova de amor (Dias, em preparação).

Ainda que os repertórios do “amor romântico” e “amor apaixonado” sejam aqueles que mais promovem a vulnerabilidade à violência através da assimetria relacional, defendendo uma maior limitação da vida amorosa feminina, aliada a uma maior passividade/submissão e restrição das emoções negativas nas mulheres, também nos outros repertórios permanecem construções genderizadas do amor. De facto, a associação entre a sexualidade e emocionalidade femininas está presente em todos os repertórios e o maior investimento relacional das mulheres, a par do seu desinvestimento pessoal, apenas não é encontrado no repertório do “amor desencantado” (Dias, em preparação).

Do conjunto destes estudos em desenvolvimento, emerge a constatação de números significativos de violência na intimidade juvenil, aliados à persistência de significações e crenças que perpetuam a genderização do poder e legitimam a violência. Desta forma, reforça-se a necessidade de desenvolver e avaliar programas de prevenção nesta área, para o que é fundamental conhecer e avaliar os esforços desenvolvidos até ao momento no nosso país.

#### **4. Programas de prevenção**

Com o intuito de reunir informação acerca dos programas de prevenção universal existentes em Portugal no âmbito da violência em contextos de intimidade, foram contactados (Saavedra, em preparação) 83 serviços com actividade desenvolvida na área da violência doméstica e, embora somente 23 tenham fornecido a informação solicitada, da análise dos materiais obtidos concluiu-se que apenas sete poderiam ser considerados como programas de prevenção universal da violência nos relacionamentos íntimos (incluindo ao nível da população juvenil).

A maioria destes programas foi financiada por fundos comunitários, decorreu em contexto escolar com jovens com idades compreendidas entre os 14 e os 18 anos, objectivava a sensibilização para o problema da violência em contextos de intimidade e o desenvolvimento de respostas adequadas, recorreu a exposição teórica e dinâmicas de grupo, funcionando geralmente em sessões únicas. Em cinco dos sete programas procedeu-se à avaliação dos resultados, sendo que em dois apenas foi contemplada a satisfação dos participantes, genericamente avaliada como positiva, e em três recorreu-se a uma metodologia quasi-experimental com pré-teste, pós-teste e *follow-up*, tendo-se verificado uma menor legitimação da violência nos momentos de pós-teste e *follow-up*, quando comparados com os valores obtidos no pré-teste (Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima, 2005; Matos et al., 2006).

Não obstante a relevância destes programas de prevenção, após a sua caracterização genérica torna-se pertinente assinalar alguns aspectos críticos que lhes estão subjacentes, nomeadamente a ausência de financiamento regular que assegure a continuidade destes programas, eventualmente associada à predominância de intervenções de sessão única e ao recurso típico a metodologias teóricas de apresentação de conteúdos. Acresce que a maioria dos programas de prevenção implementados não se encontram fundamentados teoricamente

e, ao nível da avaliação, sobrevalorizam a satisfação dos participantes, bem como as atitudes/conhecimentos em detrimento do impacto comportamental e não recorrem a grupos de controlo (Saavedra, em preparação).

#### 4.1. APAV 4D – Prevenção Integrada em Contexto Escolar

Durante o ano lectivo de 2008/2009, promovido pela Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima e com apoio científico e técnico do projecto “Violência nas relações juvenis de intimidade”, encontra-se em curso a implementação piloto do programa APAV 4D – Prevenção Integrada em Contexto Escolar, junto de seis turmas do 9.º ano na disciplina de Área de Projecto. Consiste num programa de prevenção universal de comportamentos de risco e promoção de comportamentos saudáveis, traduzido e adaptado do programa The Fourth R, elaborado e testado no Canadá pela equipa de Wolfe, Jaffe, Crooks, Hughes e Chiodo (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health - Centre for Prevention Science, 2008).

Os jovens constituem a população-alvo deste programa, na medida em que se encontram numa etapa desenvolvimental caracterizada pela procura de informação, apoio e novas experiências, pelo que a nível preventivo não basta definir os comportamentos a evitar, sendo indispensável orientar os jovens para os comportamentos saudáveis pretendidos, assegurando os meios para que estes possam ser colocados em prática. Neste âmbito, é sublinhada a importância de agir a um nível holista na redução dos diversos comportamentos de risco dos jovens, tais como o consumo de drogas, os comportamentos sexuais de risco e a violência entre pares, sendo estes os módulos que integram o programa original (Wolfe, Crooks, Hughes, & Jaffe, 2008) e aos quais o programa APAV 4D adicionou uma unidade relativa à igualdade de género.

O programa APAV 4D é composto por 24 sessões conduzidas por professores que recebem formação especializada e, apesar de decorrer em contexto escolar, procura envolver também outros elementos da comunidade, promovendo assim a proximidade entre os adolescentes e as múltiplas vertentes do seu meio envolvente e possibilitando a aplicação das novas aprendizagens em contextos diversificados. À semelhança do que defendem Wolfe e colaboradores (2008), Saavedra e Machado (2008), responsáveis pela adaptação do programa, consideram que as principais áreas de acção devem incluir a clarificação de valores, o fornecimento de informação, a tomada de decisão e uma forte componente de desenvolvimento de competências. Deste modo, foram delineados os seguintes objectivos gerais: a) ajudar os alunos na clarificação dos seus valores e limites acerca dos seus relacionamentos, sexualidade, substâncias e questões de género; b) fornecer informação necessária para uma tomada de decisão informada; c) ensinar competências de comunicação, negociação, adiamento e recusa para lidar com questões de violência, sexualidade, consumo de substâncias e desigualdade de género; d) fornecer oportunidades para praticar essas competências através de actividades de *role-play*.

Sabendo-se que a informação, por si só, não gera modificações comportamentais, considerou-se necessário manter esta componente no programa, ainda que evitando um formato didáctico e sublinhando-se a importância de levar os adolescentes a colocar as suas próprias questões. Outro nível de acção consiste no desenvolvimento de competências comportamentais, tais como a assertividade, comunicação e estratégias de resolução de problemas. Assumindo que há uma diferença entre saber o que fazer e pôr esse conhecimento em prática, considerou-se indispensável criar, no contexto do programa, oportunidades repetidas para as treinar, através



do recurso ao *role-play* como participante e observador, o que permite aos jovens explorar estas competências e receber *feedback* imediato.

Segundo o racional deste programa, o fornecimento de informação e a aprendizagem de competências, aliados à possibilidade de realizar debates aprofundados e antecipar as consequências dos diversos comportamentos, irão conduzir à clarificação de valores e limites dos jovens, bem como, desejavelmente, a uma maior motivação para a adopção de comportamentos saudáveis. No entanto, é indispensável não descurar aquelas que são entendidas pelos jovens como as consequências positivas dos comportamentos de risco, sendo esta reflexão acerca dos prós e contras das diversas alternativas comportamentais que vai permitir o *empowerment* e a responsabilização de cada um pelas suas escolhas individuais.

A necessidade de assegurar a eficácia, interesse e estruturação do programa conduziu a que a componente interventiva estivesse fortemente aliada à componente avaliativa, pelo que o programa APAV 4D prevê dois níveis de avaliação. O primeiro pretende identificar eventuais mudanças ao nível do conhecimento, atitudes e intenção de comportamento dos jovens, recorrendo a três etapas (pré-teste, pós-teste e *follow-up*), nos grupos experimental e de controlo, sendo esta informação recolhida através de questionários de auto-relato disponíveis *online*. O segundo nível visa uma avaliação comportamental e ao vivo da aquisição de competências por parte dos participantes, através da sua confrontação programada com actores que os irão pressionar para a realização de comportamentos de risco, sendo a utilização de competências pelos grupos experimental e de controlo cotada por avaliadores “cegos” através de grelhas de avaliação.

Apesar de o programa ainda estar em aplicação entre nós e de não haver ainda dados disponíveis sobre a sua eficácia, os resultados obtidos pelo programa original implementado no Canadá têm comprovado o seu impacto positivo na modificação de atitudes, na aprendizagem de competências, na participação nas actividades propostas e na utilização das competências aprendidas em contextos de avaliação realistas (Wolfe et al., 2008).

## 5. Discussão

A violência nas relações de intimidade é uma problemática de dimensões preocupantes e efeitos alarmantes, não somente a nível individual mas em toda a esfera social. Os estudos empíricos existentes demonstram que as faixas etárias mais jovens não estão imunes a este problema, evidenciando valores significativos de vitimação e perpetração e mantendo crenças legitimadoras deste tipo de violência. Como tal, o desenvolvimento de esforços preventivos a nível universal afigura-se como indispensável, devido ao seu potencial transformador sobre comportamentos actuais e futuros.

O papel crucial da escola no desenvolvimento dos jovens, enquanto local onde se procede a múltiplas aprendizagens, onde geralmente se formam as primeiras relações de intimidade e, paralelamente, como um contexto em que frequentemente ocorre violência, converte-a num espaço privilegiado de acção junto dos jovens e, indirectamente, junto de diversos elementos da comunidade, tornando os esforços preventivos mais abrangentes e articulados.

Neste âmbito, os jovens devem ser entendidos não somente como alvos de intervenção passivos, mas sim como agentes activos de mudança, capazes de interiorizar nova informação e desconstruir mitos, de adquirir competências e utilizá-las adequadamente, e de reflectir sobre os

efeitos benéficos ou prejudiciais dos seus comportamentos, tomando assim decisões responsáveis com repercussões em todo o seu mundo relacional.

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# Empowerment as the determinants of citizen-participation for environmental management plan

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## Abstract

*The present study explored the determinants of general attitude and behavioral intention of citizen participation (C.P.) for making basic environment plan. The results of our previous study indicate that through the commitment, environmental volunteers enhanced their empowerment expectation and behavioral intention of C.P. for making the environmental plan. The purpose of this study is to examine whether the ordinary citizens would participate in making the environmental plan when they could expect to get empowerment through their participation. A random sampling survey was conducted on 1500 residents in Tsushima city, which began to make a basic plan for environmental management by citizen participation. Main results of the survey were as follows. Firstly, expectation of social benefit (efficacy to change the administration by C.P.; e.g. "C.P. makes administration adopt environmental policies") was the main determinant of general attitude of C.P. Secondly, individual empowerment expectation (competence; e.g. "I will get a broader view by participating in making the plan") was the main determinants of behavioral intention of C.P. Lastly, general attitude of C.P. did not have significant effect on behavioral intention to C.P. for making basic environment plan.*

Key words: citizen participation, empowerment, environmental management plan

## Introduction

For environmental activities in Japan, citizen participation is an important issue. In 1994, the Japanese government compiled the first basic plan for the environment, specifying that one of its long-term objectives would be to establish an environmentally sustainable society by means of citizen participation. Recently, citizen panel conferences (e.g., consensus conferences and planning cells) have been introduced, and workshops are being held in many cities in order to create environmental management or waste reduction plans. The purpose of our study is to examine why people take part in a collective action like developing an environmental management plan. We focus on ordinary citizens without prior experience in volunteer activities or participation in community planning, and we investigate how they evaluate and take part in developing the plan.

Research on planning has shown that many people express positive attitudes towards citizen participation, but only a few exercise their behavioral intention to participate in planning activities (Maeda, Hirose, Sugiura, & Yagishita, 2008). Both regional plans like waste reduction plan or environmental management plan and accomplishments of environmental volunteers' activities are considered public goods, because every resident can receive benefit by environmental policies based on these plans or activities. Therefore, developing a regional plan by means of

citizen participation has been regarded as a social dilemma in supplying public goods (Olson, 1965). Citizen participation will bring social benefits to all inhabitants of the city, and based on these social benefits, many people evaluate citizen participation positively. On the other hand, people are reluctant to participate, in spite of their positive evaluation. Thus the pattern of citizen participation in planning is similar to behavior in social movements and volunteer activities.

How to facilitate the participation of ordinary citizens is an important question. Recently, a group of randomly sampled people were invited to participate in a citizen panel conference in EU, United States, and Japan. The participation rate from random sampling was around 10 to 20% in EU (e.g., in case of Karlsruhe: Hirose, 2007). But, it was lower in Japan (e.g., in case of Nagoya: Maeda et al., 2008). To increase participation rates, it is necessary to identify what affects people's evaluations of citizen participation and their behavioral intent to participate.

In previous research (Maeda & Hirose, in press), the main determinants of the general evaluation of citizen participation for making waste reduction plan were direct and spillover social benefits. People who thought citizen participation enabled the plan to provide easy-to-follow rules (direct social benefits of citizen participation), and making the plan by citizen participation facilitated other stakeholders' (e.g., schools or stores) efforts to waste reduction (spillover social benefits), evaluated general evaluation of citizen participation more positively. In addition, inefficiency of citizen participation had negative effect on general evaluation of citizen participation. In contrast, the main determinants of the behavioral intention to participate were expectation of personal empowerment and personal cost. General evaluation of citizen participation didn't have significant effect on behavioral intention. People who thought they could increase self-efficacy or solidarity by their participation and personal cost would be low, evaluated behavioral intention positively. Respondents in Maeda and Hirose (in press) were people who had experience in participating in community activities as volunteers. In the present study, we asked if this pattern of determinants was the same for people who had no prior experience of participation.

The project for waste reduction and environmental management plans in the city of Tsushima, Japan, was a good case for our purpose. Tsushima decided to develop these plans by means of citizen participation. The city first developed a waste reduction plan from 2002 to 2003, followed by an environmental management plan from 2004 to 2006. During the development of the waste reduction plan, Tsushima invited citizens to participate by establishing a citizen committee. The committee sponsored many events (e.g., an inspection visit to an advanced region which already accomplished to reduce waste, a citizen forum for waste reduction) and collected various ideas from the public. After completing the waste reduction plan, the citizen committee acted as a leader in implementing the plan. Therefore, activities for both making the plan and following up on it involved substantial citizen participation. Based on the methods used in creating the waste reduction plan, Tsushima again invited citizens to participate in the creation of an environmental management plan. About 60 people participated in a citizen committee that met more than 130 times.

The process of developing these plans was highly publicized. Therefore, it could be assumed that many people in Tsushima would know about citizen participation in making these plans, even if they didn't participate in the process. It could also be assumed that those who didn't participate in the process would still be able to evaluate the social benefits of the plan or estimate

their expectation of personal empowerment or cost should they have decided to participate.

Our research questions are as follows. The first is whether or not ordinary citizens who lack previous volunteer experience would decide to participate in making community plans. The second question is whether a citizen's general evaluation of the waste reduction plan developed through citizen participation is made on the basis of social benefits and inefficiency of citizen participation. The third question is whether personal empowerment as a selective incentive is a prerequisite for the behavioral intention to participate in developing the environmental management plan. As expected answers to the second and third questions, the following hypotheses are derived from previous studies about determinants of behavioral intention for citizen participation, social movements, and volunteer activities. The first hypothesis is that determinants of general evaluation of the waste reduction plan will be social factors, namely, social benefits as a positive factor and inefficiency of citizen participation as a negative factor (Maeda & Hirose, in press). The second is that determinants of the behavioral intention to participate in developing the environmental management plan will be personal factors, personal empowerment and personal cost (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Klandermans, 1997; Maeda & Hirose, in press).

## **Method**

### *Sample*

The city of Tsushima in Aichi, Japan was targeted as the study area. A postal survey was conducted of 1500 Tsushima citizens chosen by random sampling in January 2005. At this time, the city had begun to develop its basic environmental management plan by means of citizen participation.

### *Measures*

The questionnaire included several sections that measured behavioral intention to participate, general evaluation of citizen participation, expectation of personal empowerment, expectation of personal cost, social benefits by citizen participation, and inefficiency of citizen participation. We asked behavioral intention and its prerequisites about environmental management plan. But, as general evaluation of citizen participation and its prerequisites, we asked about waste reduction plan. Because, these two plans were made one after another, then we thought it was easier for ordinary people to evaluate general evaluation and its prerequisites based on waste reduction plan that made earlier.

The main dependent variable was behavioral intention to participate in making the basic environmental management plan. Six items were used for behavioral intention (e.g. "becoming a member of the citizen committee", "attending a forum or symposium to discuss environmental conservation in Tsushima"). We asked respondents to choose items as many as they like, and constructed an indicator of behavioral intention by combining these six items.

General evaluation of citizen participation in the basic waste reduction plan was measured by two items: "The basic waste reduction plan made by citizen participation is well organized", and "The basic waste reduction plan made by citizen participation is efficient and good on the whole".

Independent variables for behavioral intention were expectation of personal empowerment

and expectation of personal cost. In this study, two forms of empowerment could be expected by citizens participating in plan development. The first form of empowerment was a sense of self-efficacy as participants obtained a variety of useful information from different perspectives. The second form of empowerment was a sense of solidarity from developing personal relationships with officials or other community residents interested in environmental conservation. Six items were used to measure expectation of these two forms of personal empowerment: for self efficacy, e.g., "If I participate in making the environmental plan, I would be able to obtain useful information"; "If I participate in making the environmental plan, I would be able to achieve a broader perspective"; and for solidarity, e.g., "If I participate in making the environmental plan, I would be able to create social ties with various people", "If I participate in making the environmental plan, I would be able to make friends and we can support one another." Two items were used to measure expectation of personal cost: "If I participate in making the environmental plan, I would feel relationships with other participants to be burdens stemming from my participation", and "If I participate in making the environmental plan, it would take a lot of time and effort."

Independent variables for general evaluation of citizen participation in the basic waste reduction plan were social benefits and inefficiency resulting from citizen participation. Six items measured social benefits from citizen participation: e.g., "By means of citizen participation, the waste reduction plan provides easy-to-follow rules", "By means of citizen participation, the waste reduction plan provides easy-to-recycling rules". Two items measured inefficiency of citizen participation: "The waste reduction plan developed by citizen participation makes solid waste disposal more costly than ever", and "The waste reduction plan developed by citizen participation makes separation of recyclable materials more time-consuming and effortful than ever."

All items except behavioral intention were measured on a 5-point scale from 1 ("do not agree at all") to 5 ("agree very much").

In order to identify people who had previous experience in citizen participation, respondents were also asked if they had taken part in the citizen participation program that had developed the waste reduction plan.

## Results

A total of 661 valid responses were obtained, for a collection rate of 44%. Of the 661 questionnaires, 516 responses were provided by people who had not participated in developing the waste management plan.

The number of responses from females (54.4%, n=280) and males (45.6%, n=235) was almost the same; the mean age of respondents was 51.35 years.

Means of number of selected items for behavioral intention was 1.3. "Making questionnaire to examine view of citizens about environment in Tsushima" was selected by one third of respondents, the largest number in respondents.

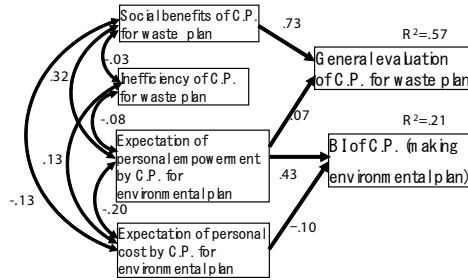


Figure1 Result of path analysis of determinants of general evaluation of the waste plan and behavioral intention to participate in creating the environmental plan.

Figure 1 shows the result of the path analysis. Non significant paths from prerequisites to general evaluation of citizen participation or behavioral intention to participate were deleted. The fit indicator values were;  $\chi^2(6)=10.8(p=.094)$ ,  $GFI=.99$ ,  $AGFI=.97$ ,  $CFI=.99$ ,  $RMSEA=.04$ . The main predictor of general evaluation of citizen participation in the waste reduction plan was social benefits. Expectation of empowerment by citizen participation in the environmental management plan also had a weak positive effect on general evaluation.

In contrast, the main predictor of behavioral intention to participate was expectation of personal benefit, i.e., empowerment expectation. Personal cost also affected intention negatively.

General evaluation of citizen participation in the waste management plan had no direct effect on behavioral intention for citizen participation.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Ordinary citizens, as well as experienced volunteers(Maeda & Hirose, in press), evaluated citizen participation from the general viewpoint of expected outcomes. They focus on the expected outcomes of social benefits and reach their conclusion based on these social benefits.

In contrast, when citizens have to decide whether or not to take part in projects, they are likely to focus attention on the personal benefits and costs. The more people expected empowerment through their participation, the more willing they were to participate in developing the environmental plan. Therefore, the more easily they can see the positive personal benefits of citizen participation, the more likely they are to participate. Therefore, there are two different processes involved in decision making about citizen participation.

We conclude that administrators who want to introduce citizen participation in environmental planning should emphasize social benefits. They should discuss with citizens the necessity of protecting the environment and the importance of citizen participation. They should appeal citizens that if many citizens participate in making environmental plans, the plans would be more effective, and various stakeholders would also increase their efforts.

On the other hand, at the stage of eliciting citizen participation, administrators should emphasize expected empowerment, as well as social benefits. The administrators should appeal citizens that if they participate in making environmental plans, they would become confidence,



and get various information, make many friends as support network. However, if citizens have no prior experience of empowerment from a voluntary activity, it may be difficult to get many people to participate. In fact, the means of number of selected items about behavioral intention was low. In future research, we will investigate the kind of actions that can encourage citizen participation.

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# Psychology of the Oppressed: Encounters with Community Psychology in Palestine

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## Abstract

*In this presentation I explore and discuss the importance and relevance of community psychology as a paradigm in understanding the dialectics of oppression and mental health in occupied Palestine, specifically in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. I survey key historical turning points in the Palestinian context and advance an argument for a critical and liberating community psychology. I end by presenting a program of community psychology we are in the process of developing at Birzeit University.*

*Rather than presenting another review of the international development of community psychology, for the purpose of understanding the specific context of Palestine it is suffice to state that community psychology as praxis involves the scientific study of people within their particular socio-political environment while using this knowledge to help improve the mental health of individuals, groups and communities (Orford, 1992).*

*Community psychology, as a sub-discipline within psychology, emerged when critical psychologists realized that the genesis of mental health disorders among members of the oppressed and marginalized communities are rooted in the objective conditions of oppression, discrimination, injustice and social deprivation within their social environment. Similar to Paulo Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed and liberation education, community psychology may as well be perceived as the psychology of liberation of the oppressed. The Latin American model of liberation social psychology (Burton, 2004) provides an ideal framework to understanding and arguing for the necessity of critical community psychology in occupied Palestine.*

*In 1948, the state of Israel was established consequential to an ethnic cleansing campaign leading to the mass explosion of more than two thirds of the indigenous Palestinian population, leaving a fragile minority behind (Morris, 1989). In 1967 the remaining of historical Palestine, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were occupied by the Israeli invading army. Since 1967 the two populations of Palestinians in historic Palestine have been divided by the virtual "green line" living under two contradictory political conditions; one group as formal Israeli citizens and one under military occupation. Palestinian refugees in exile account for the remaining half of the Palestinian people and they are about five million today spread between refugee camps in neighboring Arab countered and in the west. In this paper we discuss community psychology and mental health among the Palestinian population in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.*

*During the first two decades of resisting occupation, the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have managed to establish an extraordinary network of grassroots organizations and community level committees, including student unions, women groups, labor unions and a wide variety of professional organizations. In the foundation of this sense of community and collective responsibility was a spectacular drive for volunteerism and contribution to the public good and the national cause. When the first Intifada erupted in 1987, it was these grassroots organizations and community groups that carried out and sustained the struggle and provided the needed social and psychological support to victims of political violence.*

The signing of the “Oslo” agreement between the PLO and the government of Israel in 1993 was a turning point at which the Palestinian cohesive community described above was deliberately invaded by funding coming from western capitalist countries. Rather than having the opportunity to develop their own social and economical infrastructure, the Palestinians were taken hostages by conditional funding which had penetrated the community from the top down, including the Palestinian Authority itself. With a widespread network of funded Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating throughout the Palestinian community, the old grassroots voluntary organizations had simply disappeared.

In 2004 a total of 57 NGOs were identified as providing psycho-social / mental health care services to a wide variety of groups including women, children, people with disabilities and victims of military violence (Giacaman, 2004). Governmental institutions providing mental health services include the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Affairs. Many of these organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, provide overlapping services sometimes to the same population, all depending on the availability of external funding, which is typically conditional upon the political situation in Palestine. Despite the fact that they may operate centers within the community, their framework for intervention is individualistic in nature, where they mostly apply individualistic approaches to counseling and psychotherapy. When the second *Intifada* erupted in 2000, the Palestinian community was less prepared to sustain the collative struggle and provide the needed social and psychological support like before. Contrary to mass demonstrations and community building, which were prevalent during the first *Intifada*, the second *Intifada* was highly militarized with many casualties and victims of military violence. It was within this stressful social milieu that NGO were expected to attend to collective social and psychological suffering of war. The task was way beyond their stated agendas and professional capacities.

Parallel but unrelated to this expanding network of mental health services, there has been an evidence of growing body of research on the exposure of Palestinian children and youth to political violence and trauma. This peculiar “PTSD research industry” encompasses little relevance if any to practitioners who work with Palestinian victims of military violence.

This body of research suffers from a number of methodological flaws (Haj-Yahia, 2007): First, the overwhelming majority of the studies use the traditional quantitative research methodologies, and there is near absence of qualitative research methodology. Second, the majority of the research has been conducted in the Gaza Strip where political violence and hardship of life conditions are grater than the West Bank. Third, there is a lack of comparison groups with youth who have not been exposed to the same level of political violence. Forth, political violence and traumatic events have been measure on a dichotomous scale (yes/no). Finally, all the scales used in these studies were initially developed in English, mainly in North America and Western Europe and they were merely translated into Arabic with no attention to their cultural relevance.

The gap between mental health practices carried out by a large number of NGOs and the empirical research on political violence and mental health in Palestine brings to the fact that the fundamental necessity for critical community psychology, rather than traditional psychological and mental health practices in occupied Palestine, is derived from the assumption that the individual’s psychological well being is to a large extent an outcome of the ongoing occupation, oppression, repression, and exploitation.

Due to prolonged repression by the Israeli occupation, along with the inability of Palestinian Authority to monitor the various psychological and mental health services provided by a network of NGOs in the occupied West-Bank and Gaza, there is an entrenched phenomenon of “bad practice” embedded in the overlapping and border-crossing practices among the various professions of mental health, including psychology, social work, special education and even sociology. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the reductionist and individualistic nature of both research and practice in community mental health as well as the peculiar gap and disconnection between them. We believe opting for a paradigm of critical community psychology with its interdisciplinary emphasis and context specific praxis will provide some answer to this acute situation of community mental health practices.

It is essential that we examine how the ongoing occupation, military violence, colonialist separation wall, checkpoint, economical embargo, the rise of poverty, imprisonment and torture, assassination and killing, school closures, and the systematic destruction of Palestinian infrastructure; how all of these factors play a significant role in the severity of people’s mental health and the expansion of risk factors. Such resulting factors include but not limited to disempowerment, poor community prevention, delinquency, child labor, high-risk behaviors, aggression, domestic violence, school violence, substance abuse and many other mental health issues. While working with groups and communities within this oppressive colonialist context, we strongly emphasize that ultimately the process of community critical *conscientization* (Freire, 1970) is by and in itself a process of psychological liberation and mental health promotion.

At Birzeit University we envision community psychology as praxis where we strongly emphasis both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and epistemologies, and conduct community participatory action research about context specific issues within the Palestinian socio-political context. Our students also participate in a year long practicum in community based organizations, and encouraged to conduct their thesis research in conjunction with this practicum. They are expected to engage in a number of community level intervention projects where they gather data in participatory manner with community members, develop and implement community level intervention programs. Topics covered through course in our program include, community psychology (overview and community interventions); qualitative and quantitative research methodologies; culture and mental health in Palestinian society; child and adolescent development in war environment; applied social psychology; individual and small group interventions; professional ethics; educational community psychology; psychology and gender differences; and ethno-psychology.

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# The Psychology of Resilience among Palestinian Female Students

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## Abstract

*In this paper I present initial findings from a qualitative exploratory study with a small sample of academically resilient Palestinian female students in the West Bank. Participants reported a number of factors that from their personal experiences explain the remarkable academic achievement among Palestinian female students including: Family support, female segregated schools, supportive female teachers, educational success as a path to the public space, and resilient personal characteristic.*

## Theoretical Framework

There is a plethora of educational literature documenting the ways by which formal educational systems in diverse societies are structured and conducted in manners which hinder the opportunities for academic success and achievement among ethnic minority students, students from the working class and female students (Banks, 1994; McLaren, 1994). This corpus of scholarship in the fielded widely known as “multicultural education” focuses mainly on educational theory and practice within the context of heterogeneous western societies (i.e., USA, Canada, and Australia). Earlier paradigm of explaining the low achievement records among minority students was labeled as “the cultural deficit paradigm” which had emphasized a wide range of factors within the cultural background of the students that place them in a category labeled as “at risk students” (Pollard, 1989).

Nonetheless, there are many examples of “at risk students” who are considered “success stories” despite the odds working against them. An alternative paradigm of understanding the educational successful experiences of minority students despite the obstacles in their educational environment is known as the paradigm of “student resilience” (Jarret, 1997; Pollard, 1989; Floyd, 1996). According to scholars working from this worldview “rather than focusing on the children who were casualties of these negative factors, the studies focused instead on those who had not succumbed” (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999, p. 309). What kind of factors in the student’s immediate environment and what personality characters are credited for such accomplishments?

Furthermore, feminist scholars took an issue with the educational system’s discrimination against female students resulting in a pattern of low achievement among females comparable to their male counterparts (Sadker, Sadker, & Long, 1993). Pioneering critical research and theorizing on women’s psychology was inspired by the realization that traditional theories of psychology were, to a large extent, developed by white male scholars and used white male research participants in their earlier stages of theory constructions (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987; Belenky,

Clinchy, Golberger, & Taule, 1997). Conventional theories of psychology did not account for women's psychological experiences and development, and considered male experiences as the norm against which women's psychological development was examined and evaluated.

Working initially with Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Carol Gilligan realized that these critical developments in women's psychology provided solid theoretical foundations for many scholars of multicultural education who were mostly interested in female students' education and the ways by which educational systems discriminate against them and obstruct their educational achievements and opportunities for success (Sadker & Sadker, 1982). However, consistently with the general movement of multicultural education in diverse western societies, the focus of this body of research remains on environmental factors within the classroom, the school, and the students' cultural background which limit female students' equal opportunities for academic success, rather than exploring factors that may lead to resilience and "success stories".

Research addressing the area of children resilience is broadly conceived as "paradigm shift" (Kuhn, 1970) in our understanding of minority and female students academic success despite the factors of risk for failure abundant in their educational and social environment (i.e., poverty, racial discrimination, sexism). Resilience is defined as a "set of qualities, or protective mechanisms that give rise to successful adaptation despite the presence of high risk factors during a course of development (Howard et.al, 1999, p. 310). In a qualitative study with a group of highly successful African American students, Floyd (1996), found two sets of factors that explain these students' resilience. External factors included support from family members and significant others such as teachers and counselors. Internal factors included personality traits such as perseverance, optimism and persistence. It is crucial to identify these positive factors and foster their development in order to increase minority and female students' opportunities for success.

Palestinian women under occupation experience multiple levels of oppression where patriarchy, sexism, colonialism and class exploitation are in continuous dialectical interaction with each other producing unbearable degree of adversity (Makkawi & Jaramillo, 2006). Consequently, Palestinian female students are exposed to a series of "risk factors" embedded in their educational environment throughout all levels of their education. In addition to conventional concerns of teenager females typically discussed in the psychological and educational literature, Palestinian female adolescents face a complicated set of societal restriction, demands and pressures as they enter high school. The phenomenon of academic success among Palestinian female students, despite the mounting difficulties and obstacles, indicates a trend of students' resilience in the face of acute adversity. It is intriguing to explore which factors account for the phenomenon of Palestinian female students' academic achievement when most factors in their environment are hindering rather than encouraging educational achievement.

### **The Current Study**

The annual public announcement of the results of the *Tawjihi* exams taken by Palestinian students upon their graduation from high school in the West Bank and Gaza may seem as a conventional cultural practice for the ordinary observer. However, a remarkable piece of data regarding female students' academic achievements intrigues a great deal of intellectual curiosity in the mind of the interested researcher. Out of the first forty distinguished Palestinian students who graduated in 2004/05 school year, divided between four categories (Arts and Sciences in the

West Bank and in Gaza) an overwhelming majority (37 students) where females.

Furthermore, an examination of previous years of the *Tawjihi* results reveals a common trend of Palestinian female students' distinguished achievement, something which is most likely to be the case in the near future. This phenomenon, when juxtaposed against the widely documented environmental "risk factors" in the Palestinian educational system as well as in the Arab-Palestinian society as a whole, distinct this group of highly achiever Palestinian female students as a group that requires deeper studies of their experience.

The purpose of the current study was to explore in depth the "real world" of a cohort of female student high achievers. It focuses on their perceptions and evaluations of both external factors in their environment and internal personality factor that, from their views, led to their resilience and noteworthy success giants the odds.

This study used "grounded theory" techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as a qualitative methodology in order to explore in depth the experiences, strategies, identities, learning styles, psychological resilience, goals, aspirations, and coping methods among a purposefully selected sample of highly successful Palestinian female students. The sample of 15 participants in this inquiry consists of "data rich cases" (Patton, 2002) purposefully selected from the graduating cohort of Palestinian female high school students during the academic year 2005/06. The main tool for data collection was in-depth open ended interviews lasting approximately from one to one and a half hour for each session. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for qualitative analysis. The transcripts were analyzed for emerging themes using "grounded theory" techniques.

### **Initial Findings**

Family Support and Protection: Participants indicated a strong, warm and accepting support from their nuclear family during their high school experience. This "safety net" provided by family support and protection has some negative consequences such as limiting their chances for independence and the development of gender awareness. It is very important to them "not to disappoint their family".

Female Segregated Schools: Unlike universities where there is full integration, most Palestinian high schools are segregated by gender. Female schools were perceived by participants as providing a "safe environment" away from cruel competition with male students over achievement and other school activities.

Supportive Female Teachers: The majority of the teachers in female schools are women. Female teachers view their teaching role as a great career achievement and take it very seriously comparable to their male counterparts in the Palestinian educational context. They are personally devoted to the role, and consequently serve as appositive role model to their female students. Male teachers on the other hand, take up teaching positions reluctantly due to the limitations of other job opportunities.

Educational Success and the Public Space: As expressed by participants, Palestinian women increase their chances to participate in the "public space" when they are highly successful in their academic work. The alternative is to marry earlier and remain within the family doing mostly domestic work. This perception of educational success as a chance to be involved in the "public space" serves as a challenge to be taken many Palestinian female students. Male students



on the other hand, don't have to be academically successful in order for them to be involved in the "public space".

Personal Characteristic: Participants expressed remarkable degrees of self-confidence, internal sense of locus of control, self-esteem and persistence and motivation in their academic work.

### **Conclusion**

Resilience studies in education and mental health help identify context specific environmental and personal factors that together facilitate individual's success and healthy development despite the odds. In education, and particularly education of the oppressed such as the case of Palestinian women, policy makers must shift their focus from "fixing the individual" to "fixing the system" where factors of resilience such as the family, peers and teachers, and school environment are utilized to support "at risk" female students who are victims of sexism, oppression, and discrimination. Palestinian women have been historically involved as equal participants in the struggle for self determination providing solid bases for their claims of equality. The remarkable success stories of Palestinian female students discussed in this paper add another substantiated evidence for these claims and quest for equality and liberation.

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# Acculturation across life domains and perceived social support: a research in a suburban community of the city of Genova (Italy)

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## Abstract

The concept of acculturation is related to interethnic contacts and describes the psychological and cultural changes that occur as a result of continual relations among peoples belonging to different cultural or ethnic groups (Gibson, 2001). The acculturation process can be facilitated or inhibited by cultural aspects, individual skills, forms of support and sense of value (self esteem) that the person experiences and develops in contact with the host culture.

Over past three decades, social support has been one of the major topics for community psychological investigation and viewed as "one of the basic building blocks of social, psychological and biological integrity" (Pierce et al., 1996). Migration process gives several implications with reference to the support to reception; the support structure, given to adolescents, is considered as an efficient protecting factor in front of many problematic aspects of the life of subjects belonging to ethnic minorities (Zimmermann et al., 2000).

Self-esteem is commonly considered as an index of well-being and of psychological adjustment of adolescents (Benjet, Hernandez-Guzman, 2001; Phinney, 2001). The present study examines the relationships among acculturation strategies across life domains, self esteem and social support of Italian, double heritage and immigrant adolescents. Participants are 137 Italian, 119 immigrant and 92 double heritage adolescents recruited from public schools in Genoa (ITALY). The students fulfilled a questionnaire consisting in Socio-cultural data, Self-esteem Scale (Rosemberg, 1965: 10 items), Social Support From Family and from Friends (Procidano and Heller, 1985), Psychological Acculturation Scale (Tropp et al., 1999, in a version modified by Manetti, Frattini, Olivieri: 14 items). *Veçu et santé perçu par l'adolescent VSP-A* (Simeoni M-C., Sapin C., Antoniotti S., Auquier P., 2001). Results show significant relationships, between family support and friend's support, self esteem and well-being and different acculturation profiles by domains among Italian, double heritage and foreigner students.

Key words: immigrant adolescents, acculturation, social support, self-esteem, well being.

## An overview of the current research

### 1.1. Acculturation processes

The concept of acculturation is related to interethnic contacts and describes the psychological and cultural changes that occur as a result of continuous contacts among people belonging to different cultural or ethnic groups (Gibson, 2001).

Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936 defined acculturation as " those phenomena which

*result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups..”* (, pp. 149–152). Graves (1967) introduced the concept of psychological acculturation, and defined it as the set of psychological changes that take place in individuals who are members of cultural groups.

Berry and Kim (1988), when considering how immigrants relate to the host culture, took into account two parameters: the first one is the time running between the decision to leave and enter a new culture and the moment the immigrant establishes a relationship with the host culture. That means that there are phases of pre-contact, contact, conflict, crisis and adaptation.

The second parameter examines the degree of behavioral change immigrant persons develop entering into relationship with the host culture; so behaviors range from loss of the original identity (assimilation) to a condition of acceptance of the relationships coexisting with the preservation of their own culture and identity (integration), maintenance of relationships only for certain situations, staying outside the host culture (separation), and, finally, total denial of contacts with the host culture (exclusion).

Arends-Toth J., Van de Vijver F.J.R. (2004) suggest a specific domain model and argue that relationships with a new culture must be considered in relation to the different areas migrants decide to accept or consider consistent with their point of view, while other existing domains are refused or felt totally unacceptable for their culture.

This model is linked to the recent work of Ward (2008) who examined ethno-cultural identity conflict as a function of cultural distance. According to the author, this concept operates both individually and at level of group, and her findings converged to indicate that the identity conflict is stronger when migrants originate from countries whose culture, language and ethnic composition differ markedly from the host society. Parameters which measure closeness/distance between cultures become crucial. In particular, the author identified three constellations of relevant variables: developmental factors, family values and dynamics, and intergroup factors.

The acculturation process is facilitated or inhibited by other aspects of the migrant life such as: family and friend support structures and level of self-esteem.

### *1.2. Family and friend social support*

Over past three decades, social support has been one of the major topics for community psychological investigation. Social support has been viewed as “one of the basic building blocks of social, psychological and biological integrity” (Pierce et al., 1996).

Many studies point out how the support parents give their children depends on two features: the first is a care dimension and a second is control or protection (Parker and Gladstone, 1996). The skills parents exhibit in such areas result in a good level of adjustment of children in adulthood (Timko and Moos 1996). The parent-children relation needs the re-negotiation of boundaries and the development of progressive independence levels in relation to parental authority, especially during adolescence (Steinberg and Silk, 2002). This step may be particularly critical to immigrant teens for the following reasons:

the acculturation process may follow different timing and arrangement between the first and second generation (Kwak, 2003; Okagaki & Bojczyk, 2002). Moreover, different levels of acculturation between parents and children can intensify the challenges and conflicts, normally occurring at this stage of development, compared to what occurs in families in which members

are at similar levels of acculturation.

Children, generally, have a more rapid level of acculturation than parents.

Parents have a stronger sense of identity than children and are more linked to the ethnic traditions of the origin country (Kwak, 2003).

differences in acculturation between parents and children are associated to levels of well-being of children (Lee & Zhan, 1998), to a lower level of satisfaction of life (Phinney and Ong, 2002), to an increased anxiety and lower self-esteem (Farver, Narang, and Bhadha, 2002), and to higher levels of depression (Kim, 2003).

However, some literature (Zimmermann et al., 2000). stresses as the support structure, given to adolescents, is considered as an efficient protecting factor in front of many problematic aspects of the life of subjects belonging to ethnic minorities.

Then, parental support assumes an ambivalent function: it can be positive when it helps young people to self integrate into the new culture, or have a function of withdrawal from intercultural relationships when parents feel threatened by the host culture or, extrema ratio, have maladaptive and strongly conflicting features either inside family and inside social context. Adolescents may not feel to be helped in the interpretation and negotiation with the host culture, and then the conflicts they have to face concern both the relationships with family and with the host contexts (school, peer group, neighborhood, job, leisure).

Authors attribute different effects to the social support from family and from friends, with reference to the adjustment process, in various contexts (Roberts et al., 2000). These effects may depend either on the child immigrants culture of origin, or on the time elapsed since the arrival in the host country (Y.W. Ying, Lee P.A, Tsai JL (2007). Research has shown that when problems with friends exist these tend to be correlated with depressive situations, and that, among late adolescents and university students, the friendship relations have a protective function against stressors greater than those given by parents.

These occurrences have to be attributed to the process of separation / individualization typical of the age (Mattanah, Hancock and Brand 2004), but perhaps they depend on the fact that immigrant children recognize to the peer group a cultural know how greater than what they recognize to their parents. They utilize the peer group to comprehend, manage, and find meaning in their lives, and to ward off depressive symptoms (Gore and Aseltine, 1995; Rodriguez, et al 2003).

Generally, the friend support structures seem to produce positive effects on well-being but may have a negative impact when the request to comply with the community standards are particularly oppressive (Caughy et al. 2003; Wakefield and Poland, 2005). Moreover, family and friendly supports are not free from the influence of the context: they seem to be easily affected by economic level and by socioeconomic features of the community (Wen et al., 2005).

### 1.3. *Self esteem and well being*

Self-esteem is commonly considered as an index of well-being (Benjet, Hernandez-Guzman, 2002) and of psychological adjustment of adolescents (Phinney, 1991). The classical theory of "looking glass self" (Cooley's 1956) says that the point of view a person takes, for what is concerned, largely reflects the views of individuals and groups of reference of the individual himself. The migration process forces migrants to face the different views the groups of origin,

people who have dealt with them on the migration and people belonging to the host countries, have. In many cases these views do not correspond each other, and they have to negotiate, from time to time, their own image and their own level of self-esteem. Furthermore, the level of self-esteem may vary depending on whether individuals compare themselves with their ethnic group or with people of the majority group.

Nesdale and Mak (2003), referring to the self categorization theory (SCT) of Turner et al. (1987) report of a level of individual self-esteem and of ethnic self-esteem and / or ethnic identification. In any case, self-esteem and the sense of personal self-worth is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning and is strongly related to many other variables, including general life satisfaction, psychological health and adjustment competences, even if literature, with reference to the connections between the level of individual and ethnic esteem, is very contradictory (Nesdale and Mak 2003). However, self esteem is acknowledged to mediate measures of emotional distress. High self-esteem is associated with psychological well-being and health, whereas low self esteem is associated with psychological problems, including depression and anxiety (Abe J. A. 2004) Mruk, 1995)

### **Objectives**

Scope of the research is the collection of structural data of the reference people with particular attention to the migration situations.

Outlook of the acculturation process of subjects in relation with different life domains.

Analysis of familiar and friendly social support to check the effects on self-esteem and well-being.

Investigation of self-esteem and well-being of adolescents and pre-adolescents.

Evaluation of how these variables affect scholastic outcomes.

### **3. Hypotheses**

On the basis of the considerations reviewed in foreword, the following hypotheses have been assumed:

Hypothesis 1- Acculturation process effectiveness depends on different life domains.

Hypothesis 2- Family support is assumed to act differently from friend support.

Hypothesis 3- A relationship is expected between social support and adolescent self-esteem, their well being and their scholastic outcomes.

Hypothesis 4- Foreign and double heritage adolescents are assumed to face more difficulties than Italian with regard to self-esteem, well-being and. scholastic outcomes.

### **4. Method**

The project developed a quantitative methodological approach, based on dispensing a structured questionnaire to 348 participants: 137 Italian, 119 immigrant and 92 double heritage adolescents, recruited from public schools in Genoa (Italy). The analysis of quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was performed by the software package SPSS.13 (Software Package for Social Sciences).

4.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 348 students: 39.4% Italians, 26.4% double heritage and 34.2% foreigners. Foreign students came from four areas in particular: South America 58%, East Europe 25.2%, Africa 15.1% and North Europe 1.7%. With reference to the educational level, the majority of the interviewed students (56.6%) attended the last two classes of primary school, 30.7% the lower middle school, and the remaining 12.6% the first two years of the upper middle school. The average age for the entire sample was 11.7 (SD 2.2). Sample was equally divided on the basis of sex: M 50.3% , F 49.6%.

The majority of foreigner and double heritage students (43.8%) lived in Italy since their birth; 31.8% between 3 and 6 years; 13.5% between 7 and 10 years; 7.8% between 0 and 2 years and 3.1% between 11 and 15 years. Parent mean age was 44 for fathers [( SD 6.07) minimum 22 and maximum 60]; and 40 for mothers [(SD 6.00) minimum 22 and maximum 56]. Comparing the educational level of parents we found out that there were no significant differences and that most of parents had a medium-high educational level 61.7% ( tab.1).

Tab. 1

School level	MOTHERS			FATHERS		
	Italians (123)	Double heritage (82)	Strangers (90)	Italians (124)	Double heritage (80)	Strangers (86)
Primary and lower middle school	36	27	37	44	25	42
Higher middle school and university	64	73	63	56	75	58
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Despite a substantial cultural equivalence among the families of the three groups a marked difference in the type of jobs played by parents was found. Most of fathers played intellectual or business activities (entrepreneurs, professionals, employees, teachers) (see tab. 2) especially those of the double heritage group (79.3%). On the contrary, most of mothers played manual or domestic activities, and Italian women was the ones mostly employed in intellectual occupations (47.3%).

Tab.2

Professions		Italians	Double Heritage	Foreigners	F	Sig.
		Fathers	Intellectual and entrepreneurial	53.0	79.3	44.6
Manual	47.0		20.7	55.4		
Total	100		100	100		
Mothers	Intellectual and entrepreneurial	47.37	38.20	7.83	27.25	0.000
	Manual	52.63	61.80	92.17		
	Total	100	100	100		

#### 4.2. Instruments

Following specific tools have been employed:

Socio-cultural data sheet of adolescent and his family.

Psychological Acculturation Scale (Tropp et al., 1999, in the version modified by Manetti, Frattini, Olivieri 2005).

Perceived Family and Friend Social Support Scales (Procidano & Heller, 1983).

Global Self Esteem scale (Rosemberg, 1965).

Veçù et perception de la santé des adolescentes (Simeoni, Sapin, Antoniotti, Auquier, 2001).

Scholastic Outcomes.

##### 4.2.1. Socio - cultural variables

The structured questionnaire for students consisted of open and closed applications and included the following data: age, sex, educational level , country of origin, time of permanence in Italy, housing conditions, school outcomes (class failed, assessment of educational skills, level of comprehension, reading and writing Italian and parent language), family situation (age, educational level and employment of parents).

##### 4.2.2. Acculturation by domains

The Psychological Acculturation Scale [PAS] (Tropp et al., 1999, modified by Manetti, Frattini, Olivieri). consists of 10 items concerning individuals' psychological responses to differing cultural contexts (language use, cultural foods, music, holiday celebrations, and family celebrations). Item responses for the PAS were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (only with my ethnic group) to 7 (only with other groups), with a bicultural orientation defining its midpoint. Thus, a bicultural orientation (when a person is in a position of equidistance between its own group and other ethnic groups) could be defined as a parallel sense of connection to both cultures (Cuellar et al., 1980).

##### 4.2.2. Social support

The Procidano & Heller scale (Perception of Social Support From Family and Friends, 1983) is a 40-item measure of perception of support from family and friends, 20 for family and 20 for friends. Participants were asked to respond to each of the statements with a response of "yes," "no," or "don't know." Previous research demonstrates that the scale has excellent validity (Cumsille and Epstein 1994; Procidano and Heller, 1983).

##### 4.2.3. Self-esteem

Self-esteem (10 items) was measured with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965). The measure assessed adolescents' global feelings of self worth (e.g. "At times I think I am no good at all"). Response categories ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). This measure was computed as the sum of the 10 items in the scale. Five items were reversed scored so that higher scores denoted greater self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale demonstrated good reliability in the past (Cronbach's alfa :71; 1965). Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is probably the most used measure of personal self-esteem in ethnic identity and acculturation research (Li Gong,



2007).

#### 4.2.4. Subjective well-being

The scale *Vécu et Santé Perçue de Adolescent (VSP-A)* (Simeoni, Sapin, Antoniotti & Auquier, 2001) consists of 36 items, inquires various dimensions of the quality of life: vitality, physical and psychological well-being, relationship with teachers, relationship with parents, relationships with friends, school performance, body image and leisure activities. Each item was answered on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 "not at all/never" to 5 "very much/always". The time frame for the measure was the previous 4 weeks. The test is reliable (Cronbach alpha 0.74–0.91). Content and construct validity are good (Sapin, Simeoni, El Khammar, Antoniotti & Auquier, 2005).

#### 4.2.5. Scholastic outcomes

Students were asked a personal assessment of the results of the average of their school outcomes, in all the scholastic subjects. Responses were evaluated according to the following criteria: (seriously insufficient =3-4 , inadequate = 4-5, sufficient = 6-7, more than enough = 7-8).

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Acculturation by domains.

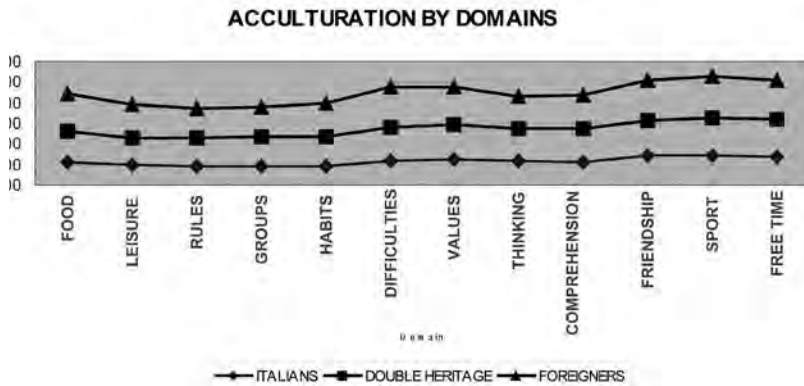
Tab. 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the tool for acculturation by domains. Mean scores and SD of the different acculturation strategies were calculated for the different ethnic groups. For each domain statistical significance is  $p > 0.00$ .

In relation to domain specificity in acculturation models, considerable research has shown that level of acculturation relates to varied outcomes in different life environment relevant for immigrant adolescents. For all domains of the areas of acculturation appeared evident how the Italians have practically exclusive reference to the Italians themselves while foreigners are the group most willing to weave relations with other ethnic groups (see tab. 4).

Tab. 3

Acculturation Scale by Domains	Italians (137)		Double Heritage (86)		Strang- ers (119)		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Acculturation_TOT (Alpha .91)	2.33	0.98	3.18	1.28	3.54	1.04	39.2	0.00
Culture (Alpha .83)	1.92	1.05	2.82	1.38	3.21	1.33	36.2	0.00
Comprehension Sharing (Alpha .91)	2.37	1.21	3.26	1.47	3.47	1,30	25.3	0.00
Friendship (Alpha 75)	2.82	1.18	3.55	1.38	3.93	1.15	27.1	0.00

Tab. 4



5.2. Perceived Family and Friends Support.

Table 5 shows how the whole sample perceived family support as significantly higher than what received by friends, to signify an important and intimate relationship the family offers either as care dimension or control and protection with respect to the external social context. But the perception of support from the family is significantly higher for Italians than for both of comparison groups.

This may simply depend on different cultural patterns or, rather, on the perception that the double heritage and foreigner families are less competent in helping children to cope with the new contexts.

Relations with friends, however, put in evidence significant differences for the benefit of foreigner and double heritage adolescents. This figure can be explained by a specific trend of local culture to have a shortage of relationships outside the family. On the contrary, the cultures of immigrants show intense relations with extended families and peer groups. It is significantly higher, however, the score achieved by Italians in relation to the perception of a situation of isolation by friends.

Tab. 5

	Italians (137)		Double Ethnic Heritage (92)		Strangers (119)		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	DS		
FAMILY SUPPORT (Alpha .73)	1.73	0.26	1.62	0.31	1.64	0.29	5.70	0.00
FRIENDS SUPPORT EXCHANGE (Alpha .58)	0.93	0.24	0.98	0.24	0.99	0.25	2.10	0.12
FRIENDS ISOLATION (Alpha .43)	1.34	0.43	1.28	0.43	1.21	0.45	2.38	0.09
FRIENDS TOT. (Alpha .47)	1.09	0.17	1.05	0.16	1.12	0.17	5.02	0.00

### 5.3. Self Esteem and Well Being

The three ethnic groups differed significantly with respect to self-esteem: specifically, foreign adolescents reported significantly lower levels of self-esteem than biracial and Italian ones (see. Tab 6). Literature (Phinney et al.1997). reports for immigrant adolescents' lower scores in relation with self-esteem. In fact they are ought to face a plurality of challenges related to the acculturation shock, scholastic fatigue and, sometime, ethnic prejudice. Also well-being for foreigners is lower than for Italians ( tab 6)

Tab. 6

	ITALIANS (137)		DOUBLE HERITAGE (92)		STRANGERS (119)		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
SELF-ESTEEM Alpha .73	3,26	0,49	3,18	0,48	3,05	0,45	6,11	0,00
WELL BEING_TOT Alpha .87	3,09	0,84	2,63	0,51	2,98	0,85	10,26	0,00

### School outcomes

School adjustment is generally regarded as the primary socio-cultural and developmental task for children and adolescents (Mattanah, et al.,2004). In the examined sample, foreign subjects turned out school grades significantly lower than Italian and double heritage ones, also maintaining assessment over the sufficiency (see tab. 7).

Tab. 7

	ITALIANS	DOUBLE HERITAGE	FOREIGNERS
Very unsatisfactory	0,0	1,1	5,1
Unsatisfactory	2,9	4,4	12,0
Satisfactory	35,0	35,2	45,3
Very satisfactory	62,0	59,3	37,6
Total	100	100	100

All differences are significant (F 14,532, sig. p>0.000)

### 5.5. Correlation

Bivariate correlation among all the measures are presented in Table 7. The data confirm the correlation between family and friend support, between family support and self-esteem as reported in literature (Phinney, et al.2002), between family support and well-being. There is a positive correlation between friend support and self-esteem, as expected, and a negative one between friends and acculturation. This last figure may be explained by the fact that friends, referred to by the foreigners, belonged, mostly, to the same ethnic group (though at school and in other contexts related predominantly with individuals of other groups). As a consequence the relationship between friend support and process of acculturation correlates negatively. Instead, self-esteem of all students correlated positively with school performance .

Tab. 8

	FAMILY SUPP.	FRIENDS	SELF_ESTEEM
FAMILY SUPP.	1		
FRIENDS	**0,19	1	
SELF_ESTEEM	**0,21	*0,11	1
WELL BEEN	**0,14	-0,07	0,050
ACCULTURATION	-0,11	** -0,16	-0,056
SCHOLASTICS OUTCOMES	0,06	0,04	**0,191

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Discussion and future research

In the acculturation scale for domains, Italians showed a strong tendency to ethnocentrism, while the need of relationship with the host culture (allocentrism) was a feature of foreigner and double heritage adolescents.

Data confirm a strong correlation between family and friend support as reported in literature, but family support seems to work in a different way for Italians, foreigners and double heritage families. In fact, for these last two groups the family is perceived as less present; this, even if strong signals of relational problems are not observed at level of community. That, however, could become meaningful in the near future as an indicator of discomfort needing further investigations.

Foreigner and double heritage adolescents have problems about: self-esteem and well-being and scholastic outcomes., on the contrary Italians have higher indexes of perception of isolation from friends.

Friend support seems to be particularly effective for foreigners and shows a negative correlation with acculturation processes, that points out how a strong sense of belonging to the ethnic group contrasts integration.

Immigrants are reported to have more difficulties in most of the areas considered, these data indicate problems attributable to the stress for migration, even in the sphere of intimate relationships (lower family support).

Presented data do not include the processing in relation to gender differences because they have been found not particularly significant.

In future research should focus on the different paths of migratory processes; in particular, in relation to the differences between cultures. Indeed, the ease / difficulty of a path of acculturation may be a result of the closeness / distance between one culture and another. The conceptual crux of proximity/ distance between cultures currently is not yet been analyzed in the mainstream of research on migration processes, therefore requires further study.

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# Psychological Sense of Community: Contributions Toward a New Understanding

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## Abstract

*To expand and broaden the conceptualization of community, we advance a psychological notion of community, as a feeling of belonging and connection with a group of people who have shared concerns, and contrast it with community defined in physical terms (i.e., a specific place or geographic location with clear physical boundaries). Results of the present study provide evidence that physical and psychological forms of community are distinct constructs and have differential links to social action.*

### **Psychological Sense of Community: Contributions Toward a New Understanding**

Volunteerism and other prosocial actions are becoming increasingly common in everyday life. From locally-based initiatives to international organizations such as the Peace Corps, people are devoting more time to benefit others. Much research has examined what motivates individuals to engage in prosocial action; however, little work has probed the important role of community in promoting behavior that enhances society. A notion of benefit to a larger community is implicit in prosocial action and may prove critical for linking desire with action. To the extent that people identify highly with their community and believe that their prosocial efforts will be beneficial, they will likely engage in actions that benefit others and society.

Current and past research has examined *psychological sense of community*, a feeling of belonging to and dependence on a larger community. However, community has often been defined by physical or geographical boundaries (i.e., as a specific place or geographic location). To expand and broaden the conceptualization of community, we advance a psychological notion of community, as a feeling of belonging and connection with a group of people who have shared concerns.

### **Notions of Community**

*Place attachment.* Commonly discussed in the environmental psychology literature, place attachment refers to the connection that people often feel to a place that, for them, elicits an emotion; for example, the place where someone was born, or where he/she now lives and works (Knez, 2005). Involved in the development and conceptualization of place attachment is a dynamic interplay between emotions, beliefs, and action (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005). Current research in environmental psychology has studied place attachment as it relates to a particular climate or environment (Knez, 2005), to recreational settings (Kyle et al., 2005; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004), and to sacred places and religion (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004).

These studies, and the concept of place attachment itself, reference a specific location



or geographic entity. Likewise, notions of physical community involve a particular geographic location with clear physical boundaries, such as a neighborhood, town, or city. Kyle, Graefe, & Manning (2005) and Hay (1998), however, suggest that place attachment may include another critical element. In their examination of attachment to the Appalachian Trail, Kyle and colleagues (2005) conclude that the social-bonding and meaningful social relationships that occur in specific settings are an important component of human-place connection. Hay (1998) also found that social ties were influential in determining the strength of his participants' attachment to their rural New Zealand community. Thus, feelings of connection to others in the community appear to be influential in determining the degree to which individuals feel attached to a particular geographic region.

*Psychological sense of community.* A feeling of connectedness with others may also form the basis for a broader sense of community. Over the last two decades, community psychology has been interested in community identity and the related *psychological sense of community* (Colombo & Senatore, 2005), a concept first introduced by Sarason (1974). Broadly defined, *psychological sense of community* refers to a feeling of belonging and being able to depend on a larger community. In the literature, it is commonly thought of as including four components: 1) a sense of membership and belonging, 2) a feeling that an individual makes a difference in the community and that the community is important to its members, 3) a sense that the community can meet the needs of its members, and 4) the presence of a shared emotional connection among members, that they will share experiences and a history together (Colombo, Mosso, & De Piccoli, 2001; Kim & Kaplan, 2004; Peterson, Speer, & Hughey, 2006; Prezza & Costantini, 1998; Proescholdbell, Roosa, & Nemeroff, 2006; Puddifoot, 2003).

Psychological sense of community has been explored in numerous studies, some conducted in the U.S. and some internationally (Bishop, Colquhoun, & Johnson, 2006; Hill, 1996; Kim & Kaplan, 2004; Puddifoot, 2003; Tartaglia, 2006), and has been linked to life satisfaction (Prezza & Costantini, 1998), social identification (Obst & White, 2005), personality traits (Lounsbury, Loveland, & Gibson, 2003), positive and negative outcomes of youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Cantillona, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2003), and the presence of threats to communities (Loomis, Dockett, & Brodsky, 2004).

#### *Issues of Conceptualization*

The notion that a psychological sense of community exists and that it has wide ranging influences is not in doubt. Rather, what current literature must now address is how to broaden the conceptualization that underlies psychological sense of community. Many studies examining community approach psychological sense of community as a geographically-bounded construct, such as connected to a neighborhood or town. Even the most commonly used measure to assess psychological sense of community, the Sense of Community Index (SCI; Chavis & Pretty, 1999; Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990) includes items that reference physical space (e.g., "Very few of my neighbors know me"; "I expect to live on this block a long time"; "My neighbors and I want the same things from the block"; and "If there is a problem on this block people who live here can get it solved.").

While some researchers (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Puddifoot, 2003; Tartaglia, 2006) do advance an expanded notion of psychological sense of community, more work needs to be done. Their assessments still involve the idea that community is a geographically-defined region

such as a block or neighborhood. Largely absent is the notion that sense of community involves feelings of psychological connectedness with other people who share similar attitudes, values, or experiences, and who may not be in the same physical location.

Omoto and Malsch (2005) and Omoto and Snyder (2002) echo similar sentiments. They conclude that most literature views community as *context*, as having and being defined by boundaries. Research should instead focus on community as *process*, shifting community sentiment to a wholly psychological conceptualization and not referring to a geographically-bounded region (Omoto & Malsch, 2005; Omoto & Snyder, 2002).

Based on this theorizing, we developed two working definitions of community. A *physical* notion of community was defined as a specific place or geographic location with clear physical boundaries. A *psychological* notion of community was defined as a feeling of belonging and connection with a group of people who have shared concerns. In the present study we examine these two conceptions of community and their involvement in pro-social action.

## Methods

### *Participants*

A total of 111 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern U.S. university participated. A majority was female (68.9%, *males*: 28.3%). Participants ranged in age from 18 (20.0%) to 20 (23.8%).

### *Procedure*

Participants completed an online survey where they were asked to define community ("When you see or hear the word community, what do you think of?"), to list the communities to which they belonged, and to indicate their interest and likelihood of participating in various volunteer activities.

### *Measures*

*Community appeals.* To examine whether differing notions of community may influence participants' interest in volunteer activities, two message appeals were created. One emphasized a *physical* sense of community, and one a *psychological* sense of community. Both appeals began with the stem: "We need your help! The Clean-Sweep Society is looking for volunteers to help clean up the alleys around the city. This is a one-time volunteer activity of only three hours on a Saturday afternoon." The *physical* appeal ended with: "Please join us – It's a great way to clean-up and beautify the area!" The *psychological* appeal ended with: "Please join us – It's a great way to connect with people who are also concerned with the environment and be successful in achieving a common goal!" Participants were randomly assigned to three conditions: 1) no appeal, 2) appeal emphasizing a *physical* sense of community, 3) appeal emphasizing a *psychological* sense of community.

*Volunteer activities.* Ten items ( $\alpha = .88$ ) assessed participants' interest in participating in volunteer activities to enhance physical community (e.g., raking leaves on your block) and twenty-two items ( $\alpha = .94$ ) assessed interest in activities that enhance psychological community (e.g., tutoring children). Participants rated their interest in each activity using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all interested*) to 7 (*very interested*). Items of each type (physical and psychological) were combined to form scales and a mean calculated.

## Results

### *Views of Community*

In participants' open-ended responses, there was evidence that they thought of community in both physical and psychological terms. One participant was clearly physically minded: "I would think of community as an area of town that I live in, the neighbors, stores, restaurants, and the people that I see ... also the parks and other green space that is a part of it." Another participant conceptualized community in terms of interpersonal relationships:

I think of a community as a group of people who spend a lot of time together sharing ideas and working together to build productive relationships. This group of people probably also works together to better the area that they live in, such as doing clean-up activities, fundraisers, and food drives.

Yet another participant viewed community in wholly psychological terms: "Community means more to me as referring to people rather than place. A community can exist beyond geographical borders as long as people share something in common."

On average, participants listed approximately seven communities to which they belonged ( $M = 7.30$ ,  $SD = 4.48$ ). Physical communities ( $M = 2.23$ ,  $SD = 2.22$ ) seemed to be slightly more salient than psychological ones ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ), although the difference was not statistically significant,  $t(107) = .56$ ,  $p > .05$ . However, when prompted with a definition of psychological community, participants could readily identify the psychological communities to which they belonged, adding significantly more psychological communities ( $M = 1.23$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) to their initial list than physical ones ( $M = .38$ ,  $SD = .70$ ),  $t(47) = -4.38$ ,  $p < .01$ .

### *Message Appeals*

As predicted, results suggest that community appeals emphasizing either physical or psychological sense of community do influence the volunteer activities in which participants are interested (see Figure 1). Participants that were shown an appeal highlighting physical sense of community expressed significantly greater interest in volunteering to benefit physical community, controlling for general interest,  $F(2, 104) = 4.81$ ,  $p < .05$ . Similarly, participants shown an appeal emphasizing psychological sense of community indicated significantly higher interest in volunteering to enhance psychological community,  $F(2, 104) = 3.16$ ,  $p < .05$ .

### Discussion

Our theorizing and research provide support for the proposition that community is salient. Participants were able to provide their personal definition of community and readily list the communities to which they belong. Importantly, results also emphasize that physical and psychological forms of community are distinct constructs. Previous literature in both community and environmental psychology has succeeded in documenting the importance of individuals' sense of community in many aspects of their lives. However, despite using the term *psychological sense of community*, researchers have failed to consider it in a wholly psychological light. Community is most often assumed to reference a relatively bounded geographic region. More broadly though, psychological sense of community seems to involve feelings of belongingness and connection to others with shared concerns, but not necessarily shared geographic location.

Not only are physical and psychological notions of community distinct, but they also have identifiable links to social action. Participants expressed a higher interest in volunteer activities that matched the type of community highlighted in the message appeal. These results illuminate

the ways in which connections to communities can serve as a motivating force, drawing people into certain types of volunteerism and even sustaining their involvement over time.

By broadening current conceptualizations of psychological sense of community, future research will broaden the theoretical perspective within which we view community and action. A broader conceptualization is needed to assess an individual's sense of community, to fully explore how this sentiment affects his/her involvement in prosocial action and motivations to volunteer, as well as to examine how community can be both a motivating force and a resulting benefit from social engagement.

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# O Impacto de um programa de Prevenção dos Abusos Sexuais de Crianças em: Crianças, Pais e Professores

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## **Abstract**

### **The impact of a Children Sexual Abuse Prevention program: Children, Parents and Teachers**

*Our aim is to present a research in which the purpose is the analysis of the impact of a Children Abuse Prevention program developed in school, contexts involving: children, their relatives and professionals within the school community (teachers). The goal is to evaluate the impact that the development of this prevention program might have in the participants to whom it is directed in terms of their knowledge, attitudes, and competence towards prevention and intervention in child sexual abuse.*

*After the implementation of the child abuse prevention program in the school context, directed to teachers (and other school professional), parents (and other relatives) and children (from the first to the fourth grade) we introduce the impact evaluations.*

*The instruments (questionnaires and interviews) have been created to allow the analysis of the reported indicators: knowledge, attitudes and competences towards prevention and intervention in child sexual abuse.*

*Others studies, with similar goals, and instruments are the basis to the organization or/and adaptation of these tools. The instruments allow the gathering of data about: 1) Demographic information, 2) Involvement in children sexual abuse prevention, 3) Knowledge of child abuse characteristics, 4) Attitudes towards the prevention notions taught in prevention programs, 5) Beliefs regarding risks and advantages of children sexual abuse prevention programs and who should participate in these programs.*

*The expect outcomes are that the participants in the prevention program demonstrate higher levels in knowledge, attitudes and competences towards prevention and intervention in children sexual abuse.*

*This might allow us to reach the secondary objective: the valorisation of child abuse prevention programs development and their dissemination in different contexts.*

**Key words:** Child Sexual Abuse, Prevention, Community

O objectivo desta comunicação é apresentar um estudo que procurou analisar o impacto de um Programa de Prevenção dos Abusos Sexuais de Crianças desenvolvido numa comunidade escolar e que envolve Crianças, Pais e Professores.

O objectivo específico é avaliar o impacto que este programa teve no público a quem se dirige em termos dos seus conhecimentos e competências no que se refere à prevenção e intervenção nos abusos sexuais de crianças.

Até há alguns anos atrás considerado um assunto tabu, o fenómeno dos abusos sexuais de crianças tem vindo a tornar-se um foco de atenção científica por parte de várias áreas disciplinares.

Embora em Portugal não existam ainda estudos relativos à prevalência dos abusos sexuais de crianças de uma forma sistemática e com uma representatividade nacional, podemos depreender que os números não estarão muito afastados daqueles que as estatísticas internacionais nos apontam. Nos E.U.A. estima-se que meio milhão de crianças seja abusado sexualmente todos os anos (Filkelhor, 1994 cit. por Chassan-Taber & Tabachnich, 1999). Contudo Kilpatrick (1992 cit. por Chassan-Taber & Tabachnich, 1999) refere que os estudos indicam que 84% dos casos de abusos sexuais não são denunciados.

Se numa primeira fase de intervenção na área dos abusos sexuais de crianças se deu ênfase, por um lado, à punição dos abusadores e, por outro, ao apoio às/aos sobreviventes e às suas famílias, hoje procura-se realçar a importância de se intervir numa perspectiva de prevenção primária (segundo o modelo tripartido da prevenção).

Contudo, a importância do desenvolvimento de programas de prevenção primária dos abusos sexuais de crianças com ênfase na comunidade só poderá ser sustentada e reforçada através da avaliação que esses programas, de facto, têm no publico a quem se dirigem.

Parece-nos, assim, de extrema importância analisarmos, numa perspectiva científica, qual o impacto que os programas de prevenção dos abusos sexuais de crianças têm. Como nos é reforçado por Jon Conte (1984 cit. por Finkelhor, 1986) estes estudos devem analisar a mudança de conhecimentos e atitudes mas, também, as competências adquiridas.

Com este propósito, após a identificação de comunidades escolares disponíveis para colaborarem neste projecto, desenvolvemos o programa de prevenção dos abusos sexuais de crianças, o programa CAP- focalizado nos pais, professores e crianças.

A história do CAP remonta a 1978, em Columbus no Estado Norte Americano do Ohio, numa associação designada Women Against Rape - WAR (Mulheres Contra a Violação), esta Associação foi, nessa altura, confrontada com um pedido de ajuda por parte de professores e pais de uma criança que tinha sido abusada sexualmente. Assim, apesar de não terem recusado ajudar essa criança, tomaram consciência que deveriam desenvolver conhecimentos próprios de como lidar e prevenir o abuso de crianças e iniciaram um processo de construção de conhecimento e desenvolvimento de estratégias tendo por objectivo a construção de um currículo que visasse a prevenção do abuso de crianças. Após alguns anos de trabalho surgiu em 1985 o National Assault Prevention Center tendo já a sua independência da Associação WAR.

Desde então, o programa tem sido disseminado por vários Estados da América do Norte bem como ao nível Internacional (Holanda, Irlanda, Alemanha - desde 1988, Nova Zelândia, Japão, Inglaterra, Moldava - entre 1994 e 1997).

O programa CAP considera que as crianças necessitam de ter informação sobre prevenção para se prepararem para reconhecerem uma situação potencialmente perigosa. Assim, ensinar às crianças estratégias de prevenção no sentido de reduzir a sua vulnerabilidade aos abusos é tão importante como ensinar às crianças estratégias de prevenção rodoviária (como por exemplo, como atravessar uma rua em segurança).

Neste sentido um dos objectivos prioritários do Projecto CAP é dotar as crianças de estratégias de prevenção dos abusos (Cooper, 1995).

Contudo, sabemos que para que essas estratégias resultem os adultos com quem as crianças podem contar devem ter informações semelhantes de como prevenir os abusos de forma a reforçar as estratégias adquiridas pelas crianças. Desta forma, outro dos objectivos do CAP é dotar os pais/educadores (ou outros familiares) e professores (e outros profissionais do contexto escolar) de conhecimentos e estratégias para colaborarem na garantia da segurança das crianças com quem contactam (Cooper, 1995) e com isto preparar a comunidade em geral.

Por outro lado, sabemos que muitas vezes as situações de abuso já aconteceram e, como tal, as crianças, bem como os adultos, devem ter conhecimentos de como identificar situações abusivas e de como lidar com elas. Consequentemente, outro objectivo deste Projecto é dotar os destinatários (crianças, pais/educadores - ou outros familiares, e professores - e outros profissionais do contexto escolar) de conhecimentos e estratégias de como intervir nas várias situações de abuso (Cooper, 1995). Desta forma, este programa de prevenção desenvolve-se, na prática, através de *workshops* com os professores (e outros profissionais do contexto escolar), com os pais (e outros familiares) e com as crianças (no contexto das suas turmas).

Após a implementação do programa CAP procedemos à aplicação dos instrumentos de recolha de dados (questionários) que nos permitiram recolher informação sobre os conhecimentos e competências relativamente às estratégias de prevenção e intervenção nos abusos sexuais de crianças dos vários participantes no programa de prevenção (pais, professores e crianças).

Os dados que iremos apresentar referem-se ao pré teste deste estudo (que tem previsto o seu desenvolvimento e a realização de estudos paralelos complementares).

Neste estudo de pré-teste desenvolvemos o programa CAP em recolhemos informação junto de duas escolas do 1º Ciclo.

No que se refere aos participantes deste pré teste, contactamos com 25 pais, 29 professores e 12 crianças.

Relativamente aos resultados verificamos o seguinte:

#### **No que se refere aos Pais**

(76%) dos participantes eram mães

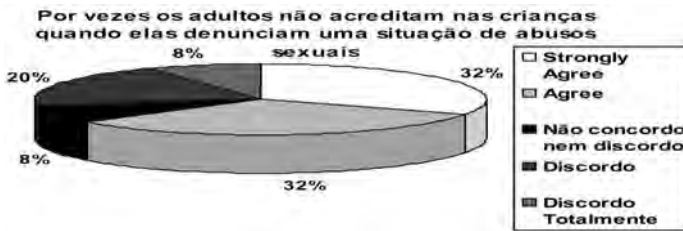


A maioria (92%) dos participantes “Concorda” ou “Concorda totalmente” que as crianças devem ser ensinadas a contar a alguém se forem abusadas sexualmente. Sendo este um dos tópicos principais deste Programa de Prevenção, este resultado demonstra o que estes pais sentem relativamente ao desenvolvimento do programa de prevenção. Podemos inferir que sentem que este programa é importante para proteger as crianças.





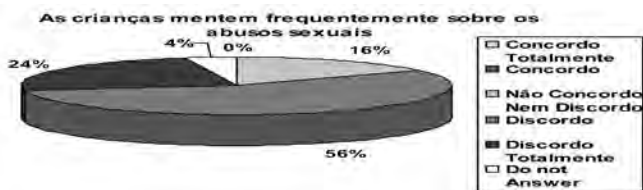
Contudo, os pais demonstram que, alguns deles, não reconhecem que é comum os adultos não acreditarem nas crianças quando elas denunciam uma situação de abuso: 8% Não concorda nem discorda, 20% Discorda 8% Discorda Totalmente com a afirmação: *“Por vezes os adultos não acreditam nas crianças quando elas denunciam uma situação de abusos sexuais.”*



Por outro lado, os pais demonstram que sabem que a maioria dos abusos sexuais é perpetrada por pessoas que as crianças conhecem e não por estranhos, 28% Discorda Totalmente e 48% Discorda que *“A maioria dos abusos sexuais seja perpetrada por estranhos.”* Assim, podemos deduzir que o mito de temer apenas o “estranho” já não é verdadeiro para estes pais. Isto é muito importante para que estes pais reforcem junto das suas crianças estratégias de prevenção dirigidas também para as pessoas conhecidas e não apenas para os estranhos.



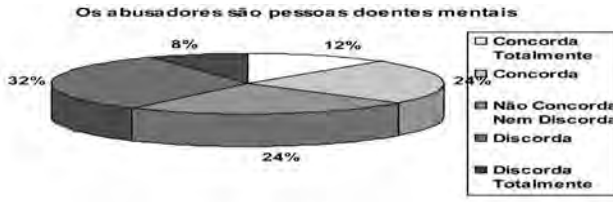
Outro mito que parece não existir para este grupo de pais é aquele que refere que *“As crianças mentem frequentemente sobre os abusos sexuais”* (56% Discorda e 24% Discorda Totalmente desta ideia) e que *“As crianças inventam histórias para se vingarem dos adultos”* (64% Discordam e 8% Discordam Totalmente).



Por outro lado, alguns pais têm a ideia errada que hoje em dia existem mais casos de abusos sexuais que antes. A verdade é que hoje em dia as crianças são mais capazes de denunciar as situações de abuso e as famílias, os amigos, os professores e a comunidade em geral, estão mais alerta.



E, alguns destes pais, também acreditam em mitos relativamente às características do abusador, pois alguns deles crêem que os abusadores sexuais têm uma orientação sexual exclusivamente dirigida para as crianças (40% Não Concordo Nem Discorda, 8% Concordo e 4% Concordo Totalmente) e, por outro, alguns deles considera que os abusadores são pessoas doentes mentais (24% Concordo e 12% Concordo Totalmente com esta ideia).



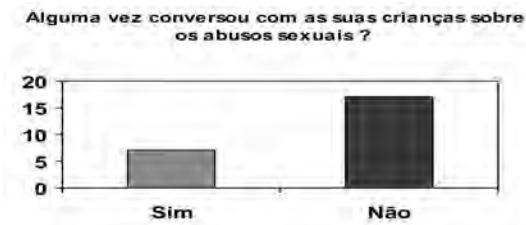
Finalmente, este grupo de pais parece considerar que os programas de prevenção dos abusos de crianças são importantes para todas as crianças independentemente do seu estatuto socio-económico ou género (52% Discorda e 44% Discorda Totalmente da afirmação “As crianças de estatuto socio-económico médio e elevado não necessitam de participar em programas de prevenção primária dos abusos sexuais”).



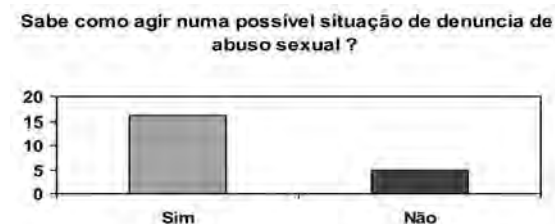
Estes pais também Discordam (48% Discordam e 48% Discordam Totalmente) que apenas as raparigas precisam deste tipo de programas. O que demonstra que este grupo de pais tem informação adequada sobre as potenciais vítimas de abusos sexuais, ou seja, indica que sabem que o único factor de risco associado aos abusos sexuais é a vulnerabilidade das crianças.



Quando questionados sobre se já falaram com as suas crianças sobre os abusos sexuais, 72% responderam que Não, apenas 28% afirmaram que já tinham conversado com as suas crianças sobre este tema.



Contudo quando questionados sobre se sabem como agir numa possível situação de denuncia de abuso sexual, a maioria dos pais responderam que sabem como reagir e o que fazer (72% "Sim" e 28% "Não").



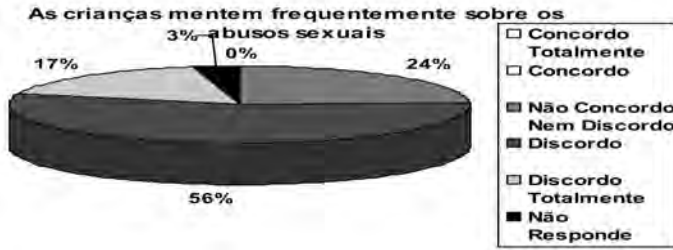
Relativamente aos Professores, todos os participantes são mulheres (100%). A maioria (57%) das participantes "Concorda Totalmente" que as crianças devem ser ensinadas a contar a alguém se forem abusadas sexualmente. Esta ideia demonstra o que estas professoras pensam sobre os programas de prevenção. Podemos inferir que consideram que este programa é muito importante para aumentar a protecção das crianças.



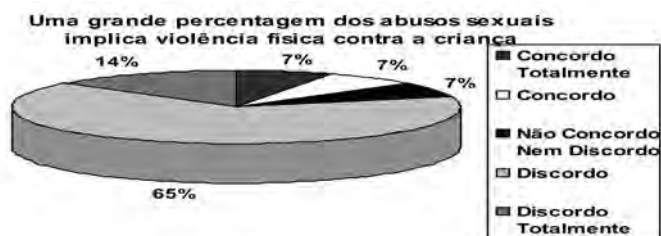
As professoras também demonstraram que sabem que a maioria dos abusos sexuais são perpetrados por pessoas que as crianças conhecem e não apenas por estranhos, 24% Discorda Totalmente e 56% Discorda que "A maioria dos abusos sexuais são perpetrados por pessoas estranhas".



As professoras, tal como os pais, demonstram que sabem que as crianças raramente mentem sobre os abusos sexuais, 56% Discorda e 17% Discorda Totalmente da frase *“As crianças mentem frequentemente sobre os abusos sexuais”* e da afirmação *“As crianças inventam histórias sobre os abusos sexuais para se vingarem dos adultos”* (49% Discorda e 24% Discorda Totalmente).



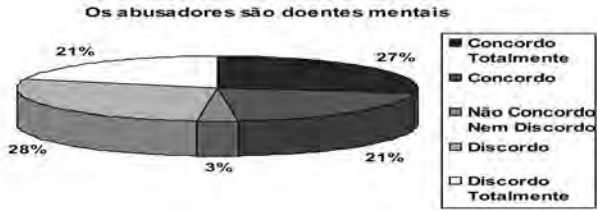
Por outro lado, algumas professoras não têm informações claras sobre duas ideias acerca dos abusos sexuais: a primeira que *“Hoje em dia ocorrem mais abusos do que no passado”* (42% Não Concorda Nem Discorda e 24% Concorda com esta afirmação). Mas a verdade é que, como já referimos anteriormente, as crianças estão mais capazes de fazer a denúncia de abusos e as famílias, os amigos, os professores e a comunidade em geral estão mais à alerta. E o segundo, que *“Uma grande percentagem dos abusos sexuais implica violência física contra a criança”* (69% Concorda e 14% Concorda Totalmente com esta afirmação). De facto, um dos grandes problemas da invisibilidade dos casos de abusos sexuais deve-se à falta de evidências; quando existe violência física (que corresponde a uma minoria dos casos em que existem abusos sexuais) existem mais evidências e é mais fácil detectar-se os abusos sexuais.



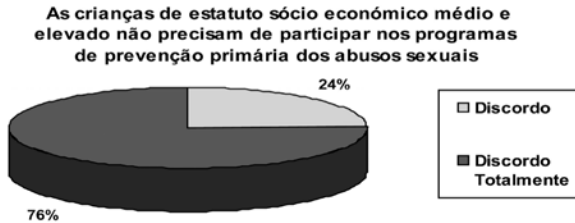
Contudo a maioria das professoras questionadas não revelam mitos sobre as características dos abusadores no que se refere à ideia que os abusadores têm uma vida sexual dirigida apenas para as crianças (53% Discorda, 10% Discorda Totalmente e 34% Não Concorda Nem Discorda).



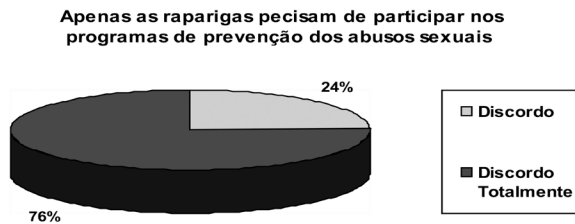
Por outro lado algumas professoras deste grupo (48%) ainda consideram que os abusadores sexuais são pessoas que sofrem de doença mental (27% Concorda Totalmente e 21% Concorda com esta ideia).



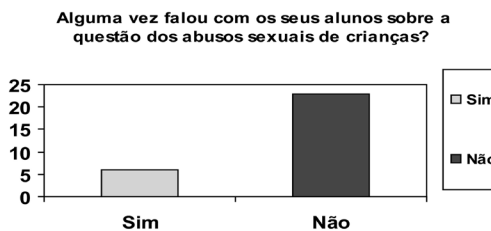
Finalmente, este grupo de professoras também demonstra considerar que os programas de prevenção dos abusos sexuais são importantes para todas as crianças independentemente do seu estatuto socio-económico ou género (76% Discorda Totalmente e 24% Discorda da frase “As crianças de estatuto sócio económico médio e elevado não precisam de participar nos programas de prevenção primária dos abusos sexuais”).



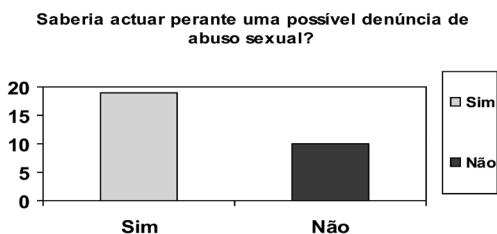
E também discordam (76% Discorda Totalmente e 24% Discorda) que apenas as raparigas necessitam deste tipo de programas.



Quando questionamos este grupo de professoras sobre se já tinham falado com os/as seus/suas alunos/as sobre os abusos sexuais, 79% responderam que “Não”, apenas 21% afirmaram que já tinham desenvolvido alguma discussão acerca deste tema na suas classes.



Contudo, quando questionadas sobre se saberiam como reagir a uma possível denúncia de abusos sexuais, a maioria das professoras respondeu que saberiam o como reagir e o que fazer (66% “Sim” e 34% “Não”).



Relativamente às crianças, todas as crianças pertencem ao 1º ciclo.

Todas as crianças (100%) demonstram ter informações correctas sobre os seguintes tópicos:

*“Tens sempre de guardar todos os segredos”* (100% Responderam que “Não”); *Bom Segredo Vs Mau Segredo*

*“Se alguém te tocar de uma forma que tu não gostas, deves dizer a alguém em quem tu confies* (100% respondeu que “Sim”); *Procurar ajuda*

*“Se alguém te tocar de uma forma que tu não gostas, a culpa é tua”*; (100% respondeu que “Não”) *Responsabilidade do abuso*

*“Se um menino mau da tua escola te mandar fazer alguma coisa, o melhor é fazeres ”*; (100% respondeu “Não”) *Ser assertivo/Procurar ajuda*

*“Está certo receberes abraços dos adultos de quem gostas It’s OK for someone you like to hug you”*; (100% responderam “Sim”)

*“Muitas crianças gostam de receber um beijinho dos seus pais antes de irem para a cama à noite, para essas crianças, este é um bom toque”*; (100% responderam “Sim”)

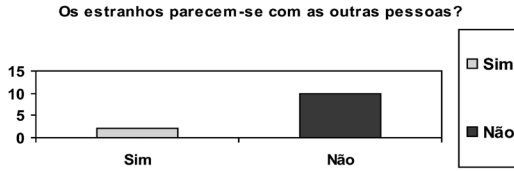
*“Alguns toques começam por saber bem mas depois tornam-se confusos”*; (100% responderam “Sim”)

*“Se ganhares o concurso de melhor desenho na tua escola e um vizinho que tu gostas te der um abraço de parabéns, isso é um bom toque”*; (100% responderam “Sim”) *Bom Toque Vs Mau Toque*

Por outro lado as crianças participantes demonstraram ter falta de informação adequada sobre os seguintes tópicos:

*“Os estranhos parecem-se com as outras pessoas”*( 83% “Não, 17% “Sim”)

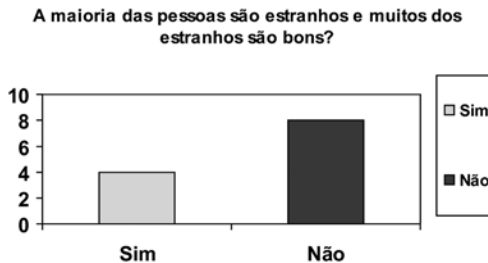




*“Se fores a passear na rua com a tua mãe ou o teu pai e ela ou ele começarem a falar com um vizinho que ainda não conheces, é certo falares com ele também”* (apenas 50 % responderam que “Sim”).



*“A maioria das pessoas são estranhos e muitos dos estranhos são bons”* (66% continuam a considerar que todos os estranhos são perigosos, assim a maioria respondeu que “Não” a esta questão)



*“Sabes sempre quem são os estranhos, porque se vê que são maus”* (34% deste grupo de crianças ainda pensa que pode reconhecer se uma pessoas é boa ou má pelo seu aspecto).



Em conclusão, podemos dizer que tanto os pais como os professores sentem que é importante o desenvolvimento deste tipo de programas de prevenção primária com as crianças.

Os dois grupos demonstram informações adequadas sobre a realidade dos abusos sexuais, como por exemplo que todas as crianças, independentemente do seu estatuto socio-económico ou género, devem participar em programas de prevenção primária; consideram ainda que as suas crianças (que pertencem ao 1º ciclo) não são novas demais para participar neste tipo de programas.

Também demonstram que sabem que as crianças raramente mentem acerca dos abusos sexuais e que a maioria dos abusadores sexuais são pessoas que as crianças conhecem. Assim, devem preparar as suas crianças para não temerem apenas os estranhos mas também para identificarem possíveis situações de perigo com pessoas conhecidas.

Em contraste, tanto os Pais como os Professores parecem apresentar ideias erradas ou mitos acerca dos abusadores sexuais, como por exemplo, que é uma pessoa doente mental e com uma orientação sexual dirigida apenas para as crianças. Estes mitos podem dar a ideia errada de que é fácil identificar quem é abusador sexual e quem não é.

Assim, relativamente ao Programa de Prevenção dos Abusos Sexuais (o Programa CAP que foi desenvolvido com estes participantes), no futuro, deveremos reforçar estas informações junto dos Pais e Professores.

Por outro lado, deveremos enfatizar, também, que a melhor maneira de prevenir os abusos é falar com as crianças acerca dos mesmos. O que podemos observar a partir dos resultados é que ambos (Pais e Professores) não falam com as suas crianças acerca deste tema, apenas se preocupam com a forma como reagir a uma denuncia de abusos se necessário.

No que se refere ao grupo de crianças, podemos concluir que têm boas informações no que se refere a distinguir entre um *Bom Toque* e um *Mau Toque* ["*Está certo que as pessoas de quem gostas te abracem*"; "*Muitas crianças gostam de receber um beijinho dos seus pais antes de irem para a cama à noite, para essas crianças, este é um bom toque*"; "*Alguns toques começam por saber bem mas depois tornam-se confusos*"; "*Se ganhares o concurso de melhor desenho na tua escola e um vizinho que tu gostas te der um abraço de parabéns, isso é um bom toque*" - 100% respondeu que "Sim"], também demonstram que sabem distinguir entre um *Mau Segredo* e um *Bom Segredo* ["*Tens sempre de guardar todos os segredos*" - 100% responderam que "Não"]; As crianças demonstraram que sabem que devem pedir ajuda a alguém em quem confiem se alguém lhes tentar tocar de uma forma que os faça sentir desconfortável ou se forem ameaçadas [Se alguém te tocar de uma forma que tu não gostas, deves dizer a alguém em quem tu confies - 100% respondeu que "Sim"]. E, finalmente, as crianças reconhecem que a responsabilidade de um abuso é sempre do abusador [Se alguém te tocar de uma forma que tu não gostas, a culpa é tua" - 100% responderam que "Não"].

Todas estas informações adequadas são muito importantes para reduzir a vulnerabilidade das crianças aos abusos, pois a falta de informações correctas sobre os abusos sexuais é um factor de risco determinante. Se as crianças reconhecerem potenciais situações de perigo e souberem como actuar ficarão menos indefesas.

Por outro lado, as crianças participantes demonstram algumas informações incorrectas no que se refere ao perigo e de onde ele poder advir, isto significa que a maioria deste grupo de crianças pensa que os estranhos são mais perigosos do que qualquer pessoa conhecida e que conseguem saber pela aparência quem é perigoso e quem não é. Estas ideias poderão colocar as crianças em risco.

Assim, no que se refere aos Programa de Prevenção Primária dos Abusos Sexuais, no futuro

deveremos reforçar as informações sobre o perigo que pode partir de pessoas que as crianças conhecem e que é muito difícil vermos pelo aspecto das pessoas quem é bom ou mau.

Mas, para terminar, podemos concluir que a maioria das informações que foram transmitidas com este programa de prevenção foi absorvido pelos participantes e podemos, assim, inferir que isto ajudará as crianças a estarem mais protegidas dos abusadores sexuais. Contudo, para termos a certeza de que os resultados obtidos foram consequência do Programa de Prevenção vamos realizar um estudo onde poderemos comparar com as respostas de pais, professores e crianças que não participaram no programa.

Obrigada!

FIM!

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# Cambio organizacional para disminución del estrés en profesionales de enfermería hospitalaria

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## Resumen

*El estrés ocupacional se presenta mayoritariamente en profesiones que se desarrollan en contacto con personas (i.e. enfermería). Numerosos estudios han mostrado las consecuencias negativas de éste sobre el trabajador y la organización, dominando en su explicación teórica la aproximación transaccional, que lo vincula con los factores psicosociales del contexto laboral. Con el propósito de superar estas limitaciones, en este trabajo presentamos el desarrollo de una buena práctica comunitaria guiada por los principios de la Psicología Comunitaria y la metodología de Investigación Acción Participativa (IAP). Supone una redefinición del problema de estrés ocupacional desde la óptica del poder, que conduce a la puesta en marcha de acciones para el cambio organizacional, resaltando la participación activa de los profesionales. Se ilustra con una experiencia llevada a cabo en el Hospital Universitario Virgen Macarena, que ha conestado de varias fases: 1) El Encargo. Implicación organizacional; 2) Identificación de necesidades; 3) Priorización de problemas; y, 4) Decisión e implementación de acciones. Se ha puesto especial énfasis en la evaluación de necesidades de carácter participativo, la implicación de los diferentes niveles jerárquicos en su desarrollo y, el proceso de incremento de poder necesario para la propuesta y puesta en marcha de acciones.*

**Palabras clave:** estrés ocupacional, Investigación Acción Participativa, colaboración, empowerment.

## Introducción

Desde la perspectiva transaccional, el estrés ocupacional se concibe como un estado de tensión o displacer, que se produce cuando se da un desequilibrio entre las demandas del contexto laboral y los recursos del trabajador (Brown y O'Brien, 1998). Estas demandas están relacionadas con características organizacionales (Mckay y Cooper, 1987) consideradas factores de riesgo para la seguridad y salud del trabajador (Peiró, 1999). En enfermería, se concretan en falta de apoyo, de control y de recompensas, presión en el trabajo, sobrecarga laboral, falta de autonomía y autoridad, conflicto de roles y falta de promoción profesional (Gil-Monte, 2002). El estrés producido por estas características puede afectar a la salud física y mental del trabajador y tener consecuencias a nivel organizacional (Moncada, 1998; Niedhammer, Bugel, Golberg, Leclerc y Gueguen, 1998).

Desde esta perspectiva, se han desarrollado modelos que tratan de explicar esta relación, destacando los de Esfuerzo-Recompensa (Siegrist, 1996) y Demanda-Control-Apoyo (Karasek, 1979; Jonson y Hall, 1988; Karasek y Theorell, 1990). A partir de ellos, se han diseñado estrategias de prevención a nivel primario (modificación de características organizacionales), secundario (desarrollo de estrategias de afrontamiento) y terciario (rehabilitación de daños

asociados al estrés). En las organizaciones hospitalarias, han primado estas dos últimas, enfocadas en el nivel individual (Cartwright, Cooper & Murphy, 1996). Por tanto, las intervenciones sobre el estrés ocupacional, se han caracterizado por centrarse en los individuos y atender a la reducción de los efectos del estrés, en lugar de reducir la presencia de estresores, y por orientarse a la gestión del estrés (Peiró, 1999). Por ello, es necesario un análisis crítico del modelo tradicional para prestar más atención a aspectos colectivos, contextuales, culturales e históricos (Peiró, 1999).

En este trabajo proponemos un modelo de intervención en el estrés ocupacional en enfermeras, que trata de superar las siguientes limitaciones del modelo tradicional:

Persistencia del problema del estrés al no modificarse las características de la organización, ya que el efecto de la acción individual sobre la gestión del estrés se diluye rápidamente (Cartwright et al., 1996). Esta limitación puede superarse vinculando el cambio individual (desarrollo de capacidades o habilidades) al organizacional (cambios estructurales).

b) Utilización exclusiva de metodología de IIP, que aunque ha contribuido a avanzar en los tratamientos preventivos, al constituir un proceso de replicación perfecta de la buena práctica basada en la evidencia, tiene las siguientes limitaciones (Green, 2001; Price, Friendland, Choi, y Caplan, 1998): a) no tiene en cuenta el contexto en el que se dan los problemas; b) no puede afrontar la distancia entre las teorías y su aplicación en los contextos locales; c) excluye el significado y el propósito de las experiencias vitales; y, d) tiene problemas con la fundamentación en valores de los hechos y la naturaleza de la relación entre el investigador y el objeto de estudio (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Estos problemas pueden ser superados utilizando la IAP, con intervenciones que ajusten las acciones a las condiciones sociales y conductuales de los individuos (Green, 2001).

Desde la Psicología Comunitaria, vincular el cambio individual con el organizacional implica contemplar los problemas desde la óptica del poder, lo que permite una redefinición de los mismos en términos de opresión e intervenir en ellos hacia el logro del bienestar, a través de un proceso transformativo que se denomina liberación (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Opresión, liberación y bienestar son, por tanto, los conceptos clave de esta perspectiva.

La *opresión* se manifiesta en diferentes niveles, pudiendo observarse en la sociedad en general, en un grupo pequeño o en una organización. En su origen y evolución deben distinguirse dimensiones políticas y psicológicas que coexisten y están mutuamente determinadas. Fuerzas externas privan a individuos y grupos del beneficio del bienestar siendo interiorizadas y conduciendo a las personas a actuar como su propio censor (opresión interiorizada, habituación) (Moane, 1999; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). El estrés ocupacional puede ser definido en términos de opresión (ver figura 1). En la enfermería hospitalaria, características organizacionales como la sobrecarga laboral, falta de apoyo en el trabajo, falta de compensaciones y falta de autonomía para tomar decisiones (Gil-Monte, 2002), son condiciones externas que constituyen la dimensión política de la opresión. Además, las enfermeras asumen dichas situaciones como inmutables, interiorizándolas y constituyendo la dimensión psicológica de la opresión. En consecuencia, el afrontamiento del estrés ocupacional debe entenderse como un proceso de liberación tanto individual como organizacional (ver figura 1).

El proceso *liberación* está asociado a la noción de empowerment, lo cual supone en la psicología comunitaria pasar de una actitud paternalista derivada del modelo de déficit propio de la IIP, a considerar a los individuos y grupos con suficientes recursos y habilidades (Hombrados y Domínguez, 2007) para solucionar ellos mismos sus problemas. De este modo, se deja de

trabajar desde un modelo de experto en el cual se desarrollaban las intervenciones *para* otros, defendiendo una aproximación en la cual los profesionales trabajan *con* las personas para promover su autodeterminación y control. Por ello, las acciones para la liberación, se llevan a la práctica mediante la metodología de IAP, que permite el análisis de las condiciones históricas y la estructura social de la comunidad y, el desarrollo de organizaciones políticas y grupos de acción para el cambio (Fals-Borda, 1985). Además, promueve la conciencia sociopolítica, facilita la acción social y otros tipos de cambio sistémico y social (Balcázar, 2003) y supone una serie de fases encadenadas que van desde la evaluación de necesidades hasta la acción y el cambio social (Balcázar, 2003). Para el personal de enfermería hospitalaria, supondrá el incremento de habilidades para analizar críticamente las condiciones laborales que les causan opresión y merman su bienestar. Analizarán sus causas y plantearán alternativas a las mismas, dejando de considerar tales situaciones como inmutables. Posteriormente a tal análisis será posible el cambio organizacional a través de la acción colectiva, es decir mediante grupos de acción formados por enfermeras que trabajan colaborativamente.



Figura 1. Modelo de liberación aplicado al estrés en enfermería hospitalaria.

Este proceso de liberación es el que conduce al *bienestar*, situación caracterizada por el disfrute del poder, entendido como una combinación de oportunidades (determinantes estructurales y externos) y habilidades (agencia y autodeterminación) para influir en el curso de los eventos (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), facilitando la satisfacción de las necesidades psicológicas y materiales (Boulding, 1989; Della Porta & Diani, 1999).

A continuación se describe la experiencia de incremento de poder protagonizada por enfermeras del hospital universitario Virgen Macarena de Sevilla.

Incremento de poder como afrontamiento del estrés en profesionales de enfermería del Hospital Universitario Virgen Macarena de Sevilla. Fases de la intervención.

Este trabajo se lleva a cabo con enfermeras y supervisores de cuatro unidades de medicina interna del hospital Virgen Macarena de Sevilla. Estos profesionales trabajan en turnos de 7 horas

distribuidos en mañana-tarde-noche o en turnos de 12 horas de mañana-noche. Cada unidad tiene 30 pacientes con una media de estancia en las unidades de 7 días. Para atenderlos hay 3 enfermeras y 3 auxiliares en el turno de mañana y dos enfermeras y 2 auxiliares en los turnos de tarde y noche y fines de semana. Estructuralmente, el hospital tiene habitaciones de tres camas y se caracteriza por ser antiguo y estar en constante renovación, habiendo escasos espacios para la realización de trabajo burocrático de las enfermeras. Además el régimen de visitas a los pacientes es abierto, por lo que hay familiares a lo largo de todo el día.

El modelo presentado consta de cuatro fases: 1) El encargo; Implicación organizacional; 2) Identificación de necesidades; 3) Priorización de problemas; y, 4) Decisión e implementación de acciones (ver figura 2).

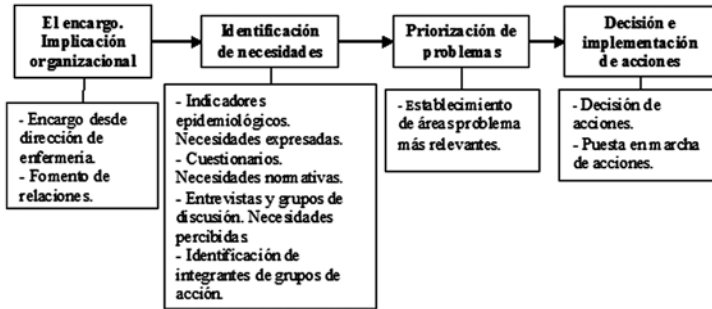


Figura 2. Fases de la intervención para reducir la opresión en personal de enfermería

#### *El encargo. Implicación organizacional*

El estudio parte de la preocupación de la dirección de enfermería por la elevación del nivel de absentismo en los profesionales de enfermería, que contacta con la unidad de investigación, para su análisis y propuesta de soluciones. Desde esta unidad, se redefine el absentismo como un problema de estrés, y se propone intervenir en el mismo desde la perspectiva de la psicología comunitaria a través de la metodología de IAP. Para ello, es necesario implicar a todos los niveles jerárquicos de la organización.

#### *Identificación de necesidades*

Se tuvieron en cuenta los criterios de necesidad expresada, normativa y percibida de Bradshaw (1972). Las necesidades expresadas se midieron con la base de datos GERHONTE que recoge la vida laboral de todos los trabajadores del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía. De ella se extrajeron los datos de absentismo correspondientes al año anterior al inicio del proyecto. Las necesidades normativas de los profesionales fueron medidas con el cuestionario Ista-21. Se trata de un cuestionario validado en la población española y que recoge datos de 21 dimensiones consideradas factores psicosociales de riesgo relacionados con los modelos teóricos dominantes (Esfuerzo-recompensa y Demanda-Control-Apoyo). Las necesidades percibidas, por su parte, fueron medidas mediante entrevistas a los supervisores y grupos de discusión con los profesionales. De este modo se identificaron 22 situaciones del contexto hospitalario causantes de estrés para las enfermeras.

#### *Priorización de problemas*

Las 22 situaciones detectadas fueron reducidas a 6 por las enfermeras en los grupos de discusión. Posteriormente estas 6 situaciones fueron listadas y entregadas a todo el personal para puntuarlas de mayor a menor importancia, quedando reducidas a cuatro: necesidad de un celador para movilización de los pacientes, de controlar el horario y el número de familiares en las habitaciones, de coordinación con el personal médico y de mejora de los registros de actividades de enfermería.

#### *Decisión e implementación de acciones*

En esta fase se llevaron a cabo nuevos grupos de discusión en los que se discutieron las posibles soluciones a los problemas detectados y se elaboraron propuestas que fueron transmitidas a dirección de enfermería. La dirección, con ajuste a los recursos disponibles autorizó la puesta en marcha de las mismas. En la tabla 1 aparecen las propuestas y las acciones.

Tabla 1. *Propuestas y acciones para el cambio organizacional*

Propuesta	Acción
<i>Control del número de familiares</i>	
Elaboración de un tríptico para entregar a los familiares, en el que se recogerían las normas a tener en cuenta durante su estancia en el hospital (e.g. presencia de un solo acompañante por paciente; silenciar los móviles). Estas normas serían definidas por el personal.	Se establecieron grupos de acción en las unidades formados por enfermeras y supervisores, para poner en marcha la propuesta y evaluar su funcionamiento.
<i>Presencia continua del celador en las unidades</i>	
Incorporar un celador en una de las unidades del estudio, y establecer un registro para medición de sus actividades.	Se ha incluido el celador, aunque sólo los fines de semana. No obstante, se han medido en todas las unidades las actividades desempeñadas por este grupo profesional.
<i>Revisión de los registros</i>	
Revisión de los registros de las actividades que realiza enfermería, para unificarlos y evitar repeticiones.	Se ha creado un grupo de acción en una de las unidades, que está llevando a cabo su revisión y modificación para pilotar su funcionamiento.

#### *Discusión y conclusiones*

Con esta intervención hemos conseguido una transformación tanto a nivel individual como organizacional.

A nivel individual, las enfermeras pasan de un estado en que no ven salida a sus dificultades en el trabajo, hasta otro en que plantean soluciones y ponen en marcha acciones. Entre otros autores, Prilleltensky (1990) o Watts y Abdul-Adil (1998) han descrito este proceso, en el que se evoluciona desde un estado acrítico hasta el de liberación, en el que se llevan a cabo acciones para el cambio. En este sentido, en relación con el problema del trabajo burocrático que tienen que realizar (registros), las enfermeras pasan de la queja por el excesivo "papeleo", a la unificación de los diferentes registros para facilitar su trabajo. Esta transformación puede ser considerada fruto de un proceso de liberación (incremento de poder) que comienza con la evaluación de necesidades de carácter participativo, el cual fomenta que las personas cuenten su problema haciéndolo visible, ayudándoles a crear una visión de futuro mejor (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). De esta manera, se ha desarrollado conciencia crítica en las enfermeras que, en los grupos de discusión, han contextualizado las características organizacionales causantes de estrés en el



trabajo, analizando situaciones concretas y debatiendo alternativas de solución a las mismas. En este proceso, las enfermeras han pasado de la normalización de las situaciones de estrés, a su descripción como condiciones sociales injustas, proponiendo opciones para el cambio.

A nivel organizacional, las acciones propuestas por las profesionales, han modificado determinados aspectos que afectan al trabajo diario en las unidades. Estas acciones han contado con el apoyo de la dirección, lo que pone de manifiesto su voluntad de cambio, aspecto que fallaba en las prevenciones a nivel primario establecidas desde el modelo transaccional (Ivancevich, Matteson, Freedman y Phillips, 1990). Se han desarrollado relaciones de colaboración entre los diferentes implicados en el problema, tal como plantea la metodología de IAP. No obstante, a pesar de haber implicado en todo el proceso a los diferentes niveles jerárquicos (dirección, supervisores, y enfermeras de planta), hay que señalar que su vinculación se ha realizado a través de las investigadoras, por las dificultades para ajustar las agendas de todos los implicados en el problema. En este sentido, se tendría que haber intentado crear una coalición, ya que es la mejor manera de crear relaciones entre diferentes grupos para la solución de un problema común y el logro de un cambio social (Berkowitz & Wolf, 2000; Wolff, 2001; McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman y Mitchell, 1995).

En cuanto a las limitaciones o dificultades encontradas durante el proceso, hay que resaltar las restricciones a las que están sometidas las organizaciones públicas. Al respecto, en la literatura se han descrito una serie de características que suponen un desafío para el cambio y el desarrollo organizacional (Golembiewski, 1985; McConkie, 1985), destacando el modelo burocrático que guía la mayoría de las organizaciones públicas. Por una parte, es muy difícil llevar a cabo acciones para el cambio, si este no está determinado desde estructuras superiores, debiéndose incorporar estos últimos sin restricciones. Por otra, el carácter dinámico de estas organizaciones, hace que se pueda atribuir a la intervención resultados que son debidos a variables no contempladas en la misma, por lo que es necesario estar alerta a todas las posibles modificaciones en el contexto. En nuestro caso, situaciones de movimiento de personal asistencial y supervisores, cambios en el turno de trabajo u obras de mejora en las unidades, han afectado al desarrollo del proceso, obligándonos a hacer múltiples adaptaciones. Para futuras actuaciones en este contexto con la metodología de IAP, recomendamos establecer un calendario de acciones más preciso, aunque flexible para ajustarse a las demandas de la población. También incorporar a otros grupos profesionales (i.e. médicos, celadores, administrativos) que conviven con los profesionales de enfermería. Todos ellos forman parte de la organización compleja que supone el hospital y, de sus relaciones y coordinación depende el buen desempeño de su trabajo.

Por último, hay que resaltar los logros conseguidos. El apoyo dado por la dirección a las estrategias propuestas por los profesionales, demuestra el impacto que este trabajo ha tenido en la estructura organizacional. Además, es previsible que esta iniciativa no constituya sólo una herramienta para la solución de los problemas detectados en este momento, sino que vaya más allá, al haber supuesto en los profesionales la adquisición de unas habilidades (i.e., análisis crítico de los problemas y planteamiento de soluciones) que podrán aplicarse a otros tipos de problemas. Así, con este procedimiento se ha inducido un cambio en el funcionamiento de las unidades asistenciales participantes, que supone tanto la movilización de los profesionales de enfermería para reivindicar las mejoras necesarias en su trabajo, partiendo de reflexiones críticas en torno al mismo, como modificaciones en la forma de actuar de la dirección, que estará abierta

a los planteamientos de mejora desde las diferentes unidades.

En definitiva, con el desarrollo de esta intervención, se han establecido las bases para la puesta en marcha de acciones ante el estrés ocupacional que vinculen el nivel individual y organizacional y, tengan en cuenta los determinantes contextuales en la definición de este fenómeno. Con ello, hemos pretendido favorecer el desarrollo de intervenciones en las organizaciones que tengan como meta el logro del bienestar de los trabajadores, y no sólo la gestión puntual de un problema como el estrés.

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# School climate perception and adolescent adjustment

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## **Abstract**

According to theoretical framework of developmental contextualism (Goossens, 2006) school context play an important role in the development of adolescent: the variability in adolescent outcomes may be explained by the interaction between contextual factors and adolescent individual differences. Most studies have focused on how perceptions of school climate affect adolescent adjustment; in particular researchers evidence that the interpersonal, organizational and instructional climate of school influences students' adjustment across multiple domains (Way, Reddy, Rhodes, 2007; Brand et al., 2008). The project objective is to analyse the school climate perception and the adolescent adjustment in immigrant, double heritage and Italian students.

Key words: **school climate, adolescent adjustment, well-being, identity process.**

The development contextualism framework describes the different social systems associated with developmental matter or adolescent adjustment. Research on the relation between context and adolescent development has been driven by an awareness of increases in problem behaviours during adolescence and an interest in the role of contextual factors that may affect adolescent outcomes (Blyth, Leffert, 1995). According to Ostrom, Lerner, Freel, (1995) the developmental contextualism is intended to be a basic process of human development dealing with the change of relationship between adolescent and their context. In literature many contributions on this research topic are referred to ecological approach. The ecological perspective assumes that human development is a function of interactional processes between individuals and contexts and happens with progressively complexity in different contexts during significant periods of time or even across the life time. Adolescents develop at school with their relationships with peers, teachers and all actors involved in the educative community.

The ecology approach is relevant in two areas: school climate and school related stress. The developmental ecology of schools has a marked impact on the academic achievement and adjustment of students (Felner & Felner, 1989). A lot of aspects of the what Moos (1979) has called the "human milieus" or defining features of the social environments of these contexts may contribute to student growth and development.

Although many of these contribute strongly to the adaptation and performance of students, one of those elements of the school context that has appears to have particular importance for student adaptation is students' own reports of their experiences of the contexts' social climate (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Fraser, 1985; Trickett & Moos, 1973). School climate

is a complex and multidimensional construct encompassing the atmosphere, culture, values, resources, social network, and organizational, instructional, interpersonal dimensions (Loukas, Murphy, 2007).

The school climate is a relevant variable that, better than all other data, show the quality of relationships among people at organizational levels. In literature this concept has been analyzed to highlight the direct relation to school performance and well being of students by indirect effects indicates that the perception of parents than the teacher – students affect on the pattern of adjustment in the transition from one level school to another (Esposito, 1999).

School environment regards environmental, organizational and relational conditions (Santinello Bertarelli, 2002). School climate is one of the elements that can modify the scholastic performances, the self-efficacy and sense of management in the learning situations (Urda, Schoenfelder, 2006). An important component of model "person-environment fit" linking school climate with psychological and behavioural adjustment is the adolescents' perceptions or experiences of the school environment rather than a more objective account of the school that is most relevant for understanding adolescents' adjustment and wellbeing (Way, Reddy, Rhodes, 2007).

The class can be understood as a community of exchange relating to issues related to knowledge and content but also as regards the well-being/ malaise of subjects, such situations have an impact on learning processes. A positive climate, as repeatedly shown in literature, promotes positive learning and the construction of knowledge shared between the different actors involved, students and teachers.

As Francescato Putton (1995) and Celi and Scuderi (2004) affirm the teacher is responsible for the existing climate in the classroom, he/she should create the conditions for developing a participatory and collaborative environment that stimulates students to the pleasure of learning. Indeed, in the process of learning the emotional aspect is as important as cognitive and reports the classroom is important to maintain a high level of motivation to learn and acquire skills. The class can and must become a place of confrontation of different positions for the talks, dialogue and enable everyone to develop their skills, both cognitive and relational. Why this happens play a fundamental role in both the school and teachers who encourage an environment in which to develop a positive climate.

Hay (1998), Moos and Tricket (2002) consider that the sense of belonging (membership) to the group and class at school is a particularly significant for the welfare and development of social competence is the ability to experience positive social conditions empathy and various ways of resolving conflicts can improve the quality of emotional development. The same variable interfere in a positive way to overcome the conditions of stress as it is recognized that the quality of education may have the effect of creating or alleviate stressful situations individually (Kallestad et al., 1998, Torsheim et al. 2001a, Torsheim et al. 2001b). It is recognized that the climate and situations are some of the elements that can change aspects of motivation task (Urda, Schoenfelder 2006, Gilman and Anderman 2006, Appleton, Christenson, Kim, Reschly 2006) and change, thus positively or impairing the performance school, the sense of autoefficacia and management (mastery) of learning situations. Often the motivation is seen as a determined almost exclusively by individual characteristics, this leads to underestimate the influence of that context,

however, may have a significant extent in setting positive attitudes towards learning (Manetti, Rania, Frattini, 2007).

Students perception of social climate have been found to be consistently associated with their performance on achievement tests and with multiple indices of their academic, behavioural, and social adjustment (Brand et al., 2008).

School climate has been identified as a key element in young people cognitive and social growth, for immigrated minors school experience is particularly important because it represents one of the main channels of participation and emancipation in the new society.

There is no single “normal” adolescent, there is no a singular adolescent experience, but multiple realities that cross a path of complex and variable growth, in relation to different *contexts* in which adolescents are included (Speltini, 2005). Adolescence has been recently defined “a challenge rich, at the same time, of opportunities and risks, to be overcome on one side by adolescent, through his own activities and choices, and on the other side by the *social contexts*, in fast modification, that act as frame to development” (Bonino, 2001). The relationship that adolescents establish with their “ecological” life context is central and can influence their chances of an optimal development, because on the one hand it can represent a resource for development and on the other a danger to avoid.

Well-being is not only depending on physical health or risk behaviour but also on own life satisfaction related to social relationship, self vision and general well-being (Santinello et al., 2005). Self-esteem is commonly considered a well-being index (Benjet, Hernandez-Guzman, 2001; Martinez, Dukes, 1997) and adolescent psychological adjustment (Phinney, 1991).

The multiethnic characterisation, that the Italian context is assuming more and more justifies the community psychologists’ attention due to the dynamics through which persons construct and define their shapes of identification, and to the identities derived from the belonging to specific cultural and national ethnic groups. Inside this conceptual framework, in last decade, has been more and more stated the construct of ethnic identity as an aspect of self acquaintance depending on the belonging to an ethnical group and to the believes, feelings and perceptions derived from that bond. Phinney (1990) assumes the ethnic identity as a complex meaning containing the following parameters: involvement and sense of belonging, positive evaluation, interest, knowledge and involvement in the social activities of the group.

Inside this conceptual framework, in last decade, has been more and more stated the construct of ethnic identity as a complex construct including a commitment and sense of belonging to the group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in social activities of the group (Phinney, 1990). In the literature the ethnic identity is considered as an important factor in the processes of well-being and self-esteem of adolescents (Blash and Unger, 1995; Phinney, Cantu, Kurtz, 1996; Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins, Seay, 1999; Umana-Taylor, 2004).

### **Study objectives and hypotheses**

This study examines the relationship among school environment’s perception, well being and ethnic identity in Italian, double heritage and immigrant adolescents in order to analyse the possible differences. The research was conducted in a medium sized city in the northern Italy (Genoa).

The present work aims to investigate the five hypotheses and research questions presented below.

1) Some differences in the school climate's perception between Italian, dual heritages and immigrant adolescents; in particular immigrant adolescents would present more difficulties about academic performances;

2) some differences in well-being among the three groups considered;

3) some differences in ethnic identity among the three groups;

4) a correlation between school environment and well-being;

5) there are effects of school climate perception and ethnic identity on the dependent variable well-being.

Method

### **Procedure**

The same procedure was adopted for each class. The researcher handed out questionnaires in the classroom with the class teacher present. This helped to ensure uniformity of administration and eliminated the need to train teachers. Each student was given one copy of the survey instrument on his or her desk. The researcher read through all the instructions and, if necessary, reformulated the question in simpler terms. Students were allowed to ask for clarification about the questions and the researcher (not the teacher) answered such queries. The students were informed that their answers would be confidential; participation was subject to parental consent.

### **Measures**

The questionnaire was composed of the following instruments:

Socio-demographic information

Socio-demographic variables included gender, age, school class, ethnicity, place of birth, time of permanence in Italy, linguistic competences, academic achievement, information about parents (ethnicity, age, place of birth, levels of education, job...)

Scholastic Situation

The scale is composed by 49 items organized in to nine dimensions including schoolmate relationship, teachers' relationship, school-related well-being, academic interest, method of study, parents' expectative, structural aspects, academic self-esteem, future employment (*Student Version, QSS-SV, Santinello, Bertarelli, 2002*).

Well-being

The scale (*VSP-A, Vécu et Santé Perçue de Adolescent, Simeoni, Sapin, Antoniotti & Auquier, 2001*) investigates various dimensions of quality of life: vitality, physical and psychological well-being, relations with teachers, relations with parents, relations with friends, school performance, body image and leisure activities. The scale consist of 34 items; each item was answered on a 5-point Likert scale, anchored at the ends from 1 ("not at all/never") to 5 ("very much/always"). The time frame used was the previous 4 weeks. The test is consistent (Cronbach alpha 0.74–0.91). Content and construct validity are good. (Sapin, Simeoni, El Khammar, Antoniotti & Auquier, 2005).

Ethnic identity

Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scale was used to assess ethnic identity. The measure consists of 20 items organized in to four subscales including sense of

belonging, identity achievement, ethnic behaviours and other orientation. Four-point scales were used, anchored with “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”. Low scores indicate an unexamined ethnic identity, while high scores indicate an achieved ethnic identity status. Scores in the middle range represent exploration ethnic identity status.

### Participants

This research is a part of a larger data collection project, demanded from regional politicians, which consisted of other measures with purpose to explore adolescents’ needs with respect to prevention.

The participants of the study are 348 subjects equally distributed between boy and girl. About ethnicity: the 26% are double heritage subject, 34% are immigrants and 40% are Italians (the Italians students are a randomly sample from the larger research that includes a large number of Italian students).

The ethnic identity category for each parent, as reported by adolescents, was used to determine group membership. The immigrants are from: 19.8% South America, 8.6% East Europe, 5.2% Africa, 0.6% North Europe. Most immigrants adolescent living in Italy from 3-6 years (41.2%), while most dual heritage adolescents living in Italy since birth (75%).

The mean age of the sample was 11.66 years. The sample is distributed in three groups regarding to school attendance: 42% of students belong at primary school, 33% at middle school and 25% at high school.

### Results

#### Descriptive analyses

Regarding to academic performance the data show that immigrants have the failed students’ percentage more high (8%), follow double heritage (6.50%), than Italian student (3%). On the contrary, there is a significant decrease ( $F^{**} 14.53$ ) about means in academic performances: Italians (3.59), double heritage (3.53) and immigrants (3.15). This data prove that immigrant adolescents present more difficulties about academic performance than Italian and dual heritage students even if they have ratings higher than the sufficiency.

In table 1 are presented means, medians and standard deviations of the variables measured by the questionnaire.

Table 1 Means, Medians, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum of Scholastic Situation (QSS-SV), Ethnic Identity (MEIM), and Well-being (VSP-A).

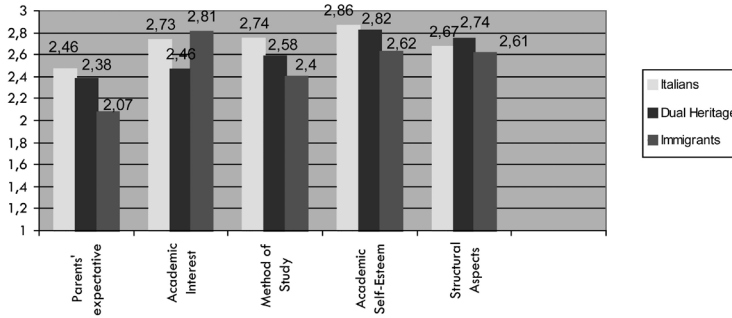
	QSS-SV	MEIM	VSP-A
Mean	24,47	60,46	103,99
Median	24,60	60,00	101
Std. Deviation	3,17	7,57	18,41
Minimum	16,40	40,00	69
Maximum	32,20	78,00	166

With regard to the QSS-SV scale emerge significant differences among three groups of students ( $F= 2.80^{**}$ ). The Italians perceive a better climate at school, follow the dual heritage and



immigrants students. Considered the subscale emerge some relevant date: parents' expectative and academic self-esteem are more low in immigrants, on the contrary in this group is more high academic interest as show in the Figure 1.

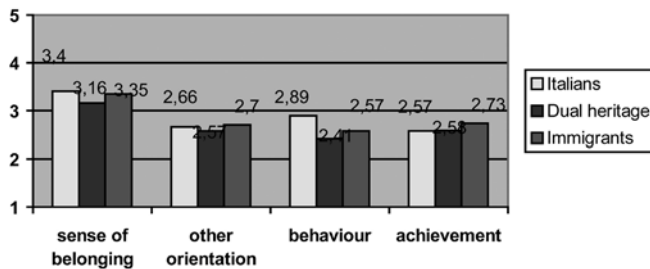
Figure 1 Italians, dual heritage and immigrants' student's means in QSS-SV dimensions.



Furthermore there is a significant decrease ( $F=4.81^{**}$ ) in overall dimensions from primary school ( $M= 25.10$ ) to middle ( $M= 24.41$ ) and high school ( $M= 23.65$ ). In particular significant differences regard four dimensions: parents' expectative ( $F= 5.86^{**}$ ), teachers' relationship ( $F= 4.87^{**}$ ), academic interest ( $17.88^{**}$ ), structural aspects ( $F=23.20^{**}$ ).

For what concern MEIM Scale there are significant difference ( $F= 5.61^{**}$ ) in ethnic identification among Italians, double heritage and immigrants' means, in particular the score more low is for double heritage (58.4) while for immigrants is 62.05 and Italians group is 60.42. Immigrant adolescents have higher ethnic identity, furthermore also dual heritage adolescents have lowest rate in the ethnic identification; the dimensions more critical are: sense of belonging and ethnic behaviour, as show in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Italians, dual heritage and immigrants' student's means in MEIM dimensions.



With regard to the VSP-A scale, the group that obtains a lower score is double heritage students (97.58) while Italians group obtain the higher score (108.02): the difference among three groups are significant ( $F= 8.40$ ). The four dimensions emerged by factor analysis (individual well-being =  $\alpha .83$ ; friendship =  $\alpha .79$ ; parent relationship =  $\alpha .81$ ; teacher relationship =  $\alpha .76$ ) shows significant difference among three group considered to relations with parents

( $F= 9.38^{**}$ ), friends ( $F= 7.44^{**}$ ), and teacher ( $F= 6.28^{**}$ ), who represent sources of social support, classically considered an important dimension of well-being; in particular double heritage group obtain the lower score in the three dimensions.

A comparison between male and female score' scale does not show any particular differences. The only meaningful result relates to friendship and teacher relationship in both dimensions girls shows higher scores. However, no significant differences were found between males and females with regard to general well-being. On the contrary, there are significant differences ( $F=40.12^{**}$ ) in overall well-being in primary ( $M= 113.89$ ), middle ( $M= 95.91$ ) and high ( $M= 98.20$ ) school' means.

In particular there is a significant decrease ( $F=6.79^{**}$ ) in individual well-being dimension from primary school ( $M=3.51$ ) to high school ( $M= 3.28$ ); while in the social well-being (parents relationship,  $F= 48.77^{**}$ ; friendship  $F= 35.70^{**}$  and teachers relationship  $F= 25.32^{**}$ ) the scores are more low in middle school.

### Correlation and regression model

Generally it can be affirmed that there are correlations between all the instruments used: QSS and MEIM (.233\*\*), QSS and VSP-A (.240\*\*). In particular correlations among variables dimensions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Correlation among school climate dimension and well-being and teacher relationship.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Classmate relationship	1										
2. Teachers relationship (teaching)	,177**	1									
3. Academic Interest	,177**	,505**	1								
4. Method of study	,079	,333**	,489**	1							
5. Parents' expectative	-,020	,146**	,019	,226**	1						
6. School-related well-being	,063	,283**	,313**	,327**	,320**	1					
7. Academic self-esteem	,176**	,211**	,272**	,292**	,284**	,344**	1				
8. Structural aspects	,119*	,416**	,461**	,194**	-,020	,238**	,111*	1			
9. Future employment	,202**	,244**	,257**	,165**	,081	,162**	,237**	,034	1		
10. Individual well-being	,269**	,119*	,138*	,068	,078	,290**	,290**	,174**	,084	1	
11. Teachers relationship	,031	,129*	,213**	,179**	,094	,081	,129*	,139*	,132*	,130*	1

\*\*  $p<.01$ ; \* $p<.05$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation that seem significant for the analysis are the relation between:

- individual well-being (VSP-A) and classmate relationship (QSS-SV;  $r .269^{**}$ ),
- individual well-being and school- related well-being (QSS-SV;  $r .290^{**}$ ),
- individual well-being and academic self-esteem (QSS-SV;  $r .290^{**}$ ),
- teacher relationship (VSP-A) and academic interest (QSS-SV;  $r .213^{**}$ ),
- teacher relationship and method of study (QSS-SV;  $r .179^{**}$ ).

Table 3 proposes a linear regression model that considers individual well-being as dependent variable. The variables that affect the individual well-being are: school-related well-being, schoolmate relationship, academic self-esteem and other orientation. The regression model presented is significant and has a  $R^2 = .40$ . The school-related well-being is the best predictor of individual well-being ( $\beta = .20, p <.001$ ) followed by the schoolmate relationship ( $\beta = .19 p <.001$ ), academic self-esteem ( $\beta = .16 p <.001$ ), other orientation ( $\beta = .13 p <.001$ ), whereas they appear to be more moderate predictors.

Table 3 Linear regression model: individual well-being as dependent variable

	<b>B</b>	<b>St. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Step 1:</b>					
School-related well-being	,195	,043	,270	4,518**	,27
<b>Step 2:</b>					
School-related well-being	,181	,042	,251	4,297**	,35
Schoolmate relationship	,199	,049	,237	4,069**	
<b>Step 3:</b>					
School-related well-being	,138	,045	,218	3,044**	,38
Schoolmate relationship	,183	,049	,191	3,745**	
Academic self-esteem	,112	,046	,153	2,408**	
<b>Step 4:</b>					
School-related well-being	,150	,045	,208	3,321**	,40
Schoolmate relationship	,162	,049	,193	3,289**	
Academic self-esteem	,119	,046	,162	2,578**	
Other orientation	,024	,011	,136	2,318**	

Further investigation has revealed as factors predictive of individual and social well-being achievement identity, school-related well-being and parents' expectative. Table 4 propose, in fact, a linear regression model that considers individual and social well-being as dependent variable. The regression model presented is significant and has a  $R^2 = .30$ . The achievement identity is the best predictor of individual and social well-being ( $\beta = .23, p <.001$ ) followed by the size school-related well-being ( $\beta = .17, p <.001$ ) and parents' expectative whereas they appear to be a more moderate predictors.

Table 4 Linear regression model: individual and social well-being as dependent variable

	<b>B</b>	<b>St. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Step 1:</b>					
Achievement identity	1,143	,392	,183	2,915**	,18
<b>Step 2:</b>					
Achievement identity	1,359	,389	,218	3,491**	,28
School-related well-being	6,331	1,867	,211	3,391**	
<b>Step 3:</b>					
Achievement identity	1,449	,389	,232	3,720**	,30
School-related well-being	5,138	1,948	,172	2,638**	
Parents' expectative	3,389	1,688	,131	2,008**	

### Conclusion

In summary it's possible to note that, immigrant adolescents present more difficulties about academic performance and academic self-esteem. Furtherers there are differences, as we assume, among three groups considered in school climate's perceptions. Italian students have highest rate in school climate evaluation. Immigrant adolescents have lowest rate in parents' expectative but they have the highest rate in academic interest. The date has showed that Italian, dual heritage and immigrant students are different in ethnic identification: immigrant adolescents have higher ethnic identity, furthermore also dual heritage adolescents have lowest rate in the ethnic identification. The dimensions more critical are: sense of belonging and ethnic behaviour.

As we assume that there are differences about well-being among three groups considered: double heritage adolescents have lowest rate in well-being scale in particular in relation dimensions (friendship, parents and teacher).

In conclusion the results underline that a high ethnic identification is related on a high well-being. This shows a critical situation for dual heritage adolescents. Dual heritage students would have identity problems and their ethnic identity would negative affect their well-being (Bracey et al., 2004).

According to Martinez e Dukes (1997), native adolescent have more high level of well-being but lower score about ethnic identification; these trends would be explained by less stress related on migratory processes and on belonging majority group (superior status).

Dual heritage adolescents, according to Brown (1990), presents a lower level of well-being that we can analyze in order to understand their complex background that influences their ethnic identity.

Individual psychological well-being is affected by the perception school climate in particular by relationship with schoolmates. Furthermore the other orientation is useful to understand intercultural relationship. On the contrary, the individual and social well-being is affected by ethnic achievement as a criterion guide for the social integration. Also parents' expectations contribute to the definition of adolescent.

Research has suggested that school climate is correlated to student behaviour, academic performance, relational and psychological well-being for students. This issue has become even more pressing as changes in funding have necessitated that schools partner with community based organizations and social service agencies in order to find resources to address student needs and to promote positive youth development.

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# Homelessness Lifetime Prevalence and Attitudes to Homeless in Portugal

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## Abstract

*The present study intended to estimate the prevalence of population that already was in situation of homeless at some moment of its life, and to accede to one specific dimension of public opinion, attitudes, identifying which characteristics can distinguish the population with different attitudes face to the homeless.*

*The estimate of the lifetime homelessness prevalence disclosed a global prevalence of 6.5% and a literal prevalence of 2%*

*It was evident the influence of some demographic characteristics of the respondents on the attitudes factors: Gender was a significant effect on General Compassion and Limit Public Rights; Age on Trustworthy; Education Degree on Trustworthy and Social Isolation; and Income add effect on Social Isolation.*

**Key words:** Homelessness; Prevalence; Public Opinion; Attitudes.

I will present the results of the first 200 interviews conducted in the study of Prevalence and Public Opinion on Homelessness in Portugal, which falls in transnational research developed by the Research Group on Homelessness and Poverty from Wayne State University, already described by Professor Paul Toro.

With this study, we intended to calculate the prevalence of Portuguese population that was already in a situation of homeless at some point in their lives, and access to a specific dimension of public opinion, attitudes, but also identify the factors that can distinguish the people with more positive representations about the homeless population with those with more negative ones, and identify the differences and / or similarities in terms of prevalence of situation of homeless in Portugal, compared to the various countries where the study has been carried out.

The instrument – “*The Public’s Perspective on Homelessness: Portugal Survey*”- was applied by telephone to a randomly selected sample of the Portuguese population, composed by a total of 200 people who owned landline telephones.

Being a transnational study, the method followed the procedures of the studies and the original versions already made in other countries.

I will present only de main results.

## RESULTS

The prevalence analysis revealed that:

5% of the interviewed say that already gone through a difficult housing situation or were *homeless*.

44.4% of homeless people slept in parks, streets, buildings or abandoned stations.



44.4% slept at friends or relatives homes.

No one slept in shelters or temporary homes.

Regarding the prevalence of homelessness, we found that:

In addition to the 5% of participants who already were in a situation of overall homelessness, plus 1.5% of the participants reported a story of precarious housing along the interview, although they have not responded affirmatively to the question. Thus, you get a prevalence of 6.5% of overall lifetime homelessness and 2% of literal lifetime homelessness.

Regarding the direct causes of homelessness situations, we found that:

1% of literal homelessness due to family problems;

0.5% to emigration;

0.5% to lack of money.

2% of precarious housing due to poverty;

1.5% to decolonization;

0.5% to colonial war;

And 0.5% due to natural disaster.

The confirmation of the Attitudes Model (figure1) defined by Tompsett et al. (2006) for the United States population showed that this was not in keeping with the quality of our study sample, and there was a need to refine it to obtain acceptable values of quality indicators of adjustment.

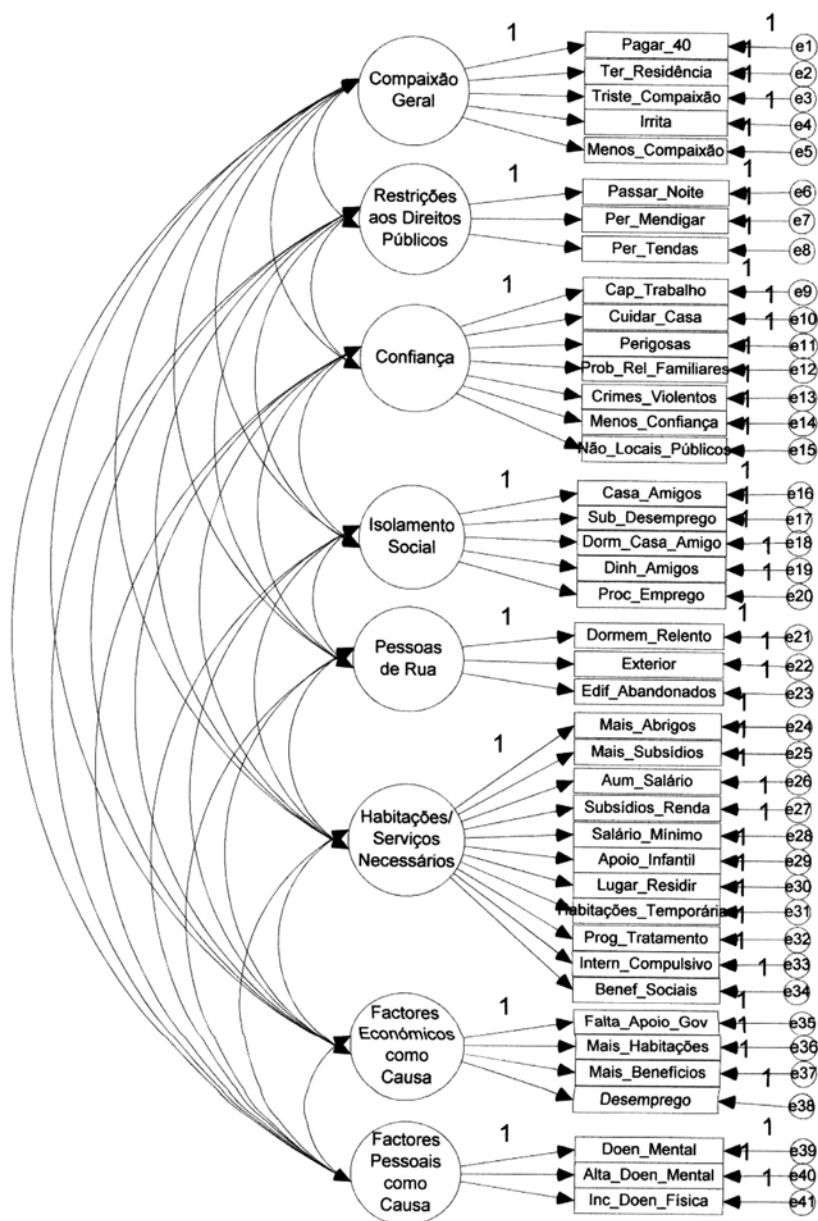


FIG. 1: Original Attitudes Model (Tompsett et al., 2006).

The attitudes factors of the model identified in our sample are the same, but are less the items that define it. Thus, we have that the attitudes towards the homeless are divided in the following eight factors:

General Compassion  
 Limit Public Rights  
 Trustworthy  
 Social Isolation  
 Street People  
 Housing/Services needed  
 Economic Factors as Cause  
 Personal Factors as Cause

Each of the factors is defined by the response to the instrument items described in the figure 2.

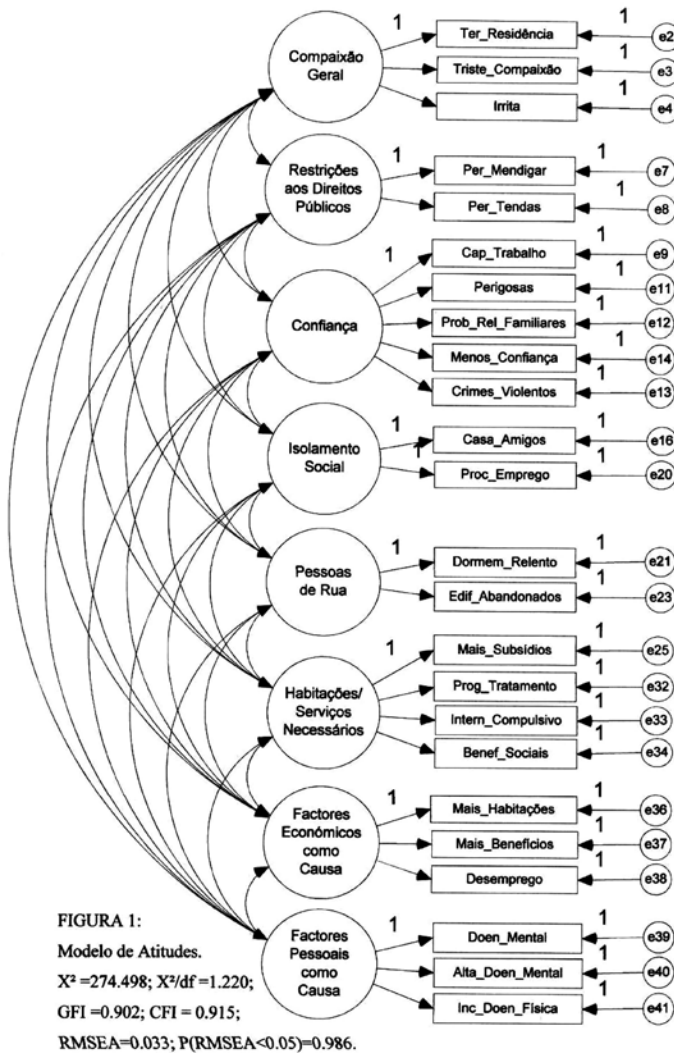


FIG. 2: Final Attitudes Model.

The results of the attitudes factors shows:

General Compassion: compassionate attitude towards the homeless.

Limit Public Rights: complacent about begging, but not for take old of public spaces for construction of structures for temporary shelter.

Trustworthy: moderate attitude of trustworthy (ability to work; trust; crime).

Social Isolation: participants tend to see homeless people as socially isolated.

Street People: consider them, almost unanimously, people from street.

Housing/Services needed: idea of the need for more support of the welfare state, particularly in terms of providing treatment for substance-dependent and mentally ill.

Economic Factors as Cause: unemployment is seen by most as a major cause of the existence of homeless people.

Personal Factors as Cause: mental illnesses, hospital discharge of people with mental illness and physical disability or illness are considered factors contributing to homelessness.

Regarding the relationship between demographic characteristics of the participants and their attitudes:

Participants characteristics who didn't reveal significant influence over the attitudes factors face to the homeless were:

- have been panhandler or homeless;
- County and District of residence;
- political party;
- to have homeless family or friends.

Features that showed significant influence on the attitudes factors were:

GENDER, AGE GROUPS, EDUCATION DEGREE and FAMILY INCOME.

GENDER had influence over:

General Compassion:

The *males* tend to have higher values of General Compassion.

Limit Public Rights:

There is also trend to upwards of Limitations of Public Rights in *males*.

AGE GROUPS had influence over:

Trustworthy

The age range in which the values of Trustworthy in homeless people are higher is the 30 to 44 years. As the age increases the Trustworthy go decreasing and there is a more marked decline in the elderly.

EDUCATION DEGREE had influence over:

Trustworthy

The level of education that showed lower levels of Trustworthy was the lowest, that is, without *schooling*, curiously followed by the more advanced degree.

What showed greater level of Trustworthy was *graduation*.

Social Isolation

The highest level of Social Isolation occurs in participants that have *1 to 3 years of university frequency*, and the lower, *without schooling*.

FAMILY INCOME had influence over:

Social Isolation

The lowest levels of Social Isolation there are in the *higher household income group*, followed by the level of *lower income and those who did not respond*.

## CONCLUSION

Taking into account the values obtained in studies conducted in other countries, it appears that countries with prevalence rates, whether literal as overall, more similar to those obtained by us are France / Belgium and Germany, which is among the richest and more developed countries of European Union.

Portugal is the country with the lowest prevalence of literal lifetime homeless and the second lowest of overall lifetime homeless, despite being the poorest of the countries mentioned in table 1.

TABLE 1: Prevalência de Sem-abrigo ao Longo da Vida em Diferentes Países.

	E.U.A.	França & Bélgica	Reino Unido	Alemanha	Itália	Portugal
População (milhões de pessoas)	274.0	69.5	54.5	82.2	57.7	<b>10.4</b>
Amostra	435	182	159	250	250	<b>200</b>
Conclusão	12/01	4/00	9/00	5/02	10/02	<b>7/06</b>
Prevalência						
Global ao longo da vida	12,9%	8,3%	13,2%	5,6%	10,5%	<b>6,5%</b>
Literal ao longo da vida	6,2%	2,2%	7,6%	2,4%	4,0%	<b>2%</b>

Still, prevalence rates far exceed the few existing in the country.

The results suggest that family relationships play a key role in homelessness (either as leading or as protective).

We can suppose that the low prevalence is due mainly to family factors, and that many of the people who could be homeless are living with families.

In 1.5% of overall prevalence obtained through stories of precarious housing, while people didn't considered themselves homeless, they were living with relatives.

About half of participants who considered themselves homeless slept at friends or relatives homes during the situation.

The fact that we have verified the impact of colonial war, and the subsequent decolonization, in the prevalence of precarious housing, justifies the need to be attentive to the changes and

social phenomena as possible inducers of homelessness situations.

Emerge then the need of a contextual approach, of demand for integration of all factors that determine the context of life of the person affected by homelessness.

The Portuguese public opinion proved to be sympathetic towards the problem of homelessness.

People tend to be considered homeless as street people and as being socially isolated, so it can be deduced that they are considered people excluded from society.

There was a high general compassion face to the homeless people, and a sparingly position for limit public rights, but also a moderate trustworthiness.

Gender, age, level of education and family income, emerge as demographic predictors of attitudes, but not always in linear ways.

Both the personal and the structural factors are considered important as cause of homelessness, but there is a greater consensus about the importance of structural factors, suggesting a possible support to public interventions in a structural level - national policies.

# Community-Clinical Psychology in Venezuela: Looking ahead

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## Abstract

*In this paper we describe how at the beginning of this century a project to create a graduate course in Community Clinical Psychology started at Universidad Católica "Andrés Bello", with the community psychology area directed by the first author. The initial errors, subsequent corrections and achievements so far produced are analyzed. And the central focus is put on aiming to construct a sub-discipline not for the community or in it, carried out in the usual ways of doing clinical psychology; but a clinical-community psychology taking place within the community, with its participation. The bases sustaining this project are rooted on an integral and situated conception of health; an active and dynamic conception of human beings as daily constructors of their lives, and a conception of the community as an agent of health. The initial and the current objectives are analyzed, as well as the achievements so far obtained, looking ahead for a better future, while developing today the roots for a better future.*

Key words: Clinical Community Psychology. New therapies. Community health. Mental health.

## Introduction

This is the narrative of how two social community psychologists came to teach at a graduate course of Community Clinical Psychology. The Catholic University at Caracas, Venezuela decided to create an interdisciplinary course where that subject was to be taught during three semesters, in order to produce specialists able to deal with the mental health problems in the community. The first author was invited to elaborate the syllabi for three subjects concerning community psychology (CP). Those subjects were the theory, the method and the practice (*practicum*), a term during which the students apply what they have learnt. None of them seemed related to CP, but she decided to accept because the possibility of working with a community psychology approach in clinical problems within communities, certainly was not only necessary and important, but a void in her own community psychology practice. She called two younger colleagues<sup>3</sup>, who are active community psychologists and, together they began the fascinating adventure of participating in a project to train psychologists used to the couch and individual therapies, to work with communities; especially, communities lacking the services and the means to receive clinical services.

The creation of this type of studies was meant to introduce the possibility of training professionals specialized in the larger sector of Venezuelan society, which at the same time is the most excluded, and less informed about psychological help and how to find and use it. We

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are not clinical psychologists but in our practice many times we had found people needing the help this branch of psychology can provide. And at the same time we became aware that psychotherapy as it is usually practiced has nothing to do with the culture, economic possibilities and language of the people with whom we were working. The world of poor communities in Venezuela, as well as in other Latin American countries is a totally different ambit. The life-world<sup>4</sup> of the poor is very distant from the middle class realm of the people making appointments with a therapist, driving to the consultation office, following professional advice, and spending years in treatment. Language also is a major issue, and not because the poor cannot understand what the therapist might say, but because often it is the psychologists the ones who cannot understand what the patient from the slum is saying. And that is because the signs and the symbols come from different life-worlds, different life histories, different education, different life experiences, and different means of living.

That was then our point of depart: much clinical ignorance, a poignant view of the circumstances in which we had been working, and some clear goals. Our objectives for this initial task were:

- To insert the community approach into clinical practice,
- To help in the development of a clinical practice able to deal with the mental health problems of people living in conditions of social and economic exclusion.
- To achieve that, we had to build a bridge between the community and the clinical foci, and to move the classroom to the community. Easier said than done. First, we had to determine the conceptual and theoretical framework for the praxis we wanted to develop; to provide the community psychology tools necessary for our clinical students, and to generate a critical and at the same time sensitive approach to the subject being studied.

The first aspect was the definition of health: By that we understand all those aspects concerning the satisfaction of primary needs (nutrition, sports, clothing, medicaments, etc.) and also immaterial aspects of psychological origin (positive emotions, motivations, beliefs, being able to develop one's creativity), as well as aspects provided by cultural links (social and religious beliefs, historic practices, sense of belonging to a culture, to a country, to a community, to peer groups).

Therefore, it is necessary for psychologists to know the context of the people s(he) is going to work with, to understand their ways of speaking and their culture, their interest, their patterns of behaviour. With base on this we consider that a Clinical Community psychology should be based on an integral conception of health and on a corresponding integral and situated conception of mental health, responding to the mental health needs of Venezuelan population, with emphasis on those sectors and communities living in precarious situation, in circumstances of poverty. This notion is complemented by a conception of human beings as active, dynamic social actors. This is an important aspect because the people a clinical community psychologist will work with should be able to work along with the therapist, transforming her/himself and transforming his/her environment, be as a patient or as a member of a patient's family or circle of peers.

A difference with the bio-medical model is made. Where the medical model concentrates

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4 By lifeworld is understood the region of reality in which one can intervene and can modify while acting within it (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973).



power, responsibility and knowledge in the therapist, the psychosocial community model distributes it among the person being tended, the multidisciplinary team doing it and other people in the community. The medical model also constructs the illness as a powerful entity, able to mysteriously introduce itself into the helpless body of the victims, its emphasis is put upon sickness and how to protect the besieged or invaded body whereas the psychosocial community emphasis highlights the social support the person may receive.

Table 1 Comparison between conceptions of biomedical and psychosocial community health.

Bio-medical Model	Clinical community Model
Institutional view of health and illness.	Health and illness are part of life and their understanding is part of culture.
Illness is external to the person. It invades and lodges itself inside the person. Conception if the invaded helpless body.	Illness is the outcome of the imbalance between biological, psychological, and spiritual aspects of life (Serrano, Bravo, Rosario, Gorrín, 1998).
The therapist knows and heals.	The therapist knows and heals contextualising the illness. The process happens with the help of members of the community where there is the problem. The healing capacity of the human body and the therapeutic effect of positive human relationships are acknowledged, and there is a cautious and prudent approach concerning the administration of drugs.
Procedures, techniques and medicaments are generated by a specific field of science, elaborated by a specific industry and, regulated by the therapist.	Emphasis in social support as a fundamental factor for the promotion and protection of health.
The core concepts are illness and the defense against it.	Considers that healthy people predominates. Health prevails over illness.
Search for health is centred in the therapist-patient relationship.	Approach to illnesses and disorders is made by multidisciplinary teams with the active participation of the person or group to be treated, as well as their relational context.
Responsibility and control of the healing process resides in the therapist.	Responsibility and control reside in the multidisciplinary team, in the person sick or in risk, in community groups and networks.
Power imbalance. Power resides in the providers of health services, who exert them on patients and groups.	Power is exerted with the community and the interested person.

M. Montero, 2004.

We wanted to generate, and train for, a practice that would go from community health to clinical community psychological help. To do that we had to start from a different perspective of health and illness, as well as a different perspective of the roles people and organized groups play in community action. The difference regards the active character of external agents, health workers of all kinds, and also in the internal agents, that is the very people in the communities: stakeholders, interested neighbours, people in need. Both types of agents should be working together according to their possibilities and knowledge, in the promotion of health, the prevention of illnesses and in the secondary and tertiary intervention cases. This means going further than

the attention within, and for, the community, reaching the attention by the community. That is, the integration of community participants and social support, jointly with clinical therapy.

The community becomes as a collective entity, a co-therapist, providing forms of knowledge that should be explored and then incorporated. That is, popular knowledge that could contribute to preserve and promote health, and help in the healing of diseases. This means that the health agents are both clinical community psychologists and new health agents stemming from the community.

### **Social Support in Clinical Community Action**

Social support within the community needs the existence of a sense of community and linked to this, intrinsic to that sense, a community identity. That is equivalent to have a community. People know they belong to a specific social network of common history, culture, values and interests. An invisible, but deeply felt network producing specific networks for helping, defending and sharing those who are like We are; those who know what I am referring to. Those networks may be affective, collaborative (protecting, strengthening, doing together), and moral (based on judgments and opinions about social issues and modes of doing. And they can help in the social adaptation and protection of people in health risk.

### **Initial tools for a Clinical community psychology**

Obviously, at the beginning in 1999 we only counted on knowledge coming from usual clinical psychology and that coming from community social psychology, to this we promptly added social support. No one working with communities can leave it aside.. Social support is the latch key to community action, and also its sine qua non condition of therapy in which the individual and the collective coexist with respect. Participation and engagement make it possible. From Paulo Freire we incorporated the action-reflection-action model, complemented with the reflection – action – reflection, its inevitable corollary. And of course, and very optimistic, we expected to count in knowledge being produced by cumulative experiences.

### **Objectives of clinical community psychology with a community approach.**

In order to construct a new field of community action, research and therapy, as well as social transformation, we set the following objectives, in the hope to develop a clinical community psychology socially sensible, and able to respond to the mental health needs of the low-income population.

The objectives of the clinical community psychology we are constructing are the following:

- To generate a model of prevention and intervention centred in health and not in illness.
- To incorporate the communities (organized groups and stakeholders), to the processes of promotion of health; to the prevention of illnesses and to the treatment of mental health disorders.
- To develop and use of communities' resources and potentialities in benefice of themselves.
- To empower communities in order to contribute to the development of a conscious civil

society, able to establish healthy relationships and to promote a predominant state of health within the community.

- To develop therapies for mental health disorders responding to the needs of communities, incorporating their resources and support, thus strengthening both the person in need and the community.

### **Clinical Community Processes and Community participation and commitment**

Community stakeholders, community organized groups and interested participants an important help and support for the clinical community action in promoting healthy habits and practices. There are plenty of examples about this: vaccination programmes, teaching and modeling hygiene practices, implementing programmes of cleaning and ecological disposing of garbage, for example. Also in prevention of diseases, like covering water deposits impeding in that way the reproduction of mosquitoes transmitting yellow fever, malaria, and dengue, or taking and teaching measures for avoiding contact in cases of infectious diseases. Detection of problems and risk factors is another area where an aware and participant community can be extremely helpful and very accurate. And collaborating in therapy treatments is the one way we are trying to develop and think that could be developed in the near future.

Concerning this aspect, community resources can be precious in obtaining help in the adhesion to therapy in mental health patients. Not only the family but other members of the community can monitor and, most important, they can obtain behaviour changes within the community, towards people with Down syndrome, and various mental disorders, thus providing a friendly and helping environment giving safety and support to those in need (Caso Cundo<sup>5</sup>). This type of community intervention by the community may produce changes in social relations leading to the acceptance and understanding of the ill person, and at the same time to the social adaptation of that person, helping her/him to become an able person within her/his capacities, and even an asset for the community.

### **Modes of therapeutic action developed in community-clinical practice**

In a country like Venezuela where more than 60% of the population is poor or extremely poor, generating ways to do clinical psychology for the communities living in those conditions means that services should be provided for the majority of the population. We are conscious that our efforts may be disproportionate, but nevertheless, we consider that it is urgent to develop modes of intervention that can be provided out of the hospitals, and can reach the people in their own environment. We mean to reach a population that cannot pay for therapy, that most of the time does not have enough money to pay for the bus or metro to go to the consultation, They have neither enough time to wait in order to see some results, nor the culture understanding the peculiar relation between therapist and client. And on top of that, that is a population living in places where violence, abuse, drugs and hunger are part of everyday routine.

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5 "Cundo" was a man in a community where both authors worked during the first half of the nineties. He was born with mental deficiency and in his childhood was the object of much stigmatization and ill-treatment. The community health committee decided to socialize him at the same time they taught the people how to behave towards Cundo. Thus the exclusion, insults, as well as the fights stopped, and many neighbours took good care of Cundo, who became a most gentle and collaborative person, although he hardly could talk.

Our students can practice their psychology skills at the Parque Social “Padre Manuel Aguirre”, a service provided by Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, where it is offered clinical support in prevention and attention regarding mental health needs for people with low incomes from nearby poor communities. But as community psychologists we consider that is not enough, because those services only reach people with means allowing them to go to the Parque Social. It is a very good service, but it does not include the community, so people have to go back to the very same context where they got sick. Therefore we decided to put our students in contact with that kind of situation.

The students first detect mental health needs, discussing it with organized groups from those communities. After that they make a project of intervention that should be carried out in eight weeks. Projects concern some problematic area pointed out by people in those groups or detected by the students in contact with community people, and they are developed with specific groups needing that intervention. Activities have a participatory character and both, the definition of needs as well as the intervention proposal, are discussed with community leaders and with the would-be beneficiaries of the intervention, who also evaluate the process and its results. Final reports elaborated by the students are also presented and given to the community as well as to the Psychology Unit at Parque Social, and are publicly discussed for evaluation by the second first author.

So far 63 students have participated in those projects. Interventions have been carried out in three marginal zones of the South-West and North of Caracas and in a marginal zone of Los Teques, a dormitory city near Caracas. In this paper we shall focus the interventions made in Catuche since 2004, a large community in the process of fragmenting itself due to its growth, where we think advances towards a community-clinical psychology, as previously described (pp. 7-8), have being obtained.

### **Community-Clinical work in Catuche**

Catuche is a low income community placed in the North of Caracas, whose organizing level has been internationally acknowledged, receiving financial aid for the development of a variety of projects, as well as the support of an important institution (*Fé y Alegría*, Faith & Happiness).

#### **The Catuche Community-Clinical intervention.**

Intervention in this community has been centred in the relationship between two problematic areas: violence and mourning. This relation affects different age groups in the community: children, youngsters and adults, individually and as part of families, and the community in general, since violence is a central problem for this community.

The process of developing forms of community-clinical psychology in which the community may participate has, so far, developed two stages and much reflection. These stages are not excluding, although each one emphasizes a particular aspect, while at the same time, keeps elements from the previous stage. Thus, when we were approaching the community to assess the needs to be tackled, inevitable we would include community-clinical reflections about processes, and we began to think about alternative ways to develop our work. Also, today, even though we have a more complex understanding of those processes, we still discover each time

new aspects in the community, in the needs, and in the type of setting required.

### **First Stage: Approaching the community**

This stage begins by entering the community and observing while also getting to know the people, hearing and talking to them about their needs. In Catuche we found out that the community already had made a study of their necessities that leaders and stakeholders presented to us. This meant negotiating about which of the manifested needs our students and we could attend. We had to explain to leaders and stakeholders what was the kind of work community-clinical psychologists do, because some of their demands had a psychosocial character (i.e.: problems of people placed in buildings after they had lost their houses during a mudslide, but having to live besides people that have killed a relative). They soon understood, and later they would sort themselves those problems linked to our field.

What they were telling us and what we were observing and hearing determined the problem to treat: Mourning of people whose children had been murdered, within the community, due to the violence existing in it. As a sideline and because of the insistence of the leaders we began two more interventions concerning mother-children relations and sexual education for adolescents, as well as family violence. The first one, based on dialogue and with a psycho-educational problematizing modality, provided the women participating with a space where they could openly express their problems.

Regarding family violence, the leaders informed that there was a high number of women victims of that kind of violence, but they feared that direct talk about that subject would scare the women, who would not want to attend it. Looking back to that experience we have the impression that the fear was in the leaders, who found aversive that problem, thus creating a sort of protecting shield impeding the issue to be made public. That reluctance and the difficulties derived from it told us that the needs as seen by the leaders were not the same as seen by other members of the community. Their mediation was imposing a way to see the community. We still consult them because they have an interesting experience and it is important to know why they consider dangerous or private certain issues, and we do make them part of the reflection; but now the work goes straight to the people in need.

And that started by interviewing them in an open way, trying at the same time to think about different therapy strategies. We came to understand the reasons behind interventions that in the past had abruptly stopped: Among those reasons were fear to revive the painful situation lived; the time of the day; having other activities to do; the risk of leaving the children alone while going to a therapy group; distrust of other participants, and fear to be denounced for talking about a murder. As can be seen there are to types of impediment. The easier ones are those concerning timetables and work. The more difficult are fear and distrust.

Mourning was especially complex because the problem did not reside in its individual elaboration but in the jointly lived experience of the loses and in the presence of their mourning in what they call "dying day by day", meaning what happens to those dear ones who are using drugs. Besides, the violence causing the deaths mourned is chain produced: a dead person means new deaths as response to violence and vengeance. Silence and door closing are the modes of protection, combined with rituals developed in the idealized community. Mourning happens then, in an ambivalent environment providing both social support and threats. And in this dual

antithetical quality mourning becomes chronic. By this is meant the continuous re-editing of the episode lived without being able to reach a resolving stage for the mourning a situation that produces constant feelings of rage, hate, and rancor.

We acquired then new knowledge: Our intervention could not deal with violence and mourning separately, they have to be treated as related expressions of the same phenomenon. And due to the circumstances it has to be individually worked, although the Parque Social recommendation was group therapy in order to help more people at the same time; but it does not work in that way.

Finally *gossip and rumor* are the cause of violence and silence, because every time something happens (meaning violence). The rumors begin to run about the community causing fear, and at the same time, people feel that in gossip they are exposed to criticism and to others people curiosity. They feel fear to express their feelings or to speak out loud about a violent fact. And that is the origin of a false silence: nothing is said, but everything is known. This is the communication mode of this community, an aspect we consider we need to study and in which we should intervene, since it could be a key to understand certain community processes and to find healthier ways to communicate.

### **Second Stage: Intervention setting and the production of community-clinical therapy**

In this stage we began questioning the kind of setting (*encuadre* in Spanish) usually employed. A specific time, a specific space, certain norms concerning participation, were modes of doing that were not working out. From the perspective of some community people, we should combine group therapy with visits to the people homes, talking there to them. This should be complemented with commentaries and observations obtained outside of the therapy space. And this was a challenge for a community-clinical psychology, because this was *a setting to be set*, adequate to the life-world of community people, with limits generated in the exchanges produced, and where the definition does not come from the practitioner but from the people-clients, stemming from their reality.

An unorthodox practice was created in that way. There was a meeting, and some of the people convoked were not punctual. Waiting for the late-comers in the street, the students facilitating the session and some of the participants began talking about the topic they were supposed to discuss, and as they were doing that some neighbours passing by, who also were in mourning, were stopped and included into the discussion. In that way they did carry out the intervention needed, but they did it in a very different way. The community people spoke freely, without feelings of fear, or of invasion or threat. The facilitators called this strategy the *Toll gate* (La Alcabala), because they stopped the people passing, "detaining" them in order to talk.

Another modality is the *Hearing Group*. In this group initially created to work on the women's suffering, the participants would include topics of community interest which did not have relation with their main problem, and the participants would help each other telling their experiences and opinions at their own rhythm. This is a semi-open group, because the participants may include other persons if they consider they would be interested in the discussion. Discussion topics are jointly defined by participants and facilitators. All can hear and be heard.

### **Incorporation of recreational and playful aspects in the adults work.**

This was one of the most useful strategies coming out of this community-clinical intervention perspective. Usually, interpretation and reflection about clinical aspects in relation with play is mostly used with children. Incorporating games and recreation, in our case offered a possibility for important topics to come forth. Those topics were related to personal worries, to aspects producing malaise or referred to the establishment of relationships. This allowed the people to intervene in their own circumstances, in a flexible space of leisure. For the psychologists this strategy provided the opportunity to observe the behaviour and the difficulty nodes in the women's relation with their children, thus providing feedback.

### **Hurdles and difficulties**

One of the hardest aspects to deal with is the difficulty of most people in the community to integrate positive and negative aspects of the community, polarizing the situation. This has produced two opposite images of the community: One denying anything negative trying to reduce or ignore that, and refusing to reflect about it; another one constructing an ideal image of the community, defining it as organized, successful and with a united identity. Those in this group tend to work too much for the community projects in what could be considered as an evading mechanism, and some of them have symptoms of burnout due to the working excess. The same polarization is found in the stereotyping classification of youngsters as "healthy" and "damaged". In our latest interventions with those teen-agers we find they are neither so good nor so bad. We need then to work both with the lack of opportunities those youngsters have, and with the defense mechanisms being used by many community members, understanding that as a mode of dealing in a very hard environment, and keeping a certain level of psychological wellness. We need to find their modes of resistance and empower the people so they can cope, and at the same time change their life-world.

### **The effects of frustration and uncertainty upon psychologists.**

Most of the graduate students working in this Project as part of their training have had previous clinical traditional training. They need to have very clear criteria for diagnosis in order to develop intervention with well defined strategies within a specific setting. Most of them have been able to make adjustments to community conditions. A few have not. We understand that the model being developed feels them with dread, because of the volatility of community groups, due to the people's hardships and lack of a habit to follow a therapy, and also because of their mistrust. They also fear community changes and their effect on people's behaviour, as well as the possibility of having to redefine the intervention being conducted. To this is necessary to add the relative short time to work (people need and want to see concrete results). When they think that their work might not be useful because of the adversities of life in those communities they tend to feel discouraged. That is to be expected, we all have had those feelings. Those who have the clarity to speak and discuss their fears and doubts have been, so far, successful in therapy terms, because they try to adjust their work to the circumstances. But silencing fear, so far has led to cautious superficial interventions.

## **Conclusions**

What has been presented wants to be a community psychology based clinical psychology aimed to develop a praxis responding to the needs of a population whose mental health needs so far are not being attended. Criteria of participation and engagement are in its base; also the situated quality of this perspective. Therefore, emphasis is being put in incorporating the people in the community, stakeholders and leaders to a therapy that may be carried out from a barrio dispensary, and from other accessible places (including their homes), so it can reach the people needing the service. The incorporation of people in the community as co-therapists, in the sense of producing a behaviour change conducing to facilitate health and reduce risk is a necessary condition. Both those in need and also their close environment need to receive the attention of clinical psychology who should be able to combine a therapeutic approach with community social psychology approach, producing a different mode of community work. This does not mean to abandon all forms of traditional therapy, some of them can be, and should be implemented in the community environment and some people will need the assistance of other practitioners and specialized institutions.

Training for this type of work needs to be included in the graduate syllabi and we think the future of this conception will produce interesting development and creative interventions and research. We would appreciate very much receiving information about practice of this type in other contexts.

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Tabla XX

Año	Intervención	Estudiantes responsables
2000	Apoyo psico-emocional a guías de centro y jóvenes recluidas en el Centro de Diagnóstico y Tratamiento "José Gregorio Hernández"- INAM. Antímamo	Corredor, María Alejandra; Barreto, María Alejandra; Rodríguez, Natalí; Huizi, Daniela; Espinal, Bárbara; Umerez; Ana Isabel.
2001	Detección de necesidades en la comunidad de Antímamo en relación con el parque social Padre Manuel Aguirre S.J.	Meneses, Maribel; Pérez, Ana; Rodríguez, Pedro; Westin-ner, María del Valle.
2002	Propuesta para la detección de necesidades de salud mental en la comunidad de Antímamo.	Briceño, Cavalieri, D sisto-Guerrero, Guinand, Juzgado, Keisar.
2003	Intervención en la Unidad Educativa "José Antonio Villavicencio" en el Marco del Proyecto de Bienestar Psicológico Infantil de la Unidad de Psicología del Parque Social-UCAB	Balda, Beatriz; Brusca, Daniela; Guti-errez, Sonia; Fernández, Elsa; Izquier, Carolina; Lizárraga, Carmen; Morillo, Geraldine; Pérez, Cristina
2004	Intervención Familiar en la Comunidad de Catuche.	Maitin, Zulaima; Salas, Pedro.
2004	Programa de Intervención en el Área de la Sexualidad en los Jóvenes de Catuche.	Díaz, Mary Francys; Quintero, Wileima
2004	Intervención clínico-comunitaria en violencia familiar con habi-tantes de la comunidad de Catuche.	Gil, Raquel; Gómez, Gabriela.
2004	Plan de Intervención Psicológica en el Ambulatorio "San Juan Evangelista", Pan de Azúcar: Una perspectiva Clínica Comunitaria	Hernández, Virna; Santander, Laura.
2004	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria del Duelo de Muertes Violentas en la Comunidad de Catuche.	Fernández, Barbarita; Issa, Claudia.
2005	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria: Taller de Prevención de Violencia en Niños de Primer y Segundo Grado que Participan en Refuerzo Escolar Dentro de la Comunidad de Catuche	Guilbet, Liza; Ortega, Susana.
2005	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria en prevención de Maltrato Infantil y Violencia Dirigida a Niños Pertenecientes al Grupo de Refuerzo Escolar de la Comunidad de Catuche. "AYUDADORES DE LA VIDA"	Trujillo, Tatiana y Alvarez, Yone.
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2005	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria en Situaciones de Duelo en Jóvenes en la Comunidad de Catuche.	Abecasis, Andrea; Sapene, Alejandra.
2005	Estudio Clínico-Comunitario en Duelo en Situaciones de Violencia en la Comunidad de Catuche.	Francisco, Valentina; Morales, Ana Carolina
2005	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria para Mejorar el Funciona-miento Familiar en Miembros de la Comunidad de Catuche: Taller Interactivo-Vivencial "Disciplina con Afecto"	Dacal, Irene; Slaimen, Gisela
2006	Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria para la Prevención de Violencia y Fortalecimiento de la Convivencia en el Grupo de Niños de Refuerzo Escolar de la Comunidad de Catuche	Duque, Zoraida; Jaramillo Ursula,, Konietzny, Marlene; Uribe, Sandra; Vázquez María
2006	Sexualidad, Feminidad y Maternidad en un Grupo de Mujeres de Catuche: Una Intervención Clínica-Comunitaria	Gonçalves, Celia; Matute, Aknatón
2006	La Rosa y El Ratón Muerto: Intervención Clínico-Comunitaria de Duelo Tras Muertes Violentas en la Comunidad de Catuche	Bernardez, Johana; Márquez, Andrés
2007	Catuche: Distintas aproximaciones a una comunidad desde la perspectiva de la Psicología Clínico Comunitaria: - Taller para cuidadores(as) de adolescentes en Catuche - Intervención con los jóvenes y líderes comunitarios del sector Portillo en Catuche - Grupo de apoyo y reflexión para líderes y personas que realizan trabajo comunitario - Documental Audiovisual: Re-construyendo la memoria e historia de Catuche	Castro, Mónica; Gallegos, Sandra; Mongillo, Magdalena; Morante, Ma-ría G.; Souto, Jhon; Tellería, Carmen; Torres, Daniela

## Refugee families in a multicultural setting

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### **The multicultural area**

Since about 1960 Sweden has received people from other countries, first as workers in our industry (they came mostly from Southern Europe), from 1970 mainly as refugees from all conflict areas all over the world.

1 of 10 families in Sweden, 10%, has ethnic roots in another country.

The newcomer's situation has always been special. Around the big cities have, during this 50 years, grown so called multicultural areas where foreign families live.

The concentration of foreign families in the multicultural areas around Stockholm can be so high as 80 - 90 %.

So if you, as a child from Iraque move to Stockholm with your family, there is little chance that your neighbours will be Swedish families. The chance is so much higher that your neighbours will be other people from Iraque, or people from Turkey, from old Jugoslavia, from Somalia and so on.

More than 60% of the children with roots in another country than Sweden live in a multicultural area.

As you already know, this have big consequences for the service in the area, for health care centres, for day care centres, for the schools, for buying food... The professionals in these areas, on the contrary, are usually Swedish.

The multicultural suburb is also an area with many children, the birth rate in most other areas of Stockholm is decreasing, but not in the multicultural suburb.

### **The life in the multicultural area**

What characterizes life in such surroundings?

1/ Some families experience these life conditions as *supportive*. You share your exclusion from the majority society with all the others.

With this experience you have no wish to leave this place. You make it your native place and your children, as grown ups, choose to stay when they marry and have their own children.

2/ Or, your experience is that you are *deported to these areas* as an intentional action from the majority society.

This is specially the case when the mix of nationalities means that you have to share the place with people who represent the formerly enemy from the home country.

Christian and Muslim families from countries in the Middle East, for example, live in the same house. Turkish and Kurdish families share the same laundry and their preschool children go to the same group in the daycare centre in the block.

This can become a motive for isolation and bitterness.

So, you can have positive or negative feelings, but seldom neutral, about living in such an area.

**The view on the multicultural area from the majority society: it creates social problems**

The practical consequences are the same, however, your contact with the majority society is restricted.

Our view on this way of receiving people from other countries is now that it has not supported integration. From the integration aspect it is a failure .

All problems that this kind of area can create, as for example

idealising your life in the home country,

problems to learn Swedish,

a hiding place for criminal networks,

has contributed to see immigrants as people with problems, or as people that create problems for our society.

**The Swedish research on migration has a problem focus**

The view on the immigrant as problematic is an important cause to the restricted refugee policy nowadays.

I think it also is the reason that *the migration research is very much focused on migration as a problem*. This research focuses school problems, psychiatric problems and unemployment.

A positive perspective, that the migration is a possibility to a better life, or sometimes the only chance to survive, has disappeared.

Perhaps that is why we don't know so much more about this life situation today than we did 50 years ago.

For example: missing is a theory about the meaning for young people to have roots in more than one culture, with respect to identity and personality development. Because some research results tell us about processes that probably are important for the personality development of children and youth.

**Some migration processes within family life**

***The migration process – departure and uprooting***

One aspect of the migration process important for the life stile in a new country concerns the ties to the family in the home country.

In studies as well as in clinical work you can see that families develop their relation to the rest of the extended family in the origin country in different ways.

This is the start of a process that I call *THE EMOTIONAL UPROOTING*.

Uprooting is a mental process and it stands for a change in your emotional ties to your extended family in the home country. Uprooting starts later than the departure.

I have found 3 different patterns in organizing your belonging to your origin family:

### **I. The definite uprooting**

This means that you definitely decide never to return to your home country.

I see this uprooting pattern mostly among parents who have a personal motive for their migration. You can have the status of refugee in Sweden but your motive to move is personal.

The personal motive for leaving can have its roots in family problems: you have been ill treated in your family and have sisters or brothers who were your parents' favourite and you were never anyone's favourite. Or you belong to a nuclear family that have had a bad relationship to the rest of the extended family because your own parents did never get along with any one else.

Your bad feelings about your native place can be about something else than the family, about how you were treated in school or at work. Shortly, you are a violated person and the violation has cost you much pain. It seems as your pain is the push-factor that makes you prepared to leave.

I know Mabel, a young woman from Nigeria, who is a good example of this uprooting pattern. When Mabel was 9 years old her parents gave her away to an aunt who could not get children of her own. Her aunt treated her very badly, with her parents knowledge, and in spite of their knowledge she was not allowed to come home again. Not until she was 16 years, when she went to her grandmothers house and refused to move back to this aunt.

Mabel tells me that she has dreamed of going far away during all these years of suffering with this cruel woman.

When she was 24 years old, Mabel met a man who lived in Sweden but visited his home country for a short time. She decided to follow him to Sweden. By this time Mabel was a hairdresser with an own saloon and a few employees. Economically she was well-off.

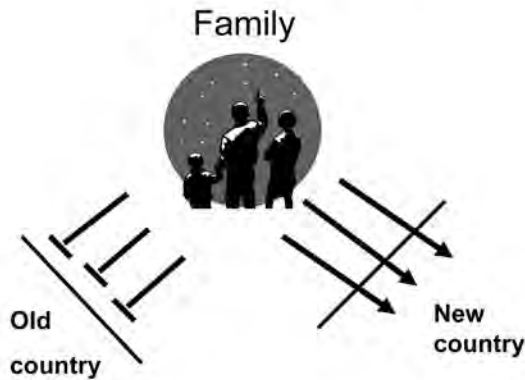
Mabel left her hairdresser saloon to a cousin and moved to Sweden. In Stockholm Mabel found herself totally dependent on a man she hardly knew. The marriage did not turn out well and to get a possibility to think over her situation she returned to Nigeria and her family after about one year in Sweden. She took her newborn son with her.

Back with her family she found that her old conflicts with her parents, and her feelings of being a foreigner in the family, still were the same. Once more she left her home town, now with the strong conviction to stay in Sweden forever.

Just now Mabel is married for the third time, expecting a new child, and has serious problems with the Immigration authorities. She cannot, of course, be accepted as a political refugee. She is unemployed since her arrival. But, she is still convinced to stay in the country. And I am sure she will.

You can say that THE DEFINITE UPROOTING develops out of disappointment and anger.

## The definite uprooting



### **The children and the definite uprooting**

For these parents, the children are a part of your Swedish project. Your expectations are that they shall adjust to the new surroundings very fast, without problems.

*But your parent expectations function as an emotional constraint for the children. They try not to show fear, to show that they miss persons in the home country, they try not to show that it is difficult with the language, or with school mates.*

## **II. A resting attachment**

I find this pattern, a resting attachment, in young families who live in a most involuntary exile. They have a *political motive* for their migration.

The nuclear family in exile leaves behind them strong emotional ties to many people. They lose practical help with the household and emotional support as parents.

There is an agreement that the exile will be short and temporary between those family members who leave and those who stay. Usually this will not be the case but everybody act as if. For the young family in Sweden this agreement is important as a guarantee for still being a part of the family at home.

Parents in this situation have much to lose but, at the same time, they have an ambition and plans for their future in their new life situation. Often they have been active and successful in whatever they did at home.

The wish to still belong to the family they have left and to form a new life in the new country is often hard to connect and realize. The projects you start are, in fact, tied to a future in Sweden.

You can find examples of this pattern of uprooting as I call A RESTING ATTACHMENT among many young Irakian families that have arrived to Sweden during the last years.

These families have not been away from home for a long time before they start to think about how they can organize a meeting with the family at home. A visit back home is impossible.

But quite often they manage to arrange a visit for a family member here. The visitor is often a person that earlier has been deeply involved with the children, not seldom a grandmother.

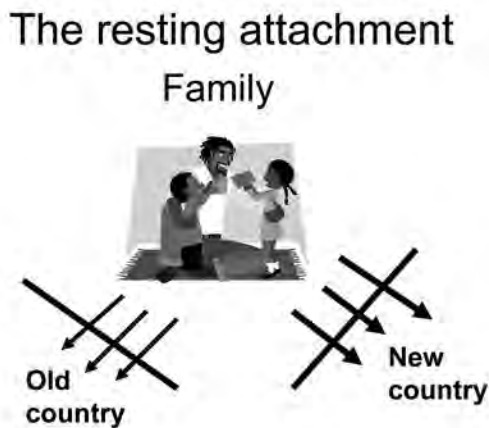
However, receiving a visitor from home turns out to be more complicated than you have expected. This visitor has eyes and ears and she tells what she sees. Often she finds the situation bad for the young family, she finds them isolated and lonely, they have problems to find an apartment, problems with unemployment. Often they have to study many years again, despite a long education in the home country.

So the young parents find that they have to defend themselves: it is not so bad, it will be better when we know the language, etc. And, above all, it does not matter because we will come home soon.

You welcome the visitor at her arrival but even feel released when she returns home. The visitor is a threat against your own positive but fragile, picture of your struggle in the new life situation.

When she leaves you feel free but also abandoned. THE RESTING ATTACHMENT is an uprooting process followed by a great deal of ambivalence.

An illustration of this process is that you keep weak roots in your native country while you at the same time start to plant new roots in the exile country.



#### **The children and the resting attachment**

Also in this case you are part of your parents project to *stay close to the culture, traditions and persons you have left, and at the same time to look forward to a successful future in Sweden.*

It is not easy to live with both these ambitions. It often results in conflicts between children and parents. The parents find you are too little interested in the home country, or too little ambitious in the Swedish school. There often grows a *culture conflict at home.*

### **III. The absent uprooting**

The third pattern of change of the relationship to your origin is NO CHANGE. Practically it means that you try to avoid changes in relation to your extended family. You do that by collecting part of the family around you in the new country. This is known as CHAIN MIGRATION. The contacts with family members at home take the form of an invitation, in which you stress the possibilities

of a good life in Sweden.

As a RECEIVER of family members from home you get a very important role in the family, as an expert on Sweden. You become an adviser for the newly ARRIVED family members in all sorts of questions for a new immigrant.

### **The receivers**

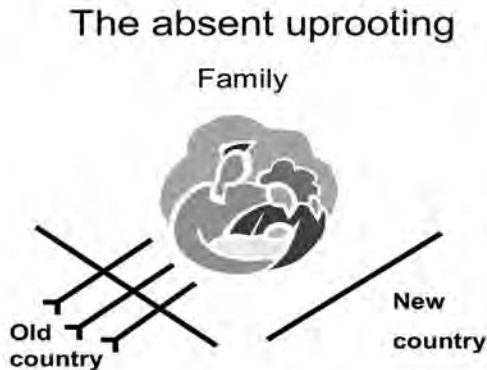
For the receivers, the reunion of part of the family functions as a vaccination against the feeling of change of the relations. You try to rebuild the life style from the home country.

When you try to form the family life as it was at home, you do that through an intense social life, by sharing the daily life with the newcomers. You do not present Sweden as something interesting at all.

Shortly, as an illustration you can say that you try to live with long roots, to keep your roots in the native country and, in fact avoid to fasten any roots at all in the ground of the new country.

A chain migration divides the family into two settlements in two different countries.

In the long run, that gives the family members special possibilities of moving and travelling between these two settlements. I have not seen any ambition to gather the whole family in one place. We have examples of chain migration among Assyrians, people from Chile, from Turkey and other countries.



### **The newcomers**

If we, instead, focus on those who arrive: they are dependent of those who already have lived in the new country for some time. As the receivers are quite dominant the arriving families develop a life style that can be called *an agreed no-change*. This means: With not much of a chance to do otherwise, you agree to try to live as you did at home. You spend much time together with the receivers. You discuss with them every step you take in the new country, and you get a lot of advice how to act and what to say in different meetings with the majority society.

### **The extended family in the new country**

When you take a close look at the first years of the extended migrant families in the new country, you find some contradictory matters.

1/ *It does not seem that a member of the extended family feels any restrictions in his/her contacts with Swedes.* If you show a deep engagement in your family you seem to be free to see

your school-mates how much you want to, if you are a child, and you are free to have private contacts with Swedish colleagues, Swedish neighbours and so on, if you are an adult.

Therefore the private contact with the majority society varies a lot between the members of these families, parents as well as children. Some of them never see a Swedish person, some have many contacts.

2/When arriving in Sweden, you count upon help from those who arrived earlier. But *what kind of help do you get?* It has often surprised me that the help is not a practical one, rather it is a verbal support: you get advice, instructions and information.

The last arrived can easily understand this so that those who arrived earlier never had any problems, the advicers are so sure how to handle their life.

Ana gave me a good example of this when her 3 year old son started to go to the daycare centre. Ana's sister-in-law, who had lived in Sweden for about two years, advised her to leave the child there and begin to study Swedish at once after the arrival.

But the boy cried and did not want to stay in the daycare centre. At home, in the morning, he used to hide his shoes, which forced Ana to search for them all over the apartment. With the child's logic he hoped to be allowed to stay at home if the shoes disappeared.

With whom shall I talk about that? Ana asked me.

I suggested: With your sister-in-law.

No, said Ana, I can't. I am the only one in my family with problems with my children here in Sweden.

There can be different reasons why those who have arrived earlier don't say anything about their own problems and difficulties to their arriving family members. Perhaps

a/ they don't want to frighten them

b/ they don't want to talk about their own earlier difficulties because it is painful,

c/ difficulties are normal, they are part of the migrant situation,

d/ you can not prepare anyone by talking, it just doesn't help.

3/\_To be successful in the new society seems to be of no importance for your position in the family. The family has its own hierarchy built on history in the old country.

For example, a teenager is guaranteed the same love and support, no matter his coping with the demands from the majority society. High grades in school, or serious social problems in the new society, neither matters for your relationships to other members of the family. Here you can rely upon the family loyalty. It seems as your position in the family is based more on family-related behaviour than on society-related.

BUT: Finally, the extended family in a cultural setting where this life style is not the norm, is impossible in the long run. Following some such families in Sweden over a long time you can see that a fragmentarisation in smaller groups are not rare.

### **The children and the chain migration**

The chain migration is very much an affair between adults. It is much more important to concentrate on inviting the family than to observe the children in the cultural aspect.

Perhaps this is a little surprise, but I find children with this uprooting pattern in the family more free, with less personal constraints, than the others. The chain migration allows children to play both with their cousins from home and with the children who are their new neighbours in



Sweden. In the normal case.

### **A complication: the concept of honour and shame**

If the family is an extended family with modern values it is a safe and good situation to have a big family around you. But if the big family import very traditional values that do not suites well the values and life stile in the new country, this can create big trouble for the young people. One such phenomenon is *early marriage arrangements*.

#### *Honour and shame*

is the social control in most home countries for the immigrants

together with early marriage arrangements results in complications for young people demands new negotiations between families abroad and families in the home country

In some home countries of our refugees, there still is a connection between marriage arrangements and honour and shame, a combination that has brought violence between fathers and daughters to our country. Some young women have been murdered by their fathers or brothers lately in Sweden.

In my study of *young womens' experiences and thoughts about marriage in exile* there was much talk about their choice of a husband.

If the arranged marriage is the norm in the society, you don't necessarily have any problem with that. You grow up with the knowledge who is going to be your husband, perhaps it is someone that you have known all your life. Or if you do not know the man earlier, but you still want to be married to this man, it is no problem.

### **But if one family moves to another country...**

But if there is a marriage arrangement between two families and one of them moves abroad, then the young people are brought up under very different conditions. Often not even the parents are inclined to hold on to such an old arrangement. They want a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, who they know that their son or daughter will be happy with and who suites well to their own family. Most parents do not want to force their children into an unhappy marriage.

And in that case, I have learned, very interesting things can happen. Some stories from young women in the study:

Fetiye came back to Sweden newly married after a summer vacation in Turkey with her parents. Her new husband came later when he got his permission from the immigrant authorities.

Fetiye told me that there had existed an origin arrangement with another young man, whose wife she was meant to become. But neither she, nor her parents, wanted him any more in their family. So Fetiye's mother, who was the best negotiator of the family, talked to the young man's grandfather and asked for a cancelling of the arrangement.

This grandfather showed his disapproval at first, Fetiye told, but he accepted the cancelling of concern with his grandson. He wished him something better than to marry a girl who did not want him.

When Zarah came back from a visit in her home city Beirut she told that her family had expected to celebrate her engagement with a boy there. Her parents had chosen him for her when she was a girl. Zarah knew that both families wanted them to become a couple. Zarah refused.

“My dad had to accept that”, said Zarah. “I don’t want to marry him. My dad told his dad that I cannot have children. End of story.”

“My brother married a girl from our village in Pakistan”, told Ramisa. “But they didn’t get along well and she cried and her only wish was to return home. Her parents took her back. At home her parents told the rest of the family and the neighbours that she never married in Sweden.”

*Why are these girls’ stories so interesting?*

Because if you speak to young migrant women you find different ways of handling an old tradition that can complicate the life of the family. But the parents do not seem to be prepared to give it up. So when these parents thrive to show respect to the young man and his family they use a lot of strategies to help out the young couple of the old promise. There are a lot of migrant fathers who negotiate and use, what we call, white lies or innocent lies, to save their daughters from unhappiness.

And the most interesting is that these parents, mostly fathers, don’t tell anything about this. If they did, perhaps the strategies would not work.

The conclusion is: Most parents do not try to force their daughters into unhappy marriages. But the picture of the migrant father in Sweden just now is that he is a demonic and aggressive oppressor to women and children.

### **Parent support in groups - good for young immigrant mothers**

Often the young immigrants who are starting an own family in a new country have a hard time I think. Standing between contradictory values. Their parents have been more identified with the culture of the home country.

We have found that the *parent education groups* can be very useful for these young people.

Parent education is offered from Mother and Child Health Care Centre when you have your first baby,

This is a national programme since 30 years. 70% of all Swedish parents participate in this parent training programme. But fewer parents in the multicultural areas attend this programme.

When we tried to intensify this work in one of the big multicultural areas outside Stockholm, we found some interesting results in our evaluation.

The focus of the parent group activities was:

- 1/ education about newborn babies,
- 2/ to make the parent feel more comfortable and secure in the area where they live.

### **Evaluation of the parent training programme**

#### ***Mothers - no fathers***

First: *we managed to get mothers to the groups but not the fathers.*

One conclusion is that the midwives and the child nurses who are the leaders of the groups must become better in inviting migrant fathers. So we decided to start with the mothers and later on try to develop another strategy with the fathers.

#### ***Contact between the participants in the group***

In the evaluation interviews I specially focused on *the mothers’ experience of the contact with the other participants in the group.*

One mother said: "There I was, a Christian assyrian from Turkey, with three Turkey girls beside me, and after a while I didn't even think about that they are Turkish."

The statement is a good illustration of what happened in the groups generally. Religion, ethnicity and nationality disappeared.

***From the General Other to the Unique Person***

To create group situations in the multicultural area is a chance to transform people from the General Other to the Unique Person for each other.

That is what happens when you meet, you transform from being a representative for a group to a Unique Person.

***To focus on what the parents have in common***

Some of the women tied this good contact between the participants *to what you have in common: the baby, the pregnancy, the delivery, your situation as a foreign parent.*

If you bring up subjects that belong to the conflict history of the home country – that can arouse problems, the said. When you have your first child you have much in common.

***A chance to make a small revolution against tradition***

The young mothers had so many older advisers at home - or from phone calls with the family in the home country. Many older women in the family were inclined to tell them how to handle their baby. And the Swedish midwives and nurses gave their advices. The young women were tired of all advises.

They used the group as an arena to discuss this, and for creating strategies to get a chance to make more decisions yourself about family and child matters.

***The future – the children choose their playmates***

One aim for the future is that these parents will put less restraints on their children when the children choose their play mates. To learn to know their neighbours will make them more inclined to let the children choose their friends over the borders of religion and ethnicity.

**When the migrant family needs help: Family Group Conference as a possibility**

When social, psychological or relational problems arise in a migrant family around their children or teenagers the majority society has difficulties to help. The traditional methods offered in the social services or in child psychiatry have failed.

In one of our municipalities *Family Group Conference* (FGC) is used and developed during the last decade. FGC is a method to make decisions for a child or a teenager at social and psychological risk. FGC is tied to concepts as empowerment, participation, child focus and social network.

The Conference is a meeting *between the social welfare and other professionals*, on one hand, *and the private network, the extended family, friends and neighbours* on the other.

**The Family Group Conference process**

What is a Family Group Conference. It can be described as a process of different phases in a quite formal structure.

***Preparation phase: mobilization of the child's network***

The social worker and the family formulates what need to be changed in the child's situation - what questions shall the FGC meeting answer?

A coordinator from the FGC-unit is engaged to help the family decide whom to invite to

the FGC

The coordinator is the administrator of the whole process.

A network map is made to help the family decide whom to invite. The preparations takes about one month.

### **The meeting: the coordinator is the host**

The meeting has three phases:

1/ *Information to the family* – professionals' opinions (social worker, teacher, recreation leader, psychologist etc). The professionals give their picture of the situation for the child. The family can put questions.

2/ *Private session* – the (extended) family confer – no professional presence: formulation of the plan for the child. This is what shall come out of the meeting: a written plan. Both professionals and family members can have tasks in the plan.

3/ *Professional and private meet again* – the family presents the plan for the social worker (for acceptance). The coordinator is the leader again.

*The plan is the answer to the initial question: what changes and what support does the child need, and who is responsible for what?*

### **Follow-up meeting**

Same procedure as first meeting, but with focused on:

is the plan put into practice?

rewrite the plan if necessary

### **Evaluation of FGC - the voice of the children**

We know from evaluations that the adults are satisfied with the method Family Group Conference. They think that their voices are heard about what is appropriate to do with a child with problems in the family.

But what about the children themselves? In an observation and interview study we asked 10 teenagers about their experiences of their own FGC:s.

A short conclusion is that FGC offers an arena for the child to express himself/herself but he or she is not always content with the decisions.

What the teenager shows on the FGC arena is *strength and vulnerability, at the same time.*

So: what do they say in the interviews and how can their reactions be interpreted during the meetings?

### **The main themes from the evaluation**

*About positive changes after the FGC* - Yes, it has become better, but this would have happened with or without the FGC.

As in many of our studies: Young persons reluctantly admit that anyone else but themselves is important for the change.

*Nobody can help me* - I myself is responsible for my problems.

But after the FGC, with reluctant delight: Our relatives call us all the time now, I don't know why.

*About the absent father (more rule than exception for them) - bad idea to invite him to the FGC, he will not come anyway.*

*About big fear to become rejected: Who wants to come to my FGC?*

*About the FGC structural arrangements - Was there a plan? Perhaps Mom has it!*

The young persons are quite uninterested in FGC as a method for social work. There interest is to be listened to.

*About their long contact with the social services - I hate all these meetings.*

But during the meeting: Why shall I sit here if you don't listen to me?

*About being the demon of the family - my problems could be much worse!*

You want to send me to a psychologist! Why only me, I am not the only one with problems in my family!

About social competence – some examples:

no problems to make the practical arrangements themselves with a foster family for a temporary stay,

no problems to call the Social Services and ask for help for the family.

*About asking for help from the social worker - Why don't you call me back? Why does it take so long time to get help from you? Social workers and young persons' opinion of what is long and short time differ a lot.*

About the adults tendencies to start a discussion about youth in general today, it can be about drinking alcohol, about appropriate time to come home at night etc. –

the answer to this exclusion is to stay quite, perhaps to take a nap.

### **Summing up the evaluation**

The arrangements around a FGC *allow the young person to step forward with his individuality.* Perhaps that motivates FGC to be called, as it has been, *a new paradigm in social work with children and youth.*

With respect to a child focus we can say: The FGC is the best method we can offer - for now.

# Enfoque Teórico Metodológico para el Estudio de la Vida Cotidiana

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Si todos tenemos una vida y la vivimos cotidianamente, ¿qué sentido tiene plantearse estudiar algo tan conocido? Diversas son las respuestas posibles, en esta presentación deseamos compartir una propuesta desde la mirada analítica de la Psicología Social.

La vida cotidiana se ofrece como lugar privilegiado para el análisis de las relaciones entre procesos macro y microsociales. Así, constituye una especie de «espacio bisagra» de las ciencias sociales y humanísticas; por consiguiente, reclama continuar su desarrollo acercándose a las precisiones de un enfoque transdisciplinario. Coincidimos con Lechner (1990) cuando afirma que *las callejuelas de la vida cotidiana son frecuentemente callejones sin salida, pero a veces permiten vislumbrar la cara oculta de las grandes avenidas*.<sup>1</sup>

Algunos presupuestos de partida para esta propuesta:

Reconoce al sujeto como actor protagonista de la construcción y transformación de la realidad social, desde la concepción de sujeto de necesidades

La vida cotidiana es un espacio de abordaje, por excelencia, de la relación individuo sociedad. A nuestro entender esta relación ha de estar abierta a un permanente, dinámico y dialéctico cuestionamiento que sitúe en su justo lugar la interinfluencia de cualquiera de los polos de la relación. Según espacios, tiempos y ritmos particulares, en la vida cotidiana consideramos que la relación no es lineal, ni automática y que lo individual y lo social no son territorios separados sino dimensiones en permanente interpenetración e intercambio donde ambas se «construyen» mutuamente.

En el «aquí y ahora», de cada contexto social y en cada uno de sus niveles de organización, (sociedad, comunidades, instituciones, grupos) es esencial el sistema de necesidades actuantes para cada ser humano territorios separados sino dimensiones en permanente interpenetración e intercambio.

**En ese sistema de interrelaciones se organiza la cotidianidad** de cada sujeto y se constituye su subjetividad. En esa vida diaria, que generalmente no cuestionamos ni interpelamos, porque «es la vida misma», la «única posible», resolvemos nuestras necesidades, enfrentamos tanto lo habitual como lo inesperado, desde los conocimientos que hemos ido aprehendiendo, conformando, al mismo tiempo que vivimos nuestra cotidianidad. De tal modo lo social se integra en lo individual, en un entramado de relaciones sociales donde el sujeto se apropia, mediante el aprendizaje, de todo el sistema de conocimientos, saberes, y comportamientos que le hacen posible su vida en los diferentes ámbitos de la sociedad.

Para comprender nuestra propuesta comencemos definiendo qué es la vida cotidiana y por qué se torna dilemática la relación del ser humano con su propia cotidianidad.

1 Lechner, N. (1990) «Los patios interiores de la democracia. Subjetividad y Política». FLACSO-Chile, p. 15

Vida cotidiana:

**Es la expresión inmediata en un tiempo, espacio y ritmo concretos** (*se define la reiteración como esencia de la estructura básica de la vida cotidiana*)

**del conjunto de actividades y relaciones sociales** (*ellas transcurren en las diferentes esferas de la vida cotidiana y constituyen las vías de acceso a la investigación sobre la producción y reproducción individual y social, en la práctica concreta*)

**que, mediadas por la subjetividad,** (*son pensadas, sentidas y actuadas, se explican por la interpenetración de lo individual, grupal y social*)

**regulan la vida de la persona** (*enfatisa la vida misma: lo ordinario y lo extraordinario*)

**en una formación económico-social determinada, es decir, en un contexto histórico social concreto.** (*análisis del condicionamiento de las necesidades humanas y la subjetividad*)

La vida cotidiana constituye un sistema en el cual es necesaria la **reiteración** de un conjunto de acciones vitales en distribuciones constantes de ritmos, espacios y tiempos, para satisfacer las necesidades y demandas de la vida personal y social. Así vivimos moviéndonos constantemente, de espacios personales y familiares a espacios de estudio-trabajo y de estos, a otros espacios sociales comunitarios o regresando a los primeros, cerrándose de este modo el círculo de cada día y quedando la sensación de un día diferente o de uno parecido a todos los días.

Esferas de la vida cotidiana

En la vida cotidiana subyacen las relaciones que los seres humanos guardan con sus necesidades en cada organización social. Los hechos, objetos, relaciones, actividades, se manifiestan como un conjunto heterogéneo y multitudinario, que se nos presentan como un mundo en movimiento. Por tanto, implica reiteración sistemática de acciones vitales, en una distribución diaria de tiempo que integra el conjunto de actividades y relaciones sociales que transcurren en las diferentes esferas de la vida cotidiana. De este modo, constituyen las vías de acceso a la investigación sobre la producción y reproducción individual y social de la vida misma, es decir, a la investigación aplicada en la práctica social concreta.

Entonces, las esferas de la vida cotidiana son: espacios y tiempos que emergen con sus particularidades y demandan ritmos de acción diferenciados para la satisfacción de determinadas necesidades. Léase como particularidades: normas, valores, tareas, tipos de relaciones, tipos de influencias y roles consustanciales a las actividades de cada esfera. tema las esferas: familia, trabajo y tiempo libre, y se plantea que pueden darse entre ellas contradicciones dialécticas de oposición o complementación en lo cotidiano.

### **Estructura de la vida cotidiana**

La estructura básica de la vida cotidiana es, en su elemento esencial, la reiteración y puede aparecer a la vista o se manifiesta como fenómeno en rutinas, hábitos y costumbres. Por tal motivo, el modo de vivir puede tornarse en un mecanismo irreflexivo y estereotipado de acción, que conduzca a la monotonía, al conformismo y hasta la infelicidad. Sin embargo, lo que existe en la vida cotidiana es la posibilidad de la monotonía, de la enajenación, pero no su necesidad, ya que no son estas cualidades inherentes a la naturaleza de la vida misma.

El hecho de que lo cotidiano se repita, de que se presente a diario, le da justamente ese carácter de parecer obvio, autoevidente y natural. Esto genera a nivel psicológico un fenómeno de acostumbramiento, de naturalización, reconocido como estado de **familiaridad acrítica** (Quiroga, 1988) que provoca la sensación, por ejemplo, de que la vida, la relación de pareja, con los amigos,

los padres, en el estudio, en el tiempo libre,... no pueden ser de otro modo y que nuestra manera de pensar, sentir y actuar es la única posible. Es así como nuestra vida está colmada de **obviedades**: es obvio, natural, normal que....

En los límites de la vida cotidiana conviven la posibilidad de la rutina, la monotonía, la acriticidad, con la posibilidad de disfrutar de los ritos, de la creatividad y la transformación.

La vida cotidiana como proceso dinámico y dialéctico es un sistema que integra la concurrencia de eventos relativos tanto al mantenimiento de la vida (estar vivos, comer, establecer relaciones con otras personas, comunicarnos...) como a la calidad de nuestra vida (ser felices, la forma de preparación y el tipo de alimentos, sentirse realizado/a en los estudios, en la pareja...). Es así porque es este escenario donde conviven los eventos cotidianos, reiterativos, ordinarios, que pueden ser productores de la rutina, del conformismo, de la pasividad, simultáneamente con la posibilidad de vivir situaciones especiales por no cotidianas, no reiterativas, extraordinarias (no magnificadas sino fuera de la común y necesaria reiteración). En ambos casos, pueden ser positivos y negativos, vivenciados de uno u otro modo por cada una de la personas en sus diferente esferas, actividades y relaciones desplegadas desde y por lo que acontece en lo personal-familiar, el estudio-trabajo, el tiempo libre, las cuestiones sociopolíticas, ideológicas y culturales, particularmente organizadas por cada sociedad y momento o lugares histórico concretos.

La naturaleza de estos eventos genera, en el primer caso, mecanismos irreflexivos, no conscientes, que devienen obviedades por el proceso de acostumbramiento y naturalización que tiene lugar dado que se vincula a las actividades, relaciones y necesidades imprescindibles para el mantenimiento de la vida (aseo, alimentación, vestir, comunicarse). Son eventos que convertimos en obviedades y que se van naturalizando en costumbres, hábitos, rutinas, estereotipos, automatismos. En su origen y esencia reiterativa son necesarios pues se hacen eficientes en la cotidianidad (economía psíquica).

Por el contrario, en el segundo caso, la naturaleza de esos eventos genera mecanismos reflexivos, conscientes y se abre paso al análisis, precisamente porque pueden ser –y casi siempre lo son– imprevisibles, inesperados e irrepetibles, sin embargo, también es necesario incluirlos, precisamente, porque permiten las actividades, relaciones y necesidades que atañen a la calidad de la vida cotidiana. Ellos pueden ser positivos (nacimiento, permutar a una mejor vivienda) y negativos (muerte, suspender un curso escolar). En caso de accidente, por ejemplo, si se afecta la locomoción, aún y siendo adultos que sabemos los movimientos necesarios par caminar, se hace necesario volver a reflexionar, pensar y ser concientes de cada pie antes de moverlos y caminar como automatismo eficiente.

Entre ambos tipos de eventos es necesario que exista una suerte de equilibrio, el cual es vivenciado por la persona como estabilidad. Las contradicciones, conflictos y novedades, tanto de carga positiva como negativa, que producen ya sea tensiones, ansiedades o estados de displacer y frustración, son indicadores de que se ha roto este equilibrio. En ambos casos, se generan estados de placer-displacer que demandan transformaciones que pueden implicar cambios positivos y negativos, reales o aparentes. Estas dinámicas abren espacio a la reflexión sobre nuestra propia vida cotidiana, intentando recuperar la estabilidad para restablecer el equilibrio.

La ruptura del equilibrio quién le abre la brecha a la reflexión, al análisis de nuestros actos cotidianos. La vivencia de inestabilidad permite interrogarnos acerca de nuestra propia forma de organizarnos la vida, siempre que no sustituyamos la reflexión por la evasión, dándole la espalda



a la contradicción y «taponeando» el conflicto. Estamos queriendo decir que existe en la vida cotidiana la posibilidad de que rompamos con la familiaridad acrítica a través de la crítica de la vida cotidiana.

En la vida cotidiana se manifiestan y se ocultan las relaciones sociales; entonces, podemos confundirnos y creer que «mi» vida es «la» vida y sólo se puede organizar y vivirla de esta única manera. De ser así nos estaríamos negando la posibilidad del cambio y la transformación. Desde esta perspectiva, se puede encaminar el despertar de las personas con quienes van a desarrollar su trabajo; en los límites de su realidad se encuentran también los espacios donde desarrollar la capacidad de transformación activa y creativa del género humano.

**Mecanismos para instalar la cotidianidad como objeto de reflexión:** Para que lo común, lo obvio, lo cotidiano deje de serlo tanto, es decir, para que se empiece a pensar, a analizar, a cuestionarse, «algo» debe suceder para que la cotidianidad se convierta en objeto de reflexión. Ese «algo» tiene que implicar la vivencia de que «mi» vida no es la única forma de vivir «la» vida y, precisamente, esto sucede por al menos dos mecanismos o vías:

**Por el conocimiento de otras cotidianidades** es mecanismo dinamizador de la vida cotidiana y permite reflexionar en torno diversas cuestiones; la dimensión en el tiempo; el concepto de espacio; la orientación a la actividad, al ambiente, las personas, la vida y la muerte, etc. Al tener conocimiento de otras cotidianidades contemporáneas o históricas, al conocer lo diferente, se rompe la visión monocular del mundo y aparece la contradicción entre la experiencia (el hecho) y la representación social de esa experiencia (subjetividad cotidiana).

**Por el surgimiento de crisis y conflicto:** al producirse un conflicto entre el sujeto y el mundo de objetos y relaciones que es la vida cotidiana (ruptura del equilibrio), acontecen cambios, desestructuración de lo obvio y lo natural por las rupturas del ritmo reiterativo y habitual de lo cotidiano, imponiéndose el momento del pensamiento y el análisis. Es precisamente la crisis, la situación durante la cual se instalan las mayores posibilidades para que se produzca cualquier tipo de cambios.

En una situación de crisis, con independencia del nivel de que se trate –personal, familiar, laboral, social–, ocurre que nuestro equilibrio se rompe, tenemos necesidades que no se pueden satisfacer de la forma habitualmente conocida y socialmente establecida, o sea, que los esquemas referenciales que poseemos no dan cuenta de lo que acontece. Las ideas previas que conformaban el pensamiento común con el cual se funcionaba para satisfacer las necesidades cotidianas dejan de ser válidas, pues los esquemas de referencia se tornan inoperantes debido al carácter inédito de la situación y a la rapidez con la que los acontecimientos suceden. Se produce una doble ruptura: entre las necesidades y los medios de satisfacción socialmente disponibles y, al mismo tiempo, entre la experiencia y las representaciones, ideas, creencias, que dan cuenta de esa experiencia.

La crítica de la vida cotidiana desde la Psicología es el análisis objetivo y científico de las condiciones concretas de existencia del sujeto. Tiene lugar como crítica de:

**La crítica del orden social,** en tanto análisis del modo en que –en cada formación económico social, o sea, en cada país o sociedad–, se organizan los destinos de la satisfacción y expresión de toda población.

**La crítica de las organizaciones sociales,** entendiendo los grupos formales e informales en los que transcurre la vida de la persona y el análisis del modo en que estos espacios satisfacen

o frustran, potencian u obstaculizan, la realización plena de los seres humanos.

**La crítica del vínculo**, entendido como aquella relación social elemental y primaria en la cual, de forma inmediata, se manifiesta la subjetividad y se actualizan las respuestas socialmente disponibles.

**La crítica de los roles, prescritos y asumidos** por la persona en las diferentes esferas de su vida cotidiana, determina ser cada vez más un mero objeto (marioneta) de las circunstancias o acercarse a su esencia y ser sujeto (activo) de su existencia misma.

Recorre todos los niveles, desde la sociedad en general, pasando por los grupos y las instituciones, hasta la relación y establecimiento de vínculos con otros y consigo mismos, como espacios más personales de expresión de la subjetividad cotidiana. Es develar sus leyes internas, las causas de tales efectos o consecuencias observables en conductas cotidianas. Es analizar las formas de pensar, sentir y actuar, aquello que de uno a otro individuo, de uno a otro grupo, o de una a otra sociedad, existe subjetivamente y resulta determinante y determinado de una manera cultural particular.

Crítica de la vida cotidiana es entonces interpelar a los hechos, interrogarlos, problematizarlos –a lo obvio, a lo natural, que por ser incuestionado pueden ser los más desconocidos–. Sería la actitud opuesta a la familiaridad acrítica. Implica romper con nuestras obviedades (mitos, estereotipos, prejuicios, automatismos) que encubren, ocultan, invisibilizan siempre otras perspectivas de la realidad, e ir en busca de lo esencial que está en los hechos, en la realidad diversa y no en la representación mental que de esos hechos construimos, es decir, en la representación social –en el pensamiento común y compartido– que naturaliza, ideologiza y mistifica los hechos.

Entonces, ¿cómo realizar la crítica de la vida cotidiana? Se trata de un instrumento de orden práctico, que supone determinadas habilidades

Función del psicólogo como crítico de la vida cotidiana

Desde el ejercicio del rol profesional se ha de desentrañar las relaciones establecidas entre obviedades-familiaridad acrítica-crítica de la vida cotidiana, para comprender y modificar la relación del sujeto con la vida cotidiana. Este rol supone al profesional desarrollar habilidades que demandan:

Primero: Vivenciar, conocer la realidad. Vivir y experimentar la realidad, conocer y ubicar en tiempo y espacio, para cada momento histórico concreto.

Segundo: Observar, develar obviedades. Romper con la familiaridad acrítica, con el mito de lo natural y lo autoevidente para poder develar el objeto de la crítica.

Tercero: Problematizar, establecer una distancia reflexiva que nos permita, desde un marco teórico determinado, conceptualizar esa realidad y comprender la situación problemática, en qué medida y cómo entorpece o potencia el desarrollo humano.

Cuarto: Transformar, elaborar viables estrategias de abordaje y/o transformación de esa realidad, en los diferentes niveles de actuación profesional (individual, grupal, institucional, comunitario y social).

Implica una práctica personal comprometida y responsable para desarrollar la capacidad de lectura del aquí y el ahora de cada realidad, en estrecha vinculación con la historia anterior de la persona o grupo específico.

Conocer la realidad sobre la cual hemos de desempeñar la crítica es requisito inicial, o

sea, el análisis objetivo y científico de una realidad que experimentamos en su práctica cotidiana actual, que vivenciamos y colocamos en sus determinaciones históricas concretas. Precisar desde la experiencia que se trata de: país, ciudad, municipio, barrio, comunidad, instituciones, grupos, personas, año, mes, días de trabajo, de vacaciones, actividades, etc.; vivenciar esa realidad concreta y ubicarla, incluso si se tratara de un tiempo histórico en épocas pasadas (donde este requisito se mantiene y se cumple a través de materiales bibliográficos, prensa, novelas, obras de arte). Poco haríamos si creemos que es posible instrumentar la crítica de la vida cotidiana en una realidad desconocida y mucho menos el despliegue de una labor profesional pertinente para la sociedad.

Para observar y develar las obviedades, problematizar la realidad y transformar la cotidianidad, contamos con **instrumentos y recursos** que el psicólogo asume en su rol profesional. Por su capacidad esencialmente humana, enriquece tomarlos para sí mismos.

Diálogo y escucha en positivo  
 No desear una vida sin conflictos  
 Contradicciones como oportunidad  
 Tolerancia es respeto a diferencias  
 Responsables agentes de cambios  
 Aplicar a realidad interior y exterior  
 «Construir» realidades diferentes

La crítica de la vida cotidiana, más que teoría es un enfoque. Hacer la crítica de la cotidianidad es una manera de captar, indagar, interrogar e interpelar la realidad. Por tanto, desde un posicionamiento teórico es imprescindible un conjunto de actitudes, valores y habilidades que son necesarios para el desempeño profesional desde esta perspectiva.

Implicará entrenar y desarrollar nuestra percepción creativa y científica de la realidad, depurando nuestra mirada de los prejuicios, estereotipos y encartonamientos propios de los esquemas referenciales desde los que funcionamos en el cotidiano de vida. Supone dejar que la realidad nos penetre cruda, en toda su desnudez, y no al revés, intentando acomodarla, encasillarla en nuestros esquemas de referencia. El rescate de la curiosidad infantil, de la capacidad de asombro, en muchos casos bloqueadas en nuestro desarrollo por estilos de enseñanza-aprendizaje pasivos, memorísticos,

La crítica de la vida cotidiana supone el empleo de aquellos recursos que implican la modificación de todos los actores sociales envueltos, incluyéndonos a nosotros mismos, pues como agentes de cambio social que somos. Los recursos propuestos son aplicables a la realidad interior y exterior, a la persona, al grupo, a la comunidad, **pero no son ni pretender ser recetas acabadas.**

# Community and place identity in change: a discursive approach to local participation

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## Abstract

*This study refers to participation and to relationships between individuals and environment. We investigated the perception of the quality of the life in the neighbourhood, the perception and evaluation of social ties and of participation by means of a semi-structured interviews on a sample of 29 active citizens. We ran a content analysis on the interviews and then a co-occurrences analysis to emphasize the relationships among the different topics investigated. Qualitative data shows both negative and positive features of the quality of life in the neighbourhood and they underline also some critical aspects involved in the process of participation. Further considerations are discussed.*

Key words: bottom-up participation, place identity, content analysis

This study refers to two important topics: one of which is based on relationship between individuals and environment and involves psychological concepts such as place attachment and place identity, the other refers to participation. When dealing with the relationship with the place we hold in consideration a discursive construction of place identity, in as much as it examines how the narrative positioning of someone who is *of* a place can connect a speaker to the multiple established meanings and identities of that place (Taylor, 2003). This approach also highlights the collective practices through which specific place identities are formed, reproduced and modified (Danziger, 1997; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

As Manzo and Perkins (2006) report there is a vast amount of literature covering the relationship that persons have with places and, in particular with their place of abode. This study will not go into the theoretical details of this topic, but will only note, as reported by Manzo and Perkins (op. cit.), that such a relationship is a critical aspect of people's involvement in their local community. It is well known that participation is a resource for both individuals and the community alike (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990); it is broadly considered as a "good practice" of interventions that intend both to use and increase the value of local resources and knowledge; in particular it allows for: a better quality of life perception (Berkovitz, 2000); an increase in the perception of being able to participate in decisional processes that directly involve citizens (Heller et al., 1984); a development of knowledge and skills, that is *empowerment*, on both an individual and social level (Wandersman & Florin, 2000); an improvement of the quality of social ties (Kieffer, 1984; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Foster-Fishman et al. 2007). However, little attention has been paid to the conflict this may trigger.

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### **Presentation of the research**

The present contribution proposes a reflection on the issue of bottom-up participation, to verify if it has reached the theorized aims (see below) and to evidence the psychosocial strategies that have been applied by individuals in an attempt to overcome the conflict and any sense of delusion and/or disempowerment that has arisen.

*Instruments.* To this aim, we conducted semi-structured interviews to investigate: participation and residential story; perception and evaluation of the present participation; evaluation of participation; perception of the quality of life in the neighbourhood. The interview took approximately 30 minutes.

At the end of the interviews subjects filled in the Place Attachment Scale (Italian version by Bonaiuto et al., 1999) to identify their level of place attachment and answered some sociodemographical questions. We ran a content analysis on the interviews and then a co-occurrences analysis to emphasize the relationships among the different topics investigated.

*Subjects* The present study involved 29 subjects engaged in initiatives undertaken in their local area, such as residents' associations and/or committees that aim at social and structural improvement of the neighbourhood.

They are equally distributed according to gender (M = 14; F = 15); and length of participation (13 "short-lasting" participants - less than 7 years -; 16 "long-lasting" participants - more than 7 years) and they show high levels of place attachment (scale ranking 1-7; average = 5.28; sd = .91; min = 3.13; max = 6.38); age: average = 51.76 yrs; sd = 13.34, min = 25, max = 75).

*Method: The thematic and the concomitances analysis.* The thematic analysis method has the scope of providing a coherent way of organizing interviews material in relation to specific research questions (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell 1996).

The category construction on which the content analysis is based, is, at the same time, both a peculiarity and intrinsic limit of this technique. Indeed, the dividing of the text into categories may give rise to fragmentation of the communication content. Whilst, it may be important to highlight how the single components link one to the other and what kind of image results from this. Although thematic analysis may be the first step at a qualitative level, there is a risk that investigation remains at a descriptive level and shows only the topics and the sub-categories.

Therefore, in an effort to overcome this limit, we used a method of structural analysis that allows for the highlighting of both associations among categories and a significant configuration of what the study cohort cited the most. This association means a correlation between each of the categories with the others, in groups of two at a time. The statistically significant concomitances are considered for the analysis ( $p = .10$ ) using the chi square test. We specify that the chi square test is applied within each single cell i.e. for each association between the two categories and not on the table as a whole.

#### *The Categories*

The content analysis enables the study to extrapolate representations, perceptions and evaluations expressed by the study cohort. Table 1 reports the frequencies that indicate how many subjects used each category and not how often they were used for each subject. We chose the subject as the unit of measure because we are of the opinion that this evidences if each category is an expression of a shared thought, or an evaluation formulated by few persons and, therefore, not representative of a common thought.

A blind categorization was carried out by two independent researchers; any ambiguous classifications were discussed along with a third researcher who had not taken part in the first stage of the codification. If no unanimous agreement were reached as to the phrase, then the categorization was not done.

Herein we will not present all the categories used for the interview analysis, but rather only the topics in line with the aims of this communication (see table 1).

#### *Individual empowerment*

The meaning of empowerment has been well known since Rappaport's definition in 1981. In our categorization the individual empowerment is referred to a development of *knowledge* (as seen in table 1), of a personal competence achieved through activism (*awareness*) and to a feeling of being an active subject (*feeling active*) and protagonist within the context, reinforcing a positive self-image. We placed sentences in which subjects said that through participation they felt satisfied with what they have obtained and they felt more "important" for the neighbourhood and for others into this category. It includes experiences that report having exerted control by participation in decision-making, or problem-solving in one's immediate environment, which, according to Zimmerman, (2000) is an important part of the empowering processes.

Another aspect of individual empowerment is placed into the category *active subject* when the subject referred to his/her own personal participation, describing him/herself as a proactive person and as a point of reference for the others. It doesn't refer to a consequence of the participation, but rather to a characteristic of the subject, that is why it differs from the category *feeling active*.

#### *Social empowerment*

This category refers to various aspects that involve the local community. By collective action individuals develop a common purpose and create new responses to meet the challenges they face (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Also the research by Leavitt and Saeger in 1990, demonstrates that the relationship among individuals, groups and the physical communities in which they exist are significant elements of community empowerment. This category includes: *social relationships*, which are fundamental elements of participation; the concrete acquisition, through a social action, of goods and/or services that are useful for the community (*usefulness*) and the perception that a *co-participation* ( by co-participation we mean the references to the importance of acting together as a whole to reach a common aim), constitutes a resource for the community. Cottrell (1983) describes a competent community by the extent to which interdependent components of a community work together to identify community needs, develop strategies to address the needs and perform actions to meet those needs.

#### *Critical aspects of participation*

This constitutes a central category for the research. It is related to what subjects referred about what happened after their participation, both on an individual and/or an societal level. *Negative outcomes* refers to any negative consequences that arose out of the participation. *Evaluation of others' participation* referred to any negative consideration related to participation enacted, or not enacted, by other people.

### *Comparison within and between neighbourhoods*

As collective identities are typically fashioned through symbolic contrasts between “our” space and “their” space, place identity derives, not only from individuals’ attachment to their environment, but also from their dis-identification with the spaces of others (Rose, 1996). As place identity is a social category, it activates comparison processes (see: similarity and differentiation). Therefore, for us this category included information as to whether subjects referred to other places they compared their present place of residence with, distinguishing the comparison between his/her neighbourhood with other areas of the city and/or with other areas of the same neighbourhood.

### *Temporal comparison*

We think that the temporal comparison allows for a clarification of the change perception: differences between past and present indicate the presence of a change: is it positive or negative? What topics are involved in this comparison? Temporal comparison may be *general* i.e. it is merely a consideration that there is a difference between past and present without any specification; or the aspects mainly involved by a temporal change are: *structures* (public places, shops, services); *inhabitants* (the kind of inhabitants in the area); *insecurity* (the feeling of insecurity in the neighbourhood).

### *Perception of the quality of life in the neighbourhood*

As participation increases so does the quality of life perception (Berkovitz, 2000), we were interested in investigating what dimensions and structures are involved in the definition of the quality of life, both from a positive and negative point of view; these are: *environment, services, commerce and insecurity*.

### *Social ties*

Social ties also contribute to the quality of life, but, as they are of particular interest, we distinguished this topic from the others linked to the quality of life.

Foster-Fishman et al (2007) specify “social ties refers to the type and extent of relational interactions that exist within a neighbourhood, such as the extent to which neighbours socialize with each other or exchange favours or resources (...). Social ties within a neighbourhood provide a critical mechanism for connecting residents to their neighbourhood and fostering the social networks needed to engage residents in change efforts and in collective action” (p. 94).

We distinguished relationships the subjects live directly with others (*relationships between the subject and others*) from general relationships (*relationships between inhabitants*).

The social tie category differs from the similar one we named *participation consequences: relational*, in as much as the former specifies the social ties present in the zone, the latter, refers specifically to social ties developed thanks to participation.

### *Inhabitants’ perception*

We have also specified this category to verify whether there are stereotypes, or prejudices that may interest particular social categories and that may characterize the social ties.

**Data analysis**

To identify any association between categories and gender, place attachment and length of participation, we then analysed the data by the Chi-square test. There were no statistically significant differences for place attachment (globally high for all participants), or as to the length of participation in the neighbourhood. Whilst, there were some statistically significant differences for gender. Females say more than males the participation favours a feeling of *being active* ( $\chi^2 = 4.144$ ; sig.  $<.05$ ) and women more than men made references to social ties ( $\chi^2 = 6.807$ ; sig.  $<.01$ ).

**The content analysis**

Table 1: QUALITATIVE DATA

*Individual empowerment: Participation consequences*

Knowledge	12
Awareness	18
Feeling active	16
Active subject	21

*Social empowerment: Participation consequences*

Relationships	22
Usefulness for others and for the community	7
Co-participation	13

*Critical aspects of participation*

Evaluations of others' participation	25 (12 neg.; 4 pos. and 9 ambiguous)
Participation consequences: negative outcomes	13

*Comparison within and between neighbourhoods*

Comparison with other neighbourhoods	17
Comparison with other areas within the neighbourhood	8

*Temporal comparison (yesterday vs. today)*

Temporal comparison: general aspects	14
Temporal comparison: structures	14
Temporal comparison: inhabitants	18
Temporal comparison: insecurity	9

*Perception of the quality of life in neighbourhood*

Positive features: environment	11
Positive features: services	13
Positive features: commerce	7
Negative features: environment	8



Negative features: services	10
Negative features: insecurity	12
Social ties	
Relationships between inhabitants	14
Relationships between the subject and others	21 (3 neg.;15 pos. and 3 ambiguous)
<i>Inhabitants' perception</i>	
Negative features	8
Positive features	4
Incivility	12
Social category	17

We will present data that refers to the content analysis and some sentences as example of the content for each category, expressed by the subjects.

***Social and individual empowerment is it a consequence of participation? Has participation improved social ties?***

People said that they were more aware of their abilities, skills and social/ political processes related to participation (see: *awareness*: 18 subjects):

*"Awareness...something in the planning has changed for the better; at first I ran after emergencies, now I try to foresee them, I try to make projects...I ask information"; "I learnt a lot of things ...and I got a lot of information...I learnt to speak to politicians who didn't give a damn...";*

*participation developed a feeling of being active (16 subjects):*

*"I work with this association so I don't have the feeling that I'm doing nothing"; "Active participation makes me feel well, I get the feeling of keeping in touch with the territory"*

and developed knowledge; 12 subjects refer to a *practical* understanding of the neighbourhood:

*"I had the possibility to get to know places, persons, events and things I ignored before"; "The association allowed us not only to bring up our children properly, but also to see a bit of the territory".*

Other consequences of participation concern *relational aspects* (22 subjects):

*"Here now we are all a big family, we are all friends; I met a lot of people and introduced lots of others"; "When you are involved in the neighbourhood, that is with the people, you feel much more at home. I rarely go down the street without meeting someone I know or who knows me".*

7 subjects talked about something they considered useful, which they are able to obtain thanks to their participation, such as cleaner streets in the neighbourhood, or services that did not exist before (*usefulness*):

*"This activity, of participation in civil life, is also motivated by the possibility of having a return: you see things are developing they change, it's not wasting time"; "Here there was a big problem, there was no centre for the elderly, there was nothing at all and it only took 4 or 5 of us to get a room for them".*

13 subjects refer to the importance of acting together as a whole to achieve their goals (*co-participation*):

*“Acting together makes us stronger”; “Here, helping one another and the help that was given to us, to re-qualify the area, was of benefit to all of us”.*

### **The evaluation of social ties**

We have already seen that social relationships develop thanks to participation (22 subjects). Now we will consider the perception of social ties, not necessarily referred to participation, but what subjects think about the possibility to have good or bad social relationships with the other inhabitants.

The people interviewed expressed a global positive *perception of the relationship between the inhabitants* (14 subjects);

*“We all know each other in the building”; “This area is like a big village; nobody is abandoned because this is a very united reality”.*

We may, therefore, consider social ties to be a central aspect for all the participants, even if some critical aspects come to light. Among the 21 subjects referring to *social ties: subject/other*, 3 persons expressed negative features:

*“Here, nowadays, in this court yard, if they see on the terrace they don’t even say hello”; “They have never really trusted me ... a lot of people think I work for the council”;*

3 evaluated them both in positive and negative terms:

*“I know almost everyone who lives in this building and it’s not that everything always turns out nicely”*

and finally 15 expressed a positive evaluation:

*“Nowadays, if I go out, I always come across someone who stops to chat to me”; “I speak to everyone, even the gypsies ... I meet them on the street and I say hello”.*

### **Has participation improved the perception of quality of life in the neighbourhood?**

The subjects report both positive and negative features as to their perception of the quality of life in the neighbourhood. The *positive features* are: *services* (13):

*“Now we even have an advisory bureau, so we’ve got more or less everything”; “We have all the public services, the bus, the market, the post office, a hospital nearby... we’ve got everything really. I’ll never go away from here”;*

*environment* (11):

*“It’s peaceful here... little traffic... open spaces...”; “The beauty of the garden. It’s the most beautiful thing ever”;*

*commerce* (7):

*“There are stacks of shops: the commercial places are more than adequate”; “There are a lot of artisans here”.*

The *negative features* are: *services* (10):

*“There is a shortage of health services and rehabilitation centres... for example if you need an injection, that kind of thing”; “I think we should have a registry office in the area ... if we need a document we have to go a long way to get it”;*

*environment* (8):

*“The smog... it’s disgusting ... the quality of the air is really terrible”; “We should do something about the traffic it’s till very dangerous, also for cyclists”;*

*insecurity (12):*

*"Sure, there's a park but it's horrible; bad people go there, even during the day, it makes you afraid to go there with children;" "We had a safety problem right under our own home, it had become a cove for pushers ..."*

The presence of services and a pleasant environment are the most important dimensions, while, among negative perceptions, the most critical features are the absence of public services and the feeling of not being safe in the environment.

### **Are there any critical aspects about participation?**

12 subjects gave a negative evaluations on the participation of others, 9 considered both positive and negative aspects and only 4 expressed a positive evaluation.

A positive evaluation is one where the subject considers that people participate easily and that collaboration between inhabitants is possible:

*"Here we've got some really important people that come and lend a hand they just come here and give us a bit of their time"; "I'm really pleased when I see that people participate...that evening we were in 800...because we managed to publicise it at the right time..."*

On the contrary 12 individuals perceived the participation of others in a negative way: because people tend to delegate others:

*"I don't see why I have to be by myself today;*

*because it's hard work to make other people become active:*

*"Action isn't spontaneous, you always need someone to guide things"; "Some just come to a couple of meetings and then disappear";*

*because of the inhabitants' opportunistic attitudes:*

*"What makes people come to the meetings is when there's free grub and booze".*

9 individuals emphasize both positive and negative aspects:

*"Although it's an active neighbourhood as far as participation is concerned, there are still a lot of others who just do their own thing and simply don't take part..."; "They are only a few because most people just live in their homes, they wall themselves in ...but there is a part of the population that wants to integrate and you only need to give them a chance to do so... a little opening..."*

13 individuals evaluated negatively participation itself. In their opinion, the experience of participation triggered feelings of disenchantment, bitterness, dissatisfaction, fatigue because the commitment is not acknowledged either through the success they hoped for, or by others (co-actors, or inhabitants):

*"It's all too easy to go backwards and suddenly, all the efforts are lost, all the time... the hours passed, all the words spent, the whole thing, you risk in first person ..."; "We work our arses off".*

### **The thematic concomitances**

An analysis of the thematic concomitances allowed us to further investigate into the reflections in such a way as to identify any correlations among the categories. We did not formulate any hypothesis on this point, but rather carried out data-centred investigation and not one based on theory. What relationships emerged? The analysis of the thematic concomitances (significant for the  $p = .10$  at the Chi square test) led us to further investigate three thematic areas: A) the relationship between some dimensions considered to be critical by the subjects; B) the relevance

of the social ties and lastly C) the comparison between times e.g. yesterday, today and between urban areas.

Now let's look at the thematic concomitance involving critical aspects:

A) Relationship between critical dimensions

*Participation consequences:* N = 6      *inhabitants' perceptions:*  
*negative outcomes* N = 13                      *negative features* N = 8

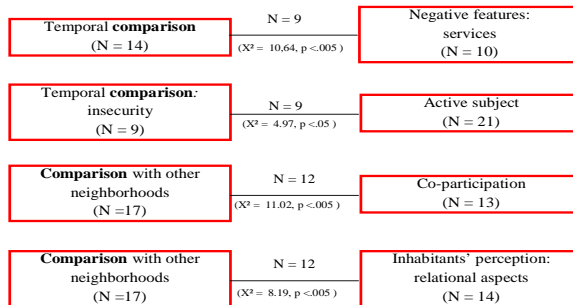
$$X^2 = 4.07; p < .05$$



These data mean that, negative outcomes were referred to participation by 13 subjects, 8 perceived negative futures of the inhabitants; among these 6 persons utilized both the categories.

In this case the failure of participation seems to be linked to the residents in the area. Therefore, one can observe the importance of social ties as a central element when dealing with participation, as is further explained in the following thematic concomitances.

B) The relevance (and criticism) of social ties



Indeed, it can be observed that the social ties constitute a component that is able to offer both gratification or dissatisfaction.

Participation is linked to the capacity the inhabitants themselves have to build up positive relationships (see: *participation consequences: relational/inhabitants' perception: relational aspects*). Also through an analysis of the contents it was observed that one of the principal aspects that participation manages to develop is indeed determined by social ties: people express importance for relationships that have developed thanks to participation and that also influence the quality of coexisting one with the other in the neighbourhood.

Moreover, the content analysis has shown that positive and negative aspects coexist with one another. Data show us other significant concomitances: we can see a cluster of categories referring to social relationships connecting individuals to the social environment. Relationship is an element that gratifies the social commitment (see: *participation consequences: feeling active/social ties: subject/other*).

However, this does not exclude the finding of some social categories in the territory with whom the relationships does become more difficult and, at times, even one of conflict (see some examples of: inhabitants' perception: social category; *"They've even let gypsies come and live here. I think they sent them away twice ...then they put in Moroccans"; "I don't deny that there are some integration problems, also on the part of some groups"*).

### C) Temporal comparison and comparison with other neighbourhoods

Nine persons who referred to a general temporal comparison expressed negative concepts about public services, formulating a comparison with a past that is "inevitably" different from the present. Therefore, they refer to a generic change (e.g. *"Things have changed a lot because there has been a transformation"; "Compare to what it was when I arrive the image has changed somewhat"*) or to a past that is worse than the present (e.g.: *"This neighbourhood has undergone a continuous improvement...it has improved a lot"; "This neighbourhood has gone forward in leaps and bounds"*).

Whilst all the 9 persons that referred to safety, which they perceived as being less pressing nowadays than it once was, also perceive themselves as active subjects. Although we cannot affirm that these subjects feel that the context has improved greatly due to their own personal actions, neither can we discard the hypothesis.

Lastly we can observe the thematic concomitances that involve *comparison with other neighbourhoods*. If indeed they do indicate place identity, expressing a process of comparison with other places of residence, we then believe it is of interest to show how some of these dimensions are correlated to the category we called co-participation (that is the awareness that acting together is a very important instrument to achieve collective goals). These data are in line with Manzo and Perkins' opinions (2006) that "studies in community and environmental psychology on disruptions to place attachment illustrate the importance of place meaning to community members as well as their commitment to, and participation in, neighbourhood processes" (pag. 337). Another concomitance is with the category *inhabitants' perception: relational aspects*, that demonstrate once more the importance of social ties in contributing to the construction of place identity.

## Discussion

We have observed that all the subjects who are active participants and have a high level of place attachment, perceive both negative and positive features of quality of life in their neighbourhood and they underline also some critical aspects involved in the process of participation.

A positive consideration of participation may support the motivation to continue the commitment. Furthermore, perceiving both a positive outcome of participation and the social expertise may be considered processes of empowerment that both develop and sustain participation.

How then is it possible to continue the engagement and, in the same time, perceive some critical aspects? What are the psychological processes that spur the individuals continue to be active?

In line with an epistemological perspective like those of the discursive psychology we

consider that the discursive analysis may highlight psychosocial processes.

The thematic concomitances analysis allows us to evidence which process drives individuals both to keep a cognitive coherence when faced with conflicting cognition (remembering Festinger's train of thought) and in protecting one's own identity (in the sense of social identity and place identity): despite some critical aspects, social ties and place attachment remain strong and solid. This is cognitively possible because individuals operate a comparison, both temporal and geographic, one that permits them to maintain a positive image of their neighbours and neighbourhood; today it is better than it was once and this area is better than others. The comparison acts either as a reduction of dissonance, or as maintenance of a cognitive coherence with the aim of protecting identity.

One consequence of the participation is also that of reinforcing the individuals' social identity. They have the perception of being important for others and of being a reference point for the neighbourhood. This aspect is connected to the perception of belonging to a social network, not only as a participant, but also as a citizen.

We can also see how some of the people we interviewed place importance on some particular categories, that need special attention (see. Social categories) and that are sometimes responsible for difficult and conflicting social situations (14 persons reported on problems of integration and communal life). An important question arises from this reflection.

As social ties are a very important factor for social participation, then when and where does the need arise for a top-down participation we must, first of all, activate programmes and projects aimed at the development of a social network, something which in participation is considered an important feature, both for its maintenance and for its enactment.

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## Narratives and health: Fostering prosocial communities among recent immigrants to Toronto

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In Forrest Tyler's recent book, *Developing prosocial communities across cultures*, he recalls two experiences that he and his wife, Sandy, had in Colombia and India that illustrate the idea of prosocial communities and a key claim of this paper, which is the importance of listening to people's own voices as they recount their strengths and their challenges. In the first, Forrest recalls the experience he and Sandy had in Colombia when they were asked to document the experience of Colombian street children in the children's own words. These children were generally despised and marginalized. However, when asked to tell their stories, they told of a sense of themselves and their communities as being resourceful and of having strengths as a community. This was different than what the experts expected. As the Tylers experienced, "the experts viewpoints reflected only their own, discipline limited outlooks about the nature and capabilities of these children" (Tyler, 2007, p. 2).

A few years later, in the second account, the Tylers were in India on a Fulbright Fellowship. Sandy sought to work on issues of domestic violence, but was discouraged by the upper caste women Indian psychology professors who did not see the lower caste women as suitable to work with. When Sandy persisted, she found that the lower caste women were quite aware of the problems of domestic violence and had a good handle on its contingencies and what they may be able to do about it. Again, the voices of those usually marginalized are important to hear if we want to develop prosocial communities.

In our study, *NARRATIVES AND HEALTH: BUILDING ON CULTURAL STRENGTHS OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE*, we deliberately sought to hear the voices of these newcomers to Toronto, so that they would be empowered and we would have a better grasp of how to work with them to improve their chances of receiving good health care.

Canada has near-universal health care for its citizens, permanent residents, asylum seekers, and refugees. Although the system varies by province, basic health care is everyone's right, at least by law. In practice it does not always work out equitably for everyone. That is, health care is not necessarily a part of the pro-social framework. Let me give an example. Canada has a population of just over 30 million, with most of that population in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver and almost all the rest within a couple of hundred miles of the United States border. Of that 30 plus million, 5 million persons do not have a primary care physician. This problem is particularly acute in Toronto, Canada's largest city. There are complex reasons for this, but one is that the provincial government actively discouraged the expansion of medical schools and the settling of physicians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in the 1990s. Another is that almost insurmountable barriers are in place for physicians who immigrate to Canada, with incredible demands placed on them for



re-licensure and punitive restrictions on them for place of practice. An immigrant physician who manages to overcome the paperwork barrier has to agree to practice in the least settled areas of Ontario for five years after getting a license—however, there is an inadequate population to support a doctor's practice in these areas.

This is not a prosocial community in action but a profession protecting its turf. Much the same situation exists for psychologists who immigrate, except from the United States or England. Combine that statistic, 5 million persons without a physician, with the immigration statistics, about 300,000 persons a year coming to Canada, mostly to Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, and you soon see that the persons most likely to be without a physician are recent immigrants. Compounding this is that many of the immigrants since the 1960s and overwhelmingly since the 1990s are persons of color, immigrants from East Asia, South Asia, and Africa. This is the context for our work.

### **Project Description and Rationale**

Our community-based exploratory research was designed to describe, understand and emphasize the strengths inherent in cultural health beliefs and practices of recent immigrants. In this study, we used the definition of health developed by the World Health Organization: Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

As part of a pilot study, we used narrative interviews to explore the perception and understanding of health beliefs and practices of 20 recent immigrants—10 from a local community center for immigrants in downtown Toronto and 10 immigrant university students. Our intention was to focus on cultural strengths. We employed a conception of culture that assumes it is dynamic, fluid, and emergent, rather than a static and fixed entity (Dorazio-Migliore, Migliore, & Anderson, 2005; Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

Our questions were the following: How do immigrants express their understanding of health, illness and their need for health care? How do they relate their understanding to the dominant model of health beliefs and practices found in Canada? What are the cultural strengths related to health that immigrants bring with them? How can these strengths be used to facilitate the transition to a new country and improve access to health care and, potentially, improve the delivery of health care services?

Immigration is typically a stressful experience, even when individuals or families have ample resources. Most immigrants, of course, do not have such resources and many come to their destination knowing only a few people, or perhaps, no one at all. Immigration is stressful, in part, because of the resultant loss of social support and inadequate financial resources. In many cases, there is a change in profession, often to a lower-paying, lower-status, job (Salaff & Greve, 2003). (There is a wry joke in Toronto that we have the world's best educated taxi drivers!) In addition, there is often a disruption to family life and prior family roles (Ahmad et al, 2004; Dossa, 2002; Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). The acculturation process that attends immigration is often stressful, "which manifests itself in health problems" (Kirkcaldy et al, 2005, pp., 296; Simich, Hamilton, & Baya, 2006). Due to the overall poorer health experienced post-migration (Simich et al, 2006), there is an even greater need to increase immigrants' access to healthcare. Health care, both access and utilization, is a major issue with immigrant, especially recent immigrant, populations both in Canada and in every major

immigration destination (e.g., Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004).

A significant body of research indicates that immigrants and members of non-majority populations encounter significant barriers to health care, even when there is universal health care (e.g., Ismail et al, 2005). Recent immigrants are often at a serious disadvantage in their encounters with health-care providers, as providers often fail to understand the cultural context, including health beliefs and practices, of recent immigrants (e.g., Chan et al, 2006; Yeo et al, 2005). This frequently leads to underutilization of health care resources and the under representation of immigrants in health care research (Chun & Chesla, 2004; Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004). The latter may be particularly problematic in the development of appropriate diagnoses and delivery of culturally appropriate services (Sue, 1998). Evidence also indicates that immigration may be particularly problematic for women's health (Dossa, 2002; George & Rail, 2005).

Many immigrants continue to use health care approaches rooted in their home culture, even after several years in the new host country (Ahmad et al, 2004; Chappell & Lai, 1998; Chan et al, 2005; Yeo et al, 2005). Yet, they also use care grounded in biomedicine (Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004). In some cases, this may represent a threat to their health status due to interaction effects. In other cases, the reliance on more traditional approaches may be adaptive and helpful (Chun et al, 2004; Goodman, 2004). However, many health care providers trained in the biomedical approach remain dismissive of such traditional health beliefs and practices. As a result, unnecessary barriers to health care may be erected for immigrants who are rightfully discouraged from revealing their practices or even using the available health care services (Yeo et al, 2005). One intention of our research program is to help reduce the misunderstanding and barriers to health care for both providers and immigrant recipients.

### **Cultural Strengths**

As serious and important as the problems related to health are for immigrants, little attention has been paid to the resources or cultural strengths that immigrants bring with them. Human beings are resilient, even in the face of traumatic experiences (Masten, Obradovic, & Burt, 2006). Without minimizing the negative impact of such experiences, it is possible to go beyond them and to seek to understand the core strengths of immigrants. It is our contention that these strengths lie in the cultural foundations of people's lives.

Strengths-based approaches have been developed in social work (e.g. Saleebey, 1996) and in some areas of American psychology (e.g., Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006). Tyler's work on prosocial communities has been an important positive development within psychology for many years (Tyler, 2007). The need to focus on strengths has been particularly stressed in mental health work with racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, an emphasis that began with the Black Nationalist movement in psychology in the late 1960s (Carlton-LaNey, 2003; Stevenson & Renard, 1993; White, 1972). The longstanding work of the late psychologist, Emory Cowen, and his students at the University of Rochester on prevention and wellness has had an enduring impact on community psychology (Cowen, 2000). Psychological research on resilience has also been oriented toward human strengths in dealing with adversity (Grotberg, H. E., 2003) or trauma (Saul, 2003). Yet, little has been written about cultural strengths as resources for immigrants.

### **Narratives**

Anthropologists and, increasingly, psychologists argue that storytelling may be universal among humans and may form the foundation of how human beings understand themselves and

the world (Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 1993). Evidence is emerging that indicates that narrative may be the most useful approach to discover cultural strengths and the human resilience that flows from those strengths (Dossa, 2002; McAdams, 1993; Skultans, 2000). Within the large and growing body of qualitative research with immigrant populations, the use of narratives has emerged as a successful approach. The narrative format allows individuals to tell their stories in ways that are close to their lived experiences (Chan et al, 2006; Dossa, 2002; Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004; Ismail et al, 2005). Narrative is a particularly effective methodology for interpreting the experiences and health beliefs of marginalized peoples, including immigrants, specifically because it does not disengage the speaker from important contextual and linguistic factors (Skultans, 2000; Tashiro, 2006). We sought in our study to give voice to the immigrant narrative, which is not well-represented in the Western meta-narrative seen in Western cultural media, such as television or film.

Explanations of health and illness are grounded in a dynamic cultural matrix, as, one could argue, all such health beliefs must be (Dorazio-Migliore, Migliore, & Anderson, 2005; Greenhalgh, Collard, & Begum, 2005). When told in their own language, especially, immigrants' stories provide a rich resource for understanding the role of cultural beliefs and cultural strengths in health and illness. These stories help depathologize the immigrant experience, while helping immigrant communities make sense of their experiences (McAdams, 1993). The potential, then, of using narratives is that not only will such stories reveal problematic aspects of the immigrant experience, but they will also reveal the strengths that immigrants bring, which can then facilitate positive health outcomes (Greenhalgh, Helman, & Chowdhury, 1998).

### **Participants and Methods**

The research team is comprised of one university professor and 8 students. A variety of languages and immigrant statuses are represented in the research group, giving us a unique perspective on the immigrant experiences that are the object of our research.

The narratives collected in this study were created in an open oral history interview format. Oral histories are a window into lives and the cultures where those lives are lived. As one author phrased it, "It is very often when narratives are most personal that they draw upon the deep structures of the cultures to which they belong ..." (Skultans, 2000, p. 11).

*Participants.* We recruited 20 participants for the first phase of our study. [There are actually 12 other participants—all Iranian—that we did not include in this report due to the slow pace of translating and transcribing from Farsi.] These 20 participants were drawn from two different settings. First, we recruited 10 participants from a well-known immigrant community resource center in downtown Toronto. The length of time in Canada ranged from 3 months to 12 years. The age range of this group was 24-46, half of them were married. Countries of origin included countries of East Asia, South Asia, South America, and sub-Saharan Africa. Where appropriate, interviews were conducted in the language of the participant, with a translator present. Because we considered that age differences may prove important, for example, younger people may be more inclined to use Western medicine, we also recruited 10 students from a local university. The age range was 18-28 and one of the students was married. A variety of countries were represented; in addition to the regions noted above, there were also students from the Middle East. The duration of each interview was from 40 minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes. Surveys were utilized in order to acquire demographic data such as age, country of origin and other to supplement the findings and background information.

*Analyses.* We anticipated that the oral histories will be rich in thematic material, as themes seem to occur “naturally” in stories (e.g. Tashiro, 2006). We also anticipated that many of these naturally occurring themes will be core to the person’s identity, that is, they will be epitomizing narratives (Dossa, 2002).

We coded and analyzed the transcripts manually in order to identify common themes. We used manual coding, rather than using a software designed for this, in order to avoid omissions, restrictive categorizations, or other errors. We established a 70 per cent interrater reliability as an acceptable level.

## **Results**

**Access & Utilization:** Our results were in agreement with other findings that health care, both access and utilization, is a major issue with recent immigrant populations in Canada. We found that recent immigrants were likely to underutilize health care. Our results indicated that many immigrants continue to use health care approaches rooted in their home culture, even after several years in Canada. Yet, they also use biomedical care. One common theme was the immigrants’ experience that many health care providers trained in the biomedical approach were dismissive of traditional health beliefs and practices. Our participants, too, reported that the attitudes of health care providers often discouraged them from using their services except in emergencies. Several participants indicated that they would only use the Canadian health care system as a provider of last resort, as they were so disheartened.

A common complaint was the wait time for medical care. Most of our participants have not been able to find a primary care physician. As a result, hospital emergency rooms and walk-in clinics are the options used when seeking health care. Our participants reported wait times ranging from one hour to 18 hours. These wait times were often compounded by impersonal care when the patient was seen. As a result, many of our participants reported very low satisfaction with the health care system.

**Cultural Strengths.** But, what about our participants cultural strengths, those resources located in their culture of origin that potentially could help them as immigrants in their new country? The results were mixed on this. First, all but one of our participants reported that in their country of origin they learned health practices grounded in the local culture. Themes that have emerged so far include reliance on special foods, herbs, or drinks (e.g., teas) as important for restoring and maintaining health. While the particular food or drink varied from culture to culture, it is clear that conceptions of health in many cultures center on eating and drinking the right things. (There were many complaints as well that Western food, McDonald’s was mentioned most frequently, was ruining the health of the home population.) Most, but not all, our participants especially relied on traditional home remedies for minor complaints. There was a great deal of variability here, as one of our participants reported strong belief in the power of the evil eye and the power of an enemy to inflict illness through manipulation of the spirit world. For such illness, special teas and foods were important to the remedy, but the key action was to seek the help of a local healer to reverse the spiritual manipulation.

Experiencing nature through an activity was also a common theme of what it means to be healthy for many of our participants. This could mean rising early to breathe fresh air or hiking through a park or just being outdoors.

Cross-generational knowledge transmission of health maintenance was also important.

Many of our participants reported a family member: mother, grandmother, occasionally a grandfather, who told them how to care for themselves. Often, it was a particularly close relationship, e.g., a grandmother, that sensitized the participant to self-care.

All of our participants also reported that they relied on allopathic health care, the biomedical model. All of them utilized visits to health care providers with some regularity, but especially for serious health concerns. Most, but not all, reported that when they had a personal primary care physician in their home country, it was typically a close relationship. The physician could be counted on to listen to complaints patiently and to provide guidance for many of the affairs of life.

Finally, and this helps us return to the main topic of our symposium, prosocial communities, many of our participants reported that when they were in their culture of origin, they were embedded in a rich matrix of relationships that informally guided them toward healthy beliefs and actions. That is, they were living in prosocial communities. Just so this does not seem Pollyannaish, a number of our participants had immigrated or become refugees because of strife in their home country. Their sense of community back home had been destroyed.

One way to interpret our tentative findings is within a prosocial framework. Many of our participants left homes and communities where they felt they had belonged and where they were part of longstanding kinship and friendship networks. They left, many of them, because they wanted a better education and more opportunities for their children, or for economic reasons, and a few left because of political reasons. What they have found so far in Toronto is a struggle to regain that sense of belonging and of being in a place where they are cared for and can adequately care for their loved ones. We believe from what our participants have told us that they brought with them resources that can help them do so. What we hope to do is elucidate their strengths in ways that will help the host culture be receptive to those strengths.

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## Disclosure of sexual abuse in school environment: Intervention with teachers

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### **Abstract**

*Teachers and professionals of education should be prepared to identify and evaluate the signs of intra or extra familial violence. The school environment might be a context where abused children and adolescents feel free to "break" the silence and ask for help. This work aimed to investigate the effects of these situations in a public school located in Rio Grande/RS, Brazil. Seven first school years teachers participated in this research and intervention project. The proposal was elaborated under the theoretical basis of the bioecology of human development. The methodology followed two steps: the first consisted of the diagnostic of the school dynamics. The second moment consisted in the application of the Intervention Program which was organized by the presentations of themes based on the analyses of the diagnostic phase. The program focused on orientating the educators to build strategies to have an attitude of denouncing sexual abuse legitimating the protective role of the teachers and of the school. The program was presented in seven meetings containing different subjects, theories and concepts followed by the discussion on practical cases. The results showed that families stay usually far over the gates of school. Most teachers showed a discourse marked by negative characteristics of the families and have little knowledge of the children's everyday life. Concerning the situation of sexual abuse, the educators recognized their difficulties and limited knowledge on the issue. They emphasized the need of having more community network support and reported actions that put the abused children and their families in risk or away from school. The intervention program aimed to fill in the special needs of these populations through offering strategies to deal with sexual abuse in the context of schools. The teachers showed high satisfaction with their participation and suggested the repetition of the program in other schools.*

*Key words: sexual abuse, child/ adolescent, denunciation, teachers*

O abuso sexual contra crianças e adolescentes é uma modalidade de violência que pode deixar marcas profundas no desenvolvimento da criança e do(a) adolescente vitimizado (a), no Brasil (e em outros lugares do mundo), não é um fenômeno restrito às camadas populares, mas envolve pessoas de todas as classes sociais, de diversos credos e áreas profissionais (Martins, 1998). Há quem diga que é um dos "fenômenos humanos mais democráticos" (depoimento no filme Canto de Cicatriz - Chaffe, 2005), pois atravessa todas as camadas sociais, etnias, crenças e culturas. Pode ser classificado em duas categorias: intrafamiliar e extrafamiliar. O abuso sexual intrafamiliar define-se por ocorrer no ambiente de convívio familiar e é praticado por um membro



da família: pai, mãe, irmão, avô, avó, tio, tia, padrasto e madrasta. Santos (1998) afirma que o abuso sexual intrafamiliar, na maioria das vezes, não é um fato isolado que envolve somente o abusador e a criança ou adolescente violado. De forma direta ou indireta inclui todos os outros membros da família, seja pelo 'silêncio' compactuado, seja pela participação ativa no abuso ou na organização dos papéis sexuais no contexto familiar. O abuso sexual extrafamiliar ocorre fora do âmbito familiar e é geralmente praticado por pessoas que possuem algum vínculo com a criança: vizinho, amigo mais velho, professor, médico, babá, entre outros. A Abrapia - Associação Brasileira Multiprofissional de Proteção à Infância e Adolescência, é referência, fundada em 1988 coordenou até 2003 o Sistema Nacional de Combate ao Abuso e a Exploração Sexual Infanto-Juvenil. A associação monitorava e tratava estatisticamente denúncias de abuso e exploração sexual contra crianças e adolescentes em 27 unidades federativas do Brasil. O último relatório, disponível via Internet, apresenta dados no que diz respeito ao vínculo do agressor com a vítima de abuso sexual: nos casos de violência intrafamiliar, o pai e o padrasto aparecem em primeiro lugar seguidos por namorado(a) da vítima 3,25%, namorado da mãe 2,56%, namorada do pai 0,10%, irmão 4,64%, irmã 0,10%, avó 0,59%, avô 3,16%, mãe 6,60%, padrasto 23,37%, madrasta 0,49%, pai 36,39%, primo 2,76%, prima 0,10%, companheiro(a) 1,08%, tio 9,07%, tia 0,59% , tio-avô 0,49%, outros 4,24% e não informado 0,10%.

Sabemos que o microsistema familiar é o primeiro contexto experimentado pela criança, no qual ela vai estabelecer seus primeiros vínculos de confiança (De Antoni & Koller, 2004) e processar os primeiros passos para o seu desenvolvimento. Tem como principal função proteger e gerar o bem estar da criança. Uma família que expõe a criança à violência pode deixar uma profunda marca na sua trajetória de vida. Situações de violência levam a criança a sofrer ainda mais os impactos de novos ambientes, o que fica explícito durante as transições ecológicas (movimentos que caracterizam saídas e entradas em novos ambientes microsistêmicos), sejam elas: a ida para a escola, a retirada da criança da família quando necessário, a ida à delegacia de polícia ou a sede do Conselho Tutelar, depor na frente do juiz e por fim a institucionalização (Yunes, Vasconcelos & Garcia, no prelo).

Além das funções de proteger a infância e a juventude e dar iniciação aos valores e preceitos sociais básicos, a família deve preparar a criança e o adolescente para futuras interações com outros microsistemas da sua rede social. Colaborar para formar mesossistemas de proteção no mapa social destes seres em desenvolvimento, ou seja, incluir e conhecer as relações com as pessoas da escola, com os vizinhos, com os amigos em geral, com os profissionais do posto de saúde e da igreja (De Antoni & Koller, 2004) devem ser prioridades para os adultos do grupo familiar. Assim, além do provimento dos bens, sustento dos filhos, educação formal e informal é tarefa da família atentar para a transmissão de valores culturais, que serão assimilados pelos filhos, no decorrer da sua trajetória e ciclo de vida. Quando os agressores estão na família, fica complicado garantir proteção e segurança, pois os papéis e as funções se confundem, principalmente nos casos de violência sexual, onde o ato é mascarado por cenas de carinho e sedução. Os adultos se aproveitam da vulnerabilidade e da imaturidade de uma criança que se sente confusa e passa a viver uma situação conflituosa e traumática, permeada por diferentes sentimentos que se misturam, sejam eles: o medo, a raiva, o prazer, a culpa e o desamparo.

Neste cenário, o microsistema escolar se apresenta como ambiente ideal para detectar e intervir nas situações de abuso sexual contra a criança. Depois da família é o ambiente mais

próximo da criança. As transições ecológicas da família para a escola se fazem em diferentes etapas de acordo com as singularidades das experiências de cada criança e de cada família (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). Quando a criança procura ajuda por estar sendo abusada, ou quando há desconfiança do professor, este profissional deve estar preparado para identificar e efetuar a denúncia. Por isso, é importante conhecer e compreender o tema abuso sexual, seus sinais e principalmente definir caminhos para uma denúncia protetiva e consciente.

### **O contexto escolar como espaço de proteção de crianças e adolescentes vítimas de abuso sexual**

A escola é um dos principais ambientes responsáveis pela transmissão da cultura e transformação das estruturas sociais. Portanto, as propostas pedagógicas devem estar ajustadas às necessidades das crianças, famílias e comunidades. Muitos governantes preocupam-se com a apresentação física, com os recursos materiais, com a quantidade de equipamentos e atualização da tecnologia educacional das escolas. Fica em segundo plano, a qualidade das relações entre o próprio corpo docente e dos docentes com seus alunos. Renomados pesquisadores britânicos publicaram em 1979 os resultados de um criterioso estudo longitudinal que pesquisava os efeitos das experiências escolares, das características das escolas e dos professores no desenvolvimento das crianças e adolescentes (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore & Ouston, 1979). Os autores perguntavam-se quais fatores de organização e funcionamento dos ambientes escolares seriam relevantes na formação dos alunos. A partir deste estudo ficou demonstrado que não importam as condições físicas ou as modernidades dos prédios escolares, nem a baixa relação entre o número de alunos e professores. O que realmente ficou evidente foi a importância da escola como organização, suas normas e valores sociais. Ao mesmo tempo, no Brasil, na voz de Paulo Freire (1987) e seus seguidores se pregava um educador humano, libertário, dialógico, revolucionário que seria o motor de um sistema educacional justo e solidário. Diante disso, cabe a nós refletirmos se nos dias de hoje, enquanto organização social, as escolas estão instrumentalizadas para enfrentar as disfunções nas relações de poder e de confiança que se expressam nos casos de abuso sexual contra crianças e adolescentes.

Embora nas famílias abusivas, o pacto de silêncio consista em “um acordo” entre abusador e a vítima (Furniss, 1993), isso pode ser “quebrado” ou rompido na escola, seja através de sinais típicos, ou pela confiança do aluno no professor. Tais situações ensejam uma atitude profissional do educador ou dos educadores. Assim, “a escola mostra-se como um lugar ideal para a detecção e intervenção em casos de abuso sexual infantil, uma vez que o principal agressor geralmente encontra-se na família” (Brino & Willians, 2003, p. 1).

As pesquisadoras Brino e Willians (2003) investigaram o universo dos professores de escolas municipais e de educação infantil – Emeis – de uma cidade de porte médio do Estado de São Paulo, abordando: informações sobre o ECA, focando a violência doméstica contra crianças; os sintomas apresentados pelas vítimas e os procedimentos e ações adotados perante casos de violência sexual. Segundo a pesquisa, apenas 15% dos profissionais participantes têm informações sobre abuso sexual contidas no Estatuto, o que evidencia um importante desconhecimento dos aspectos legais. Um número significativo de professoras, cerca de 65%, já havia se defrontado com vítimas de violência sexual em suas classes o que reforça a necessidade de atenção para incidência destes casos no ambiente escolar. Quando questionadas sobre o dever do professor

ao se deparar com um caso de abuso sexual em sua classe, 60% informaram que seu dever era denunciar, no entanto somente 21% afirmaram que denunciariam o que demonstra um verdadeiro descompasso entre teoria e prática. Segundo as autoras, existe uma grande distância entre o “falar” e o “fazer”. Constata-se, assim, a importância de estudos que busquem alternativas eficazes para que a denúncia seja devidamente realizada e encaminhada.

### **Impasses, dificuldades e possibilidades dos profissionais para identificação e denúncia de abuso sexual**

Quando a criança procura ajuda por estar sendo abusada, ou quando há desconfiança do professor, médico, enfermeiro, etc., este profissional deve estar preparado para identificar os indicadores e efetuar a denúncia. Por isso é importante conhecer e compreender o tema, seus sinais e principalmente definir caminhos para uma denúncia protetiva e consciente. Porém, não basta denunciar, é preciso denunciar para o órgão e para as pessoas certas.

As dificuldades que complicam a análise das causas e conseqüências do abuso sexual contra crianças e adolescentes vão desde questões teóricas e metodológicas, como a escassez de estudos longitudinais, até as impossibilidades de se estabelecer relações entre as variáveis envolvidas em situações plurais de violência. Características das vítimas, tais como, sexo, idade, história prévia e recursos de apoio (Palácios, Jiménez, Oliva & Saldaña, 1998) devem ser consideradas, pois podem interferir no diagnóstico situacional.

Os sinais que revelam que crianças ou adolescentes estão sendo vítimas de abuso sexual são inúmeros e inegáveis. Podem ocorrer sintomas físicos como: as infecções urinárias (mais freqüentes, no caso das meninas em que aparecem os corrimentos vaginais ou retais), as queixas de dores ao urinar ou cólicas intestinais, a enurese/encoprese (falta de controle para urina ou fezes), o diagnóstico de doenças sexualmente transmissíveis, entre outros sintomas que podem ser encontrados em literatura competente (Azevedo & Guerra, 1989; Santos, 1998; Braun, 2002; Koller & De Antoni, 2005). Além disso, indícios psicológicos evidenciam que a criança ou adolescente está sendo vitimizada, como: mudanças súbitas de comportamento, por exemplo, no apetite, chegando a formas de anorexias ou bulimias, conduta agressiva ou rebelde, dificuldades no desempenho escolar, reações defensivas, de alerta, comportamento sexualizado e incompatível com a idade, sinais de promiscuidade sexual e prostituição, fuga do contato físico, sintomas de depressão, entre outros (Braun, 2002; Koller & De Antoni, 2005). A família da criança que sofre abuso sexual também apresenta algumas características que devem ser observadas e investigadas. Santos (1998) aponta algumas destas características: cuidado exagerado dos pais, controle nas relações sociais da criança, desconfiança permanente, proibição de namoro em casos de adolescentes, o uso de drogas e bebidas alcoólicas na família, uma sensação de segredo que envolve todos os membros do grupo familiar, mães com atitudes excessivamente submissas ao companheiro, acusações de promiscuidade atribuída às crianças e indícios de que os pais tenham sofrido abuso sexual quando crianças. Deve-se ressaltar que este último item citado é tema controverso. Não se pode afirmar que toda vítima de violência sexual na infância ou adolescência, invariavelmente será um abusador, pois os dados empíricos não apóiam totalmente esta hipótese. (Palácios & cols, 1998). Alguns autores encontram taxas de reprodução transgeracional que chegam a 100% (Steele & Pollock, 1968) enquanto outros situam-se no extremo oposto, como demonstra a taxa de 1% divulgada por Widom (1989). No Brasil, as mesmas contradições se expressam. Autores como

Amazarray e Koller (1998) destacam a necessidade dos profissionais estarem atentos às causas do ato abusivo e levarem em consideração as “histórias de negligência, abuso físico e sexual na infância de ambos os pais” (Amazarray & Koller, 1998, p. 13) e concluem que “pais abusadores freqüentemente apresentam histórias de maus-tratos em sua infância e ignorância em relação ao cuidado dos filhos” (p.13). Porém, Azambuja (2004) argumenta que: “não existem estudos que apresentem evidências sólidas que confirmem esta hipótese de modo definitivo, muito pelo contrário, (...) apenas em 20% e 30% das pessoas que foram maltratadas na infância praticam agressões com seus filhos”. (Azambuja, 2004, p. 267) Segundo Palácios e cols. (1998) a maioria dos investigadores está de acordo que a porcentagem de transmissão de práticas abusivas nas famílias estaria entre 30% e 40%. Com estes dados, conclui-se que é importante considerar que a transmissão geracional não é determinante ou inevitável, pois uma boa parcela de pais parece conseguir romper este ciclo.

As controvérsias que atravessam as práticas dos profissionais confrontados com sinais de violência sexual em crianças e adolescentes geram outros impasses além da geracionalidade e se apresentam em dimensões mais pessoais. Do ponto de vista individual, atender vítimas, abusadores e suas famílias, pode trazer sentimentos de ansiedade e angústia vinculadas à escuta e compreensão profissional da revelação de uma situação abusiva relatada por uma criança. A narrativa e as descrições com detalhes de conotação sexual na voz de crianças ou adolescentes, incapazes de agir em defesa própria, geralmente provocam diversas emoções. Além disso, a multiplicidade de inquietudes dos profissionais se remetem às dúvidas sobre as consequências da experiência relatada na vida das crianças/adolescentes e das famílias.

Vários autores apontam que em casos de violência sexual, a criança é sempre a vítima e jamais deve ser considerada ou apontada como culpada (Furniss, 1993; Braun, 2002; Azevedo & Guerra, 1989). Sua vulnerabilidade à situação abusiva decorre das próprias características da infância ou adolescência. Os sentimentos de confiança e dependência dos adultos, o porte físico que facilita o uso da força ou coação e as impossibilidades cognitivas e emocionais de resistir ou consentir atestam a submissão da criança ou adolescente ao abuso sem que haja o exercício de qualquer forma de liberdade (Azevedo & Guerra, 1989; Braun, 2002). A situação assume proporções ainda mais preocupantes quando se aborda as conseqüências sociais que levam à estigmatização dos envolvidos, os traumas familiares e individuais, a freqüente descrença dos adultos nos relatos da criança em contraposição à negação do abusador e a culpa atribuída à criança pelos inevitáveis danos na estrutura e dinâmica familiar, embora do ponto de vista legal, o culpado seja sempre o abusador. Como primeira medida recomendada pelos especialistas em casos de violência sexual doméstica, está “a proteção imediata à vítima quando a estrutura e o funcionamento da família incestogênica indicarem a inexistência de condições capazes de barrar a reiteração do abuso com a mesma vítima ou sua extensão a outras no mesmo lar” (Azevedo & Guerra, 1994, p. 104). Priorizar o bem estar da criança, considerando que ela pode estar sob o mesmo teto que o seu agressor, não pressupõe intervenções imediatistas ou individuais, mas sugere a necessidade de uma equipe técnica institucional e de uma rede de apoio preparada para lidar com estes casos.

### **O Papel do Professor diante de suspeitas de abuso sexual no contexto escolar**

Falar sobre o papel do educador no cotidiano escolar não é tarefa fácil. Além de estar voltado para os aspectos relativos à aprendizagem dos conteúdos formais, cabe ao professor

observar e procurar conhecer seus alunos, identificar seus problemas e queixas, e compreender a frequência e a continuidade das manifestações comportamentais e emocionais (Craidy & Kaercher, 2001). É muito importante também que o professor esteja atento às condições familiares dos seus alunos. De acordo com o ECA (Brasil, 2003) o professor deve propiciar o desenvolvimento de atitudes, hábitos e habilidades favoráveis à saúde física e mental dos seus alunos e encaminhar para o Conselho Tutelar as suspeitas de vítimas de violência. Portanto, é responsabilidade do professor, investigar situações de maus tratos que possam encobrir outros tipos de violência. Identificar os casos de violência contra a criança e o adolescente “são obrigações dos profissionais que trabalham com crianças e adolescentes e, em especial, do professor” (Abrapia, 1997, p. 6, citado em Camargo & Libório, 2005)

Entretanto, poucas pesquisas reforçam a figura do professor como aquele que interfere nos casos de violência contra a criança. Um dos poucos trabalhos no Brasil sobre esta temática e já referido neste texto, foi realizado pelas professoras Brino e Willians (2003). Segundo as autoras, em 44 % dos casos de abuso sexual o professor era a primeira pessoa a tomar ciência das condições de abuso sexual. Em 52% dos casos, era o professor, o primeiro adulto em quem a criança confiava. Isso demonstra a importância de estudos que demonstrem que o papel do professor é fundamental no processo de denúncia de ocorrências de abuso sexual. É ele (a) que pode romper com o círculo de silêncio familiar.

Camargo e Libório (2005) sugerem alguns passos que o professor deveria seguir: “comunicar o fato à direção, que encaminhará um ofício ao Conselho Tutelar da Região ou, na falta deste, ao Conselho Tutelar que abranja a área domiciliar da criança ou adolescente. Em situações mais graves, a escola encaminhará a criança ao Hospital ou Posto de Saúde, e poderá solicitar orientação aos Centros de Defesa ou Programas SOS-Criança” (Camargo e Libório, 2005, p.21). Porém, o mais importante é que o professor não se sinta só, que ele tenha o apoio da escola e que a denúncia seja institucional e não pessoal, para evitar os riscos de retaliação por parte dos agressores.

As escolas necessitam construir uma política institucional para lidar com situações caracterizadas como abuso sexual. Mais do que isso, as escolas são importantes nichos ecológicos de prevenção contra esta forma de violência. Para tanto, os educadores, - isso inclui todos os trabalhadores da escola, - devem compreender as leis, os recursos da rede de apoio, os sinais emitidos pelas crianças, as peculiaridades das famílias e as principais questões do desenvolvimento humano. Desta forma, pode-se chegar a uma cultura escolar preparada não apenas para “transmitir conteúdos”, mas para proteger ativamente seus estudantes e familiares. É preciso buscar metodologias que sensibilizem os professores e os habilitem para intervir em casos de suspeita ou constatação de abuso sexual.

Assim, este trabalho buscou desenvolver a idéia de um programa de atendimento aos professores dos primeiros e segundos anos do ensino fundamental, com foco na sua obrigação ético-moral de proteção à criança e ao adolescente. A escola na qual se conduziu o trabalho exploratório e experimental é pública e localiza-se em um bairro da periferia da cidade do Rio Grande/RS. A proposta foi desenvolvida a partir de contatos com um grupo de docentes e tem por objetivos: suscitar reflexões, analisar e intervir nas práticas educativas escolares que ocorrem diante de situações de abuso sexual contra os alunos. É um projeto que almeja delimitar as funções do professor diante destas condições e promover o diálogo interinstitucional em rede.

### **Programa de intervenção psicoeducacional para professores**

A presente proposta foi delineada tendo como primeira etapa de elaboração, a inserção ecológica dos pesquisadores (Cecconello & Koller, 2004) no ambiente escolar que foi previamente escolhido como cenário deste trabalho. A Inserção Ecológica (Cecconello & Koller, 2004) prioriza que os investigadores se aproximem do objeto de estudo para familiarizarem-se com as pessoas e suas ações cotidianas. Neste caso, o ambiente escolar eleito foi visitado e observado com uma frequência semanal sistemática (duas vezes por semana em turnos alternados) durante dois meses. Pretendeu-se com isso, observar a organização escolar e verificar o que se faz, como se faz, a quem se recorre em casos de abuso. A inserção ecológica buscou ainda analisar os quatro aspectos chave da teoria bioecológica: o processo, a pessoa, o contexto e o tempo (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996) conforme já referido em seção anterior. Este método é utilizado também para dar base à proposta de intervenção e propõe como instrumento prioritário para a coleta de dados, o diário de campo. Neste, foram registrados todos os acontecimentos e as percepções dos pesquisadores acerca do funcionamento escolar.

A segunda etapa consistiu de um estudo exploratório com observações e entrevistas com alguns professores do ensino fundamental da escola. As falas durante as entrevistas e as observações denotaram a presença das famílias para além dos muros e grades da escola e foram detectados episódios que sugerem o distanciamento relacional entre professores/funcionários e familiares dos alunos. Fica evidente que as famílias são tratadas com indiferença, “desde a secretária até a professora de classe”. Como de praxe, os profissionais solicitam a presença das famílias na escola somente para a entrega dos boletins. Quanto à situação de abuso sexual, os educadores reconheceram suas dificuldades e o desconhecimento do tema. Enfatizaram a necessidade de ter apoio da rede de atendimento comunitário e relataram ações que afastam a criança e a família da escola. Sabe-se que em famílias onde ocorre violência intrafamiliar existe o pacto de silêncio. Quando inquiridas frontalmente, os membros negam o que está ocorrendo, portanto, nestas situações chamar a família pode contribuir para que a criança seja revitimizada. Um caso relatado por uma das professoras demonstra que a família de um aluno retirou a criança da escola e mudou-se de bairro logo após ter sido chamada pela diretora para falar da suspeita de abuso sexual contra a criança.

O passo seguinte para construção da estratégia de intervenção ou terceira etapa, foi o convite aos professores para um encontro grupal, no qual se usou a técnica do grupo focal (De Antoni & cols, 2001) para debater 5 questões relacionadas ao tema da violência sexual contra crianças e adolescentes. Este encontro foi realizado com 7 professoras, um mediador e um auxiliar de mediação na própria escola e teve duração de 1 hora e meia. Já no primeiro questionamento: “Como vocês definem AS?” as participantes demonstraram receio e desconhecimento do tema através de respostas vagas como: “molestar, ter alguns tipos de intimidade com uma criança... isso já é considerado um abuso sexual por parte do maior...?” Ao mesmo tempo que respondiam o faziam direcionando o olhar interrogativo para o mediador denotando insegurança. Após este primeiro momento e a partir da intervenção do mediador, as docentes transpareceram mais convicção e confiança e relataram vários casos de abuso sexual que foram detectados na escola: “... aqui tem vários casos que surgiram...às vezes a família toda fazendo parte” diz uma delas. Outra relatou “... surgiu o caso de uma aluna minha que andou faltando aí... “está doente”, “está doente”... aí quando ela veio a mãe veio com essa situação”. E ainda “... eu tenho uma aluna que é a vó que

cria, que traz pra escola, o pai abusô da menina, ele tá preso...". Percebe-se que pela incidência de casos, o ambiente estudado necessita de trabalhos de prevenção e intervenção para cuidados e encaminhamentos aos casos de abuso sexual. Quanto questionadas acerca dos indicadores de que uma criança está sendo abusada, as professoras relatam que a criança apresenta mudanças no seu comportamento, dificuldades de aprendizagem, agressividade, medo e dificuldades de relacionamento, o que condiz com dados da literatura. Entretanto, a família é para as professoras um sistema distanciado da escola. São famílias adjetivadas genericamente como "desestruturadas", "perdidas". As professoras parecem desconhecer a realidade de cada um destes grupos e pouco fazem para aproximar-se deles. A terceira pergunta exploratória para as educadoras focou as leis que protegem crianças e adolescentes da violência. Mais uma vez emergiu o sentido do desconhecimento, embora algumas citassem o ECA (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente). Duas das educadoras confundiram legislação com órgãos de proteção e citaram o conselho tutelar. Neste momento uma das professoras mostrou sua inquietude e questionou: "O que fazem com este abusador? Vão presos, mas voltam para a casa", demonstrando descontentamento e rigidez quanto à aplicação das leis no Brasil. Mas foi a quarta pergunta que mais preocupou e fez refletir acerca da prioridade de programas e alternativas de intervenção para estas situações de abuso no âmbito das escolas, sejam elas públicas ou privadas. As respostas desavisadas das professoras à seguinte questão proposta pela mediadora: "O que fazer diante de um caso de Abuso Sexual?" com respostas do tipo "... colocar para a família a situação..."; "... chamar a mãe de repente...". Estas soluções foram quase unânimes. Apenas duas professoras narraram que colocariam o caso para a direção da escola. Quando questionadas sobre o conhecimento de casos de violência sexual sofridos por alunos da escola ficou explícito que o ambiente estudado pode beneficiar-se de um trabalho interventivo e de proteção, pois cada professora teve pelo menos um caso de violência sexual sofrido entre seus alunos.

Como quarto momento deste processo, foi aplicado um jogo de sentenças incompletas (De Antoni, Yunes, Habigzang, & Koller, 2006) individualmente com cada professor. Os resultados das análises reiteraram o conhecimento superficial das leis de proteção à infância e juventude enfatizando a questão da segurança como principal elemento das leis. Quanto aos indicadores das situações de abuso sexual e suas expressões na escola, a maioria das professoras aponta somente indícios comportamentais, destacando agressividade e isolamento. As famílias dos estudantes são mais uma vez percebidas de forma preconceituosa e estereotipada: "um problema"; "desfavoráveis"; "omissas"; "desinteressadas". São estes os adjetivos que aparecem na fala da maioria das professoras e nenhuma delas possui algum projeto que aproxime a família da escola. Quanto à atribuição de causas da violência sexual, as professoras alegam fatores diversos: drogas, desestrutura, (está palavra aparece como característica para as famílias); dependência financeira, "falta" de valores; busca do carinho, problemas psicológicos. Ao se posicionarem acerca de atitudes em caso de uma suspeita de abuso sexual, somente duas professoras denunciariam e as outras responderam que investigariam, buscariam ajuda de órgãos competentes ou orientação na escola ou no Conselho Tutelar.

Quanto aos aspectos da responsabilidade e papel do educador, as professoras parecem estar cientes da importância de suas funções de "educar para a vida", "fundamental" e que é "Importante, pois depois da família, será o professor o seu exemplo, sua segurança"; "Muito importante e indispensável". Para as vítimas de abuso ficam narrativas que demonstram pena,

preconceito e estereótipos tais como: “diferentes”, “marginal”, “coitado”, “condenado” e “culpado”, o que em cada um dos possíveis sentidos pode resultar em práticas educativas ineficazes e inadequadas para a delicadeza da condição em questão. Os sentimentos evidenciados nestes casos são de indignação.

Durante todas as etapas relatadas acima e que precederam a elaboração da proposta de intervenção propriamente dita, as professoras mostravam muito entusiasmo e desejo em aprender mais profundamente o tema. Saber como agir tanto com o aluno quanto com a família era ressaltado pelas educadoras. Além dos aspectos apontados que revelaram o despreparo e a escassez de informações na formação de educadores, é preciso incentivar os professores a lidar de forma protetora nestas situações. Decidir por fazer uma denúncia que não tenha o sentido popular de “caguetar” o abusador, mas optar por garantir os direitos da criança e do adolescente de viver e ser criado em um contexto de amor, saúde e paz é uma medida educativa que protege o desenvolvimento humano em diferentes situações.

Entretanto, o que se pode notar no ambiente escolar, é que prevalece o “jogo do empurra-empurra” nestas ocasiões, ou seja, caso a criança revele o abuso para o professor, este conta para a orientadora, que conta para a diretora, que ao invés de acreditar na criança e pensar no que fazer para protegê-la, denunciando para o Conselho Tutelar ou para o Serviço Sentinela, pode tomar decisões inapropriadas tais como, chamar a família, chamar a polícia, etc. Conforme já exemplificado, as famílias abusivas acabam por negar e podem agredir ainda mais a vítima do abuso e retirar a criança/adolescente da escola.

A partir das considerações suscitadas pelos resultados destes quatro momentos investigativos no contexto escolar, foi elaborada uma proposta de programa psicoeducacional para ser desenvolvido em 5 reuniões na própria escola e com a participação dos professores do Ensino Fundamental. Os achados descritos acima levaram a propor uma seqüência de temas em forma de módulos a serem trabalhados com grupos de professores na seguinte ordem: Módulo 1 - Abuso Sexual: definições, sinais e vitimização da criança/adolescente; Módulo 2 - Família e violência: fatores determinantes; Módulo 3 - Aspectos legais que envolvem o abuso sexual; Módulo 4 - Denúncia e Responsabilidade do educador; Módulo 5 - Estudos de caso: neste módulo foram apresentados casos práticos aos professores visando observar quais os seus encaminhamentos. Foi elaborada uma apostila que foi entregue para cada participante contendo textos sobre os assuntos abordados e discutidos em cada módulo com as devidas referências. Após a aplicação do programa foi realizada uma nova reunião do grupo para *feedback* sobre a aplicação do programa. Esta foi realizada pela equipe com os educadores e com os representantes dos Conselhos Tutelares, do Serviço Sentinela e com o Promotor da Infância e da Juventude na intenção de uma denúncia protetiva para as crianças e educadores.

A proposta apresentada está longe de ser a solução final para este problema social de tamanha abrangência e complexidade. Entretanto, é uma alternativa para promover mudanças nas práticas educativas escolares através de uma intervenção em um contexto que além de ser a porta de entrada para a educação formal, deve preocupar-se com o desenvolvimento integral dos educandos. A escola não pode mais furtar-se às suas responsabilidades sociais de propiciar proteção não apenas às crianças e adolescentes, mas também às famílias de seus alunos. Em muitos locais, a escola é o único ponto de apoio afetivo e social da rede e por isso deve estar preparada para interagir com seu público de maneira humana e respeitosa.



Almejamos que esta proposta de intervenção venha a fortalecer os vínculos do contexto escolar com os outros segmentos sociais para que o abuso sexual à criança e adolescente deixe de ser negado ou distanciado, mas seja enfrentado por vias que garantam a saúde física, mental e bem estar dos envolvidos.

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# Competencias Profesionales en Estudiantes de Psicología

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## Abstract

*The accelerated changing nature of our times has without doubt had a great impact on areas of knowledge. Education in Psychology at undergraduate level is growing rapidly in Mexico, in terms of the emergence of numerous university faculties and graduates, who confront the evermore complex demands of a given context when they enter the workplace, and hence competencies such as team work, planning, organization, innovation, flexibility, decision making, among others require greater attention during their professional education.*

*The improvement of such competencies posed a challenge for the authors of the present research document. We proposed that through the development of activities that imply carrying out a macro research project, we could, in a systematic and planned manner, develop professional competencies in a group of undergraduate psychology students who were writing theses or providing social service.*

*For the purposes of our research, competencies are considered to be a set of knowledge, attitudes and skills deemed necessary for professional practice, flexible and autonomous professional problem solving, organizational work tasks, and the ability to collaborate in a professional work environment, i.e., the aptitudes required in order to carry out professional activity in an efficient manner.*

*From a professional point of view, competency is closely linked to the ways in which a person acts, the professional duties a person must carry out, and their characteristics are determined by the way in which a person organizes and utilizes their acquired knowledge, how they integrate them into their practice and interrelate them within a given context, depending on the individual and social peculiarities.*

*The methodology involved a descriptive study that aimed to expose a group of types of behaviour in students and with this make a diagnosis, through research, action and training throughout the process, where quantitative and qualitative procedures were implemented during the diagnosis phase of the research. The improvement of competencies, such as team work, planning and organizational skills, etc. was achieved in participating students.*

**Key words:** Competency, education, psychology students.

## Resumen

*Ante los cambios vertiginosos de nuestra era, sin duda las áreas de conocimiento han tenido un mayor impacto y la carrera de Psicología en México, aparece con un acelerado crecimiento en cuanto a número de facultades como de egresados, que se enfrentan a las demandas más complejas del contexto al incorporarse en el ámbito laboral, y es en donde competencias como el trabajo en equipo, la planeación, la organización, innovación, flexibilidad, toma de decisiones, entre otras requieren de mayor atención en su formación profesional.*

*La mejora de tales competencias profesionales represento un desafío para las autoras de la presente investigación que se plantearon que a través del desarrollo de las actividades que implican llevar a cabo un proyecto macro de investigación se podrían de manera sistematizada y planeada formar en un grupo de alumnos prestadores de servicio social y tesis de la carrera de psicología.*

*Para esta investigación se consideró a las competencias como un conjunto de conocimientos, actitudes y habilidades, necesarias para ejercer una profesión, resolver problemas profesionales de forma autónoma, flexible y ser capaz de colaborar en el entorno profesional y en la organización del trabajo, es decir, la capacidad de una persona para realizar una actividad con eficiencia en dependencia de las peculiaridades individuales y sociales.*

*El método empleado fue un estudio descriptivo que intenta dar cuenta de un grupo de comportamientos de los alumnos, para con ello llegar a un diagnóstico, a través de la investigación acción y la capacitación sobre la marcha, donde utilizando procedimientos cuantitativos-cualitativos, se obtuvo la mejora de competencias en las siguientes categorías: psicológicas, participativas sociales y técnicas de los alumnos participantes.*

**Palabras Clave:** Competencias, formación, estudiantes de psicología

### I.-INTRODUCCIÓN.

Las competencias, están vinculadas a la actividad laboral, en una triada importantísima: el saber, el saber hacer y el hacer.

Los programas educativos a nivel superior cada día responden más a fortalecer la práctica y formación profesionales, así como mejorar el desempeño profesional, respondiendo a la premisa de que mientras mejor informado y preparado esté el alumno, más eficiente será su labor como psicólogo.

En este contexto, la gestión de las competencias profesionales nos proporciona un marco de referencia para el diseño de acciones formativas. El desarrollo de competencias en este sentido es importante desde una dimensión contextual y específica de la profesión del psicólogo ya que ello nos ha de permitir identificar, acciones formativas a través de experiencias concretas como lo es la *investigación aplicada*.

### II.-COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONALES.

La noción de competencias en el ambiente académico, surge precisamente de la necesidad de conjugar los conocimientos académicos, con el trabajo o ejercicio laboral (Huerta, Pérez y Castellanos, 2000; Roe, 2003). Es decir, que los planes educativos miren hacia el futuro en el que el estudiante deba enfrentarse a condiciones de trabajo en las que deberán desarrollar

competencias para el ejercicio del mismo, pero ¿cómo lograr este desarrollo de las competencias profesionales?

Las competencias vistas desde esta perspectiva pueden ser consideradas como la capacidad de actuar desde lo que la persona es, con sus valores y actitudes haciendo algo con lo que sabe. Sin embargo, para que la formación sea considerada de calidad debe, además, satisfacer las demandas sociales en cuanto a formación profesional, la cual debe incorporar no sólo una mera acumulación de conocimientos, sino que debe ser un proceso de aprendizaje constante que expanda las potencialidades del individuo y que logren en él la flexibilidad cognoscitiva necesaria para su transferencia al complejo entorno cultural, productivo y social que caracteriza a la sociedad actual, Checchia y Fernández, 2005, en Huerta, Pérez y Castellanos (2000).

Retomando a (Roe, 2002 en Roe, 2003), la competencia representa: "una capacidad aprendida para realizar adecuadamente una tarea, funciones o rol". Hay dos rasgos distintivos de la noción de competencia, es decir, que se relaciona con un tipo específico de trabajo para ser realizado en un contexto de trabajo particular y que integra diversos tipos de conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes.

1. Los **conocimientos** pertenecen a las diversas teorías y datos empíricos producidos en los diferentes campos de la psicología.

2. Las **habilidades** se aplican a la comunicación oral o escrita, observación y escucha, análisis de problemas, aplicación de métodos estadísticos, uso de programas de ordenador, etc.

3. Las **actitudes** se relacionan con la precisión, integridad, autocrítica, obligaciones, responsabilidad, respeto y tolerancia con los demás, conciencia ética, orientación al servicio, etc.

4. Las **subcompetencias** son más amplias, en el sentido de que contemplan e integran conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes, pero son también más específicas. Se relacionan con el cumplimiento de tales funciones ocupacionales básicas tales como administrar tests, llevar a cabo entrevistas, aplicar técnicas de grupo y buscar documentación.

Para Huerta, Pérez y Castellanos, (2000), El concepto de competencia otorga un significado de unidad e implica que los elementos del conocimiento tienen sentido sólo en función del conjunto. En efecto, aunque se pueden fragmentar sus componentes, éstos por separado no constituyen la competencia: ser competente implica el dominio de la totalidad de elementos y no sólo de alguna(s) de las partes.

Un rasgo esencial de las competencias es la relación entre teoría y práctica. En esta dependencia la práctica delimita la teoría necesaria. La relación entre las condiciones y demandas de las situaciones concretas en el trabajo (la práctica) con las necesidades de sistematización del conocimiento (la teoría), es más significativa para el individuo si la teoría cobra sentido a partir de la práctica; es decir, si los conocimientos teóricos se abordan en función de las condiciones concretas del trabajo y si se pueden identificar como situaciones originales, **Espinete, E. (2004)**.

Las competencias profesionales se construyen mediante un proceso formativo del alumno y del accionar diario del profesor de una situación de trabajo a otra.

### III.-EL DESARROLLO DE LAS COMPETENCIAS.

3.1.-A través de un currículum que integre conocimientos teóricos con prácticos.

De este modo, un currículum por competencias profesionales integradas que articula conocimientos globales, conocimientos profesionales y experiencias laborales, se propone reconocer las necesidades y problemas de la realidad. Tales necesidades y problemas se definen mediante el diagnóstico de las experiencias de la realidad social, de la práctica de las profesiones, del desarrollo de la disciplina y del mercado laboral. Esta combinación de elementos permiten identificar las necesidades hacia las cuales se orientará la formación profesional, de donde se desprenderá también la identificación de las competencias profesionales integrales o genéricas, indispensables para el establecimiento del perfil de egreso del futuro profesional, Huerta, Pérez y Castellanos, (2000)

El modelo propuesto por estos autores de competencias profesionales integrales establece tres niveles:

Las competencias básicas, son las capacidades intelectuales indispensables para el aprendizaje de una profesión; en ellas se encuentran las competencias cognitivas, técnicas y metodológicas, muchas de las cuales son adquiridas en los niveles educativos previos (por ejemplo el uso adecuado de los lenguajes oral, escrito y matemático).

Las genéricas, son la base común de la profesión o se refieren a las situaciones concretas de la práctica profesional que requieren de respuestas complejas.

Las específicas, son la base particular del ejercicio profesional y están vinculadas a condiciones específicas de ejecución.

Los planteamientos de formar por competencias se reflejan en la curricula del programa educativo de la licenciatura de Psicología de la Universidad Veracruzana, donde a través de de la integración de los tres elementos mencionados se desarrollan en los estudiantes conocimientos, actitudes y habilidades.

### 3.2.-A través del Diseño del currículum académico.

Como parte del modelo arquitectónico de competencias planteado por Roe (2003) este exige en su segundo punto: el currículo académico, diseñado de tal forma que sea cubierto adecuadamente el puente entre las demandas del comienzo y del final de los estudios. Esto significa que deben tocarse todos los temas y que los métodos educativos empleados proporcionen las necesarias oportunidades de aprendizaje mediante el estudio (por ejemplo, lecturas, demostraciones, ejercicios, trabajos de estudio y elaboración escrita, exámenes), así como aprendiendo por la acción y trabajo colaborativo (por ejemplo, prácticas, trabajos de investigación, trabajo supervisado como estudiante), **López, M. (2007.)**

El currículo académico en la educación superior según Checchia y Fernández, (2005), privilegiará el cumplimiento de la función social, misión, o razón de ser está delimitada legalmente, en la mayoría de los casos, y referida a las funciones de formación de profesionales, dotando a los estudiantes de los medios necesarios para desarrollar competencias profesionales y ofrecer a la sociedad personas capaces de trabajar con "éxito" en el campo de actividades que ellos escojan; teniendo entre otras la función de generar conocimientos a través de actividades de investigación básica, aplicada y de desarrollo, y la función de asesoramiento e interacción social.

### **3.3.-A través de la estrategia didáctica:**

Aprendizaje Colaborativo.

El logro de desarrollo de competencias profesionales requerirá situarlo desde alternativas de enseñanza como el aprendizaje colaborativo que contempla el uso de estrategias para propiciar el desarrollo de habilidades mixtas (aprendizaje y desarrollo personal y social.). En el aprendizaje colaborativo cada miembro del grupo es responsable de su propio aprendizaje, así como el de los restantes miembros del grupo donde en cada sesión el docente-facilitador plantea claramente los elementos para cada sesión de trabajo:

La interdependencia positiva, “nosotros” en lugar de “yo”

Responsabilidad y compromiso individual: Es la contribución personal para lograr las metas del grupo.

La interacción promotora; interacción cara a cara entre con todo el grupo participante

El uso de destrezas sociales Es importante encauzar en los estudiantes el desarrollo de habilidades y actitudes como el reconocimiento al esfuerzo y logros de los compañeros, la solicitud e intercambio de información, la solicitud y ofrecimiento de apoyo.

El procesamiento de grupo: La reflexión sobre el trabajo grupal para describir qué acciones de los participantes fueron positivas y cuales no, y tomar decisiones sobre que acciones continuar para unir esfuerzos y alcanzar metas.

Para **Delors** (2007), las actividades formativas deben integrar el saber hacer reflexivo al saber hacer y al saber ser un profesional en la ocupación o área de trabajo.

Estos saberes se expresan o se infieren a partir de los descriptores de la norma de competencia y se vinculan fuertemente con las situaciones problemáticas de la práctica profesional.

Los procesos de enseñanza y de aprendizaje de competencias articulan práctica-teoría-práctica, partiendo de la reflexión en torno a las acciones de trabajo.

Las competencias desde esta perspectiva formativa integran: Un saber hacer, es decir, como el conjunto de capacidades que permitan a las personas actuar con pertinencia y eficacia en los distintos ámbitos de su vida cotidiana resolviendo situaciones problemáticas reales.

La educación basada en competencias tiene dos principios fundamentales: el primero, es que el clima y el medio ambiente del salón de clases deben ser democráticos, activos y participativos; El segundo, los estudiantes deben tener el derecho a recibir una enseñanza estimulante, innovadora, desafiante y de calidad.

El desarrollo de las competencias por tanto integra: La práctica reflexiva y la implicación crítica.

Aprendizaje por modelaje.

En la investigación realizada por Moreno (2007) en la que compila las opiniones de varios estudiantes de doctorado en educación sobre las formas de actuación de sus profesores, obtiene las siguientes conclusiones, las cuales hacen énfasis en cómo los estudiantes valoran la forma en que se desenvuelven los profesores en diferentes actividades del doctorado, enfocándose ha las cualidades de los profesores como profesionales y personas:

1) Las actuaciones de los formadores son cuidadosamente analizadas por los estudiantes, se refieren a ellas expresando acuerdo o desacuerdo, contrastándolas con los imaginarios que han construido sobre lo que habría de ser el desempeño del formador en este nivel, pero también visualizando a mediano o largo plazo su propia función como investigadores formadores. El aprendizaje vicario resulta ser entonces la principal mediación que apoya la formación de los futuros formadores de investigadores.

2) Los estudiantes detectan que los formadores que participan en su programa tienen diversos tipos de motivación para estar allí: encuentran desde profesores y tutores ampliamente comprometidos con la función formadora, hasta casos de atención obligada y con prisa, de los que reciben el mensaje de que la formación puede no ser la función prioritaria de un investigador.

3) El hecho de que los alumnos expresen desaprobación o, en su caso, reconocimiento de las diversas formas de actuación de los formadores, no es suficiente para asumir que sólo aprenderán aquellas que consideraron positivas, pues también se dan cuenta de que el nivel de compromiso (expresado en actitudes, tiempo destinado a los estudiantes y sobre todo en espacio psicológico para atenderlos) tiene que ver no sólo con características personales del formador, sino con sus prioridades de logro, entre las cuales suele tener un peso importante su producción y reconocimiento como investigador, lo que puede traducirse en escaso compromiso con la función de formación.

4) Las experiencias de formación vividas por los estudiantes se incorporan de diferente manera a sus esquemas individuales de actuación profesional. Algunos ejercen su función tratando de que ésta tenga los rasgos que más valoraron en sus formadores, pero también ocurre que algunos (consciente o inconscientemente) transfieren a sus formas de actuación las experiencias negativas que vivieron como estudiantes.

El aprendizaje por modelaje aplicado en el nivel de enseñanza superior se vuelve un proceso colectivo de planteamiento de problemas, de reflexión sobre los mismos y de formulación de soluciones; donde alumnos, maestros y contexto social interactúan permanentemente.

#### IV.-PERSPECTIVA TEÓRICA.

La presente investigación se basó en el enfoque del socio-constructivismo el cual privilegia que el alumno construye su conocimiento no sólo a partir de las enseñanzas del maestro del curso sino también a partir de las experiencias pasadas y de la relación con su medio (compañeros, recursos bibliográficos, experiencias en trabajos, uso de recursos en Internet, prácticas de campo, visitas a comunidades, organizaciones etc.), **Viau, M. (2007)**

El socio constructivismo considera que el aprendizaje es un proceso donde el estudiante es resultado de las experiencias individuales más la del trabajo en grupo. Las actividades en grupo son coordinadas por el maestro y dichas actividades son realizadas por los estudiantes que conforman el grupo de trabajo, sus elementos básicos son:

**Las personas** es decir el (los) maestros (es) y los estudiantes son los actores principales del proceso de formación y mejora de competencias.

**El producto** implica el conjunto de evidencias que deben realizar los estudiantes.

**El proceso** es el conjunto de actividades colaborativas a realizar por los estudiantes y organizadas por el maestro.



**La didáctica** que especifica los fundamentos pedagógicos que permitan al estudiante aprender las competencias requeridas de manera colaborativa.

**Los proyectos** es la gestión de los recursos que debe de tomar en cuenta los estudiantes para alcanzar con éxito el desarrollo de las competencias.

**Un ambiente de aprendizaje colaborativo** es el soporte que permite acceder a los objetos de aprendizaje e interactuar de forma presencial y a distancia con el maestro y sus compañeros de equipo de trabajo.

#### V.- METODOLOGÍA

Investigación- acción.

La investigación acción es un método de investigación usado por docentes para resolver un problema práctico mediante el uso del método científico, combinando el conocimiento teórico y el conocimiento práctico que poseen maestros y alumno. Permitiendo aproximarse al fenómeno por estudiar desde diferentes puntos de vista.

#### V.1.-Población objeto de estudio.

Esta investigación considero a un grupo de nueve alumnos prestadores de servicio social y tesisistas de la facultad de psicología, con edades promedio entre los 22 y 24 años, con un nivel socioeconómico medio. Estos alumnos estaban muy próximos por egresar de su formación como psicólogos en un plan de estudios basado en competencias. Y de tres maestras a cargo de la investigación.

Numero	Participantes	Perfil	Institución
4	Prestadores de Servicio Social	Educación Superior	Universidad Veracruzana
5	Tesisistas	Educación Superior	Universidad Veracruzana
3	Maestras	Doctoras en Psicología	Universidad Veracruzana

#### V.2.-Instrumento:

Para evaluar las competencias profesionales se construyó una escala de likert, que midió principalmente 73 competencias en las siguientes categorías:

Competencias Psicológicas

Competencias Participativa-Social

Competencias Técnicas.

#### Cuadro 1.- COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONALES

<b>Competencia Psicológica</b>	<b>Competencia Participativa- Social</b>	<b>Competencia Técnica</b>
<i>Flexibilidad</i>	<i>Participación</i>	<i>Transferencia</i>
Pensamiento: analítico, sintético, creativo, autónomo, adaptabilidad, negociación	Disposición a la cooperación, honradez, responsabilidad social, espíritu de grupo, emprendimiento	Relacionada con la profesión: Metodología, estadística, teorías y modelos de evaluación e intervención, psicología de grupos y organizaciones, teorías psicológicas, capacidad para investigar, diagnosticar e intervenir en aspectos básicos del comportamiento humano
Dinamismo, responsabilidad personal, comunicación oral y escrita	Capacidad de coordinación, organización, relación, decisión, dirección, trabajo en equipo	Amplia la profesión: panorámica sobre disciplinas y profesiones afines, manejo de ordenadores, procesadores de textos ,idiomas herramientas de presentación, automóvil

Se aplico de manera individual y las opciones de respuesta incluían, autoevaluarse en la mejora de cada competencia a través de las actividades de investigación con los niveles de Excelente, buena, no desarrollada.

### V.3.-Procedimiento de trabajo:

Conformación del equipo de investigación por de tres catedráticas de la facultad de psicología con grado de doctoras, una amplia experiencia en investigación y reconocimiento de perfil deseable ante el Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado.

Elaboración de proyecto de investigación: “Programa de formación ciudadana con menores veracruzanos en edad reproductiva y en situación escolar para promover una vida familiar y comunitaria libre de violencia.” para presentarlo ante CONACYT.

Acciones de Vinculación con la Secretaria de Educación y Cultura de Veracruz y con el programa de Telebachillerato. Que implicaron reuniones repetidas con las autoridades correspondientes y la asignación de colaboradores claves para realizar en trabajo en las diferentes zonas del estado de Veracruz.

Difusión del proyecto en la Facultad de Psicología –Xalapa y Poza Rica, a fin de que se incorporarán tanto maestros como alumnos de servicio social y tesistas interesados en la temática de investigación.

Formalización de los equipos alumnos de servicio social y tesistas de la facultad Xalapa y Pozarica

Capacitación a estudiantes de servicio social y tesistas con la metodología de investigación acción en los siguientes aspectos

Metodología cuantitativa y cualitativa

### Construcción de Instrumentos

Inmersión en las diferentes comunidades de telebachilleratos.

Diseño y determinación de la muestra

Piloteo de instrumentos

Aplicación definitiva de Instrumentos

Elaboración de bases de datos para el análisis con paquetería con el SPSS.

Análisis e interpretación de resultados de la fase de diagnóstico.

Elaboración de Informes

Diseño y elaboración de intervenciones

Pasos implementados de la Investigación acción, para el trabajo de cada una de las fases con los estudiantes de servicio social y tesistas

Paso 1: Elección conjunta del problema que se quiere cambiar o solucionar.

Paso 2: Búsqueda y análisis y discusión de la bibliografía pertinente.

Paso 3: Integración y consenso de la acción a realizar.

Paso 5: Determinación de la metodología que se usará para cada acción

Paso 6: Capacitación por parte de las maestras a los estudiantes sobre el como hacer la tarea implicada.

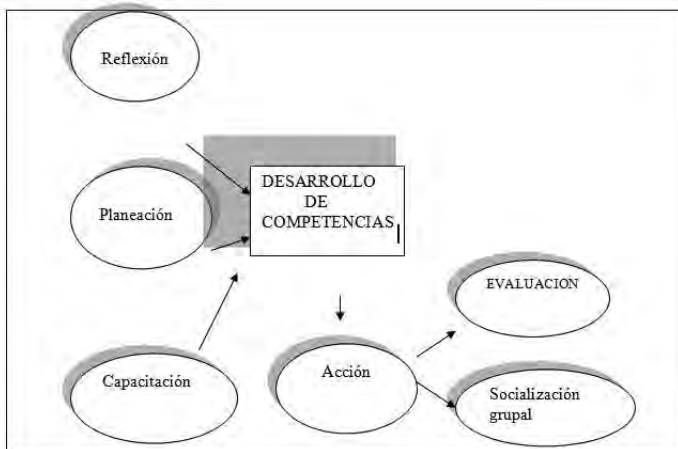
Paso 7: Se organiza la acción con una maestra coordinando a sub grupos de estudiantes.

Paso 8: Se presentan informes y bitácoras, se sacan conclusiones.

Paso 9: Se comparten las conclusiones con los colegas y alumnos.

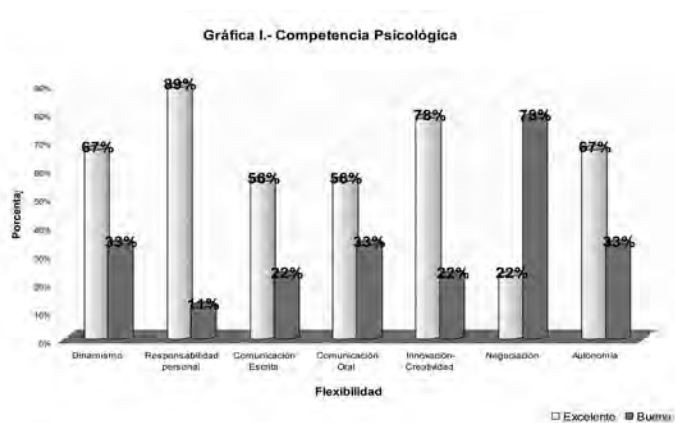
Quedando ejemplificado en el esquema de abajo el modelaje de formación de competencias de alumnos participantes en la investigación.

### Esquema de modelaje de las competencias



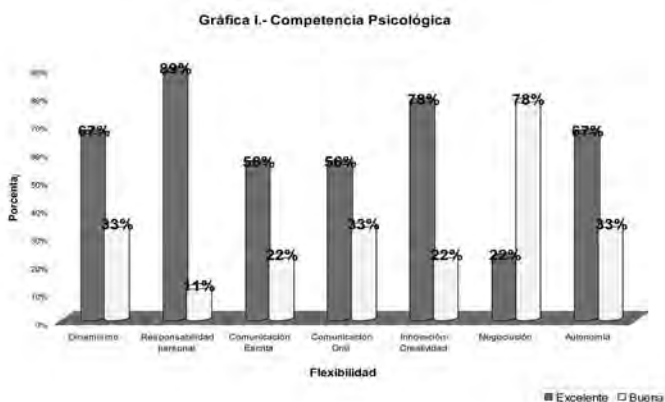
## IX.- RESULTADOS:

Se presentan los resultados generales que aportó la escala diseñada para medir como los estudiantes consideraban el desarrollo de las competencias después de un año de trabajo realizando las actividades planeadas de investigación. Para lo cual se agrupan los mismo en los datos obtenidos en competencias: psicológicas, participativas sociales y técnicas.



Fuente base de datos de la investigación 2008

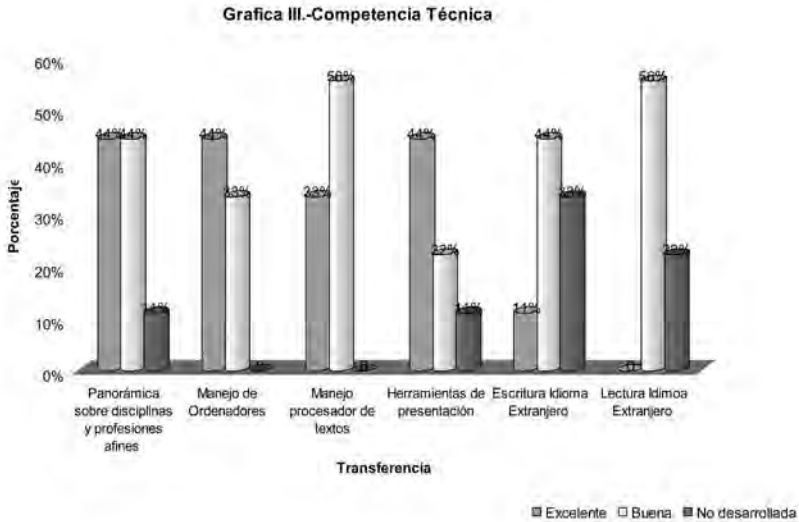
Es este apartado el rubro con mayor puntuación es el de la *Responsabilidad Personal*, en el que el 89% de los alumnos encuestados respondieron poseer esta competencia desarrollada en grado Excelente, mientras que el 11% restante contestó que el desarrollo de esta competencia es Bueno. En segundo lugar encontramos la *Innovación y la Creatividad* en la cual el 78% de los alumnos consideran emplearla en grado Excelente y el 22% calificó como Buena. El cuanto a la *Negociación* solo el 22% de los alumnos consideran poseer esa competencia en grado Excelente mientras que el 78% cree que su desarrollo es Bueno.



Fuente base de datos de la investigación 2008

En este gráfico sobresalen el *Trabajo en equipo* y la *Colaboración* como las competencias optimizadas en mayor grado durante la investigación. El 89% de los alumnos calificó como Excelente el desarrollo de estas dos competencias y el 11% restante como Buena.

En contraste, el *Apoyo a los compañeros* es la competencia optimizada en menor medida durante el trabajo obteniendo los siguientes porcentajes: Excelente 33%, Buena 44%, Poco desarrollada 22%.



Fuente base de datos de la investigación 2008

El rubro de Panorámica sobre disciplinas y profesiones afines, fue calificado como Excelente por el 44% de los alumnos, como bueno por el 44% y el 11% dijo No desarrollarlo. El 56% de los alumnos aseguran que el desarrollo del *Manejo de procesadores de texto* fue Excelente en 33%, Bueno en un 56% y Poco Desarrollado en un 11%. La escritura en un idioma extranjero se optimizó en un 11% de forma excelente, 44% de forma Buena, 11% se desarrolló poco y el 33% no la desarrollo. Algo similar sucedió en la Lectura en un idioma extranjero la cual se desarrollo en forma Buena por el 56% de los alumnos, para el 22% fue Poco Desarrollada y para el 22% no se desarrolló dentro de la actividad.

## X.- REFLEXIONES

Podemos concluir que las competencias psicológicas, desarrolladas en mayor medida a través de la formación con actividades de investigación, son las que corresponden a la vida psicológica de cada uno de los estudiantes, ya que los porcentajes en general en esta categoría se encuentran entre excelente y buena la optimización de las competencias. Los jóvenes se considerarían entonces como personas capaces de enfrentar, a través de sus propias capacidades personales, los retos que campo laboral les impongan.

En el rubro de competencias participativas-sociales, a pesar de que el *Trabajo en equipo* y la *Colaboración* se encuentran entre las competencias mejor optimizadas, el apoyo a los compañeros

se encuentra entre los rubros más bajos, entrando entonces en la paradoja de trabajar en equipo y colaborar pero en lo necesario, dejando de lado tomar o apoyar en las responsabilidades de otros, la problemática de no asumir la responsabilidad de alguien faltante o con alguna traba o problema, con el fin de apoyar al equipo o a los resultados u objetivos que buscan el mismo.

En cuanto a las competencias técnicas los alumnos aseguran que su *Panorámica sobre disciplinas y profesiones afines*, se optimizó a partir de su contacto con al investigación, pero las competencias de escritura y lectura en un idioma extranjero fueron poco optimizadas dentro de su experiencia en la investigación.

Finalmente podemos concluir que el modelo educativo por competencias profesionales integradas para la educación superior es una opción que busca generar procesos formativos de mayor calidad, pero sin perder de vista las necesidades de la sociedad, de la profesión, del desarrollo disciplinar y del trabajo académico. Asumir esta responsabilidad implica que la institución educativa promueva de manera congruente acciones en los ámbitos pedagógico y didáctico que se traduzcan en reales modificaciones de las prácticas docentes; de ahí la importancia de que el maestro también participe de manera continua en las acciones de formación y capacitación que le permitan desarrollar competencias similares a aquellas que se busca formar en los alumnos.

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## Social exclusion paradox in Poland

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### Abstract

*The process of social exclusion can be described from two perspectives: of the society that stigmatizes and of the stigmatized group. The paper explores the paradox of social exclusion of football hooligans in Poland. The authors argue that social exclusion is not necessarily connected with the reduced level of the quality of life. The sense of belonging to a hooligan group becomes the essential source of support. Simultaneously it is a foundation for shaping one's identity.*

### Introduction – social exclusion vs. quality of life

The current usage of the notion of *social exclusion* features mainly in the context of social sciences, and predominantly within social politics, encompassing socio-economic, political, and (less frequently) culture-related conditions of existence of social groups. Much as it is new, the notion describes to a phenomenon that has a long history. According to Szarfenberg (2006) the definitions of social exclusion relate to:

- problems connected with participation in the life of society or community;
- problems of accessing resources, goods within public sphere, institutions or social systems;
- problems connected with social laws, which are respected only to some extent or rejected altogether;
- poverty and deprivation.

The marginalization and social exclusion are connected with low professional status, poverty and homelessness. Significantly it affects various social groups: the mentally disturbed, the physically disabled, the victims of violence, the elderly, adolescents, etc. Hilary Silver (1994) distinguished 23 such groups. Likewise, the National Social Integration Strategy for Poland anticipates substantial risk of social exclusion (NSIS, 2003) among 24 types of persons: those who have experienced problems with accessing job market or education, or have low professional qualifications. The groups at risk include the handicapped, the addicted, the singles, the crime element, foreigners and refugees, ethnic minorities, religious and cultural minorities, women, children (working children from pathological families), persons with poor housing conditions, those who engage in lifestyle pursuits that are socially inadequate or considered deviant (criminals, substance abusers, quirks, etc.) and persons who display downward mobility.

From the psychological perspective a weak network of social support, poorly-established social bonds, and low social capital play a key role in the processes of social exclusion and



marginalization across all of the above-mentioned groups.

The society relies on a number of various mechanisms to maintain its *status quo*, thus ensuring the predictability and control of the social world. The process of social exclusion may vary in the degrees of “acuteness”, ranging from the out-and-out exclusion from social life to the more subtle mechanisms of social exclusion, as in the instances of placing the blame on certain groups, stigmatizing them or enveloping them with silence.

By adopting a broader point of view – beyond social politics – we are faced with a situation whereby the social group is perceived as different. The majority of society sets this group apart, and embarks on actions aimed at isolating, discrediting or even discriminating against this group. From the psychological perspective the criterion of “being different” may assume various forms. Paradoxically, being a member of the lower register of society entails the risk of social exclusion no less than belonging to the highest ranks of society (see: Girard, 2002). Notably the risk of social exclusion occurring grows in the time of social unrest.

The notion of the *quality of life* deserves reflection on a number of related issues. The researches are unanimous that it encompasses three dimensions of human functioning – psychological, social and physical. The quality of life evolves dynamically, with a number of factors – external and internal – influencing its level. Besides, two aspects of the quality of life may be distinguished: objective and subjective. From psychological standpoint the perceived quality of life hinges on emotional and cognitive processes – pertaining to self-esteem and the assessment of the environment (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Diener et al., 2003)

### **Two hidden assumptions**

It is commonly assumed that being a part of the group that is socially excluded entails a decrease in the quality of life – at individual or group level. This is a consequence of such factors as: a diminished income, a sense of being rejected by the society, aversion shown by others, and a resulting sense of alienation. There are at least two hidden assumptions behind such a reasoning:

involuntary character of exclusion – does marginalization or exclusion comprise situations wherein the individual ‘does not want to’ participate in the social life or are narrowed down to situations wherein individual ‘is unable’ to participate;

individuals or groups that are subjects of exclusion aspire to belong to society or to middle- or upper-middle classes.

The authors intend to show that being a member of the socially excluded group does not necessarily entail a decrease the quality of one’s life but - quite paradoxically - it may even help to improve it. By analyzing the example of *football hooligans* we intend to show that the group may provide a considerable source of support for the individual, a foundation for moulding one’s identity, whereas the sharing of ideas and professing the same values help alleviate the feeling of loneliness. The group offers its members a set of unambiguous rules of conduct and comprehensible ways of achieving recognition and prestige in community. Last but not least - and paradoxically - the phenomenon of football hooligans may be seen as an attempt of realizing their ideals based on violence and of attracting young people to their cause.

Psychological benefits related to the situation of exclusion on the example of soccer hooligans

**Alleviated sense of alienation.**

Deviant behaviours, manifested in groups of sport supporters can be explained as a way of coping with the sense of alienation (Piotrowski, 2000, 2006). The rules of social exchange and the values permeating society at large are rejected by the football hooligans who consider the social rules (legal, moral, customary and cultural) as unclear, internally contradictory, and imposed from the outside. Moreover, they are convinced that by complying with these rules they will not be able to reach their own goals. The group values and standards are perceived as alternative to the principles inculcated by school and the mass-media, which are regarded as unclear and ineffective in satisfying the needs. The sense of being rooted into the local community and identification with a group of soccer fans is accompanied by a sense of increasing alienation and inability to function in a wider social context.

**Clear-cut ways of career.**

A group establishes a set of simple rules of conduct - alternative to the rules promulgated by the school, the family or the media. The ways for achieving respect and prestige are also clearly defined: aggressive behaviours, commitment and devotion, readiness to support the team during away-from-home matches. Provoking brawls with the opponent team's fans, clashes with the police, acts of vandalism, all serve to reassert or enhance individual status (and group status in the so-called *hooligan league*).

**Clearly-defined idealistic values.**

Soccer hooligans adhere to the idealistic values that they understand in a specific way – as disregarded by the rest of society. These values include: honour, allegiance to the ideals and emblems of the club, loyalty and commitment to 'the cause'. Courage features prominently among them. One should never back out from a fight even when the opponent group far outnumbers one's own. Fleeing from the "battlefield" is perceived as an utmost betrayal of friends. Courage is a prerequisite for loyalty within the group. Moreover, in the subculture of soccer hooligans an unwritten rule prohibits launching attacks on women, children, or otherwise uninvolved persons. Due to their attachment to these values the soccer hooligans consider themselves to be the elite of sport supporters and the last remaining advocates of the ideals of *fair play*.

**A chance to express one's opinions.**

Significantly, while supporting their favourite football team, participating in various matches away from home, the members of the group are presented with an opportunity to express their opinions freely. Often it is a novel opportunity that was beyond their reach earlier, due to young age or inadequate social position. Football stadium stands are a prime platform for expressing and publicizing these opinions. The same applies to *fanzins* – newsletters issued by soccer hooligans. The group provides the individual with support and justification, which does not only facilitate promulgation of socially unacceptable (e.g. racist) ideas, but serves to justify various acts of deviant behaviour.

### **Reinforced group coherence resulting from social exclusion.**

Paradoxically, any attempt on the part of society to stigmatize the members of the group, to exert pressure on them to change their behaviour, or any promulgation of negative opinions on the group does not affect the said behaviour nor change the group affiliation. Quite conversely, it only enhances the coherence of such a group. As a result of mechanisms described by social psychology the group or, as in this case, the subculture unites its forces in opposition to a common enemy. Solidarity among soccer hooligans - irrespective of the club they support - is best illustrated by clashes with police. Even the rival fan groups unite their forces on such occasions. Tainted by pseudo-ideology of soccer hooligans subculture, the image of the policeman is the embodiment of various negative traits: stupidity, cowardness, and also incompetence combined with unjustified brutality.

### **Replaced meanings.**

Soccer hooligans are not inclined to passively accept the label imposed on them by the social audience. They attempt to negotiate it. Critical opinions on the soccer supporters only reinforce the coherence of their group and in a way may be 'cherished' by them. Negative labeling (e.g. bandits) may be entertained conversely by the team members and implemented in the process of self - labeling as a positive value, which enables the group to stand out from the rest of 'regular' society, the representatives of which they despise. What we are observing is a discourse in an attempt at defining the role of the sport supporter in contemporary world. Much as the public opinion defines the sports fan mainly as the "consumer" in the sport event, the soccer hooligans emphasize the significance of values such as: loyalty, honour, readiness to incur renunciation for the 'club colors' and non-compromised ways of defending them.

### **Taking control over exclusion.**

A group of soccer hooligans consists of individuals alienated from the mainstream of social activities. The experience of relative deprivation is conducive to feelings of resentment and humiliation, which may in turn generate aggression. What emerges is a permanent inclination to perceive the world as hostile, which, by projecting thus generated aggression beyond the group further reinforces the coherence of the group, thus protecting the group from the negative consequences of such aggression. On the other hand, developmentally inherent tendencies of activating defences will transform the feeling of humiliation into a sense of superiority and pride blown out of all proportion. When compounded, these tendencies will affect the experience of relative deprivation. Having been excluded themselves, the soccer hooligans try to subject others to exclusion: 'bad knights' of the opponent football clubs or their own persecutors (the society at large). In conclusion - the paradox rests in the fact that the soccer hooligans capitalize on the stigmatization and exclusion of which they are the subject. By transforming the stigmatization into 'hallmark of glory' and the exclusion into 'a holy anointment' they consequently create foundations for their prestige and identity.

## Conclusions

We have attempted to show that within the framework of *paradox of exclusion* pertaining to certain groups (subcultures) such as football supporters, the marginalization does not necessarily involve a decrease of the quality of life (as perceived subjectively by the individual or the group). Significantly, the individual is shielded from the perceived sense of the low quality of life that accompanies social exclusion. This occurs as a result of the creation of the group bonds, following a set of comprehensive rules of conduct, adherence to the same values. When a group that had been marked by (or is at risk of) social exclusion is capable of creating strong internal bonds that lead to the emergence of a subculture, then the social exclusion may only further reinforce the group coherence.

Both the functioning of subcultures based on aggression and resistance towards the society as well as counteracting them actively (which further strengthens their integration and resistance) are very disadvantageous for society, which subsequently loses control over these subcultures as well as capacity to re-integrate them. Such groups pose a threat to society as they may become purveyors of alternative and often destructive values, attracting individuals who perceive themselves as marginalized by the contemporary society.

Therefore it seems reasonable that apart from implementing repressive measures (stadium entry ban, efficient prosecution immediately after the breach of law, etc.) we should step up efforts to initiate and support preventive measures at a local level.

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## Construction of a Portuguese Online Forum for Mutual Help

Marta Sofia Pita

This presentation is based on a project which the main objective was the construction of a Portuguese mutual help on-line Forum which the underline subject is mental health.

The foremost characteristic of this Project is the use of a collaborative research approach. This is important because it gives voice to the community that is being worked on, or should I say work with, and also because of the fact that it is a research-action Project, since not only there's a study occurring, but also a new community is being built. This way of working allows for research (example: to know what occurs during the construction, and in the future what are the outcomes of a online mutual help forum), education (in this case training in the computer science area and deeper knowledge of mutual help and online forums) and last but not least action since we are building and changing a community. There are important concepts such as reciprocity which underlines the fact that everyone had something to gain when working together. Since reciprocity was the basis of this forum but the facilitator had to be aware and be sensible about each person's opinions, ideas, feelings, and so on. Another important concept is the sense of shared responsibility in the outcomes which in turn will allow for sustainability, because decisions are made together and the project belongs to everyone, it allows for a continuance of the project.

To understand the processes that occurred during Project "Online Forum for Mutual Help" an analysis of the on-going relationships that took place during the construction of the forum was made. The analysis was made through the narratives transmitted by the participants and that emerged from the investigator/ facilitator.

The research was implemented in Portugal, in the Association for the Psychosocial Study and Development (AEIPS), specifically with 6 elements of the Empowerment and Mutual Help Center (CEAM). This group was made up by 3 women and 3 men who rotate in their presence during the construction of the forum. Some were literate in the computer science from a user's standpoint (working with Word, Outlook), others had a deeper knowledge.

During this research the data was registered during the Project implementation through Formal meetings, Informal meetings, Construction meetings, Training, a focus group (future) and Facilitator's Personal Registry.

During the first formal meeting there was a presentation of a research already made in an online forum of mutual help. During which characteristics of mutual help online were stated, as for the advantages and disadvantages of the internet among other characteristics. After this presentation a decision was made on what was going to be done (forum vs chat vs blog vs website). In a second meeting examples of online forums were showed and how and where to construct them.

The informal meetings were used to build a closer relationship with the research group members in order to have a thrust basis and facilitate communication. Also more practical aspects were decided such as Steps for Research (timetable), forum's implementation and Decision

making and problem solving (e.g. titles, what was going to be discussed, what could or not be done, and so on).

During the forum construction again the main areas approached were Decision-making and problem solving, but above all Training. The members of the research group had a hands-on approach which meant that they built the forum and the facilitator was there to assist on any doubts or difficulties that might come up (e.g. how to give and take privileges to future forum users). This was done in order to develop autonomy in the group in work with the online forum.

Focus group will be done where these and other issues will be discussed

How do you feel about what was done?

Changes for the present?

Now that there is a forum what do you believe it is for?

What is expected for the future? (e.g. consequences of the forum)

A personal registry was made where my feelings during this whole process were written. These feelings were stress about time management, since this is a study for my Master thesis, awareness since attention to conflicts that occurred in the group due to discrepancy of opinions were important. Also personal feelings on how to combine study, work and group elements came up.

Some of preliminary conclusions on collaborative research and the construction process of the forum were possible to be drawn in this phase. Collaborative research is an *empowerment* process where there are active participants. The participants are experts and knowledgeable and gave the community's standpoint and incorporated the perspectives of the real community on the online community. Ideas of how to establish a pre-set plan were proven not to be possible because the methods and decision making that emerged from the research process. Also there was the need to be aware of any personal agendas from the participants that may subvert the research-action, since leadership and control over the online forum were some of the issues that rouse.

Also during the process of construction there some questions that raised to which was given special attention. In all relationships in the group between members are of great importance since they will have impact in how each step of the research will occur. Has it was previously referred there was the need to be aware of personal problems and leadership issues which have to be taken into account during the Project's process. Also since this research was deeply linked to computer knowledge, an assessment of each member's capacity was made in order to insure that everyone was grasping/ understanding what was going happening in the forum.

One of the most important issues was the proximity to group, there was the need to be near to the group since it made it easier to set appointments/ group meetings, maintain the established timetable and to keep a open communication. When a physical separation occurred the project stagnated.

When the investigators/ facilitators steps away from a Project, he/she leaves with hope, I hope that the forum will serve to exchange knowledge and experience, raising awareness about other realities (not only in Portugal) and most of all friendship for people who have mental health issues, since this is a strong form of support But I do not forget the warning that there are some disadvantages in using the internet that should be prevented.

## De la opresión al bienestar. Explorando Poder, Opresión y Bienestar entre Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España

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Durante las últimas décadas, millones de personas han llegado a países de la Unión Europea para mejorar su calidad de vida y la de sus familiares. Las diferentes culturas, mercados y servicios que encuentran en Europa, fomentan en estos nuevos ciudadanos de la Unión Europea expectativas de satisfacción de sus necesidades, reconocimiento justo de sus aportaciones. Sin embargo, frecuentemente los inmigrantes se incorporan a un mercado laboral precario, que les obliga a asentarse en barrios sin acceso a servicios y recursos sociales, fomentando actitudes de rechazo en los vecinos nativos. La incorporación de los inmigrantes se realiza, por tanto, en condiciones asimétricas, que dificultan sus posibilidades para desarrollar su proyecto migratorio. En este contexto, la adaptación de la comunidad inmigrante se configura como uno de los principales desafíos para el presente y futuro de la Unión Europea.

Tradicionalmente, el estudio de la integración de la población inmigrante se ha abordado desde la perspectiva de la Psicología Transcultural, que vincula el bienestar de la población inmigrante a sus posibilidades de adaptarse culturalmente al contexto receptor. Desde este enfoque, diferentes modelos tratan de explicar las experiencias, procesos y resultados asociados a la aculturación (Birman, Trickett & Vinokurov, 2002). Berry y sus colegas (Berry & Annis, 1974; Berry, Kalin & Taylor, 1977) formularon el primer modelo bidimensional de aculturación donde definen como un proceso dual, de cambio cultural y psicológico, que tiene lugar como resultado del contacto entre dos o más grupos y sus miembros individuales (Berry, 1992; 1997; 2005). A partir de este modelo surgieron otros que tratan de expandir y refinar sus principios y propuestas -e.g., el modelo interactivo de aculturación (MIA) de Bouhris (1997), el propuesto por Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker y Obdrzálek (1999), y el denominado modelo relativo de aculturación extendida (MRAE) de Navas, García, Sánchez, Rojas, Pumares, y Fernández (2005). En general, estos modelos adoptan un enfoque centrado en el individuo y asumen que la población inmigrante se adapta al nuevo contexto social en base a las decisiones que toma sobre dos dimensiones: mantener o no su propia identidad y cultura de origen, y establecer o no relaciones con los miembros de la sociedad receptora.

Estos modelos han supuesto un gran avance en el estudio de la integración, no obstante, a nuestro modo de ver, su limitación fundamental es que todos ellos asumen que los inmigrantes eligen la estrategia de aculturación que adoptan en el contexto receptor sin observar la influencia de las condiciones de opresión, desigualdad y exclusión social en las que toman esta decisión. La situación de la población marroquí en el sur de España ejemplifica estas circunstancias. Se trata de un colectivo eminentemente masculino, que trabaja principalmente en la agricultura intensiva, la

construcción y la hostelería turística, con frecuencia sin documentación, ocupando los puestos que la población nativa rechaza por sus duras condiciones, inestabilidad y bajos salarios. En estas circunstancias se ven obligados a concentrarse en áreas rurales aisladas o en barrios urbanos marginales, con escaso acceso a los recursos y servicios comunitarios básicos (Hernández-Plaza, Pozo & Alonso-Morillejo, 2004; Izquierdo, 2003; Martínez, García-Ramírez, Maya, Rodríguez & Checa, 1996). La espiral de exclusión en la que se ven inmersos fomenta estilos de vida marginal y de segregación que son el caldo de cultivo de un perfil psicosocial que provoca miedo y actitudes racistas entre la población nativa (Hernández-Plaza, 2003).

En suma, al no reconocer que la aculturación se produce en el contexto de relaciones intergrupales asimétricas y no explicitar las dinámicas de poder implicadas, la perspectiva dominante en la investigación sobre integración y aculturación contribuye a mantener el *statu quo* que sostiene y legitima las condiciones de opresión e inequidad. Por otra parte, la perspectiva dominante en la investigación sobre aculturación no responde a esta realidad migratoria porque ignora el papel que tiene la falta de expectativas de futuro en los lugares de asentamiento, donde habitualmente no son bien recibidos ni respetados. Por otro lado, la investigación se ha desarrollado básicamente con metodología cuantitativa y no ha abordado estudios contextualizados que permitan conocer la visión que poblaciones específicas tienen de sus procesos de aculturación.

Por tanto, se hacen necesarios nuevos enfoques teóricos y metodológicos, de investigación-acción, para el análisis y transformación de las condiciones de opresión que viven los inmigrantes. Esta nueva aproximación ha de entender las transiciones migratorias como el conjunto de oportunidades y capacidades que permiten a los inmigrantes rentabilizar en cuotas de bienestar individual, familiar y colectivo, los esfuerzos que hacen por adaptarse culturalmente a sus nuevos escenarios de vida. Asimismo, ha de servir de base para el desarrollo de acciones comunitarias orientadas a dotar a los inmigrantes de oportunidades para: a) desarrollar sus capacidades y potencialidades en el mercado laboral, b) incorporarse a los vecindarios, vivienda, escuela y establecer relaciones igualitarias con los nativos, c) acceder a profesionales culturalmente competentes, d) desarrollar comunidades étnicas equilibradas, con acceso a los mercados y al tejido empresarial, organizaciones e instituciones, así como puestos de dirección y liderazgo social y político, y e) proporcionar pautas para el desarrollo de identidades que permitan compatibilizar herencia cultural y valores occidentales, especialmente para las segundas generaciones. Este nuevo enfoque debe conceder un papel fundamental a la validez psicopolítica de la investigación sobre aculturación, que necesariamente ha de promover la liberación y el bienestar de los colectivos implicados (Prilleltensky, 2008).

La Psicología de la Liberación responde a estos desafíos dado que analiza cómo y por qué la población inmigrante sufre y resiste las adversidades que afronta en los países receptores. Desde esta perspectiva, se definen los problemas objeto de estudio a partir de las condiciones de opresión existentes, se cuestiona el *status quo* y se determina el rol que las dinámicas de opresión juegan en la adaptación cultural y el bienestar de la población inmigrante. A nivel metodológico, la metodología cualitativa permite responder a los desafíos planteados por la Psicología de la



Liberación porque hace posible el estudio de los fenómenos sociales en profundidad, en los contextos naturales donde se desarrollan, y desde el punto de vista de los diferentes colectivos implicados, permitiendo que la recopilación de información esté influenciada por las experiencias y prioridades de los participantes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). De manera particular, el estudio de las narrativas puede ayudar a comprender los vínculos entre las personas y sus contextos. Estudiar las narrativas supone recoger y recomponer las historias de vida o de eventos significativos que son experimentados por las personas que los cuentan en circunstancias concretas. Su valor reside en cómo estas historias organizan la propia experiencia, dan coherencia y significado a los eventos vitales y proporcionan un sentido de continuidad y progreso (Mankowski y Rappaport, 2000) Además, las narrativas actúan como motivadores, ya que las comunidades comparten unos discursos que les ayudan a explicarse, a ellas mismas y a otras, quiénes son, qué están haciendo y porqué (Harper, et al., 2004; Rappaport, 2000).

Partiendo de lo anterior, a continuación se presentan dos estudios en los que se vincula la perspectiva de la Psicología transcultural y la Psicología de la liberación, para explicar y comprender los procesos de aculturación de la población inmigrante tomando en consideración las narrativas de la población marroquí en el sur de España, que confieren a descripciones de sus experiencias y vivencias en los contextos de asentamiento y sus perspectivas de futuro en los mismos. Los estudios presentados forman parte de una investigación más amplia, actualmente en desarrollo, acerca de los factores que facilitan y/o impiden la integración comunitaria y el bienestar de los marroquíes en Andalucía

Estudio 1: El papel de las condiciones de opresión en la integración de los inmigrantes marroquíes en el sur de España

El estudio que se presenta a continuación examina el papel de la opresión en la integración de los inmigrantes marroquíes en el sur de España, prestando especial atención al papel del barrio y el entorno laboral como contextos fundamentales de aculturación. Para ello, se recurre al análisis de narrativas basadas en entrevistas abiertas a una muestra de seis marroquíes residentes en diferentes contextos de la provincia de Almería.

El principal propósito de la investigación es analizar la relación percibida entre las oportunidades y barreras presentes en el barrio y el entorno laboral como contextos locales de aculturación, las estrategias individuales de aculturación adoptadas por los marroquíes, y los resultados adaptativos alcanzados en términos de bienestar y satisfacción con el proyecto migratorio.

Los entrevistados relatan cómo su nueva vida en la provincia de Almería comienza en un barrio que se caracteriza por una presencia mayoritaria de inmigrantes. Estos barrios, de acuerdo con la tipología de contextos de aculturación de Berry (2005), se identifican como barrios de segregación y exclusión.

Los "barrios de segregación" serían aquellos donde la mayoría de la población es marroquí, y el contacto entre inmigrantes y nativos es extremadamente limitado, a excepción de algunos vínculos sociales, claramente asimétricos, basados en relaciones de poder (p.ej. entre empleador y empleado). Estos barrios se identifican principalmente en contextos rurales, cuya economía se basa en la agricultura intensiva de invernadero.

*"Toda la zona de marroquíes excepto la dueña y su hijo, la dueña de la casa"* (mujer, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)

*“Y si hablamos de la relación que tengo con los vecinos, podemos decir que me llevo muy bien con los marroquíes, que son la mayoría del barrio. Nos invitamos, nos reunimos de vez en cuando, pero no tenemos ninguna relación con los españoles (...) Este barrio no me gusta y no me está facilitando la integración”* (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense).

Estos barrios de segregación cuentan con escasos servicios y recursos, por lo que quienes residen en ellos se ven obligados a desplazarse a otras zonas para el acceso a servicios básicos como los sanitarios, educativos y sociales.

*“Es un barrio que no tiene nada, ni centro de salud ni asociaciones. Hay algunas tiendas y cuando queremos hacer compras tenemos que ir al centro donde hay supermercado (Día), o al mercadillo. Para ir al centro de salud también tenemos que ir hasta el centro de Campohermoso”* (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense)

*“Van a Roquetas para hacer compras o al mercadillo el jueves. Suelen ir allí los inmigrantes para comprar. No hay tiendas”* (mujer, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)

Dada la ausencia de contacto entre marroquíes y nativos, los habitantes de estos barrios perciben un elevado nivel de rechazo y prejuicio,

*“Los españoles aquí son racistas. Algunos cuando te acercas a las tiendas ni te miran (...) No nos saludan, no nos miran bien, no se comportan bien”* (mujer, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)

o ningún rechazo, ocasionado precisamente por la ausencia de contacto.

*“No me siento rechazada ni he notado ningún racismo, quizás porque no tengo relación con los españoles”* (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense)

Los “cortijos” en zonas de invernaderos pueden ser considerados “barrios de exclusión”, al describir a la población inmigrante que los habitan como una población invisible que vive en condiciones de extremo aislamiento físico y social.

*“Aquí en Almería, el ochenta por ciento de los marroquíes, de mano de obra es marroquí. Y estos marroquíes, la mayoría viven en cortijos, fuera. Entonces estas personas cómo crees que van a integrarse. Por ejemplo, si entra a trabajar a las ocho y sale a las seis, llega y entra a dormir. No estudia, hasta la televisión no la mira. Hay quienes no tienen ni agua ni luz. Es decir, cómo esta persona va a integrarse”* (hombre, contexto urbano)

Otros habitantes marroquíes describen que en su barrio existe una convivencia entre marroquíes y nativos, aceptándose los unos a los otros como individuos y grupos con diferentes identidades culturales. Estos barrios pueden ser categorizados como “barrios multiculturales”. El barrio de Pescadería, situado en la capital almeriense, presenta algunas de las condiciones propias de este tipo de barrios, siendo el único de los contextos analizados donde la aculturación puede llegar a ser entendida como un proceso recíproco y bidireccional de ajuste mutuo.

*“La gente del barrio (Pescadería) es popular. Es fácil integrarse con ellos. Cuanto te integras con*

*ellos, con el tiempo la persona puede conseguir un trabajo (...). Creo que es un lugar adecuado para que haya integración porque en el barrio hay muchos marroquíes. Para el español es fácil integrarse con la persona marroquí porque no le resulta extraño” (hombre, contexto urbano)*

El barrio de “Pescadería”, situado en un contexto urbano, ofrece todo tipo de servicios (salud, educación, comercios, etc.), y es habitual encontrar negocios y comercios de los propios marroquíes.

*“En Pescadería hay escuelas, hay colegio, está el hospital de Alcazaba también (...). El hospital del barrio está cerca, andando puedes tardar unos diez o quince minutos (...) Existen locutorios, eso lo que hay mucho” (hombre, urbano)*

La elección del barrio está estrechamente relacionada con las características del mercado laboral en el contexto local, y depende en gran medida de las oportunidades que los marroquíes tienen para encontrar trabajo en cada zona. En la provincia de Almería, la mayoría de los marroquíes trabajan en la agricultura intensiva y, en consecuencia, la mayor parte de ellos viven en contextos rurales, cerca de las zonas de invernaderos donde habitualmente trabajan.

*“Por razones de trabajo. Verdaderamente no fue por voluntad propia. Por obligación de trabajo (habla de la decisión de vivir en Las Norias, zona rural del poniente almeriense)” (hombre, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)*

*“Para los hombres, el primer trabajo es la agricultura, el segundo es la construcción, esto es lo que hay. Para las mujeres, la mayoría trabajan en los almacenes (...) Hay otros empleos que no puedo encontrar fácilmente (fuera de la agricultura y la construcción)” (hombre, contexto urbano)*

De acuerdo con la tipología de contextos de aculturación propuesta por Berry (2005), en Almería, el trabajo en la agricultura intensiva de invernadero actúa fundamentalmente como contexto de segregación y exclusión. En este contexto se cuentan historias en las que la mayor parte de los marroquíes empleados en este sector no poseen contrato laboral, por lo que sus oportunidades para alcanzar una situación legal estable y acceder a mejores condiciones laborales en otros sectores, son extremadamente limitadas

*“La inmigración se ha ido a otros sitios, Barcelona. Cuando estás regular, mejor, buscas mucho mejor trabajo y vas a otro sitio. La mayoría de la gente que está trabajando en la agricultura no tiene papeles” (mujer, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)*

En la agricultura intensiva, la mayoría de los trabajadores son inmigrantes. En consecuencia, quienes viven y trabajan en zonas de invernaderos comentan cómo se relacionan principalmente con otros inmigrantes, que no suelen hablar castellano, encontrando escasas oportunidades para relacionarse con la población nativa y aprender el idioma.

*“El trabajo tampoco facilita la integración porque sólo nos encontramos con otros inmigrantes que tampoco hablan el español (rumanos), y tampoco encontramos en el trabajo un lugar donde libremente podamos comunicarnos” (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense)*

*“Aquí no tienes tiempo. Como está ella, está trabajando en los invernaderos. Trabaja muchísimo.*

*Y a veces, últimamente, está trabajando los domingos. Últimamente no tiene un día de descanso, depende de las temporadas (...). Como sus compañeros son rumanos... Han llegado rumanos nuevos que tampoco manejan el español"* (mujer, contexto rural en el poniente almeriense)

El contexto laboral puede desempeñar también un papel clave como contexto de integración y así es percibido por los marroquíes. Se transmite que, en Almería, los marroquíes que consiguen trabajos menos precarios fuera de la agricultura intensiva, habitualmente tienen mayores oportunidades para alcanzar una situación legal estable, relacionarse con los españoles, y aprender el idioma. Estas condiciones suelen ser más comunes en contextos urbanos, donde las oportunidades para encontrar trabajo en otros sectores son mayores, tal como sucede en el caso del entrevistado residente en el barrio de Pescadería.

*"Mi trabajo me facilita mi integración porque me encuentro con mucha gente, gente de varios niveles de pensamiento (...). Para mí como soy pintor, me resulta fácil entrar a las casas, hablar con la gente por razones de mi trabajo, es decir, que me facilita integrarme con la gente, hablar con ellos"* (hombre, contexto urbano).

En conclusión, los resultados obtenidos muestran que, para los marroquíes, vivir y trabajar en contextos multiculturales se asocia con comportamientos y actitudes propios de la integración, y con resultados adaptativos positivos en términos de bienestar y satisfacción con el proyecto migratorio. Este es el caso del entrevistado que vive en el barrio de Pescadería y trabaja como pintor.

*"Efectivamente, la persona cambia un poco porque aprovecha muchas cosas (...). Me siento marroquí, pero como un marroquí que tiene más derechos que un marroquí de allí (...). Me siento de aquí porque te llevas cosas que has adquirido aquí, se ve que vives aquí, una vez estoy allí. Se te nota, se ve en ti que eres de aquí cuando hablas con la gente, a nivel de comportamiento con la gente, a nivel de muchas cosas (...) Como marroquí siempre seguiré como marroquí, sin discusión. Pero con el tiempo, cuando uno vivirá aquí muchos años, uno puede sentirse marroquí pero español"* (hombre, contexto urbano)

*"Yo un cincuenta por ciento me he integrado, y tengo más amigos españoles que marroquíes por razones de mi trabajo"* (hombre, contexto urbano)

*"(Emigrar) fue decisión acertada cien por cien"* (hombre, contexto urbano)

En cambio, vivir y trabajar en contextos de segregación y exclusión, claramente mayoritarios en la provincia de Almería, se asocia con actitudes y comportamientos propios de la separación y la marginalización, y con resultados adaptativos negativos en términos de salud y bienestar. Este es el caso de la entrevistada que reside en Campohermoso, un contexto rural del levante almeriense, y trabaja principalmente en la agricultura intensiva, y ocasionalmente en la hostelería.

*"No sé hablar español (...). En cuanto a mis costumbres, no ha cambiado nada, sigo igual que en Marruecos, cuidando mis costumbres, mi forma de vestir es la misma, y en cuanto a las comidas, son marroquíes. A mí no me gustan las costumbres de aquí, no me gusta la feria"* (mujer, contexto

rural en el levante almeriense)

*“No tenemos ninguna relación con los españoles (...). Yo me siento más integrada con los marroquíes, me llevo perfectamente con ellos”* (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense)

*“No me siento bien, ando con una depresión porque no tengo trabajo ni casa, porque es alquilada y mis hijos no están trabajando”* (mujer, contexto rural en el levante almeriense)

Estudio 2. Bienestar psicológico de inmigrantes en condiciones locales opresoras: tensiones entre integración y separación.

En este trabajo se describen las experiencias de los inmigrantes marroquíes del sur de España que adoptan la separación como estrategia de aculturación. Estas experiencias relatan vivencias de superación y bienestar cuando perciben que el contexto local le ofrece oportunidades de desarrollo personal y cuando consideran que disponen de capacidades para superar las condiciones de opresión en las que se encuentran inmersos. La separación les permite mantener su cultura original y evitar las interacciones con los miembros de la nueva cultura. Para hacerlo, se despliega el mecanismo de la resistencia que evita la marginación o asimilación, protegiéndose de la opresión. Para el análisis se utilizan las narrativas de los inmigrantes marroquíes expresadas en situaciones de entrevistas abiertas y grupos focales, que en total constituyeron 16 marroquíes residentes en las provincias de Almería, Huelva y Sevilla.

El principal objetivo de este texto es hacer un recorrido, a través de las narrativas de las personas entrevistadas, por las diferentes formas de opresión que identifican de manera particular y sobre las que experimentan mecanismos de resistencia. Como criterio de codificación de estas formas de opresión se ha tomado como referencia los mecanismos de opresión y control identificados por Moane (2003): explotación laboral, exclusión política, fragmentación, control cultural y violencia. Por último, se muestra cómo a través de este proceso de opresión-resistencia los marroquíes pueden manifestar bienestar dentro de una concepción personal y particular.

Una de las situaciones de opresión experimentadas es la explotación económica. Un caso lo encontramos en la vida diaria de una mujer inmigrante que habla de las dificultades que para ella conlleva afrontar las necesidades básicas de vivienda, alimentación, etc.. Esta forma de explotación económica también se plantea ante situaciones de explotación laboral donde se incorporan nuevos elementos como consecuencias negativas para la salud y horarios inadecuados.

*“... en el campo son salarios vamos una miseria que si tú tienes una casa y tienes que pagar alquiler en 400€ de alquiler más el agua la comida,... no te llega”* (mujer, contexto rural, Huelva, menos de 9 meses de empleo al año).

*“Nadie estaba satisfecho con un sueldo de miseria, pagándonos 800€ aproximadamente por jornada completa sin pagar nada por las horas extraordinarias..., ese trabajo me ha producido una alergia y un fuerte dolor de espalda. He intentado buscar otro trabajo..., y era peor, he estado solo una semana porque las condiciones eran muy malas, se trabajaba incluso de noche por una miseria de dinero”* (mujer, contexto rural, Almería, indocumentada, menos de 9 meses de empleo al año).

Ante estas circunstancias la población inmigrante marroquí expresa que tiene las

capacidades y oportunidades para rentabilizar en cuotas de bienestar sus esfuerzos por adaptarse culturalmente al nuevo contexto, que tiene que ver con el desarrollo de conciencia crítica para llevar a cabo acciones de superación a las condiciones de opresión. De manera particular, entre los miembros de los grupos focales se proporcionan ejemplos de cómo los marroquíes crean sus propios negocios, lo cual les permite ser autosuficientes y satisfacer varias de sus necesidades simultáneamente (i.e., mantenimiento de su gastronomía y redes sociales con compatriotas, independencia económica).

*“A: Los marroquíes ..., aunque tienen todas las dificultades, donde se encuentra, mejoran su calidad de vida. Van a hacer comercio, hacen sus bazares, hacen sus... Es lo que me gusta de los marroquíes.*

*B: Es el futuro.*

*A: Sí, pero es algo que me gusta de los marroquíes. Luchan para tener algo mejor.*

*B: Son emprendedores.*

*A: Yo lo veo positivo. Y da independencia económica” (grupo focal de Almería).*

En el caso de la exclusión política, ésta es definida por aquellas situaciones que conllevan la imposibilidad de participación política, del derecho al voto, del disfrute de derechos sociales básicos, etc. En sus discursos se comentan la relación entre la ausencia de participación política y el no poder hacer oír su voz..

*“El inmigrante no tiene derecho a que está reflejado en la ley de extranjería, a los derechos básicos, a los derechos sociales básicos ... El español tiene derecho” (grupo focal de Almería).*

*“Así el problema está fundamentalmente en el derecho del ciudadano como ciudadano, mientras los inmigrantes no tienen voz ni participación en la vida política, yo creo que al político local, porque hay que empezar por la política localista, municipalista, para abrir vía a la participación comunitaria, porque no existe participación comunitaria, existen individuos en un municipio... cuando lo empezarán los inmigrantes a participar con voz y voto, yo creo que ahí se abrirá la participación comunitaria. No hay participación comunitaria, hay grupos viviendo dentro de una mayoría, donde la mayoría tiene protección del político, frente al otro que en lo tiene. Cuando ese se discrimina su derecho, el político ahí, defiende, defiende a un ciudadano más que a otro” (grupo focal de Almería).*

Las estrategias de afrontamiento que se expresan ante esta situación tienen que ver con las oportunidades que les brinda el contexto para acceder a las organizaciones, instituciones y a puestos de dirección y liderazgo social y político. La resistencia a las condiciones de opresión se consigue creando asociaciones, implicándose en la comunidad, fortaleciendo las redes sociales con sus compatriotas y presentándose a la población autóctona como un colectivo cohesionado y con fortalezas.

*“Pues es muy importante esta cuestión de las organizaciones, porque son una de las puertas para defender los derechos de los trabajadores y para la igualdad de derechos...” (hombre, contexto rural, Almería).*

*“No es fácil para que una mujer marroquí sigue con una asociación adelante. Si ... me está*

*diciendo que tuvo dificultades, yo más dificultades porque no les interesa que una mujer,... que nuestros hijos puedan aprender el idioma para llegar a un alto nivel, no les interesa que tú consigas la colocación de ... de un título alto, porque no les interesa, a parte que eres inmigrantes marroquí... Y a parte, como estoy diciendo, como mujer, he encontrado mucha... Y por qué estoy todos los días presente en todos los actos, en todos los actos. Yo quito mi tiempo de mi trabajo, no quiero ganar dinero, pero esto presente. Para que mi voz sea escuchada más, más lejos” (grupo focal, Almería).*

Respecto a las situaciones de fragmentación, la población inmigrante marroquí refiere el poco contacto existente entre el colectivo marroquí y la población autóctona y entre aquél y los diferentes grupos étnicos. Así, la competencia real entre inmigrantes y autóctonos es casi inexistente, dada la clara segmentación del mercado laboral, que ubica a los trabajadores inmigrantes en los sectores más precarios. Puede existir cierta competencia entre inmigrantes de diferentes países, pero incluso en este caso, en ocasiones lo que predomina es la segmentación, a través de la ubicación de trabajadores de diferentes países en distintos sectores del mercado laboral. En Almería esto es muy evidente: en hostelería no trabajan los marroquíes ni subsaharianos, relegados casi exclusivamente a la agricultura, pero sí inmigrantes latinoamericanos o europeos del este.

*“No creo, hay diferentes opiniones, por ejemplo nunca yo ha visto un grupo junto entre marroquíes y españoles, cada uno va por su lado” (hombre, contexto rural, Huelva, indocumentado, menos de 9 meses de empleo al año).*

*“Últimamente como han venido rumanos y búlgaros, ahora trabajan casi siempre sólo ellos, aunque veo que los marroquíes son muy trabajadores, pero al no tener papeles y no conocer el idioma, no se les contrata” (mujer, contexto rural, Almería indocumentada, menos de 9 meses de empleo al año).*

Ante esta situación de opresión la población inmigrante se resiste creando conexiones sociales, delimitando su territorio y creando su red de recursos para satisfacer sus necesidades.

*“... va construyendo su espacio y los grupos humanos... vamos marcando nuestro terreno. Los inmigrantes empiezan a comprar casas, con el esfuerzo, lo que costaba, después de mucho esfuerzo... El inmigrante compra una casa en un bloque..., todos se van, se venden, compran inmigrantes, la tienda se abre del inmigrante. Lo que el político decía que no quería, los guetos en su pueblo, al fin y al cabo, se terminaron creando guetos” (grupo focal, Almería).*

*“... la relación que tengo con los vecinos... me llevo muy bien con los marroquíes que son la mayoría del barrio, nos invitamos, nos reunimos de vez en cuando, pero no tenemos ninguna relación con los españoles. Excepto los saludos, ya que no hablamos español, aunque son buenas personas” (mujer, contexto rural, Almería, indocumentada, menos de 9 meses de empleo al año).*

En lo que se refiere a las situaciones de control cultural, se ejemplifica con situaciones tales como las dificultades para usar su lengua en lugares públicos, practicar su religión libremente, vestir sus ropas, etc.

*“Y el miedo, el miedo al musulmán, porque el marroquí es el musulmán. Entonces, para no*

*decir que ese rechazo es por miedo, o para que esté Almería más segura de lo que es el musulmán, entonces es por eso por lo que está haciendo el traer la mano de obra de otros países que no tienen ese miedo religioso” (grupo focal, Almería).*

*“Yo hablo árabe con mi mujer y mosquea a los españoles, porque, que está hablando este. ¡Eso malo, eh! ...” (hombre, Sevilla, documentado, trabaja más de 9 meses al año).*

La población inmigrante reacciona a este control reafirmando sus creencias y hábitos, introduciéndolos en la población autóctona y tratando que ésta se habitúe a ellos.

*“... tenemos una mezquita en el barrio de la Macarena, en principio tuvimos un poco de recelos por parte de los vecinos... cuando vieron la realidad de lo que es la mezquita a mi personalmente me acuden muchísima gente incluso española, ... Porque a mi me consideran como si fuese a lo mejor un pastor de ellos, ¿no? un cura” (grupo focal, Sevilla).*

*“...se echa de menos,... Lo hacemos pero no tan completo. Falta muchas cosas para, el ambiente... pero las costumbres no se cambia... Sí, sí. Las mantengo. Las fiestas... eso lo mantengo... Claro, por ejemplo cuando voy a una fiesta así marroquí que me acuerdo pues sí, por lo menos tengo, tengo algo. No lo he perdido todo...” (mujer de Sevilla, indocumentada, más de 9 meses de empleo al año).*

La violencia ejercida hacia la población inmigrante es vivenciada a distintos niveles, como agresiones físicas o verbales, como intimidación por parte de las autoridades, instituciones, etc.

*“Hoy en día yo lo veo incluso con las autoridades, estamos marcados como sospechosos, todo el mundo que acude a la mezquita, y hay un control diario a las mezquitas. Y algunas veces pues dilatan el punto de acoso de los musulmanes. Porque hubo temporadas que se ponían policías en la puerta de la mezquita” (grupo focal, Sevilla).*

*“... la gente en la comunidad cristiana solamente quiere entre ellos, entonces a mí la madre no me tragaba para nada, para nada me hizo sufrir, llorar, todo. ... tenía la novia de aquí de Moguer y la trataba diferente de a mí... se demostraba ella sola que ella era racista, sin decir nada, sin... demostraba ella sola,... y me hacía como si fuera inferior a ella. Y yo no soy ni inferior a ella si superior a ella, pero ella me hacía sentirme así. Pero como a mí me daba absolutamente igual, yo me pasaba porque a ratos yo me sentía incómoda estar en casa de una persona que no te trate como si fuera... Entonces me sentí super rara. Y ahí es cuando me sentí que era, que no eres querida, que no era..., y desde ahí ya ...” (mujer, contexto rural, Huelva, trabaja menos de 9 meses al año).*

Ante esta situación de violencia los marroquíes en Andalucía pueden reaccionar interiorizándola, mostrando indefensión, desesperanza, baja autoestima, etc. Sin embargo, cuando se autodefinen con capacidad crítica reaccionan evitando la desesperanza, tratando de explicitar la situación antes quienes ejercen dicha violencia sin generalizar las situaciones y mostrando que en la mayoría de los casos los estereotipos no se cumplen.

*“Y yo evitaba para no enfrentarme porque odio estar siempre a la defensa y al final tuve que echar la broma -pero qué pasa cada semana me ves y me tienes que registrar-. Entonces está, y al final*



*ya dejo de, pero tuve que echarle una broma" (grupo focal, Sevilla).*

*"Y dar fé de buena conducta diariamente... Por eso le digo que hay que luchar en, hay que olvidar de que uno realmente está, porque yo le estaría transmitiendo un sentimiento de mucho, de las personas, de las personas musulmanas que ven que son, que tienen que hacer esa labor diaria de decir que son personas correctas" (grupo focal, Sevilla).*

En suma, se ha observado cómo las condiciones opresoras de los contextos receptores provocan el despliegue de estrategias de resistencia como rechazo hacia la nueva cultura y desconfianza hacia la población anfitriona o el fortalecimiento de las propias redes sociales como refugio de la población inmigrante en su grupo étnico. Estas estrategias de resistencia experimentadas y contadas por los inmigrantes marroquíes en situaciones de opresión tienen lugar cuando la comunidad inmigrante tiene las capacidades y oportunidades necesarias, constituyéndose entonces como un proceso de desarrollo psicopolítico (Prilleltensky, 2003) que implica el desarrollo de conciencia crítica, creación de redes sociales y puesta en marcha de acciones de transformación. Como consecuencia, la población inmigrante se libera de las fuerzas opresoras y alcanza bienestar. Bienestar que es entendido por la población en función de tres dimensiones; desarrollo de la espiritualidad, sentido de utilidad social y estado de satisfacción general. La posibilidad de desarrollo espiritual y la práctica de sus hábitos religiosos que les permite tener esperanza en un futuro mejor en el que poder influir y un consuelo ante las dificultades que afrontan. En segundo lugar, como reinterpretación de utilidad social por el que consideran que la población autóctona carecería de los actuales niveles de bienestar si no fuese por su contribución económica al país. Y, por último, como estado de satisfacción general donde se valora que el esfuerzo invertido en el proyecto migratorio ha merecido la pena o que, al menos, de manera progresiva se logran objetivos.

*"Yo creo que eso depende también del factor espiritual, yo creo que es el alivio... Es el alivio, ¿no? que tiene el musulmán, ¿no? Por eso acude, cuando está agobiado, por eso acude, porque espiritualmente a la mezquita, porque proporcione, por lo menos esa esperanza de que pueda cambiar el mundo algún día o cambiar incluso su situación. Entonces pues eso el factor religioso es muy, muy, muy importante que hay que anotarlo como parte ¿no?..." (grupo focal de Sevilla).*

*"... si no existieran los marroquíes y si no existieran los africanos, su nivel de vida (de los españoles) no estaría alto sin la presencia de los marroquíes. Los marroquíes son imprescindibles." (hombre, contexto rural, Almería, documentado, trabaja más de 9 meses al año).*

*"¿Havalido la pena?... yo creo que sí porque una vez cuando, tú no te das cuenta, cuando alguien te pregunta cuando vuelvas atrás.. Yo he luchado mucho, porque aquí no das, no das importancia a lo que haces, porque tú estás trabajando, hacer cosas, y cuando te paras pues..., mereció la pena porque yo he podido" (mujer, Sevilla, indocumentada, trabaja menos de 9 meses al año).*

## Conclusiones

Desde la perspectiva de la Psicología de la Liberación (Prilleltensky, 2008), se han presentado dos estudios que analizan las narrativas de un grupo de inmigrantes marroquíes

asentados en el sur de España que experimentan los procesos de aculturación en contextos específicos de opresión.

En el primer estudio, se han analizado diferentes contextos de aculturación que según la tipología propuesta por Berry (2005), se han podido categorizar como barrios de segregación, exclusión y multiculturales. Mientras que en éstos últimos se manifiestan experiencias de convivencia entre inmigrantes y nativos aceptándose mutuamente y en los que la población inmigrante marroquí obtiene resultados adaptativos positivos en términos de bienestar y satisfacción con el proyecto migratorio; en los barrios predominantes de segregación y exclusión se enfatizan las condiciones de asimetría y las relaciones de poder entre población inmigrante y autóctona,. En estos barrios, relacionados con actitudes y comportamientos propios de la separación y la marginalización, la comunidad inmigrante marroquí muestra resultados adaptativos negativos en términos de salud y bienestar.

El segundo estudio se ha centrado en la exploración de aquellas narrativas que en contextos de opresión exponen cómo la separación como estrategia de aculturación y el fortalecimiento de capacidades como resistencia a las condiciones de opresión puede alcanzar cuotas de bienestar. Bienestar que es definido en términos de desarrollo de la espiritualidad, sentido de utilidad social y estado de satisfacción general. Ante contextos de opresión como la explotación laboral, exclusión política, a la fragmentación, al control cultural y a la violencia (Moane, 2003), la población inmigrante marroquí adopta estrategias de separación a la cultura dominante y ofrece mecanismos de resistencia gracias a la participación organizacional y comunitaria, al fortalecimiento de redes sociales y de las creencias y hábitos que les son propios, evitando así la marginación o asimilación.

En resumen, se observa que los contextos más idóneos para alcanzar bienestar son los multiculturales. Sin embargo, en Andalucía predominan los contextos de segregación y exclusión que pueden ocasionar resultados adaptativos negativos en términos de salud y bienestar. No obstante, este modo de entender la propia experiencia de aculturación cambia si en estos contextos la población inmigrante marroquí se identifica como grupo cultural propio frente al de la población autóctona y se define poseedora de capacidades y oportunidades para resistirse a las diferentes condiciones de opresión y para alcanzar bienestar, definido en los términos relevantes para ellos.

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## Places of fear and attachment. How Azoreans perceive seismic and volcanic risk.

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### Abstract

*Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have been regular phenomena in the Azores. In spite of the knowledge already gathered by local historians and earth sciences researchers, there are no scientific data on the socio-cultural dimensions of volcanic and seismic risks. A research project on risk perception of natural hazards (TOPOI METUS) is now being carried out in order to study the social cosmographies of seismic and volcanic hazard. Based on data produced along fourteen in-depth extensive interviews conducted in five of the nine islands of the archipelago, this presentation focuses on preliminary findings of perceptions regarding seismic and volcanic risk profiles, patrimonial and economic vulnerability to those risks, and risk management (i.e. information and actions taken before a crisis, and during the response and recovery phases of a disaster situation). Exploratory results show that people living in the most vulnerable areas insist in staying there, even when they are aware of the dangerousness involved in it. To uncover the apparently irrational reasons beneath these options will allow understanding some of the barriers encountered by risk managers engaged in the minimization of destructive impacts of those natural hazards. Knowing that people both 'put themselves in the Hands of God' and highly identify with the patrimonial history of their living place may help to develop knowledge to more fully inform civil protection/defence policies. Results may also allow reconceptualising the variable "identification with the local" in the scope of risk perception.*

Key words: Seismic risk perception; volcanic risk perception; place attachment; the Azores islands;

### Introduction

The Azores are nine islands of volcanic origin located over the triple junction of the North American, Eurasian, and African tectonic plates. These characteristics make phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions regular natural threats throughout the archipelago's six centuries of history. Some of those were quite expressive natural events with serious impacts in the physical and social environment of the islands. Recent events, still in the memory of Azoreans (earthquakes of Faial Island, in 1998, and Terceira Island, in 1980) have caused deaths, wounded, homeless and mass destruction of buildings in several villages in different islands.

The seriousness of the potential impact and the uncertainty of occurrence of seismic and volcanic events in the islands justify the social investment that has been put forward both in their study and in the implementation of civil protection/defence devices. However, in spite of the notion that a successful process of decision making and implementation of complex strategies of risk management depends upon the integration of both people's perceptions of risk and experts' risk assessment (Bernardo, 1998; Brunsdon & King, 2002; Renn, 2004; Sjöberg, 2000),

the management of these natural risks has been solely based on experts' evaluations. In other words, seismic and volcanic risk appraisal and management in the Azores have not taken into consideration the analysis of the social and cultural factors which frame people's perceived risks as well as their perceptions and behaviour towards those risk situations. In addition, there is also a lack of knowledge concerning other elements considered to be crucial for an efficient way of managing natural hazards - the communication between all parts involved in the situation, the participation of citizens and stakeholders in decisions, and the trust people hold in persons and institutions responsible for risk governance (Renn, 2004). In fact, drawing on a wide and quite comprehensive perspective on risk governance, a framework proposed by IRGC – International Risk Governance Council, a central assumption in this study is that governance choices today are believed to call for an interchange between governmental institutions, economic agents, and the civil society (IRGC, 2005). If there is to be interplay among them, considering the different stakeholders' interests and the possibility of eventual conflicts with respect to what is at risk and how severe that risk might be, it would be necessary to understand, develop and integrate different perspectives of risk.

Earthquakes, like other natural and technological disasters, are random, rare and when they occur there is not time to implement risk control measures. Due to these characteristics, they are usually perceived as threatening and fatal – *risk as a fatal threat model* (IRGC, 2005; Renn, 04). Contrary to technological hazards, which are understood as resulting from reasoned decision, natural events may also be seen as catastrophic events that no one can escape from or, except God, can control. For that reason, such situations, including earthquakes, are often seen as prescribed phenomena – *risk as fate model* (idem). Renn (2004), in his revision of perception models used by society in perceiving and assessing risk, posits that people react to those sources of risk either by moving away from them, when they can afford doing it and when events occur regularly or frequently, or by denying them or their severity, if they are rare and random, as the risks under study in this research.

Knowing that a high risk perception does not lead necessarily to people moving away from the threat (Gaillard, 2008), then what can explain the decision to stay in one's living place? Also, why people who are exposed to seismic/volcanic risk are frequently less equipped to deal with those events than they should be (Spittal et al., 2008)? Controllability associated to natural hazards such as earthquakes is not related to when they will occur but rather to the strength and the capacity of systems and social structures to manage disasters. Thus, can it be expected that having populations better prepared to deal with this source of risk will contribute to both empower them and reduce the denial of the threat they face?

Studies on public's perception of earthquake risk concerned with *loss* reduction strategies identified factors that seem to contribute to the adoption and support of protective measures and behaviour. Some of these factors are: recent experience, degree of personal exposure, degree of perceived control over risks, awareness of mitigation options, the availability of resources to address them, trust in the loss-reduction strategies suggested and those who intend to implement them, perception of responsibility for loss reduction actions, the social costs and benefits associated with risks (e.g. Gouch, et al., 1995; Palm and Hodgson, 1992; Smith, 1992; referred in Wachtendorf & Sheng, 2002). Other research (Brunsdon & King, 2002; Shaw, 2003; Mileti, 1993) also focusing on risk perception and risk reduction have pointed out the crucial role that education, families

and the community play in contributing for both a culture of preparedness and disaster recovery. Place identity and local attachment, which have been studied with a greater emphasis in the fields of community psychology and environmental psychology, can also mediate/moderate practices of preparing for and coping with disasters.

A considerable body of literature in those fields has been devoted to explaining the links between people and places. 'Sense of community' (Sarason, 1986; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Chavis & Pretty, 1999), 'place/local identity' (Proshansky, Fabián & Kaminoff, 1983), and the emotional bond between people and place or 'place attachment' (Tuan, 1974; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Mesch & Manor, 1998) have been central constructs in research intended to explore and clarify people's behaviour, perceptions and decisions regarding aspects of their physical and social surroundings. The relationship of those constructs with variables such as the adoption of sustainable habits and behaviours (Pol, 2006), the use of natural resources (Bonaiuto et al, 2008), land use changes (Bonaiuto et al, 2002) or the support of protected areas (Carrus et al, 2005) are just a few examples. Studies on seismic/volcanic risk perception have focused on issues such as confidence on emergency plans and public officials (Barberi, et al, 2008), household adjustment to earthquake hazard (Lindell & Perry, 2000) or hazard preparedness (Ngyuen et al, 2006; Spittal et al., 2008) and only some have looked at the relationship of risk perception with people's sense of community or people's attachment to their living place (Barberi, et al, 2008; Gaillard, 2008).

To address the above mentioned gap between experts' risk assessment and people's risk perceptions, as well as the lack of information on disaster preparedness in the Azores, a research project, "*TOPOI METUS - Social cosmographies of danger. Risk perception of natural disasters*", is now being carried out by social science researchers in collaboration with geological risk researchers at the University of the Azores. This study, along with others focusing on risk perception and communication regarding different hazards, aims at contributing to bring together and to facilitate the communication among all parts involved in a particular risk situation: decision-makers, researchers, citizens and the media. As such, in addition to creating knowledge on the social dimension of risk situations, it is crucial to develop communication assets and devices (videos, web, video games, cartoons, flyers, etc) capable of supporting decision and action intended to mitigate risk sources and/or consequences. Thus, the study's major goals are:

1. To explore personal narratives of natural disaster situations in order to both understand how dangerous and uncontrollable events are interpreted and to obtain information capable of helping in the construction of a questionnaire;
2. To construct a questionnaire, sensitive to the Azorean context, the mysticism historically embedded in natural disasters, and the people's identification and emotional relationship with the place, (1) to study perceptions of risk associated to natural disasters (*i.e.* the existent knowledge on the agent of risk, the risk profile and the vulnerability of the different systems to the risk; the public evaluation of the social response to these situations; and people's commitment to a 'preparedness culture'), and (2) to clarify communication aspects (strategies and means of communication people value the most; public trust; and what functions should risk messages serve); and
3. To validate the questionnaire for stratified samples of the population in different islands of the archipelago.

The research was organized in 2 phases: the first was an exploratory study of people's narratives devoted to uncover their perception of seismic and volcanic risk, and the second was

dedicated to the construction of a questionnaire, based on the information gathered in the exploratory phase, and its validation in the Azores. The study is still in progress and is expected to be finished towards the end of 2009. This presentation focuses on the first phase and on preliminary findings emerging from data obtained through the participants' narratives.

## Method

The *TOPOY METUS* Study will be based on thirty in-depth, individual interviews in five of the nine islands of the archipelago (São Miguel, Santa Maria, Terceira, Faial, and Flores). These islands were selected by employing a maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990) and by using as criteria the frequency, time of last occurrence and severity of seismic and volcanic events. This presentation focuses on data produced along fourteen interviews already carried out<sup>1</sup>, with an average duration of 60 minutes, conducted in three of the nine islands of the archipelago (São Miguel, Santa Maria, Terceira)

As to participants in the study, in order to obtain a greater diversity, the thirty participants were stratified in terms of age (10 from 18-25 years old group; 10 from 26-55 years old group; 10 from more than 56 years old group) and sex (15 males; 15 females).

A set of predetermined open-ended questions were designed to address a system of four dimensions, and 14 sub-dimensions of seismic and volcanic risk perception as well as predictors such as age, sex, place of birth, place of residence, religious orientation, educational level, profession and place attachment– connectedness with the place. Given the salience of this last predictor in the present study, it makes sense to present some questions asked to assess it – *“How connected are you with this place? How much do you enjoy living here? Would you live in another place? Knowing the dangers of living in the Azores, why do persist in living here? What are the main reasons for you to live here/not moving to another place?”*

The interview dimensions were: (1) Risk source characterization (e.g. *“How do you describe an earthquake? And how do you describe a volcano?” “What causes earthquakes/volcanoes in the Azores?”*); (2) Risk profile assessment (e.g. *“Have all the islands been equally affected by those natural events?” “Which events do you think were the most severe?” “Do you think that the probability of occurring an earthquake in this island is smaller, equal or larger than the probability of an earthquake to occur in another island? Why?” “Is there anything we can control in an earthquake or in a volcano? What is it?”*); (3) Systems' vulnerability evaluation (e.g. *“Who has been more affected by earthquakes/volcanoes? Has anyone benefited with those events? Who? How?” “In your opinion, which aspects can make a given place more vulnerable than another place?” “What kind of damage can earthquakes and volcanoes cause?”*); (4) Risk management - before, in response to, and recovering from the crisis. (e.g. *“What should people do to prepare themselves for earthquakes / volcanoes?” “Do you consider that what is being done so far guarantees peoples' safety? Why? What do you think that might be failing regarding prevention? Which actions should be carried on to improve the situation? The information you have is sufficient to face the problem? Where did you learn what you know about the way of acting in the situation?”*); and (5) Trust – in information processes; in risk management processes (e.g. *“How much do you trust the entities involved in crisis management?” “How much do you trust the information that is given to citizens before, during, and recovering from a crisis?” “Who, from all persons and entities involved in the management of these phenomena, do you trust most? Why?” “Who can't we trust? Why”*).

1 Interviews carried out until the preparation of this presentation in May of 2008.

Data are being content analyzed by the three members of the research team, individually at first and jointly later, in order to reach a consensus. The analysis aims are twofold: (1) to identify data 'regularities' - the participants' more salient shared perceptions and perspectives regarding the risks under study; and (2) to spot data 'specificities' - the diversity of participants' ways of understanding and explaining phenomena. While the former may account for possible trends or tendencies in perceiving the various dimensions of risks and, therefore, may allow for some sort of comparison with findings from other studies, the later would provide the heterogeneity of positions crucial for the empirical oriented construction of the intended Seismic and Volcanic Risk Perception Questionnaire in a further phase of the study.

The findings presented next refer to a preliminary analysis of data from fourteen interviews analyzed up to the present.

### **Preliminary data analysis**

Earthquakes were regarded as the most serious (more dangerous; uncontrollable; with more devastating effects on social and physical contexts) natural hazard in the Azores. Other natural hazards (*i.e.* small tornados, floods, land sliding) and 'man-made' hazards (*i.e.* *"The Azores being attacked as a retaliation of Cimeira das Lajes"*- A., Male 76 yrs. old), were also appointed as significant but, curiously, volcanoes were not mentioned at all. The smaller relevance attributed to volcanoes is somewhat reinforced by the difference in ways of describing the two natural hazards under study: while earthquake descriptions rested on a multiplicity of dimensions - sensorial, emotional, physical, and cognitive - (*e.g.* *"Earthquakes put everything shaking. You see and feel things trembling. (...) They can have either a tectonic or volcanic nature. (...) They scare me."* - M., female, 45 yrs old), volcanoes were described in a much simplistic and typified manner and often portrayed as spectacular events (*e.g.* *"A volcano is when the magma comes out of the earth. (...) peaces of earth in fire projected in the sky"* - J., male, 19 yrs old). Nevertheless, there is a strong connection of emotions with both earthquakes and volcanoes. Referring to them, the majority of interviewees, regardless of their age, sex, island of residence or previous experience with this kind of events, expressed fear and anxiety (*i.e.* fear of dying; fear of loosing a loved one). Regarding the perceived severity of events, most participants stated that seismic and volcanic risks varied in the various islands (some islands being very much affected while others having no seismic and volcanic activity and events ranging from quite strong to very weak). As matter of fact, the way people recognize the threat varies with the degree of perceived personal exposure.

The interviewees considered that earthquakes cannot be predicted but pointed out that the weather and specifically a certain type of weather (*e.g.* quiet, muffled, warm, 'deaf'), was a sign of earthquake announcement. Animal (strange, bizarre) behaviour was also appointed as premonitions by many respondents. For some of them this uncontrollability seems to justify their lack of concern in adopting measures to get better prepared for disaster (*e.g.* *"What can we do?! Nothing. Earthquakes don't announce themselves!"* - A., Female, 23yrs old). Others, despite considering those events uncontrollable believe there can be a relative controllability by strengthening the infrastructures resistance and/or by developing an efficient social response and individual preparedness to crisis - (*e.g.* *"little can be done to control the situation except being better prepared to respond during a crisis, for example: to have more resistant houses and buildings in general; knowing what to do during the occurrences"* - J., Male, 23yrs old). In a further and



deeper analysis of these results it would be interesting to see if there is juxtaposition between the prediction of earthquakes and the plausibility of preparedness in the justification people provide for their behaviours and their commitment with a culture of precaution.

Far from the time when earthquakes and volcanoes were seen as God's punishments and/or signs of discontentment, as described in the 16th through 18th century historical narratives, today's prevailing explanations are mainly grounded on factual and/or scientific evidence. However, the majority of interviewees think that these events cause losses in the generality of the affected populations: casualties were appointed as the worst consequence, followed by patrimonial losses. With respect to who is more negatively affected by the disaster situation and who benefits with an earthquake, opinions were associated to the 'seismic experience' of respondents. Those who had never had that experience tended to believe that there were no gains in these situations (e.g. "*nobody can gain anything with an earthquake, everybody is affected (...) the poor people is the population segment suffering more with earthquakes*" - E., Female, 75 yrs old). On the other hand, those who had experienced an earthquake reported different points of view: an emphasis on losses suffered by a particular segment of the population (e.g. "*the ones that had something [a house, a business] before the earthquake but were not rich are the most affected one; they lose everything they possessed and had worked for throughout their entire lives and then, because of that, they are 'rewarded' when they are considered rich and don't get any support to repair the damages suffered*" - L., Male, 60 yrs old); and, curiously, the belief that everybody, both at a personal and at a community level, gained something with an earthquake (e.g. "*Everybody gets something out of it. And, in general, the society also benefits because of the reconstruction that gets done in the buildings and everything.*" J., Male, 23yrs old).

The inexistence of a culture of precaution becomes more evident with data pertaining to risk management on the pre-occurrence phase of disasters. The majority of interviewees revealed not doing anything in special to get prepared for these kinds of events, and not needing more information in order to be better prepared to respond to such situations. This idea sounds paradoxical taking into consideration the negative evaluations addressed to public entities. The Government and Civil Defence forces are seen as being quite inactive in preparing citizens for a crisis. Regarding trust on the various parts involved, the interviewees showed a tendency for trusting others – official and non official entities – regarding both risk/crisis communication and risk/crisis management, although opinions differ with respect to public entities: (i.e. "... *if there is a disaster the different entities – military, Government and NGOs - joint themselves and come to rescue and help*" – A. Female, 40 yrs. old ; "*I want to believe them, but I am not sure to what extent they tell us the truth*" - A., Male 76 yrs. old; "*No, we cannot trust anybody anymore*" - L., Male, 60 yrs old; or "*No, they do not really care to help people*" - E., Female, 75 yrs old).

With regard to 'Place Attachment', interviewees reported having a quite strong connection to their living place and that feeling was grounded on both social-emotional reasons - birth place, life history, interpersonal relationships, knowing the place, and beauty; as well as material/quality of life reasons - owning a house, having facilities near the house. Participants who had lived through a seismic and/or volcanic crisis stressed the solidarity among people and the capacity of affected community residents to solve conflicts as the major facts in those situations.

Although these are preliminary analyses, data suggest interesting paths to explore later. Taking into consideration the uncontrollability of events, the strong social and emotional ties with

the place and among people, and a general sense of basic trust our results gain new contours. Understanding how these three tendencies, which are positive and functional, conjugate to sustain rationales of avoidance and disinvestment regarding crisis preparation is a challenge that remains open to be addressed next.

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# Disasters and social participation in a Nahuat Community from Mexico

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## Abstract

*This article is organized in four sections. The first one introduces to the topics of disasters and community participation. The second section describes a participative paving project of a rural community as means of confronting a disaster in December, 1989. A snowstorm destroyed the region's coffee plantations dramatically affecting its population. An analysis of the relationships of vulnerability, resilience and community participation is presented. The third section is an account of community's social participation facing intense rains in October 1999 and the positive effects of the joint action of inhabitants from the community, teachers and university professionals. The fourth section presents the dramatic events caused by the Dean Hurricane in August-September 2007. This section stresses the importance of preventive actions derived to resilience and community participation.*

Key words: Disasters, vulnerability, resilience, community organization and social participation.

## Introduction: The disasters

The increasing frequency of destructive events.

Sustainable development, eco-development, sustainable society are some of the multiple and varied concepts that, especially in the seventies, started to be developed to face socio-environmental challenges. The report called *Club of Rome: The Limits to Growth* could be signaled as a symbolic date about the growing consciousness of something that had become evident from decades ago, the crescent deterioration of the human's habitat due to the actions taken by humans.

In this context, the topic of disasters and their study started to acquire a prominent place in the scientific realm as well as in public policy, given the increase of the frequency of destructive events in diverse locations of the planet. Explanations of disasters have their own history: they went from religious interpretations that considered them to be "God's punishments", -a belief widely spread during ancient times as well as the Middle Ages- going to the Enlightenment

interpretations of disasters that emphasizes an anthropogenic feature. It is now a common place the recognition that the so called “natural disasters” are actually a social product and the result of a human civilizing process which has been taking place during the past two centuries: industrialization, population growth, the “development” and happiness paradigm, all of them Modernity’s features in different versions, such as those of western capitalism and that of the socialist bloc.

The split society-nature started to take alarming proportions, and current informational capitalism, post-industrial and post-socialist, flexible, global and at the end savage, in the one we are immersed, has not been able to cope nature’s destruction. The issue is not an easy one to face because it involves cultural constructions from long date. The hegemonic cultural trend has been and is still one that promotes lifestyles that imply a high degree of energy and water consumption, and at the same time, a great production of waste. These ways of life have already become unviable for the whole population and they are only possible for a minority of the people. Those who live in such lifestyles are not willing to change them, and those who have no access to them, desire to have it. In addition to that, the structural and symbolic frameworks that hold them in place and feed those unviable ways of life are not easy to revert, or at least their transformation includes great social costs in doing it.

The environmental summits, environmentalist organizations, the growing debate about global warming, air’s pollution, and scarcity of water and, in general, what has been called climate change has allowed some actions to be taken by some governments and citizens. Even though the effects of their actions have had limited results, these are symbolically significant.

### **New phenomenon’s conceptualization**

From the decade of the eighties, as an answer to the increase in the frequency of the so called disasters, the conceptual frameworks started to grow rapidly through important analytic works (Dynes, R. R. 1993, Quaratelli, E.L. 2000, Maskery, A. 1989, Blaikie, 1996, Aguirre et al, 1995). This conceptualization includes multiple forms of categories of risk, threat, vulnerability and resilience or resistance capacity; and have been distinguished as calamity, disaster or catastrophe according to their intensity levels.

Among different conceptions of disaster, one that seems to be relevant is the one which regards it as a natural change, ordinary or extraordinary, that involves damages to human beings. If there is no damage done to human groups, it cannot be regarded, in strict sense, as a disaster.

Taking this definition as a starting point, it can be said that the disaster’s magnitude –and in consequence the level of risk for the population affected by it– is directly proportional to their vulnerability. The concept of socio-environmental risk has been identified as one of great analytic usefulness and diverse authors define it as the relationship between vulnerability and threat. Vulnerability is a population’s fragility, the latter understood as a geographical location, insufficient material infrastructure, precarious housing, public institution’s weaknesses, or social isolation. Threat, on the other hand, is a sudden change in the environment. The greater the vulnerability or fragility are, the greater the risk of damage in a given population and as well its difficulty to recover from it. That is why a population living in extreme poverty, located in areas where the impact of climate change is more direct and frequent, is a population in a situation of high risk.

Finally, from physics, it has been adopted the concept of resilience, understood as the capacity to resist before destruction and also the capacity to re-construct after a traumatic situation. It is a person's or group's capacity to adapt well in the face of tragedy, trauma and threat.

### **Indigenous communities and disasters.**

Indigenous communities from Mesoamerica, as those from other parts of the world, live in a paradox. On the one hand, their way of living is precarious and they are subjugated to different types of oppression, discrimination and harassment which increase their vulnerability. On the other hand, they have accumulated an extremely important and relevant knowledge regarding their environmental surroundings, that, as it was said by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon "the world is paying increasing attention to the leadership of indigenous populations in environmental matters" (ONU, 2007).

Traditional knowledge has been useful in different situations to diminish the impact of natural disasters. In a recent symposium held at Oxford University it was mentioned how indigenous populations "use mangrove swamp areas to absorb the strength of waves and tsunamis, and some others apply genetic diversity in farming to prevent total failure of certain crops.

Although, it is also evident that many indigenous communities currently have to adapt to new ways of life due to environmental changes. That is the case of Saami communities devoted to deer pasturage in Sweden who have to face the challenge to find food under a thick layer of ice due to the increase of snowstorms. The Andean communities are facing serious problems of food scarcity, which has resulted from extreme climates (ONU, 2007).

### **Social Participation**

We define social participation as availability of the members of a collectivity to interrupt their daily life to devote time to the production of public goods. Disasters, by definition, interrupt daily life, which does not automatically translates into social participation but, without a doubt, promote it. The greater or lesser habit of the affected groups to participate is one of the factors that diminishes or increases its vulnerability.

With regard to the response actions to face disasters, ways of participation are varied and in this work we will analyze events that took place in a community in the North-eastern Mountains of Puebla by three destructive events: a frost in 1989, heavy rains in 1999 and Hurricane Dean in 2007. A special emphasis will be given to the process that took place during the frost of 1989.

### **A Nahuat Community and a Non Governmental Organization**

This work underlines the social participation process to face the consequences of the frost of 1989, and it also analyzes the impact of the relationship between the community and a NGO in the response actions to the disaster.

Twelve years of intercultural relations in the Northern mountains of Puebla (Sanchez, M.E., 1985) between an indigenous community and an urban team<sup>1</sup> led to the constitution of three community approaches of self-development, ethno-development and eco-development. Twenty-two years later, in 2007, those approaches seem to be more modest as a consequence of

<sup>1</sup> The Nahuat community of San Miguel Tzinacapan and PRADE Group (PRADE stands for: Animation and Development Project Civil Association in Spanish).

the globalizing changes and environmental catastrophes. Instead of self-development, it should be talked about decent survival; instead of ethno-development, cultural coalition; and instead of eco-development, disasters prevention (Sanchez, M.E. & E. Almeida, 2005). 1989, the year when it snowed, was the starting date for these new utopian horizons. Survival, cultures' coalition and disasters prevention are tightly related to each other as it will be showed in the following parts of this work.

### **The snow storm of 1989 and the community paving project.**

Social communitarian participation has been, in the Nahuat community studied here, the central element of its survival, also crossed by its history of external and internal conflicts of diverse intensity (Sanchez, M.E. & E. Almeida; 2005). The types of participation blended new forms with traditional ones. It gave rise to the kind of the interaction between the peasants and the mestizo group of professionals who established in the community since 1973. Towards 1987 participation had been consolidated in four local organizations.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1989, a snowstorm occurred in the Cuetzalan region, in the Northeastern Mountains of the state of Puebla, where is located the community studied in this work (Gutierrez, L. & Rodriguez, F.J.)<sup>3</sup>.

The economy from this zone depended basically on the coffee plantations that had been established since the end of the XIX Century, and it had become almost a single crop farming. Snow burned almost all coffee crops, leaving the zone -San Miguel Tzinacapan included- without their main means of living. Oddly, almost simultaneously, the international agreement that regulated world coffee prices was cut, making its price drop rapidly. The "natural" disaster and the transnational disaster took place at the same time.

In Puebla State, in the eighties, coffee was grown in 48 out of its 217 counties. Coffee production occupied nearly 50,000 hectares. Northern Mountains from Puebla had a production of around 1000.2 Kg. per hectare. In this zone 90% of producers were small owners and the rest of them were landowners who took up almost all the stock of the production of peasants. The latter instead of finding the economic support for their needs made richer and richer the caciques (chiefs) who controlled like a monopoly the commercialization of coffee.

Towards the end of the eighties, coffee occupied the second place in agricultural production in the State of Puebla and it was the most important cash crop for export in the country. Northern Mountains from the State produced 90% of the total production of the state of Puebla and it was the main income for its inhabitants. The Mexican Institution for Coffee (INMECAFE in Spanish) regulated market prices and acquired part of the production while at the same time handled export permissions. Between INMECAFE and hoarders made peasants remain in a big economic dependency.

### **Looking for alternatives to migration**

As a result of the frosts on December 23<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 in the Northern Mountains of Puebla, the inhabitants' survival, particularly that of indigenous population, was in question and

2 The local organizations were: a Rural Production Society, a Society of Social Solidarity, a Cooperative for consumption and the NGO of people external to the community.

3 A first version of the description of these events was presented in March of 1991, at the Conference of Participative Research organized by the Psychoanalysis Seminary A.C. (Almeida et al, 1991)

temporary migration became the main alternative for survival. It was urgent to create temporary employment so people from the town were able to have an income which could help them keeping their standard of living and at the same time creating a community improvement.

### **The elaboration of a paving project: participation in cascade.**

In one of the meetings of the Health Center "Tapajtiloyan", in January of 1990, the possibility to look for alternatives for subsistence were discussed; not only for San Miguel community but for all neighboring towns. The Health Center coordinator<sup>4</sup> and a peasant<sup>5</sup> from San Miguel –a member of the Health Committee who also belonged to the Research Center of PRADE A.C.- thought that a paving project for the community could be a temporary solution.

On January 7th, 1990 the idea was presented to the Research Center of PRADE, and two other members from this Center<sup>6</sup> started to collect information to design the project. First, existent potentialities were analyzed: both internal and external to the community and it was found that if it was possible to put them together to work, the project should become a reality. They were aware that the majority of the people from rural communities had knowledge and abilities but the lack of economic resources make it difficult to achieve their objectives. They were also aware of the fact that in order to provide the project with a formal structure they would have to take into account existing opportunities in San Miguel due to local independent organizations. These organization would be the platform to create the Committee Pro Paving, which would be in charge of managing financial resources; and to lead, advise and supervise the project. The participating organizations were: a) CEPEC a Society of Social Solidarity; b) The Tzinacapan section of the Regional Cooperative; C) The Animation and Development Project (PRADE); and the Rural Production Society from San Miguel.

The first groups to mobilize were the Health Center and the PRADE Research Center. After them, the Cooperative store and CEPEC coordinated efforts and finally, the Society of Rural Production was integrated to the whole group (Almeida, 1999).

A first draft of the project was written, in which the main causes why it was being designed were described and its objectives established:

1o. To face the crisis produced by the frost.

2o. Create employment in the community to support its inhabitants, regardless their political affiliation.

3o. Improve town's streets, as a community benefit.

The aims of the project were:

1o. Create a Committee which held the project's' legal representation. The task was not easy since it had to be agreed amidst political turmoil derived by the close elections for the County Auxiliary President from the jurisdiction.

2o. Write a list of the needed tools for the project.

3o. Convince the town inhabitants to donate the stones for the paving.

4o. Determine the places to be paved

5o. Define the technique to conduct the paving. It implied to know how many stones would be needed, how to conduct the cobbled paving, the procedure to steam roll and how to

4 Blanca Rosas (+) PRADE, A.C. member.

5 Luis Félix

6 Antonio Vázquez and Eduardo Almeida



locate the stones.

In order to do this whole process some consults were conducted with the inhabitants of the town who had the local knowledge.

In March, the first draft of the project was presented to the Board of Representatives of the four Independent Organizations from San Miguel. The Board approved the project. At the same time, a contract was established with an anthropologist from the National Indigenous Institute (INI)<sup>7</sup>, who suggested that the project should be presented to the State Delegation of the Ministry of Budgetary Management.

### **Local elections and national recognition: social effervescence and institutional support**

At the same time that the project was being designed under a participatory approach, another two important processes were evolving in a parallel way. On the one hand, since the end of 1989 the four organizations under the leadership of the local cooperative, were conducting an intense political campaign in order to support their candidate for the local presidency. This process ended the 25<sup>th</sup> of March having as a winner the organizations' candidate which would become a decisive factor in the implementation of the paving project.

On the other hand, "Nexos", a magazine of national circulation, published a call for proposals to apply for the Solidarity Grant 1989. One of the members of the NGO<sup>8</sup> wrote a Memory of Actions taken by PRADE, A.C. which was sent to be considered at the contest. On May the 15<sup>th</sup> the Board of Advisers from PRONASOL (National Solidarity Program) informed PRADE, A.C. that they had been awarded the 1989 recognition. This recognition included three million pesos cash from the time (around 300,000 current pesos), which were devoted to complete the payment of the land where the store of the local cooperative was established. The recognition was also a main factor in obtaining the resources granted by PRONASOL in order to implement the cobbled paving project.

The procedures: nightmare and lessons learned.

Towards the end of March, the final document of the project was submitted to the State delegation of the Ministry of Budgetary Management. The document was signed by the Secretary General of the group of the four independent organizations from San Miguel and the directors of each organization. From March to July the Pro-paving Committee conducted several negotiations which cannot be described here nor analyze, but which also were part of an important process of training, participation and coordination of the community with external institutions.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> was formally established the Committee before the Notary from Zacapoaxtla. The project finally obtained the approval on July 1<sup>st</sup>. There was a waiting till October 19<sup>th</sup> when the local President could pick up in Puebla the first part of the deal: 66.580 million of pesos (66,580 current pesos).

### **The project's implementation: The community as an enthusiastic workplace**

In October 1990, the inhabitants were anxiously awaiting for the starting of the works. 10 months had already passed from the date of the disaster.

Discussions about the project that would offer possibilities of employment, income and

<sup>7</sup> Pedro Martínez

<sup>8</sup> Maria Eugenia Sanchez

community improvement had been taking place for over six months. A popular assembly had already taken place to organize the work. Finally, Monday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1990 they started working. By then, a big number of head of households had already migrated in search of employment and income.

An average of 200 peasants was dedicated to the cobbled paving of the streets of the village. The community became a workplace where enthusiasm was obvious.

Suddenly, on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, after the visit of some low-ranking government employees from Puebla, the works were suspended. The second delivery of resources was postponed until a financial audit would be conducted. The reality was there were no major irregularities, but it was a signal of bureaucratic and monopolizing jealousy, since the resources had been directly granted by the central government of Mexico to the community.

All organizations involved and the local presidency took action once again to face this challenge. They were successful in getting the remaining money. On 4<sup>th</sup> December, the issue was solved in favor of the community. The Ministry of Finance granted the remaining 266.320 million pesos (266.320). These resources were locally administered and financial reports were presented according to the advancement of works. It had been agreed that each worker would receive a payment of 100 pesos daily, a sum bigger than the minimum salary of that year (1989).

Works started again on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1990 and they continued until September, 1991.

The community's cobbled paving was done at steady pace; people from San Miguel Tzinacapan and from nearby communities participated in the work regardless their political affiliation. All works were coordinated by the Committee and the local Presidency.

Each Saturday payments were done and an Assembly of all workers took place in order to analyze project's advancement. The Committee reoriented the work, pointed out deficiencies as well as good decisions. It was also a space where workers presented complaints and suggestions to the Committee. A strict control of resources was applied and all workers received the same payment. The monies were asked for employment and they were applied on it.

The relation among vulnerability, resilience and social participation

The structure of participation

The project's idea emerged from both an endogenous actor and an exogenous one in order to face an evident need. From the beginning of the project, some community's organizations participated in the project's design. The political campaign was oriented to promote its viability. The traditional indigenous organization from the town –religious assignments - supported the project too. The inhabitants' participation was first mediated by the organization representatives' action, and then it acquired a complete prominence in the implementation and the benefits obtained by communitarian work.

State bureaucratic action within the community was reduced to its minimum expression. There were clear minimum norms both in the organization and the work. It was possible to combat and defeat outsider bureaucratic intervention. The community provided workforce and the material resources and it was well aware that funds granted by PRONASOL were obtained due to its coordinated organization. The sense of co-responsibility was developed and fostered because no one could claim unilaterally the project's success: it was not due to a single organization, nor to the local presidency, nor to PRONASOL, neither to the State. The success was the whole community's success.

An authentic counterbalanced system facilitated the transparent management of resources. Local Presidency was permanently supervised by the Pro-Project Committee and this in turn was supervised by the former. In the same way, salaries' equality impeded the privileged allocation of funds for only some people. Weekly assemblies also contributed to the honest management of budget.

### **The memory of participation.**

Ten years later, twenty-one members of the community who had taken part in the paving project were interviewed. Interviews were held between May 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

The memory of the process reported by the interviewees is similar with regard to the concrete actions. They all remember the places from where the stones were brought: Ahuach, Tepetitc and Tepetzalan; who donated them and which construction and carve workers participated too. Regarding the atmosphere lived during the process, interviewees in 2000 keep many memories about this intense community action. They remember that in it women and men worked hard and also that people from other communities joined them, people from Ayotzinapan, Xaltipan, Yohualichan, Tepetzintan, Pinahuistan, Cuetzalan, Acaxiloco, Txicuilan and Cuahutamazaco. They all emphasize that the success achieved was due to popular participation. The interviews results clearly demonstrate that in people's minds the paving was a great collective action, carried out by the people and their own authorities. Ten years after the disaster and the work done by the people, they still remember those times in which people from the town and the region participated in a collective enterprise.

Answers are more dispersed and vary widely regarding to having more precise memories about how participation was organized, from where were obtained the funds, who had the initiative to present the project, etc. Only three interviewees directly mention that this project was aimed to face the impacts of the snowstorm.

### **Risk mitigated by social organization**

The community of San Miguel Tzinacapan has a long history of resistance as many indigenous communities have; and this has allowed the village to survive and celebrate despite of its economic and geographic location and the structure of social subordination that has placed it in a high level of risk. The interaction of a group of external professionals who emigrated to San Miguel since 1973, let reinforce a collective self-esteem and trigger a new organization process. It allowed diversifying and reinforcing links with institutions from outside the community. It also helped diminishing in an important way, the town's vulnerability and therefore, the risk of the community. In this way, the disaster caused by the snow, could be faced in a creative way. Nevertheless, without the resilience of indigenous cultures that have faced deprivation and uncertainty for centuries, the level of participation achieved in the cobbled paving project, as well as the atmosphere lived during the process, could not be explained.

## **Confronting the intensive rains of 1999: indigenous people, teachers, and university actors.**

### **3.1. An announced disaster: Torrential rains in September – October 1999**

(Acevedo, B. 2002: 115-123)

During September and October 1999, exactly between September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup> there was sequence of torrential rains in the mountains (Fernandez Fuentes, A. 1999: 7) which had a strong impact deforesting hills, as well as deteriorating poorly built roads and houses and public buildings settled in risky locations. The region changed, flooding cut the system of communication, harvest was lost as well as properties and some human lives. Popular reaction to these terrible events exceeded by far actions taken by authorities (Acevedo, B. 2002). The area is vulnerable and as it has been demonstrated, storms have happened again in subsequent years. Preventive actions from authorities have been very limited. Although, it has to be said that the population has been learning from these painful experiences and according to their limited resources they have been developing measures to prevent the consequences of possible disasters (Fritz, C. E. 1979; Toxqui Furlong, M.G. 2000).

### **3.2. San Miguel and Cuetzalan festivals and the water torrents.**

During the autumn of 1999, the Patron Saints' festivals of San Miguel Tzinacapan and San Francisco Cuetzalan were being organized. In San Miguel Tzinacapan, the festival of September 29<sup>th</sup> was being awaited as usual, with happiness despite the tensions that had taken place in the previous months. The fear was also the same as usual: that it would rain that day and the procession of the Patron Saint and the dances would be affected. In fact, this happened; it rained heavily from September 28<sup>th</sup> till October 1<sup>st</sup>. During two days rain stopped and it was expected that on October 4<sup>th</sup> the festival of San Francisco in Cuetzalan could take place joyfully. Unfortunately, on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at four o'clock in the afternoon started to rain again and it rained as it had never rained before in all the region, from that day till October 6<sup>th</sup>. The indigenous market from Cuetzalan was swept along by rain and the streets became rivers. Water came out from the hills as internal cascades exploding. Merchants, tourists, and the entire town were in shock. There were roads' landslides, and parts of some hills fell apart. The region was overflowed, coffee plantations were destroyed, water swept away animals, and many houses were seriously affected as well as some people died. Calls asking for help started to be transmitted through the region's indigenous radio station XECTZ. It was known through television that the disaster covered a big area from the states of Puebla and Veracruz. Fear was generalized.

### **3.3. Social dynamic and disaster's evolution.**

Rapidly, help brigades were formed with voluntaries coordinated by the County's government manager. The municipal auditorium was habilitated as a refuge. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, a brigade tried without success to help the Tozan Community, which is located in the margins of the river of the same name. Then a group from Tzinacapan coordinated by the local President managed to save the seventy adults and children from Tozan. They were accommodated in the Presidency office. In order to provide help to the inhabitants from Xaltepec, the small buildings of the Takachualis Commission of Human Rights, and the Nursery of Tzinacapan became refuges

too. Inexplicably, the President of Cuetzalan was absent during all those days.

On October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> rain stopped, the region was isolated. The roads from Cuetzalan to Zacapoaxtla, and from Ayotoxco to Teziutlan were closed. The bridge of Buena Vista, which was another way of access recently built, was also destroyed. Soon stores from Cuetzalan started to be empty and hunger started to be felt.

Groups of exhausted people started to arrive to San Miguel from faraway places as Putaxcat, Plutonichuchut, from Huehuetla County. The afternoon of October 9<sup>th</sup> it rained again. Electric shocks damaged the energy plant from Mazatepec. There was a shortcut of energy. Telephones did not work. The radio XECZN stopped its transmissions. Federal and State governments took a long time before showing up in the places affected. There were no works to open the road from Zacapoaxtla to Cuetzalan as it had been previously announced.

### **3.4. Teachers get organized.**

Given the standstill situation of authorities, some teachers - which had taken part in a Diploma on "Environmental Vulnerability" organized by PRADE A.C. and the Iberoamericana University from Puebla (Zambrano, 1993)- started to coordinate teachers from the region in order to take action. Monday October 11<sup>th</sup> teachers from all teaching levels got together in front of the municipal palace of Cuetzalan. They coordinated the population to open the road with picks and shovels and invited all communities to join them. The answer was surprising. Daily, around 1500 people worked with picks and shovels, stockpiled goods and prepared food for all workers. By the side of Ayotoxco people also worked to open the road. Civil organizations from Puebla, among them the Iberoamericana University managed to deliver provisions through Buena Vista.

Despite these actions, shortage of supplies kept growing as well as the immobility of authorities. *"Why is there a total absence of government from all its levels? Why not a single helicopter has come down here? Why whenever there is a guerrilla somewhere they can land even during the night?"* a teacher asked herself. On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> a march of protest to Puebla started to get organized in order to denounce government's negligence and indifference. This was not necessary because on October 14<sup>th</sup> the President of the Republic and his "retinue" arrived by helicopter and they could see the inhabitants' indignation and rage. A whole scenery had been tried to be organized to receive the President, putting pressure on women beneficiaries of the PROGRESA program to pretend the refuge was working properly; that military doctors were providing assistance to the population and giving free medicines. But when he and the governor of Puebla entered the County auditorium, there was not a single applause. Instead, people were shouting "road, road, road". Both the President of Mexico and the governor of Puebla had to leave without being able to speak.

From October 15<sup>th</sup> the magic of rebellion, and the presidential visit made it possible to have many helicopters flights with supplies even amidst the rain. The teachers' organization, especially due to the leadership of those who had been participating in the Diploma of Environmental Vulnerability organized by PRADE and UIA-Puebla, played a decisive role in organizing people's participation, as well as in relevant actions to reestablish normal activities. The confrontation against the authorities make them take their responsibility in confronting the disaster.

#### **IV. The Dean Hurricane and the Festival in 2007**

Eighteen years after the frost, and eight after the flooding of 1999, the Dean Hurricane arrived to the Northern Mountains of Puebla with a strength that was unexpected. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> at the beginning of the afternoon chaos invaded Tzinacapan. The elderly people told it had never happened something similar to this. Trees were flying, rain was moving horizontally and roofs from many houses were taken away by the wind. The following day after the hurricane passed, it was necessary –although not without a bereavement ritual- to finish tearing down the immense age-old tree that guarded the main plaza. Pepper trees, one of the main current income resources of the population, were torn down by wind as if it was a crop being weed. The location that was used for the community's band rehearsals, and where diverse courses took place, became a refuge for those who lost their homes. Incessant rain and later, the arrival of the Lorenzo hurricane kept causing several damages, leaving their print too.

Population's organization and participation were diverse. The support consisted basically providing sheets of steel and cardboard for the reconstruction of roofs of affected houses. Bricks and some food supplies were also provided. This help had been sent by Federal and State authorities, NGOs, universities, Rotaries and some others. The intermediaries to deliver the help in the case of Tzinacapan have been different organizations from the zone.

After the 1989 frost, that ruined the coffee plantations, the zone's main economic resource, the anxiously asked question of the external professionals was: How was the population going to face the situation? Multiple activities had been conducted together by PRADE, A.C. and the inhabitants of the community since 1973, activities regarding economics, education, health, and organizational issues as well as building links with outside actors. What could be observed after the intensive rains was remarkable. It was remarkable the speed with which domestic groups reorganized to reinforce their productive actions: art crafts elaboration, children's work as tourists' guides, young women emigrating to work as domestic workers, young men forming music bands, men and women improving the care given to crops and pepper trees, and creative use of external support. The mental flexibility, the emotional determination, the ability to face uncertainty and deprivation- were all astonishing, as was their capacity to keep celebrating life. This happened once again after the Dean hurricane.

After the Dean hurricane, the festival of the town on September 29th took place with the joy and organization that characterizes it. It is true that there was a need to eliminate festival activities that were held other years, but in no way its essential features were absent. There were seventeen ritual dances: Negritos, Santiagos, Quetzales, Voladores, Moros, Tesoneros, Migueles<sup>9</sup>. There was also a procession through the whole town, basket ball championships, tacos, sweets and ice cream stands, pots and blankets merchants; and the local band played nonstop. Many people, women and men of all ages celebrated the festivities wearing embroidered blouses and skirts and sandals.

All over the place there were color and life, the religiosity that draws together fright and joy; promises and fears, the Talokan and San Miguelito.

#### **Conclusions**

The interaction process between the Tzinacapan community and PRADE A.C. started in

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9 All these names refer to different groups of ritual dances. Translator's note.

1973. It has gone through all sorts of transformations and vicissitudes. It has meant joint actions in different realms as well as in processes of participative research and investigative participation. It has diminished the community's vulnerability and increased the ability to confront disasters, as it was shown by the ways in which the different events mentioned in this article have been faced. It also has favored dense levels of social participation. The formative processes of different kinds, the generated networks, the recovery of the oral tradition that served to strengthen the collective spirit, together with the to that inherent cultural capacity of the community to survive with dignity and to celebrate constitute an interesting complex approach in confronting disasters.

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## Discutindo o conceito de comunidade na psicologia para além da perspectiva identitária

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*Este estudo tem por objetivo discutir o conceito de comunidade no campo da psicologia. Na realidade latino americana, as comunidades onde o psicólogo comunitário atua são, na maioria, áreas urbanas ou rurais ameaçadas pela pobreza e pela negação de oportunidades e de direitos sociais iguais. Ao buscar conceituar comunidade, observamos que a psicologia comunitária sofre a influência da sociologia tradicional, que a define como uma forma de vivência coletiva perdida com o desenvolvimento da sociedade. A comunidade é compreendida em sua delimitação geográfica e por um modo de associação natural e íntimo entre seus habitantes. Ela constitui-se como lugar de afirmação de identidade ao reunir signos linguísticos, crenças, regras, valores e objetivos que são igualmente compartilhados por seus integrantes. A identidade é o eixo que funda a comunidade como um todo orgânico, coerente e unitário. Como alternativa a essa perspectiva identitária, neste estudo apontamos uma compreensão sobre a vida em comunidade apoiada no conceito de constituição do comum de Antonio Negri.*

Palavras-chave: comunidade, identidade, constituição do comum, produção de subjetividade.

Dado o caráter experimental e clínico que marcou o nascimento da psicologia, sua afetação pelos movimentos comunitários ocorreu tardiamente. Segundo Bader Sawaia (1996), a psicologia passou a problematizar o conceito de comunidade por volta dos anos 70, quando deu-se início ao trabalho envolvendo grupos sociais mais amplos e levando em consideração fenômenos psicossociais. Neste estudo, gostaríamos de discutir brevemente como a comunidade foi compreendida no saber e na prática do psicologia, e como na contemporaneidade o entendimento sobre comunidade ganha novas nuances.

De uma certa maneira, comunidade parece ser mais um termo de uma lista de conceitos ultrapassados, pela dificuldade de pensá-los atualizadamente. Seria ainda possível falar em comunidade, em tempos onde as transformações econômicas, tecnológicas, culturais, dentre outras, redesenharam as relações sociais, enfraquecendo laços tradicionais que mantinham conectados os indivíduos, como valores, utopias, a força na crença em grandes projetos coletivos, fossem eles religiosos, políticos? Por outro lado, a comunidade tem voltado à tona e sido rediscutida, o que vem revelando a dificuldade de chegar a um entendimento único sobre o que ela seja, sobre como pensá-la hoje. Existem diversas perspectivas, que delimitam distintas formas de aproximação e intervenção nos espaços aos quais se faz referência: pequenas cidades, bairros, favelas, associações de vizinhos, comunidades virtuais. Em seguida, apresentaremos um breve painel do desenvolvimento do termo comunidade e de sua apropriação pelo campo psicológico.



Primeiramente, situamos os discursos sobre a comunidade na conjuntura da Revolução Francesa. O conceito de comunidade foi hostilizado pelos intelectuais iluministas por se aproximar das estruturas do feudalismo. No lugar da sociedade fundada na terra, nos vínculos sanguíneos e na tradição que eram as marcas da comunalidade, defendia-se a idéia de uma sociedade fundada no contrato entre homens livres, que se associam através de alianças pontuais e reguladas pela racionalidade econômica. Sucedeu-se, no entanto, uma reação do pensamento conservador da época no intuito de positivar e resgatar o ideário de comunidade como modelo do paraíso e da boa vida e harmoniosa, preservada dos avanços terríveis da modernização. Segundo Sawaia, em ambos os casos a idéia de comunidade aponta para uma utopia do passado, despertando sentimentos de nostalgia ou de algo ultrapassado e nocivo.

Essas concepções continuam alimentando o pensamento sobre o social no século XIX, e voltam ao centro de discussão entre os intelectuais sob outras roupagens, agora no contexto formação da sociologia como ciência. Ferdinand Tönnies é um dos pensadores da comunidade cujas formulações desdobram-se ainda hoje nos estudos da área. De acordo com Sawaia, foi no século XX que a *“comunidade elevou-se à categoria analítica central do pensamento social, e se estabeleceu a antítese de comunidade e sociedade”* (SAWAIA, 1996, p.39). Tönnies diferenciou duas formas de organização social distintas e contrárias em seus valores e princípios. A *Gemeinschaft* se baseia pelo parentesco ou pela vizinhança, pelo trabalho e pela crença comuns e na capacidade de vinculação e identificação solidária entre seus membros, enquanto a *Gesellschaft* é regulada pela lei do mercado e pela divisão entre os homens. *Gemeinschaft* e *Gesellschaft* designam, respectivamente, as diferenças estruturais entre comunidade e sociedade.

No século XX, as formulações teóricas sobre a categoria de comunidade prepararam a penetração da administração direta do Estado nos espaços populares no período do pós-guerra, colaborando na concretização das propostas liberais-populistas de modernização e progresso que foram observadas no Brasil da década de 50. Ainda de acordo com Sawaia, na época, essa era a concepção de comunidade que norteava as experiências práticas da psicologia comunitária, então comprometidas por uma proposta muito próxima da assistência social:

*Comunidade era entendida como unidade consensual, sujeito único e homogêneo, lugar de gerenciamento de conflito e de mudanças de atitude. Sua prática visava a união de esforços entre povo e autoridade governamental para melhorar as condições de vida de comunidades e, através delas, integrar a sociedade nacional, construindo a prosperidade do país. E sua delimitação era espacial/geográfica* (SAWAIA, 1996, p.45).

A partir dos anos 80, com o movimento de contestação à psicologia social vigente e o questionamento do papel político do psicólogo, os moradores desses espaços populares passaram a ser mais considerados como agentes ativos de transformação política e social. No entanto, de acordo com Sawaia, em meio a essa nova abordagem de trabalho a psicologia ainda se encontra presa no impasse entre uma visão de comunidade como algo uno e homogêneo e uma visão que leve em consideração as particularidades de seus indivíduos.

Percebemos que, quando se fala em comunidade, mesmo que não se chegue ao consenso, a noção de identidade é o eixo de sustentação que atravessa suas definições pela psicologia, a base de compreensão da mesma. A identidade é o parâmetro para avaliar o nível de consistência comunitária em relação a determinadas variáveis/características: convívio próximo delimitado

num mesmo espaço geográfico, história, cultura, características sociais e psicológicas etc. Para Cezar Wagner Góis (2005), o espaço físico-social é um dos pressupostos fundamentais, englobando aí tanto a questão da proximidade física quanto a inclusão numa mesma realidade social. Para o autor, ricos e pobres que dividem o mesmo espaço, como observamos frequentemente nas metrópoles, não constituem uma mesma comunidade, pois não possuem uma convivência social próxima.

A comunidade coloca-se para a psicologia comunitária como instância de construção coletiva e consciente da realidade, no qual os indivíduos têm espaço assegurado de participação e expressão de suas posições. Nesse espaço de intimidade, a pessoa é reconhecida e confirmada em sua identidade e como pertinente à comunidade, que garante a “*proteção da individualidade frente à natureza e à sociedade*” (GÓIS, 2005, p.61). Ela corresponde a “*um agrupamento humano que expressa um sentimento claro de unidade e e constitui um todo à parte*” (RIOS apud GÓIS, 2005, p.63).

Observamos que as tentativas de definição do conceito de comunidade para a psicologia, mesmo que variadas e imprecisas, são construídas a partir de uma compreensão sociológica original, que relacionou comunidade e sociedade como categorias esquadrihadas por uma regulação social e disciplinar, compartimentada. Neste modelo de entendimento da organização social, as relações entre os indivíduos são mediadas por um dispositivo transcendente que é espacializado no entorno da vizinhança – o que esfacela as possibilidades de constituição do comum, como entendido por Antonio Negri (2005). Os dispositivos que fundaram a comunidade nasceram do programa disciplinar do biopoder e que agora na contemporaneidade têm adquirido outras variações em relação ao controle. Mesmo quando se enxerga a comunidade como espaço de comunhão e sentimentos puros, tal como propôs Tönnies, de acordo com os poderes administrativos o espaço produtivo da comunidade não deixou de ser cooptado como instância intermediária da sociedade. São níveis de mapeamento em linhas concêntricas, onde num extremo tem-se o indivíduo, cuja individualidade está protegida na comunidade, e no outro encontra-se a máquina estatal da administração pública:

*Na obra de Hegel (Filosofia do direito) [...] o Estado é uma “Communitas communitatum” e não a agregação de indivíduos pelo contrato como propunha o Iluminismo. Sua visão de sociedade é concêntrica, formada por círculos interligados de associações como a família, comunidade local, classe social e igreja, cada qual autônoma nos limites de sua abrangência funcional, cada uma delas considerada fonte de afirmação do indivíduo e, todos eles em conjunto, reconhecidos como elemento formativo do verdadeiro Estado (NISBET apud SAWAIA, 1996, p.39).*

De acordo com essa perspectiva, o próprio espaço aberto e territorial da comunidade foi assumido funcionalmente como uma instituição social, ainda que não tenha funcionado sob a lógica do enclausuramento que caracterizou a sociedade disciplinar. Esta análise impede qualquer tipo de entendimento naturalizante da comunidade, como algo que se configura espontaneamente em decorrência da convivência íntima sob um mesmo espaço. Nesse sentido, é interessante pensar as formas pelas quais a comunidade está sendo reinvestida na sociedade de controle, onde a delimitação física dos espaços de produção do social é implodida. Isso explica porque as políticas que se voltam para o desenvolvimento ou transformação da comunidade empreendem agora uma relação diferente no que diz respeito às formas de aproximação com a

mesma. As comunidades populares obtiveram meios de inserir-se em outros circuitos produtivos da cidade que não são essencialmente especializados, como as redes que se formam através das novas tecnologias da comunicação e que permitem a partilha de conhecimento e de projetos criativos.

No entanto, mesmo que o conceito de comunidade que aqui descrevemos como sociológico-disciplinar esteja ficando para trás, o território urbano concreto que ele buscou cobrir permanece em definitivo. A questão urbana hoje passa necessariamente pela urgência de pensar a realidade das favelas, morros, periferias, comunidades populares, enfim, são várias as formas de referir-se hoje a esse território forjado na margem do regime de produção capitalista. Esses lugares crescem e ganham cada vez mais visibilidade, suscitando ora o medo nas classes sociais média e alta, com as quais divide o uso dos espaços urbanos, ora a curiosidade nessas mesmas classes, em relação à criação de novos estilos de vida gerados nas comunidades, e que hoje se vinculam sobretudo à arte e à cultura.

Assim, acreditamos que, longe de estar esgotada pelo caráter institucional com o qual a comunidade foi investida pelo poder disciplinar (posto que a crise das instituições como a escola, o hospital psiquiátrico etc. são marcas da sociedade de controle), a comunidade popular é hoje um território em constante ebulição de forças micropolíticas, onde encontramos *“um ambiente propício para que política e arte revelem-se em sua condição de potências da vida humana – potências de resistência e de invenção, respectivamente”* (ROLNIK, 2003).

De acordo com tal perspectiva, o próprio conceito de individualidade que a psicologia comunitária entende (que pra ela se diferencia do individualismo) seria uma produção disciplinar de mapeamento e normalização. Será necessário lançar mão de uma gramática diferente se a psicologia comunitária quer repensar a comunidade, deixando de enxergá-la como unitária e totalizada e abrindo o campo para a produção das diferenças. Para isso, há de se compreender a distinção entre individualidade e singularidade, bem como abdicar do pensamento identitário. Sobre as diferenças entre individualidade e singularidade, Guattari (1986) faz uma separação entre os processos de individualização, que modulam indivíduos pela fabricação de blocos serializados de valores, hábitos, crenças e desejos, dos quais os sujeitos seriam consumidores em busca de signos identitários, e processos de singularização, nos quais os indivíduos ou grupos podem inventar modos próprios de relacionar-se com a vida e consigo mesmo.

Dizer, como Góis (2005), que a comunidade não é homogênea porque carrega contradições e conflitos não avança na questão, se a compreensão dessas contradições e conflitos estão todas já codificadas e pertencem à mesma lógica binária da luta pela tomada do poder. Esse tipo de antagonismo não é suficiente o bastante para que as concepções de comunidade em psicologia compreendam o funcionamento político das diferenças. Certos tipos de conflito na ordem dos interesses comunitários não ativam a produção de diferentes circuitos de efetivação e elevação da potência da comunidade, mas apenas confirmam e preservam as formas engessadas que se chocam entre si, encarnadas nas figuras do opressor e do oprimido.

A partir do estudo que Simon e Silva (2005) empreenderam sobre a diversidade de sentidos de comunidades presentes das concepções e produções bibliográficas da psicologia comunitária, confirma-se que a noção tradicional de comunidade ainda é comum a esses trabalhos, permanecendo circunscrita em termos de homogeneidade e unicidade:

*O problema central é que muitos trabalhos têm por pressuposto a*

*comunidade como uma entidade natural igual às comunidades da época do feudalismo, denominadas de “naturais”. Desta forma, alguns pensam que os vínculos, os sentimentos de pertença, de compartilhamento de interesses e necessidades, de solidariedade, cooperação, já estão presentes no cotidiano das pessoas e que se revelarão a partir do momento em que colocamos as pessoas juntas sob o critério de semelhança por nós definidos (SILVA e SIMON, 2005, p.44).*

A dinâmica da atividade comunitária por si mesma, compreendendo aqui a dimensão de interação e proximidade física entre os moradores, não garante a unidade e a consistência que a psicologia comunitária insiste em procurar e fortalecer. Como comenta Arendt (1998) a respeito da emergência de “não-lugares”, que de acordo com Marc Augé, seriam lugares que não se definem como identitários, relacionais ou históricos, poderíamos ver que: “*para os psicólogos e as populações marginalizadas por eles estudadas a noção de comunidade é uma invenção teórica, um princípio de sentido e inteligibilidade, mas também uma ilusão.*” (1998, p.4).

Em resumo, conseguimos extrair e sintetizar através deste percurso algumas formas de abordar o conceito de comunidade que se assentam em dimensões diferentes.

Como ponto de partida, temos uma noção de comunidade oriunda da sociologia, definida sobretudo pela circunscrição geográfica e por um modo de associação natural e íntimo entre seus habitantes. A concepção de comunidade que prevalece na psicologia comunitária deriva dessa primeira noção, que engloba aspectos como signos linguísticos, crenças, valores e objetivos em comum, e a identificação dos seus integrantes entre si e em relação ao todo unitário que ela compõe é o que garante sua sustentação. Na prática do psicólogo comunitário, as comunidades nas quais ele se insere são, muitas vezes, aquelas áreas urbanas periféricas, que historicamente se constituíram à margem dos circuitos econômicos e das possibilidades de efetivação dos direitos sociais.

Por outro lado, existem alguns autores que, ao repensarem o conceito de comunidade tal como formulado acima, propõem novas formas de definir as articulações comunitárias, prescindindo da sua delimitação em um mesmo espaço geográfico, como nos apresentam Silva e Simon (2005):

*Segundo Petersen e Lupton (2003), as estratégias de trabalhos centradas na idéia de comunidade baseadas na localidade, impõem uma identidade de comunidade que nega outras possibilidades de construções identitárias que transcendam os espaços físicos, principalmente, se pensarmos no avanço tecnológico e as novas formas de comunicação, descritas anteriormente, como a “internet”. Por exemplo, as formas identitárias por gênero, classe social, etnia, raça, entre outras. As pessoas não precisam estar no mesmo local para formarem uma comunidade. Os autores salientam que a idéia de comunidade é útil para aqueles que necessitam dar visibilidade para sua identidade. São grupos, geralmente, que estão em desvantagens ou são marginalizados (SILVA e SIMON, 2005, p.45).*

Apesar de proporem novas formas de comunidade, os autores que seguem essa linha de pensamento mantêm em comum com a concepção anterior o papel central da identidade como eixo congregador de comunidades. O espaço comunitário seria, portanto, uma forma de junção e sobreposição de identidades entre iguais, funcionando sob o princípio das segmentaridades binárias descritas por Deleuze (1998). Elas podem dizer respeito a indivíduos:

ser homem *ou* mulher, criança *ou* adulto, saudável *ou* doente, branco *ou* preto. Às vezes, as binarizações proliferam as dualidades, mas a aparição de uma terceira condição não desmancha a dicotomia: se não se é nem branco nem preto, certamente se é pardo, ou amarelo, opções mutuamente excludentes. As oposições também podem dizer respeito a coletividades: existem os proletariados e os burgueses, ou ainda a sociedade civil e o Estado etc.

É nessa direção que procuramos nos alinhar com autores que se propõe a problematizar a vida em comunidade para além de suas segmentaridades, traçando sobre a comunidade linhas mais flexíveis que não operam divisões identitárias. Neste sentido, muitos autores tem falado do *comum*, que seria um plano das forças que habitam um território, mais que um plano das formas bem definidas e organizadas. Compreendemos que o comum e a comunidade, tal como ela é caracterizada nos estudos de psicologia comunitária, não se confundem entre si, pois apresentam disparidades e propõem modos diferentes de aproximação com os processos coletivos. Ao mesmo tempo, acreditamos que essas noções podem se encontrar e promover deslocamentos que favoreçam a abertura da psicologia à produção de diferenças e a fragmentação do todo unitário e identitário da comunidade que ela persiste em afirmar.

A vida em comum é uma questão cada vez mais presente nas discussões sobre o contemporâneo e as novas formas de sociabilidade que se observam. Ao mesmo tempo em que o Capitalismo Mundial Integrado se expande por todos os países e territórios, não reconhecendo mais fronteiras sólidas (HARDT e NEGRI, 2003), para Bauman (2003) a formação das chamadas comunidades se realiza pela multiplicação de fronteiras, que definem modos de inclusão e exclusão em relação à suposta identidade e unificação das mesmas. Como podemos pensar em formas do viver junto que não consistam na negação da alteridade e na reclusão às categorias do mesmo? Como articular a singularidade social e cultural dos corpos coletivos com formas não segmentarizadas e antagonizadas de convívio, em meio à máquina capitalística homogeneizante?

A noção de constituição do comum (NEGRI, 2005) é uma das formas de tentar escapar das máquinas de estratificação e hierarquização do social, defendendo uma outra maneira de ação comum política que parta do exercício da democracia. Essa democracia não se resume, entretanto, à relação dos indivíduos com o Estado ou com as organizações partidárias, mas concebe um exercício da biopotência pela formação de redes autônomas, solidárias e cooperativas, onde as singularidades têm condições de produzir e gerenciar o que é comum, apostando na criação de novos coletivos e na potência da invenção. Para Negri, esse comum é a produção de um terreno compartilhado de expansão da vida, sendo também base para produções futuras: é ao mesmo tempo condição imanente e alvo de construção, produtivo e produzido no conjunto das atividades sociais, econômicas, políticas, culturais etc.

Assim, o princípio da identidade como articulador da comunidade tem sido diminuído em virtude de outras maneiras de pensar a constituição do comum, que levam em consideração não aqueles elementos de representação de um coletivo, mas como zona de ressonância tecida por um mesmo plano de imanência:

*Aquilo que supostamente se perdeu da "comunidade", aquela comunhão, unidade, co-pertinência, é essa perda que é precisamente constitutiva da comunidade. Em outros termos, e da maneira mais paradoxal, a comunidade só é pensável enquanto negação da fusão, da homogeneidade, da identidade consigo mesma. A comunidade*

*tem por condição precisamente a heterogeneidade, a pluralidade, a distância. [...] a comunidade, na contramão do sonho fusional, é feita da interrupção, fragmentação, suspense, é feita dos seres singulares e seus encontros. Daí porque a própria idéia de laço social que se insinua na reflexão sobre a comunidade é artificiosa, pois elide precisamente esse entre. Comunidade como o compartilhamento de uma separação dada pela singularidade (PELBART, 2003, p. 33).*

Negri e Hardt (2003) apontam o surgimento de um novo tipo de exploração do capital. Para além do apoderamento dos corpos em termos de exploração de sua força material, o novo alvo do capitalismo é a vida no que ela tem de mais inventiva. O trabalhador é exigido em termos de sua capacidade criativa, dinâmica, autônoma, de gestar e operar informações, seu poder de engajamento em redes comunicativas. Deste modo, não apenas suas funções intelectivas estão em jogo, mas sua própria dimensão sensível, seus afetos, suas potências de liberdade e de expansividade da vida.

Para além da organização da sociedade civil em instituições já demarcadas, Negri nos traz a noção de multidão como novo coletivo social, dotada de um *poder constituinte* que não está submisso ao domínio do *instituído*. Multidão é um termo comumente designado de forma pejorativa e negativa, historicamente compreendido pelas ciências políticas como massa irracional e pré-social a ser dominada e adestrada, a fim de tornar-se sociedade. Hoje, com a reconfiguração das classes sociais, cujos contornos específicos encontram-se indefinidos em função das novas dinâmicas do trabalho, e com a emergência de um proletariado cada vez mais imaterial, a questão da multidão reaparece. No entanto, ela traz características diferentes:

*Existe hoje uma multidão de cidadãos, mas falar de cidadãos não é suficiente, por que é apenas qualificar em termos teóricos e jurídicos indivíduos que são formalmente livres. Seria antes preciso dizer que existe hoje uma multidão de trabalhadores intelectuais. Mas isso pouco importa. Na verdade, é preciso dizer que existe uma multidão de instrumentos produtivos que foram interiorizados, encarnados nos sujeitos que constituem a sociedade. Mas isso ainda é insuficiente: é preciso acrescentar à realidade afetiva, reprodutiva, os desejos de gozo. E hoje multidão é isso – uma multidão que subtrai ao poder toda transcendência possível e que não pode ser dominada senão de forma parasitária, portanto, feroz (NEGRI, 2001, p.31).*

A potência da multidão reside em seu poder constituinte, que por sua vez é um exercício de resistência na invenção de formas democráticas de participação política. A multidão opõe-se à massa pelo fato de que não vem a constituir-se como unidade nem é homogênea,

*é plural, centrífuga, ela foge da unidade política, ela não assina pactos com o soberano, ela não delega a ele direitos, ela é resistente à obediência. O povo, ao contrário, converge numa vontade geral, se reflete no soberano ou no Estado” (PELBART, 2003, p.115).*

O poder constituinte da multidão pode firmar acordos e regras, mas que são contingenciadas temporalmente a partir de questionamentos e reavaliações, e redefina a concepção de poder político, não mais reduzido ao seu caráter representativo. A expansão de seu poder se expressa através de atividades empreendedoras que atravessam o território social, político, econômico, por atividades que reorganizam as situações de produção da vida e do social, sem, no entanto tomarem por princípio único as demandas econômicas.

A potência da multidão reside justamente na riqueza de sua heterogeneidade, suas singularidades, que circunstancialmente se agenciam através de esquemas de cooperação, redes autônomas que se cruzam. São dessas formas associativas e solidárias que advém o poder constituinte da multidão, sua capacidade de resistir à racionalidade capitalística e sua capacidade de inventar outras racionalidades que devolvam a potência à vida. É pela biopotência da multidão, produtora de subjetividades abertas à alteridade, estéticas, amorosas e apaixonadas, que o *comum* tem sido investido, pela multiplicação das conexões e parcerias mais que pelos embates de oposição. A multidão é a realidade onde Negri acredita ser possível constituir o comum como atos de solidariedade que não são identitários.

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## ¿Por dónde se asoma la comunidad? Un camino desde los adolescentes y la familia.

### Programa de atención integral para padres y adolescentes en dos comunidades urbano-marginales en el municipio de Durango

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#### **Abstract**

*Se presentan los avances de la puesta en marcha del Programa integral para padres y adolescentes como modelo de intervención psicológica en dos colonias marginadas de Durango, Dgo. México. Se rescata la pertinencia de la metodología propuesta por la psicología comunitaria como una estrategia preventiva en la salud mental para padres e hijos adolescentes, en posible situación de riesgo. Se intenta, asimismo, generar procesos de autogestión de las condiciones de vida en las comunidades atendidas y la oportunidad de propiciar la conformación de redes de apoyo psicosocial entre los mismos participantes. Constituye el primer avance de las posibilidades que representa el trabajo comunitario desarrollado conjuntamente por la Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango e instituciones gubernamentales con el fin de reconocer que la psicología no sólo está comprometida en una lucha contra la patología en los consultorios, sino que debe desarrollar estrategias para la promoción de la salud en la "normalidad", entendiendo ésta como una dimensión no homogénea que incluye, por sí misma, capacidades y destrezas susceptibles de ser aprendidas por los propios implicados mediante un proceso de adquisición de competencias y habilidades que hagan posible la restauración del bienestar emocional, familiar y social.*

Palabras clave, modelo de intervención, bienestar social, autogestión, investigación-acción

#### **INTRODUCCIÓN**

Si bien la psicología comunitaria tiene ya buen trecho andado en latitudes latinoamericanas y mexicanas, en Durango el trabajo y la investigación en este campo está comenzando con el presente milenio. Ello se debe sin duda a las propias circunstancias históricas, económicas, educativas e incluso geográficas de nuestro estado<sup>1</sup>. Pero quizá la razón más relevante para explicar el incipiente trabajo académico en torno a la psicología comunitaria se deba a la tardía formación de profesionistas en el área social, algo que recientemente ha empezado a impulsar la universidad pública del estado. La carrera de psicología de hecho se ofertaba, hasta hace muy poco, solo a través de la educación privada. Queda todavía por impulsar, desde la universidad pública formaciones de carácter propiamente social. En ese sentido, el *Programa de atención*

<sup>1</sup> México está dividido por demarcaciones o provincias que denominamos estados. Durango es uno de los 32 estados que conforman el país, situado al noroeste de la república, rico en biodiversidad y clima pero rezagado en aspectos económicos y educativos en relación a otros estados más prósperos. Cfr. Indices de marginación, Consejo Nacional de Población 2005, Anzaldo Carlos, Prado Minerva, Segob, México 2005



*integral para padres y adolescentes*, nació como una respuesta emergente ante una problemática largamente atendida sólo mediante asistencia social, religiosa y gubernamental, por tanto exenta de ser analizada desde la mirada rigurosa de la investigación formal.

Las problemáticas que actualmente se desarrollan en la sociedad mexicana, particularmente en el ambiente familiar, donde la violencia de género, intrafamiliar y social, los problemas educativos, la relación cotidiana entre los jóvenes, la cultura mediática y tecnológica, entre los principales factores, están impactando de manera negativa el proceso de formación integral de los adolescentes, lo que representa uno de los grandes retos que debemos atender.

El trabajo que se presenta son los resultados parciales de un primer momento en el que el proyecto se llevó a la práctica mediante el apoyo financiero de SEDESOL<sup>2</sup>, un organismo institucional que encontró en la propuesta similitudes concretas con lo desarrollado por la asistencia social y el desarrollo comunitario; sin embargo, el trabajo empírico ha permitido el abordaje de una reflexión teórica que se extiende en dos vertientes: i) la urgencia de continuar un trabajo en la línea de la psicología comunitaria a nivel empírico; y, ii) la evidente necesidad de establecer como línea de investigación-acción la psicología comunitaria y sus distintas modalidades en la formación de los psicólogos egresados de nuestra universidad.

Es por ello que, en el marco de un convenio de colaboración interinstitucional entre la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social a nivel federal, la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social del Estado de Durango, así como el Gobierno del Municipio de Durango y la Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, a través de la Escuela de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana, se llevó a cabo el *Programa de Atención Integral para Padres y Adolescente (AIPA)*, en el Polígono que comprende las colonias periféricas: Ampliación PRI y Lázaro Cárdenas del mismo municipio en el Estado de Durango, México.

La propuesta que da sentido al programa (AIPA) se ha definido a partir de la construcción de un espacio de análisis y reflexión que tiene la finalidad de lograr una mayor comprensión de la etapa de la adolescencia, vinculada al contexto familiar, al tiempo que el enfoque de la misma soporta la expresión práctica del trabajo en las comunidades referidas.

El programa, llevó a cabo un plan sistemático de formación y vivenciación en aspectos de orden psicosocial, psicoemocional, axiológico y comunicacional con los asistentes al mismo. Al

2 El Programa está dirigido a enfrentar los desafíos de la pobreza urbana mediante la instrumentación de un conjunto de acciones que combinan, entre otros aspectos, el mejoramiento de la infraestructura básica y el equipamiento de las zonas urbano-marginadas, así como el desarrollo comunitario y acciones que favorecen la prestación de servicios sociales en esos mismos ámbitos. Pretende asegurar la concurrencia y la integralidad de los esfuerzos dirigidos a apoyar a la población urbana en situación de pobreza patrimonial, de acuerdo con los criterios establecidos por el Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social para la medición de la pobreza (CONEVAL). El Programa Hábitat se ha definido, desde el ámbito gubernamental como un instrumento que busca: "hacer ciudad"; construir espacios con identidad y valor social; articular los barrios marginados y los asentamientos precarios al desarrollo de la ciudad; favorecer el ejercicio de los derechos de ciudadanía de la población asentada en esos ámbitos territoriales; y elevar la calidad de vida de los moradores de las ciudades y zonas metropolitanas del país. De ahí que ha pretendido que, los esfuerzos sean dirigidos a las ciudades y zonas metropolitanas cuyo tamaño, ubicación y significación económica y social, las convierten en puntos estratégicos para impulsar el desarrollo nacional y regional.

mismo tiempo, el grupo operativo de profesionales en psicología fue capacitando y asesorado por un equipo de académicos e investigadores de la Escuela de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana que participan en el proyecto.

### **PLANTEAMIENTO Y DEFINICIONES**

El planteamiento del problema *a priori*, en el trabajo empírico, consistió fundamentalmente en la construcción de un espacio de análisis y reflexión con el objetivo de lograr una mayor comprensión de la etapa de la adolescencia, vinculada al contexto familiar y comunitario, mediante un plan sistemático de formación y vivenciación con los asistentes al programa de atención integral.

Por ello, en este trabajo intentamos, en primer término y con sentido heurístico, reconocer las diferencias biopsicosociales de la categoría adolescente; no obstante, en términos empíricos hemos debido asumir una definición “tradicional” según la cual esta significa “tanto fase de transición como categoría demográfica; una sucesión de constantes cambios, así como el producto de una fuerza transformadora; un tiempo cronológico y un tiempo social, inseparables ambos y que se retroalimentan; un enfrentamiento con los demás que alienta y es consecuencia de una lucha interior; una introspección frustrante provocada por búsquedas no satisfechas de identidad o asunción como propias de identidades convenidas; una etapa de conflictos con uno mismo y de problematizaciones inducidas, y un largo etcétera de contradicciones más”. (Moral-Jiménez, 1998:4). Sin embargo, tenemos claro que esta propia definición, sin ser explícita, se halla presente en la comunidad en la que se realizó el trabajo empírico; lo cual nos enfrentó con el hecho de asumir problemáticas de antemano construidas, sobre todo en el trabajo con los grupos de adultos, que en tanto el hijo o la hija se hallan en ese grupo de edad daban por sentado estar implicados en “conflictos propios de la edad”. Es decir, la comunidad inició por reconocer dificultades pero como parte de una “realidad natural”.

Por lo tanto, partimos de considerar a la comunidad, sustantivamente, como un lugar y un grupo social que lo puebla, como una unidad social interdependiente y diferenciada frente a otras cuyos miembros desarrollan sentimientos de pertenencia, así como relaciones e interacciones estables. Adjetivamente, como elementos y lazos comunes (incluyendo el sentido psicológico de pertenencia, opuesto al de marginación o desarraigo personal), compartidas generalmente y no siempre por razón de vecindad. Es decir, como espacio desde donde y por donde pueden construirse lazos y relaciones entre personas (Sánchez Vidal, s/f).

En este caso la visión compartida de la adolescencia entre los padres, los hijos y la comunidad de pertenencia.

Desde esa perspectiva, la *Psicología Comunitaria (PC)*, como campo de estudio de la *relación entre sistemas sociales (comunidades)*, el comportamiento humano y la *intervención para la prevención de problemas de carácter psicosocial*, así como del *desarrollo humano integral*, considera la comprensión de determinantes socioambientales y la posibilidad de una *modificación* consciente y planificada de un *sistema*, así como de las *relaciones psicosociales* en ella establecidas y del propio *desarrollo comunitario*. (Rappaport, 1977 y Sánchez Vidal 1988, 1989).

En tal sentido, la PC viene a ser una respuesta de la ciencia psicológica ante situaciones de inequidad, injusticia, pobreza y marginación que grupos humanos numerosos viven hoy, al tiempo que cuestiona, de la misma forma, la idea según la cual sólo mediante la psicología clínica

pueden resolverse problemas de salud mental.

A partir de esta serie de elementos de carácter teórico-conceptual se retroalimenta la propuesta de intervención que define sus pretensiones en congruencia con los objetivos delineados.

### **Objetivos general y específicos**

#### Objetivo general

Aplicar un programa de formación integral para padres y adolescentes a partir de implementar talleres vivenciales que respondan a las necesidades y características de familias que forman parte del programa Hábitat (SEDESOL) para ofrecer una atención en la prevención de posibles situaciones de riesgo, así como propiciar una red de apoyo psicosocial entre padres de familia, adolescentes y comunidad en general, para promover la pertenencia y cohesión social, al tiempo que se da seguimiento y se evalúa la intervención, a partir de las problemáticas vinculadas con el adolescente.

#### Objetivos específicos

- Implementar talleres vivenciales que permitan orientar, prevenir y atender necesidades de carácter psicosocial y psicoemocional de las familias de dos colonias en el Mpio. de Durango.
- Propiciar una red de apoyo psicosocial entre padres de familia, adolescentes y comunidad en general.
- Fomentar un contexto familiar que ofrezca al adolescente el desarrollo de capacidades y potencialidades para su vida cotidiana y fortalecimiento de su desarrollo psicoemocional, social y cultural en la comunidad a la que pertenece.

### **Metodología**

El Programa de atención integral para padres y adolescentes se centró en la construcción de un espacio para dialogar acerca de la educación y fortalecimiento de los lazos familiares, así como la identificación y prevención de situaciones de riesgo como: drogadicción, suicidio, alcoholismo, embarazo no deseado, pandillerismo y enfermedades de transmisión sexual entre los más significativos en la vida de los adolescentes. Se trabajó en la idea de establecer una comunidad de padres y adolescentes como red de apoyo psicosocial para propiciar que las experiencias vividas en los talleres se vieran reflejadas en sus contextos familiares. Por otra parte, se llevó a cabo la canalización de algunos casos, particularmente a las clínicas de la Escuela de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana, con la finalidad de que recibieran la atención requerida y el apoyo especializado como alternativas de solución a los problemas detectados.

Los temas abordados como parte del contenido en los talleres vivenciales respondieron al enfoque interdisciplinar que teóricamente configuró al programa, por lo que, al detectar problemáticas propias de las comunidades atendidas se retomaron aspectos de carácter psicológico, educativo, filosófico, axiológico y comunicacional, con la finalidad de partir de éstas para trabajar aquellas actitudes y formas de proceder de los participantes en los talleres en su calidad de madres e hijos y la percepción que ambos grupos tenían en torno a ellos mismos.

El Programa se implementó de acuerdo a una perspectiva cualitativa, se empleó un enfoque de corte Etnometodológico (Harold Garfinkel, 1960, 1984), considerando que la etnometodología

parte de comprender que los “etnométodos” no son más que los métodos populares- de los no expertos- empleados por la gente para dar sentido a lo que hacen los demás y especialmente a lo que dicen porque son utilizados de forma natural, sin que se les preste atención consciente. Permiten conocer lo que las personas dicen detrás de las palabras, al acercarnos al contexto social del que forman parte. (Garfinkel en Giddens, 2001, 127-128).

Consecuentemente, el proyecto tomó en cuenta la perspectiva de la Investigación Acción Participativa desde la cual nos interrogamos acerca del sentido de nuestro trabajo, de nuestra vida y, particularmente tratándose de los académicos e investigadores de áreas afines al campo social, para preguntarnos: para qué hacer investigación social, a qué grupos de población sirve nuestro trabajo y finalmente qué sentido tiene lo que hacemos. Ello permite crear las condiciones para un análisis que rescate elementos valiosos de la cultura popular, que permita seguir creando formas propias de acción y que expresen sus valores, opciones políticas y de desarrollo (Alcocer, 1998, 433-434).

En tal sentido, la investigación acción participativa, al promover un sistema continuo y permanente de autogestión de la realidad, nos ha permitido propiciar una reflexión grupal que fomenta la participación de los actores involucrados, a través de una serie de talleres vivenciales y la posibilidad de potenciar el establecimiento de una red de apoyo psicosocial, con el fin de favorecer una visión más clara del lugar que ocupan los jóvenes en la comunidad y el desarrollo de las capacidades y potencialidades de los asistentes al programa para la construcción de espacios de convivencia y desarrollo comunitario.

La generación de estos espacios como lugares para la construcción de procesos de autogestión y empoderamiento han pretendido ser una estrategia metodológica desde y con la cual buscamos, a mediano y a largo plazo que, posibilite:

*“...otorgamiento de poder real de decisión y acceso, de los propios actores sociales, a los recursos necesarios para su realización, así como adquisición y potenciación de las competencias (capacidades) y espacios de acción para su ejercicio efectivo.”*

En tal dirección, los aportes pueden dirigirse a la conformación de *espacios de cultura reflexiva y creativa, donde la participación integral de los actores sociales* de los procesos autogestivos a través de *comunidades reflexivas* puedan:

*“aprender a pensar y debatir, problematizar, concertar, clarificar, convivir con las diferencias, reconciliar los puntos de vista de acuerdo con principios y valores, negociación de conflictos para lograr consensos desarrolladores, formación de una postura ética de tolerancia, respeto, compromiso y concertación social, promoción de valores humanistas, de solidaridad, honestidad y dignidad humana...”*

Para la autotransformación social en el sentido del desarrollo humano integral emancipatorio (D'Angelo Hernández, Ovidio, s/f).

Como se ha mencionado, el enfoque de los talleres vivenciales del Programa contempla un plan sistemático de formación en aspectos de orden psicoeducativo, axiológico y comunicacional con la finalidad de fortalecer la visión y necesidad de generar entornos familiares donde se promueva un ambiente saludable y de bienestar familiar que fomenta el crecimiento personal de los adolescentes hacia su reconstitución como personas y como sujetos sociales.

Al asumir que tales procesos requieren de tiempos y formas, más allá de los simples

deseos, y de la recuperación de experiencias de los asistentes al programa, inicialmente a partir de talleres vivenciales, el proyecto se llevó a cabo de acuerdo a las siguientes fases:

### **Promoción y difusión permanente del programa en las comunidades**

En términos empíricos se realizó un primer acercamiento a la comunidad mediante la promoción del Programa, para ello convocamos a los participantes mediante una labor de promoción que se llevó a cabo de manera personal bajo la forma de visitas domiciliarias, con la finalidad de abarcar al mayor sector poblacional posible y fomentando así el interés de los padres con respecto al Programa. Específicamente, se planteó el abordaje de amas de casa por constituir éstas el principal nexo comunicativo con la familia, así como el miembro que más tiempo está en la vivienda.

Durante el desarrollo del trabajo de promoción, se extendió la invitación entregándoles volantes con la información pertinente acerca de los talleres a jóvenes que se encontraron en las calles aledañas a la escuela. En lo que respecta al personal directivo y docente de las escuelas visitadas, se puede mencionar que la actitud ante la propuesta de trabajo fue buena y que en todo momento se ofreció plena libertad y apoyo a la labor de promoción.

El objetivo fue tener un contacto directo y personalizado y promover la empatía, la calidez, la motivación y la confianza por tratarse de la primera interrelación entre el Programa y los asistentes potenciales. Asimismo, dicho acercamiento permitió disipar las dudas que, *a priori*, pudieron surgir en el momento de la invitación. La estrategia de promoción se basó en informarles brevemente el objetivo del Programa, es decir, la forma en que se desarrollaría el trabajo en los talleres vivenciales y el abordaje de temáticas diversas a través de pláticas, juegos y narración de experiencias por parte de los propios asistentes.

Como resultado de dicha estrategia, la aceptación mostrada fue satisfactoria en la mayoría de los grupos, que manifestaron una gran iniciativa a la hora de participar en la dinámica. Algunos de los alumnos con los que se tuvo contacto afirmaron estar asistiendo ya a los talleres; otros pidieron más información a las promotoras y prometieron acudir a los lugares de reunión.

Análisis de la población atendida a partir de

- Acercamiento a las comunidades objetivo para construir el perfil sociodemográfico de las mismas.
- El estudio de las interacciones que se dan en los grupos específicos atendidos.
- El diseño de las intervenciones pertinentes en cada grupo (de madres y adolescentes).

La reflexión sobre las vivencias recogidas durante el Programa por parte del equipo de psicólogos en su carácter de facilitadores de los talleres vivenciales, lo que ha dado pie a:

- La exploración y valoración de los jóvenes psicólogos integrados profesionalmente a la psicología comunitaria, partiendo de:
- La reflexión en torno a la construcción de una profesión más allá del paradigma de la psicología clínica, precisamente en el trabajo comunitario y la investigación psicológica.
- La formación profesional de la práctica en la comunidad.

## RESULTADOS PRELIMINARES

### Metas cualitativas:

Integración de los facilitadores a la comunidad

Logro del afianzamiento de la disciplina en niños y adolescentes

Reforzamiento pedagógico (lecto-escritura en niños y adolescentes)

Cohesión de los participantes en cada grupo de los talleres

Interés por participar en actividades culturales y recreativas (festival artístico-cultural/día de Reyes)

Autoreconocimiento de la resiliencia por parte las madres de familia (capacidad de resistir y sobrevivir situaciones adversas y acceder a una vida productiva para sí y para su sociedad)

Mejor conocimiento de las propias emociones y afectos (en todos los grupos)

Mayor expresión de emociones y afectos en adolescentes y madres de familia

Concientización de los riesgos que implican las adicciones (en todos los grupos)

Canalización de casos clínicos para una atención psicológica individual

### Metas cuantitativas

Se atendieron 109 hogares

Se aplicó un cuestionario final para conocer, en cierta medida, la percepción que los participantes han adquirido a lo largo de 6 meses.

Se trabajó con 122 personas (62 mujeres, 23 hombres y 37 niños)\*

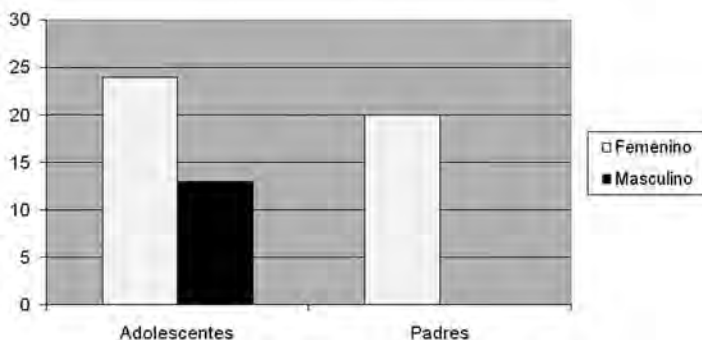
Se llevaron a cabo 60 hrs. de trabajo en talleres vivenciales en las comunidades(4 hrs. de trabajo durante 18 semana en 5 meses de trabajo intensivo)

Se trabajaron 34 hrs. de promotoría permanente durante la ejecución del proyecto (2 hrs. semanales durante las 18 semanas que duró la ejecución del mismo).

Se emplearon 80 horas de asesoría/capacitación para al equipo de psicólogos que llevaron a cabo el trabajo de intervención a través de los talleres vivenciales. Incluyo una asesoría metodológico-instrumental, así como una capacitación y supervisión permanente a partir de las intervenciones en los grupos atendidos.

La población atendida que permaneció en el Programa se ilustra mediante las siguientes gráficas:

SEXO DE LA POBLACIÓN ATENDIDA POR CONDICION FAMILIAR



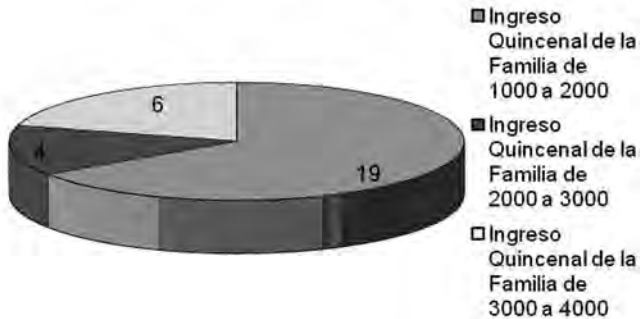


Estos, entre otros datos, permitieron establecer un perfil sociodemográfico de la población atendida para el que se elaboró un cuestionario que permitió el reconocimiento de las percepciones y sentidos de vida de dichas comunidades en torno a aspectos de su vida cotidiana-familiar, éste se trabajó a partir de los grupos de adolescentes y los grupos de madres de familia.

Por otra parte, las condiciones de marginalidad y problemas psicoafectivos pudieron establecerse mediante una vinculación metodológica entre el análisis del perfil sociodemográfico y la interpretación del material recogido en el trabajo etnográfico que amerita un ejercicio adicional al presente.

Tabla que ilustran niveles de marginalidad<sup>3</sup>:

**INGRESO QUINCENAL EN PESOS**



A pesar de que el Programa estuvo dirigido a ambos padres, el cuestionario fue contestado sólo por la madres, esto se debió a que fue aplicado ya avanzado el Programa y sólo las madres permanecieron en él, quizá encontraron mejores condiciones para encuentros femeninos y que los tres padres que asistieron al principio desistieran conforme avanzaba el Programa. La mayoría son duranguéñas católicas, con un promedio de edad de 37 años, lo cual nos habla de haber iniciado la gestación y crianza de hijos, alrededor de los 22 años, ya que el promedio de edad de nuestros adolescentes es de 12 años; sin embargo, este dato no puede ser del todo confiable en tanto sólo 11 de ellas son madres de alguno de los adolescentes encuestados.

<sup>3</sup> En Durango, más del 80% de la población gana menos de \$3,000 quincenales (187€), según datos difundidos por el INEGI. Sin embargo, el nivel de ingresos de 46 de cada 100 personas ocupadas en el Estado es de 1 (\$50, 3.11€) a 3 salarios mínimos (\$150, 9.33€ diarios); pero, todavía un 14% de la población gana un salario mínimo diario o menos (Siglo de Torreon, 2007, disponible en: <http://www.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/noticia/272946.ganan-duranguenses-menos-de-3-mil-pesos.html>).

Tenemos 9 casadas y 4 en unión libre, es decir 13 que viven en pareja, no obstante identifican como jefe de familia al padre solo 11, entre las que viven en pareja se consideran, por lo menos 2 como ellas mismas el jefe de familia. Este dato es significativo porque nos habla del inicio de un cambio sustantivo. Respecto al nivel socio-económico, la mayor parte de las familias ubican su percepción de uno a dos salarios mínimos, esto se confirma con las respuestas sobre indicadores de marginación según el cual el 50 % reporta vivir en vivienda de 2 habitaciones y el 75% con piso de cemento. Tenemos un grado importante de familias marginadas, el 30%, reporta tener piso de tierra y el 10 % no contar con los servicios básico de agua potable y luz eléctrica.

Dentro de estas condiciones económicas adversas podemos inferir que ciertos elementos solidarios compensan tal situación en tanto el 65% dice contar con amigos cercanos y de confianza, tal vez se refieran a las amigas que lograron consolidar durante el proceso del Programa. Este elemento es importante a considerarse en el trabajo cualitativo.

Respecto a los datos de salud, encontramos una contradicción al considerarse saludable el 85% de las encuestadas y sin embargo reportan problemas de diverso tipo, entre estomacales, cefaleas, insomnio, problemas dentales, el 100% de ellas, lo cual nos lleva a revisar de qué manera el concepto salud-enfermedad está construido desde la cotidianidad de pensar que enfermedad es algo más que un dolor de cabeza o un dolor de muela. Sobresale también que de las 13 que viven en pareja ninguna reporte haber padecido nunca alguna infección vaginal, es posible que los flujos o descargas vaginales entren en el concepto de "normal".

De igual manera se encuestaron a 37 adolescentes, de los cuales la proporción por sexo es de 62% de mujeres, 38% de hombres. De ellos el 70% provienen de familias biparentales, el 25% de familias monoparentales, un 5% dice vivir con los abuelos. No podemos inferir que se trate de familia extensa. El jefe de familia es el padre en 59% de los casos, la madre en el 35% y el 5% alguno de los abuelos. Es de notar que este dato se contrasta con el de que 70% de ellos conviven con ambos padres, sin embargo en algunos casos ven a la madre como jefe de familia. Es muy probable que a la pregunta sobre la convivencia con ambos padres se le haya atribuido la idea de que el padre asista ocasionalmente o viva fuera de casa, sin embargo los adolescentes lo incluyeron en su vida cotidiana. La ocupación del jefe de familia es, mayoritariamente, empleado, con un 45%, ama de casa con un 24%, el resto se reparte entre obrero y comerciante. Del total de los adolescentes encuestados sólo 1 de ellos trabaja formalmente en trabajo remunerado, el resto dice ser solo estudiante, de ellos 1 admite trabajar ocasionalmente. La mayor parte de los adolescentes ubican el ingreso familiar entre 2 y 3 salarios mínimo Refieren tener casa propia el 67%, prestada el 21% y rentada el 8%, con 3 o 4 habitaciones en su mayoría (incluyendo el baño), de ellos el 8% dicen no contar con servicios básico de agua y luz y 5 % con piso de tierra. Deducimos de estos datos que la mayoría de los encuestados se hallan ubicados en un nivel de marginación medio, no obstante el no saber el tipo de material y piso de la casa es significativo en un 15%, es probable que la marginación sea un poco más allá de lo que consideramos media.

Respecto a su vida social, 75% dicen contar con al menos un amigo de confianza, 25% dicen no contar con ningún amigo confiable. Dicen tener novio/a el 20%.

En lo relativo a salud, el 40% refirió padecer gripes frecuentes, el 51% dolores de cabeza, el 35% problemas dentales, dolores menstruales, insomnio y estomacales también fueron mencionados. Es probable que se hayan ubicado en varios padecimientos, no obstante; considerarse saludables el 78%; lo cual nos lleva a considerar el mismo problema que con las



madres, la conceptualización de salud y enfermedad que tienen los adolescentes es distinta a la que se tiene según la OMS.

Finalmente detectamos un nivel educativo por debajo del grado escolar que dijeron cursar, aunque dadas las condiciones generales del país y de Durango (Prueba enlace<sup>4</sup>). Esto no pudo ser contrastado con el nivel educativo de estudiantes en otras áreas menos marginadas<sup>5</sup>.

## Conclusiones

Por lo que respecta a la comunidad, al concluir la primera fase de intervención psicológica, hemos apenas sentado las condiciones para que la comunidad comience a reconocer su capacidad autogestiva para la generación de mejores condiciones de vivienda y educación.

De ahí que, el trabajo se definió a partir de una acción colectiva entre profesionales y las comunidades participantes ante los riesgos sociales y psicológicos que experimentan las propias personas y familias involucradas con el programa.

En cuanto a los hallazgos de la investigación social y psicológica desde la Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, en su búsqueda por vincularse con las políticas públicas del Estado, éstos se inserta en la idea según la cual dichas políticas se hallan en la transición desde lo social definida en función de las necesidades básicas, hacia aquellas que podríamos concebir como derechos ciudadanos básicos. Por ello, la investigación encuentra su sentido de vinculación con la comunidad a través de programas y acciones que, no sólo expliquen la condición de los sujetos de riesgo, sino que atiendan esas necesidades en los espacios territoriales definidos como vulnerables.

El Programa de Atención integral para padres y adolescentes se orientó hacia la articulación de profesionales en salud en el campo de la psicología y la propia comunidad atendida. Los talleres vivenciales fueron diseñados por profesionales de la psicología para llevarlos a la práctica por parte de los facilitadores, en su mayoría egresados de esta Escuela. A partir de la asesoría continua que recibieron los facilitadores, se reconoce el alto nivel de motivación, la conciencia de necesidad y la participación en los grupos, una vez formados, tanto de adolescentes como de madres. La asesoría en este proceso planteó la necesidad de reconocer la ausencia de la figura paterna debido, entre otras cosas, a su trabajo. Aunque se reconoce también que es necesario continuar analizando y reflexionando cuáles son las variables de orden sociocultural que están presentes en dicha ausencia. Asimismo, se valoró que las personas participantes dieron muestra de gran capacidad de autogestión con vías a afianzar sus redes sociales.

El proceso de formación y capacitación por parte del grupo de profesores que incluye a los maestros Emma Galaviz, Cosme F. Maldonado, Luis Fernando Ortiz, Rebeca Treviño y Rocío Guzmán se enfocó hacia una orientación fundamentalmente centrada en el apoyo de orden

4 La prueba enlace es una evaluación estatal que permite obtener un diagnóstico sistemático para dar seguimiento del avance hacia las metas estratégicas plasmadas en el documento AGENDA ESTRATÉGICA 2007-2009. Es una evaluación de conocimientos y habilidades de Español y Matemáticas de los estudiantes de 3° a 6° de Primaria y de 3° de Secundaria (Enlace Intermedia, 2008, disponible en: [www.enlaceintermedia.com.mx](http://www.enlaceintermedia.com.mx)).

5 En el Municipio de Durango, el 93.48% de la población entre 6 y 14 años asiste a la escuela, mientras que el 6.46% no lo hacen, según un estudio sociodemográfico realizado por el INEGI en 1995. De la población mayor de 15 años, el 7.37% no acude a la escuela; el 25.88% tiene primaria incompleta; el 23.11% primaria completa; el 21.15% acude a Preparatoria y el 22.45% a nivel superior (INEGI, 1995, disponible en <http://www.inegi.gob.mx>).

teórico-conceptual y práctico en torno a lo que significa la psicología comunitaria y las diferencias que ésta plantea con respecto al trabajo desde una perspectiva psicológico-clínica exclusiva.

Desde este proceso de asesoramiento permanente se puede recapitular que, las sesiones llevadas a cabo en la operación del programa fueron exitosas tanto para los participantes como para el equipo de asesores interviniente, lo que cosechó una valiosa experiencia con sentido formativo para la profesionalización de los facilitadores, aspecto de suma importancia si tomamos en cuenta el carácter exploratorio e innovador que en nuestro medio representa esta experiencia.

Respecto al trabajo de carácter metodológico, con miras a fortalecer la investigación y el enfoque académico del programa, este fue determinante en cuanto al diseño del estudio sociodemográfico en torno a las madres y adolescentes participantes, con la finalidad de construir un perfil que nos diera las bases cuantitativas para explicar y comprender al grupo atendido. A partir de los datos pudimos notar las deficiencias en términos de conceptualizaciones que tiene la comunidad en los diversos ámbitos de su vida cotidiana.

De manera general, durante el trabajo de campo se pudieron contrastar datos de orden cuantitativo que explican, en gran medida, las condiciones de la población con aquellos de carácter cualitativo. Esto significó una posibilidad para avanzar de lo explicativo a lo comprensivo. Asimismo, el trabajo de rescate de datos cuantitativos e interpretaciones cualitativas dará lugar a la producción de ensayos académicos con posibilidades de publicación y presentación ante congresos relativos a la disciplina psicológica comunitaria.

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# Marginalisation and Rurality

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## Abstract

*This paper adopts a 'community psychology' approach to the study of domestic violence in an isolated rural community. It suggests that such a perspective – of 'the individual in context' - provides important insights both into the character and exegesis of the problem and into possibilities for social change. At the same time the research provides an opportunity for reflection on the character and prospects for Community Psychology itself, particularly with regard to its impact on policy and practice for work in marginalised communities.*

Key words: Community; rurality; marginalisation; domestic violence;

## Domestic Violence and the Eden Valley

The research described in this paper highlights the need for generic provision for those escaping domestic violence within a rural area of Cumbria in the North of England, the Eden Valley. At the same time it attempts to address some specific needs presented by this rural area, including a widely dispersed rural community, lack of public transport, limited access to key services and the nature of small village life and points to some of the deficits in knowledge, resources and training that act as barriers to the uptake of services.

## Background

Eden is one of six districts in the County of Cumbria and lies in the eastern part of the County, bordered by South Lakeland to the south, Carlisle to the north, Allerdale to the west and Northumberland and Yorkshire to the east. Extensive, rural and sparsely populated, the focus of the district is the Eden Valley, which runs broadly north/south through the district. Eden is one of the most sparsely populated districts in England and Wales and has a population of over 50,000 people scattered in small villages over 830 square miles of land. The population density of the area is approximately 23 persons per km which is in stark contrast to the population density of the North West of the UK of 244ppkm. There are four main centres of population in Eden, the largest of these is Penrith, which has a population of around 15,000, followed by Appleby, Alston and Kirkby Stephen. There are currently over 23,000 households in the district. The economy of Eden is largely dependent upon tourism and agriculture, and the services that support them.

To outsiders Eden is an area of outstanding natural beauty, affluence and idyllic lifestyles and as such is not perceived to have the same level of social need as other, more urban, or deprived, areas. Certainly, up until relatively recently, little attention has been paid to the possibilities of social exclusion, poverty or crime in the area. However, of late, there have been a number of studies identifying a variety of factors contributing to the deprivation, marginalisation

and exclusion of people in rural areas. For example, in 2000 and 2006, 'Living in the Countryside', a report commissioned by the Countryside Agency, highlighted a number of day-to-day issues experienced by those living in the countryside that contributed to a 'poorer quality of life'. Most particularly at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or deprivation were those living in extremely isolated areas, those with no transport or jobs, those on low incomes and those with specific needs (e.g. health, education) and factors found to contribute to deprivation included poor geographical access to services such as post office, food shops, G.P. and schools.

Factors such as those identified by the Living in the Countryside report clearly have significance for a range of service providers in an area such as Eden. Certainly, over the years anecdotal accounts from professionals and residents working and living in the area, alongside statistics provided by the police and other front line services, suggest that Eden, like other areas of the country, does indeed suffer from a range of social problems but that the nature of the area means that these problems are different and are not as visible or well resourced as those in urban areas. Of particular concern to this paper is the impact rurality has on those experiencing and working with domestic violence.

For those working in rural areas there has been little research carried out on domestic violence. Instead most work on domestic violence (e.g. assessing incidence) has focused on urban locations rather than the patterning of domestic violence across the rural landscape. Of the few studies that have been conducted on rural areas, these have tended to focus on generic social problems rather than specific issues such as domestic violence. However, from the research available a number of potential problems facing those who live in rural and isolated areas and experience domestic violence have been identified. The study 'Living in the Countryside' (2000, 2006) highlighted how problems for those experiencing domestic violence in rural areas might be exacerbated by factors such as lack of transport, isolation from services (particularly health, police and housing). Evans (1999), Eastman, Bunch, Williams and Caravaan (2007) and Eastman and Bunch (2007) drew attention to the impact of car ownership, public transport facilities, the problems of re-housing, lack of specialist services and other aspects of rural culture – for example, the responsibility for domestic pets and other animals – all contributing to a tolerance of domestic violence and hurdles facing access of services.

Anecdotal evidence from workers from a variety of Women's Aid projects around the U.K. gives some insight into the difficulties people can have both coping and working with domestic violence in a rural areas and how these factors need to be taken into consideration when planning services. In particular these problems included: the physical, emotional and social isolation that can come with living in an isolated area, small community living, the lack of public transport and difficulties in accessing central services and information.

Additionally, a number of service providers in Eden have identified a further problem that may well be operating in the district. Professionals (e.g. the police and the health services) have raised the concerns that the recorded incidence of domestic violence in the area may be significantly under-reported and represents just 'the tip of the iceberg'. Although under-reporting is historically a problem with domestic violence research (e.g. the British Crime Survey, 2000, estimated that less than one in three (31.1%) of victims of domestic violence report the incidence to the police) it is of particular concern to professionals in Eden as it is believed that under-reporting may well be below the U.K. average and that there might well be a number of additional

factors are contributing to this under-reporting. For example, workers in the area believe that the lack of awareness around domestic violence issues (both in the community and service providers), lack of specialist services, problems in accessing services and little formal co-ordination or sign posting of servicing all are thought to contribute to the difficulties facing those experiencing domestic violence in the Eden area.

In order to address the concerns raised above this research, commissioned by Eden Forum Against Domestic Violence, set out to explore the following areas:

- To identify/estimate the present level of domestic violence in the Eden area
- To identify current provision in the area
- To assess use and effectiveness of provision, from both the point of view of provider and user
- To make recommendations as to how provision might be improved

### **Methodology**

One important goal of community psychology is to develop collaborative working relationships with people (Bond 1990). In this research much attention was given to developing a collaborative research study with a range of stakeholders, including members of the Eden Forum Against Domestic Violence, service providers and users. However, in view of the various research aims of project it also became necessary to use a range of data collection strategies.

In order to build an understanding of the social and economic character of Eden, of the incidence of domestic violence and of the availability of specialist services within the area and the national figures for domestic violence and domestic violence provision, primary and secondary data analysis of local, regional and national studies and reports was carried out. The documentation analysed included: local and area statistics and policy documents prepared by the Cumbria police, local authority, social services and housing authorities; national statistics produced by the Home Office; other questionnaire and survey results obtained by the local authority, charitable and voluntary organisations and groups. Secondly, to gain an in-depth understanding of local services and the experiences of both those seeking help, and those providing support and advice for those experiencing domestic violence semi-structured questionnaires and interviews were carried out with services providers and survivors. The first stage of the investigation entailed sending out questionnaires to a wide range of agencies and professionals across Eden. The 'agency questionnaire' was designed to collect information on the following: the agency's role; experience of domestic violence; services offered by the agency and evaluation of provision; training and policy; awareness of other services; recommendations for improvement. Agencies were selected on the basis of their likely contact with domestic violence. Research (e.g. Dominy & Radford, 1996) has shown that after family and friends, the police, health services, housing services and legal services are most commonly approached by those experiencing domestic violence. However, as the research moved on a number of other agencies and professionals were approached because of the information disclosed to the researchers (e.g. the church was mentioned by a number of interviewees as an agency that dealt with domestic violence concerns). Agencies and professionals were also invited to participate in a follow-up interview.

Making contact with people who had experienced domestic violence was a complex and sensitive process and used three routes. Firstly, a number of the Forum members had professional

caseloads of people who had or were experiencing domestic violence and they collaborated with service users on looking at ways in which they might participate in the research. In preparing for engagement with service users all forum members worked with the researchers in reaching a shared understanding of the research process and developed a protocol for approaching potential interviewees, explaining the research, supporting individuals in filling in the questionnaire or carrying out interviews. Secondly, all agencies that were contact in stage 1 of the research were sent additional information about engaging service users in the research. Alongside the agency questionnaire, a pack of information about the research (including individual questionnaires and advice to services providers about engaging participants) was sent with a request for agencies to display or, if appropriate, to pass onto potential interviewees.

Finally, an awareness raising campaign about the research took place. This included posters, leaflets, letters, a website, talks to women's groups, a radio and t.v. interview, newspaper articles. Besides raising awareness of domestic violence, the campaign explained about the research project and its aims and invited people to come forward to either fill in a questionnaire or participate in an interview. On all the questionnaires, letters and information about the project there was an invitation for potential respondents (survivors or professionals) to discuss and negotiate the nature of their participation (including interview, questionnaire, anonymity, confidentiality).

### **Raw Findings**

The research team was aware from the outset that there would be a number of limitations with the sampling used and it was very likely that the project would only make contact with those willing and able to participate. Previous research shows that there are many reasons why victims of domestic abuse do not disclose their abuse (e.g. willingness, embarrassment, fear, ability – including being literate) and it is very possible that this might impact on this research. Similarly, agencies can only provide data on those that they come into contact with, so again the data that they can provide might be distorted by a range of factors (including women who are most in danger, in need, without any other means of support, same individual reporting to a number of agencies)

### **Service provision**

The data gathered showed that there were a number of essential services already available in the area and these were reasonably accessible to those who had transport. For example, the Police, health services, social services, legal advice were all represented in the main market towns. However, these services were more likely to be in the business of providing 'crisis support' (e.g. police protection, emergency health care, emergency housing) for those seeking help and there was found to be very little specialist support for women in the early stages of help seeking (who might, for example, just want to talk). Additionally, many of the services available were centrally located, difficult to access for those in rural isolated areas and were not well advertised for people experiencing domestic violence. Hence these services were difficult to access because of their physical location and because they were not well know about or signposted. Both service providers and individuals reported that much was needed to both raise the profile of services, fill in the gaps and meet the particular needs of those living in rural and isolated areas.

## **Rurality and Domestic Violence**

The rural nature of Eden clearly presented specific and additional difficulties for women who experienced domestic abuse. Problems included: accessing services, poor transport systems, keeping services anonymous, breaking into closed communities, changing prevailing attitudes of acceptance and silence. The following raw quotes or vignettes are taken from the questionnaires and interviews carried out with service providers and survivors. They have been chosen to highlight some of the more perspicuous findings of the research:

Breaking into closed communities:

*"we know that there are cases of domestic violence in the very rural areas, but people don't come forward. I'm sure they don't just find it hard to get here transport wise. To make a specific journey to talk about your marriage just is too much of a hurdle"*

*"The women do not get the opportunity to get support, they are isolated socially as well as geographically.... without the support of other women in similar situations it very hard to talk about it or change your situation...."*

Physical and social isolation:

*"in the morning he would check the mileage on the car and unplug the phone. If I had to go out then he would check exactly how far I had driven. He would keep on at me too – where had I gone, why, who had I talked to – so in the end it just wasn't worth it"*

*"I can think of a family who lived in a huge isolated house with no neighbours, The woman was totally intimidated by her husband who treated her like an animal. I spent so much time trying to build her confidence but she had no transport and he could rule her life."*

Finding and maintaining support:

*"I didn't know who to tell, if I went to Penrith I couldn't keep going, and there's nothing here"*

Access to services and transport:

*"there isn't any local police officers any more, they all come from Penrith .... A woman could be dead before they even get the call"*

*"it took weeks to sort everything out and get things organised... whereas if you were in Penrith you could just sort of drop in and see whoever you wanted"*

*"to get to Penrith or Carlisle if you don't have a car and you don't have any money ... you just can't do it"*

Childcare:

*"to get to Penrith is a real hike.. its not just getting the bus .. but trapesing all the kids and their stuff too..."*

Confidentiality/lack of anonymity:

*"once you say something round here its round the village in no time"*



*"...they [the doctors' receptionists] know all your business, I once took in a sample for a pregnancy test for my neighbour, by the time I got home the women in the shop asked if I was pregnant again."*

Service providers being part of the community:

*"I felt I couldn't tell him (the doctor) because he was a man ... he plays cricket with X anyway, so he wouldn't believe me"*

*"the policeman that came round used to live two doors away, he told us to keep the noise down and sort it out for the kids sake"*

Difficulties in getting away:

*"I took out an injunction on him to stay away, the magistrate granted the injunction but allowed him to live in the caravan in the yard. He had access to the house twice a day. The first thing he did was superglue the locks, he had the shotgun in the caravan, I was terrified, I didn't sleep for weeks. I eventually called the police and moved out when he was chain-sawing through the windows, I held the phone up to the noise for the police to hear, I think they believed me then."*

Roots:

*"I was born in this village, he was too, we have a business here too, so when I had to move I lost my house, my friends, my family, and my livelihood, he still drinks in the same pub and pays me when he feels like it."*

Being 'labelled' and stigmatised by the community:

*"whereas here you can't do anything without somebody else knowing about it, and I'd feel, well when it was happening that everybody was on his side because he was telling everything what the reasons why I had bruises and it just felt as if everybody was closing in on me and talking about me and you couldn't go anywhere without people sort of talking behind your back"*

*"I couldn't go to the doctors, I didn't want anyone to know, I went to Carlisle hospital and told them I had fallen, they know though.... When I went to a solicitors I went to Carlisle again just in case anyone saw me, daft really everyone knew, I'm sure"*

Acceptance of violence/macho culture:

*"There aren't places to go round here, no women's things I mean, you are meant to be home baking in the kitchen"*

*"many people in this area (Appleby) would regard a smack from their husbands as normal ... not as domestic violence"*

### **Analysis and Discussion**

Whatever the methodological limitations, this empirical study, and the vignettes quoted above, clearly identify experiences and perceptions of domestic violence and of service provision in rural areas, a topic already identified as in need of further investigation (Grama, 2000; Krishnan et

al., 2001; Logan et al., 2001). What these documented experiences suggest is that service providers working with domestic violence victims should especially understand how particular contextual, social and environmental characteristics of rural life can impact on both the phenomena itself and the experiences of victims. This research clearly shows that for women in rural and isolated communities there are additional problems that make their experiences different and service providers need to respond to these differences in developing their services. Living in rural and isolated areas creates a number of specific problems faced by those experiencing domestic violence. The psychological isolation that many abused women feel can be heightened when living in sparsely populated areas where there are reduced opportunities for social, community or specialised (confidential) support. The search for help and support can be far more difficult to undertake, particularly if the woman is reliant on public transport or partners and specialist support (such as Refuge or Women's Aid) is likely to be less accessible. Even being able to access a website for specialist advice or information can be impossible in isolated areas where there is no network access. Although this research suggested that domestic violence is 'classless', it also showed that those who were most economically dependent on their partners who were most disadvantaged by their experiences and were most likely to be excluded and marginalised by their social isolation and dependency.

Rural communities have longstanding and often intractable characteristics that may exacerbate both domestic violence itself and efforts to seek or provide services. To present a simple example, rural isolation adds to the practical difficulties of providing sufficient and appropriate services. Statutory agencies need to rationalise service provision due to their resources, this results, for example, in local offices that are few in number, emergency services response times are affected by the sheer size of the area they have to travel between their home site and the incident they are attending, outreach services have to build in the time and cost of travelling and find ways of servicing a clientele that has specialist needs and a wide geographical area; housing stock is limited in sparsely populated areas - this can mean women have to leave their communities in order to be housed safely or, if chose to stay in their community, are housed in close proximity to their abuser; and need to find resources to develop specialised provision.

Thirdly, many women have roots within the community, e.g. family, support network, employment, schools, which makes it difficult both to report abuse, and to 'up and leave'. Close kinship and community ties create problems for confidentiality and anonymity, while notions of sturdy self-reliance, common in depictions of rural life can act to further reduce the likelihood of reporting abuse. Coupled with this it also has to be acknowledged that there are also many perceived benefits of living in rural areas. This study identified key positive features included: a sense of living in relatively secure and friendly community and living in an attractive, peaceful and unpolluted environment that was not perceived to be blighted by poverty, unemployment, crime or 'traditional' deprivation that comes with 'inner city living'. Some of these were cited as outweighing the 'pros' of leaving an abusive relationship.

Finally, the traditional beliefs of many small, isolated, rural communities was cited as contributing to the stigmatising and social isolation of women disclosing domestic violence, an 'unwillingness to believe the victim', and a tolerance of violent and abusive behaviour both inside and outside the family. Reluctance to report abuse is similarly reinforced by a stereotypical "stand by your man" mentality rooted in patriarchal attitudes and beliefs about appropriate gender

roles that are themselves communally derived and reinforced. Highlighted in the accounts of women and workers was both a subtle and an explicit 'patriarchy' which impacted on the culture, organisation and norms of society in general. In turn these norms and values appeared to trickle down into the local communities and organisations in which these individuals lived and worked. At their worst these attitudes and beliefs led to the 'condoning' and normalisation of violence against women. The impact of these norms and values on the socialisation of children (through the media, social institutions such as schools and church, peer group and family) was also apparent. In the research I found evidence of communities and organisations unwilling to acknowledge, name, react to, or condemn domestic violence or those who perpetrated it (e.g. communities, health care services, criminal justice system) and implicitly, and explicitly, 'blaming' those who were the recipients of this violence. All these factors suggest that rurality may both increase the reluctance of women disclosing domestic violence and influence the extent and effectiveness of services that can be offered – there is a strong sense that victims risk further victimization as a result of the inadequacy or ineffectiveness of service provision. All these factors must obviously be taken into consideration when developing appropriate, coordinated, community services.

This study has a number of important implications for practice and service provision, most notably in highlighting the variety of factors that contribute to domestic violence, the impact of the wider community on people's experience of and responses to domestic violence, the importance of a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach in responding to domestic violence. For the women and children experiencing domestic abuse there needs to be both ameliorative provision, providing, for example, immediate and ongoing support services, helping with women's immediate emotional and practical needs, and longer term prevention strategies, which work at local, national and international levels. At the widest level strategies have to be transformational and directed to the wider social, cultural, institutional and political contexts, raising awareness, changing attitudes, and informing policies and practice. However, interventions also need to work both within the communities in which women live and the organisations with which they come into contact as there is clearly a need for 'small-scale', community based preventative and ameliorative work. Actions needed would include, raising awareness of domestic violence in the local community, and the role played by all in contributing (e.g. by recognising policies and practices that contribute to the hiding of domestic violence or poor treatment of women experiencing it) and work on developing inter-agency strategies that tackle the causes of abuse, improve provision and indicate areas of good practice. This research supports arguments as to the complex, multi-causal character of domestic violence (see Heise, 1998). However, whereas some of these factors (e.g. attitudes towards women and violence), appeared to be present in all the women's experiences other factors gave a women's particular experience a specific quality. The social context in which women lived proved particularly important in this study as the rural environment clearly provided particular nuances to women's everyday experiences, as did the absence or presence of social support networks. In this research the geographical context impacted on the nature of women's experiences and on their searches for help. Furthermore, although rural, isolated living had a significant impact on all the women's experience it was those women who were most dependent, economically, physically and/or emotionally, on their partners, families and communities who were the most disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised.

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# Supportive Houses for persons diagnosed with serious mental disorders as sociocultural sceneries: A methodological and theoretical proposal from the sociocultural psychology.

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## Abstract

*Supportive houses for persons diagnosed with mental serious disorders are essential for a system based on the community mental health. Nevertheless, beyond the recognition of the patients' life quality improve who live in these supportive houses, it has been researched little on the influence of these sceneries in the recovery's process of the residents. In this sense, it's especially important the possibility of constructing alternative identities to the "patient" role in these scenery. It's necessary to define these sceneries in a complex way in order to start investigating how social environments can help to reconstruct the identity of the persons diagnosed with mental serious disorders and contribute to their recovery. The methodological and theoretical contributions of sociocultural psychology can help us in this task. The sociocultural psychology, Vigotsky was one of the founders this theory, studies how the cultural, historical and institutional sceneries by means symbolic and material mediators are related dialectically to the cognitive resources of the human beings. Concepts which come from of this tradition as "sociocultural sceneries", "privilegiación", "activity" and "practice" will be used in this paper. A sociocultural analysis of these sceneries needs a description of the following basic dimensions:*

- 1) Concrete activities in the scenery
- 2) Interactive daily patterns in the scenery: Objective aspects like verbal exchange, space – temporal context, not verbal communication, etc. And also a subjective aspects evaluation, intentions, expectations, values, beliefs, how do the interactions' participants define the context?
- 3) Institutional: organizational norms and rules. How does the institution define the scenery?

Key words: Recovery, Socio-Cultural Psychology, Supportive Houses.

## I

This paper belongs to a research in progress about changes in life narratives of patients with schizophrenia who live in special "Care Homes". I have worked for eight years at a public foundation which provides special lodging to persons with serious mental problems. Concretely I worked in special "Care Homes". I'm interested in studying of these "Care Homes" and in effects of these settings in the patients' identity construction. In this paper I expose the theoretical approach following of methodological requirements of my research design.

Programs which provide accommodation for people with mental serious disorders are

fundamental for system of community mental health. Basically, these lodgings should supply of basic needs, support active participation in the community and interpersonal relationships of users (Dorvil et al, 2005)

Beneficial effects have been demonstrated in social functioning, quality of life, and hospital admissions, and pathological state of patient, although in this last case the evidence is minor (Lopez, Lara & Laviana, 2004).

However, the debate about specific characteristics of these lodgings is open. For example, the temporary or permanent character of lodging, number of residents, characteristics of the professionals who work in these lodgings, model of resource management (public or private) and aims of these programs; only basic needs or the inclusion of systematic rehabilitation programs.

The special lodgings, where I worked and where I develop my research, are called "Casas Hogar", "Care Homes". These lodgings belong to a public foundation called FAISEM (Andalusian Foundation for the integration of the mental ill). "Care Homes" provides accommodation for between 16 and 20 persons with 24 hours of professional attention. These professional don't have specific academic education. The residents suffer schizophrenia and other psychosis and the most come from other social and health institution, however more and more come from own home or family home.

## II

The study of changes in life narratives of patients who live in these "Care Homes" is the key point of my research. These life narratives are related to the construction process of the social identity of patients. We can find more and more contribution which point out that the reconstruction of patients' identity is a very important phase in recovery. In this sense, our narratives of life are the essential instrument by means we give meanings to our experiences and by means we present ourselves to the community. Life narratives are like our visiting card. I think that it's difficult to understand how a patient can achieve recovery without a coherent and shareable life narrative. In this point a question arises: How a setting as "Care Homes" can transform, or help to transform life narratives of patients? In order to respond this question is necessary a complex description of these settings. A concept belongs to Socio-cultural psychology helps me to understand "care Homes" as socio-cultural contexts: "scenery or setting of activity". Before explaining this concept and showing example from my research we are going to expose some ideas of socio-cultural psychology.

Only three points about socio-cultural psychology. I think that these three ideas are very interesting in order to understand the recovery process of people with schizophrenia.

First, this theoretical tradition affirms that the individual psychological developmental is explained from micro-social and macro-social contexts, that is, from interpersonal interactions or institutions where persons participate. In other words, psychological function is explained by participation in cultural activities (Vigotsky, 1978).

Second, signs like all cultural material tools are internalized or appropriated by individuals from a social dimension (Vygotski, 1930/1981; Wertsch, 1985). These tools, especially the system of signs called language, mediate our cognitive processes. For example, when we achieved to use language to communicate, in this moment, our cognition is being mediated by these signs; when we learnt writing and reading, these new actions transform our psychological functions.

Also, when we use new methods to transmit language, for example books and now Internet, our psychological functions are transformed.

Finally, socio-cultural psychology makes emphasis on processes rather products of psychological function (Luria y Vygotski, 1930/1992).

Activity settings are defined as very specific socio-cultural contexts where concrete human actions take place (Wertsch, 1985). What I think interesting is that the activity settings are explained not only by means space-temporal and objective descriptions, but by means meanings and subjective assumptions of participants in actions. These meanings are necessary in order to recognize the activity setting by participants. We have said that language is an essential cultural tool. Therefore, it is normal that speech or discursive genres are fundamental in order to explain activity settings. That is, conversational patterns, stereotyped issues and linguistic uses, which can be observed in activity settings.

For example, how "Care Homes" are defined? Next, we see three different definition of "care Homes":

#### Excerpt 1

*FAISEM: "A resource aimed at promoting the continuity and active participation in social life" (Documento de trabajo nº1. Criterios para el desarrollo del programa residencial. FAISEM, 2000)*

#### Excerpt 2

*Monitor: "[...] They are institutionalized and have the experience of being institutionalized but we want to sell that this is not an institution, that is a Home. The everyday experience of them is that it's an institution.[...]" (Interview to "monitor". Año 2008)*

#### Excerpt 3

*Resident: "Why must I clean my room? if I did it last week... You earn, because I pay you, because I'm paying here!". (narrative Interview to resident. Año 2007)*

First, a definition from an official document, "Care Homes" is defined as a useful instrument to achieve recovery and integration. In opposite sense, a worker affirms that "we can sell that this is not an institution", but the residents, their everyday experiences "is that it's an institution". Institution for this worke(a)r is understood as a closed space separated from society. But, how does a resident define "Care Homes"? In this last extract we can see how a resident defines "Care Homes" as a Hotel in which the people pay for service. These three definitions interwoven are a fundamental part of this setting of activity.

### III

With regard to discourse genres, let me show you two excerpts from my interviews:

#### Excerpt 4

*Monitor 1: "And what I personally use are stories, any situation that has*

*happened to me personally.*

*Interviewer: Aha*

*M: This morning it has happened to me with my child... he has said to me that... and I tell him something that was not important, but that it belongs to real life and that it's personal and then automatically they change the chip, at least, momentarily".*

Excerpt 5

*M2: "[...] I've had my problems, for example with this person; because he often confuses something... he tries to consult psychiatric problems to me. So I do not have neither voice nor vote, I don't understand, You must say it to your psychiatrist, I can't help you with that".*

We observe that a fundamental characteristic in "Care Homes" is that verbal interventions, utterances, of residents related to some delusive or hallucinatory topic are not accepted. In the first extract, a professional explains us what she does when a resident tell her some delusive story or when the resident suffers a hallucination. This professional sets up against this delusive story "any situation that has happened to me personally", "something that was not important, but that it belongs to real life and that it's personal". In this way "they change the chip, at least, momentarily".

In the second extract, other professional is more radical. Faced with some commentary related to delusion or hallucination, he directly sends the resident to the psychiatrist. "I have neither voice nor vote, I don't understand, you must say it to your psychiatrist, I can't help you with that".

This meanings and assumptions explain aims and characteristics of the actions that participants develop in the settings. Moreover, interpersonal relationships take place in daily activities and residents appropriate discourses and other cultural tools by means interaction with professionals and other residents. In this sense, analyzing daily activities is essential in order to understand deeply "Care Homes". The analysis of daily activities needs a historical approach. That is, we need to observe the process and not only the product. In this sense, statistical tools like the instruments that we see in the slide are useful but not sufficient to describe "Care Homes". I would like to study changes in the time, therefore I need other designs.

For example, we can read in the next extract that a professional tell us the activity of going with the patients to the doctor or to hospital. We discover that, contrary what we can believe at the beginning, these activities are the more adequate for arising personal talks between professionals and residents.

Excerpt 6

*Monitor: The activities usually tend to be simple and then it's a time perhaps with more personalized talks with residents. Because, well, you spend an hour, an hour and a half with them on the street alone, many conversations arise. Small talks, it's a nice day today! I fancy to go to the beach! or more serious conversations, about what? How have you been these days? [...] I have heard that you had a fight with someone, I*



*have heard that your family came to see you how was it? How are you?*

#### **IV**

Other methodological requirement is the study of institutional contexts. Normally, this task is realized by sociologist and historians. But, as we have seen, macro-social context also affects human actions and psychological functions. Therefore, in my opinion Institutions is an object of study also for psychology. It's possible to analyze official documents, minutes of meetings and other documents. In this sense, is fundamental to consider in our analysis, for example, in the case of "Care Homes belong to FAISEM, the public funding or the participation of relatives of patient in the institution.

For example, in the Quality Plan Program for next years the institution includes an extensive questionnaire about social functioning of residents. It's significant that the Institution decides to establish systematically an individual evaluation and intervention for each patient. In this way the aims of the institution go beyond providing basic needs. That means more systematization of the work in the last years. Also it's interesting the inclusion of aspects related to the sexual life of residents in the evaluation.

In summary, an activity setting, in this case "care Homes" for patients with mental ill, should be analyzed from two focal points. On the one hand, institutional definitions, aims of the institution, institutional history, standards and rules. On the other hand, subjective factors as definitions, meanings and cultural tools that are used by participants. Human actions, which we can observe, take place between these two focal points.

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# Interactive Patterns between professional and Patient in supportive houses for serious mental ill

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## Abstract

*This study belongs to a research in progress about changes in life narratives of persons diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. These persons live in supportive houses in Andalusia which belong to a Public Foundation. In the present study the more important interactions between professionals and patients are described. It was carried out ten semistructured interviews to expert professionals who work in the supportive houses. The interactions face to face between professionals and patients is one of the essential factors that can help us to understand the process of patients' recovery in these sceneries. The description includes very wide aspects as the special – temporal context, the verbal exchange, the emotional charge, the professional evaluation of the interaction, etc. The episodes that the professionals reported us can be classified in the six interactive formats.*

Key words: Social interactions, Recovery, Supportive Houses.

## I

In my second paper I would like to speak about some preliminary results of my research in progress (Saavedra, 2006). Concretely, I refer to a first approach to types of interactions between professionals who work directly with residents in "Care Homes" by means interviews to professionals. The aim of this paper is: In-depth description of recurrent interactions between professionals and patients in the context of the "Care Homes". According to theoretical approach which we are described in my first paper I am interested in subjective experiences of "Monitors": meanings, assumptions, valuations of interactions, emotional states, etc.

Participants were ten expert professionals, called "monitors", who work directly with patients in "Care Homes". All participants have more than three years of experiences and permanent contract. Two of these professionals belong to work council. That is, they have labour union responsibilities. They were four men and six women. Four "monitors" have university education; three have secondary education and three have primary education. It's important to point out that professionals don't have a specific education in order to develop this job.

I have utilized a semi structured interview. We informed to professionals that the well practices were the interview's focus. This interview consists of a first open question: ¿Could you describe me in detail three interactions between you and one o more residents during your work in "Care Home"? The first interaction a very common interaction, second a usual interaction, and finally a rare interaction. So, we obtain thirty extensive descriptions of interactions. After the first professional's description, interviewer can ask or holds a dialog about concrete aspects. The

analysis is qualitative and I seek interactive patterns or idiosyncratic formats between the thirty professional descriptions. We call “interactive episode” each one of descriptions of “monitors”. And we call “Interactive Format” each one of set of interactive episodes that are grouped by criteria such as type of activity, space-time context, and goals for the participants in the interaction, valuations, speech genres, etc.

## II

We have found six interactive formats.

Interactive Format 1 (IF1). Related to health problems of residents.

1.1 Interactions related to anxiety or delirious state of residents

1.2 Coping of compulsions and strange behaviors

1.3 “Going with residents to the doctor”

IF2. Demands of residents

IF3. Routines related to daily life in “Care Homes”

IF4. Interactions in free time activities

IF5. Disruptive Behavior

IF6. Mediation between Family and Resident or explicit request of emotional support

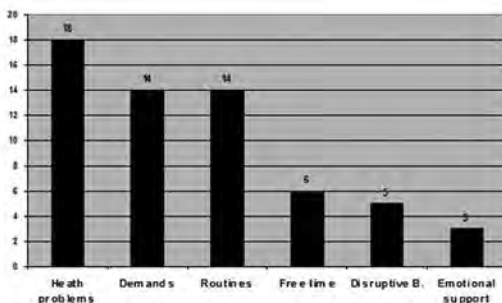
First, a big interactive format related to interventions of monitors in residents’ health problems. This format is divided in other three subgroups. One of these are “Interactions related to anxiety or delirious state of residents”, other “coping of compulsions and strange behaviors”, and finally “Going with residents to the doctor”.

The second IF is related to concrete demand to monitors of residents. The following IF refers to daily life routines, interactions in free time activities, Interventions related to disruptive behaviours of patients and finally mediation between family and residents or explicit emotional support. If we score interactions, we obtain frequencies of each IF. In the next graphic we see a graphic representation of these frequencies.

3 pts. Interactions very common

2 pts. Interactions usual

1 pts. Interactions rare



As you see the first three IF are absolute majority. That is, during the work of these professionals the majority of the interactions with residents in "Care Homes" are related to problems of health of residents, demands of residents or daily routines. I would like to describe in detail each IF, but we don't have enough time, so I select the three more frequent IF in order to expose some significant results.

### III

Within interactive format "Health problems of residents", I consider interesting episodes related to anxiety or delirious state of residents. Professionals describe an important number of episodes in which they help residents to control unspecific distress, for example, pain in different places of the body, fear, anxiety, etc. Professionals can respond to patients' requests of help, but also they keep watch residents and ask often them for their state. The professionals express the importance of physical contact in order to moderate anxiety. For example, a professional describes how she clean slowly patient's eyes when the patient feels anguish and thinks that he becomes blind.

How do professionals define or interpret these states of distress? All professionals use the same concept to explain unspecific distress. These patients' behaviors are described as "demands of attention" by monitors. That is, patients look for personal contact with professionals more or less intentionally by means expressing unspecific distress.

What happen when a resident tells a delusive story or comments an auditory hallucination? Two monitors tell us how they cope with this situation. First, they listen briefly patients because to deny the reality of the patient's experiences in the moment of hallucination is absurd. Second, they tell to residents very concrete stories with real personages belong to community or order very specific tasks. Only, after the acute state, professionals can confront the reality of these experiences or inform about characteristics of illness.

### IV

As you can see in the first excerpt, this Interactive Format, "Demands of residents", is described as residents' demands of different objects by monitors. For example, money, medicaments, bus card, etc. Professionals express their tiredness because of residents are constantly demanding. The valuation of this interactive format is the worst.

#### Excerpt 1

*Monitor 1: [...] I came very early every day and we already have Antonio waiting. That is my entry every day. He is waiting. When I came, he was waiting at the door (.). And he is saying, medication! The bus card! and money! So I say Antonio, good morning [...]"*

As you can read in the last two excerpts, professionals describe these interactions as "continuous war", "fight" or "burning".

*"E2.M2: [...] and that is a continuous war. I believe that we are constantly saying no, not only on the issue of snuff, but with the money "*

*"E3.M3: [...] and that fight is ongoing, right? the truth is that burning a lot every day repeating the same story [...]"*

Professionals lose the initiative of interactions and they feel sick and tired for resisting demands. Professionals said that they are limited to say no systematically to demands of residents. What is interesting in this interactive format is that the evaluation is worse than other interactive formats, which we can think more difficult to cope with. For example, professionals consider coping with hallucination, disruptive behaviors or emotional problems part logic of their job. However, they have some problems to accept demands of residents as part of job.

## V

The third more frequent Interactive Format is related to daily activities as awakenings, home tasks, hygiene of residents, etc. The aspect more important of this format is the high affective communications that take place in daily routines. We can say that professionals and residents express in this format intimacy and proximity. Professionals describe in interviews affective expressions, smiles, embraces and physical contacts which convey trust and intimacy. This interactive format is appropriate in order to residents can collaborate actively with "monitors" and even to take some minor decisions. Regarding to communal tasks, professionals show a wide number of arguments in order to get the collaborations of residents. Next slide shows an excerpt in which a professional describes the common tasks activities in the morning.

E4.M4: [...] Just when I open the door of the wardrobe, he laughs a lot. I give to him the towels, that other residents need, and he delivers to others the towels. Well, very happy at that time. He laughs a lot to me and he shows much affection, is not it? ... I don't know... there are not well... caresses, but it is physical contact that show that... affection, is not it? The glances... he shows that is... the truth is that I also enjoy, I laugh a lot and I convey him in some way the same feeling...

You can see positive valuations of these activities. Monitor tells how the resident collaborates and what affective expressions resident shows: for example, "laughs", "caresses", "physical contacts". At the end of the excerpt the professional says "the truth is that I also enjoy, I laugh a lot and I convey him in some way the same thing"

## VI

To conclude I point out some general consideration about results, including interactive format that we don't have described.

Firstly, physical contact with residents is recognized by professionals as a useful instrument in order to express intimacy and trust or in order to regulate anxiety state.

The use of stories for professionals is an aspect to remark. Some stories can help to cope with positive symptoms and are utilized in order to help residents' elaborations of life narratives.

Most of residents' behaviors, which are valued by professionals as negatives, are explained as "demands of attention". The concept of "Demands of attentions" works as an "explanatory framework".

The "daily routines" are the main contexts for expressing affection and intimacy (Sells,

Stayner and Davidson, 2004; Roe y Davidson, 2007).

The main interactive formats for elaborating personal stories in dialogue with professionals are “free time activities” and “going with residents to the doctor”

Interactive Format as “Disruptive Behaviors” and, specially, “Demands” involve professional burnout.

Finally, we can say that “Care Homes” provide of an important emotional support (López et al, 2007).

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# Does the “broken window” theory work? How incivilities affect sense of insecurity in Italian university students

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## Abstract

*The aim of this study was to examine the influence of incivilities on sense of insecurity in Italy. The “broken window” thesis claims that by reducing signs of disorder, police can make lasting reductions in crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Other studies argue that changes in level of physical decay and social disorder do not lead decreased crime rates (Taylor, 2001). However, all these studies, as well as several others, link disorder to insecurity: people who perceive incivilities more are more fearful (Lagrange et al., 1992; Santinello et al., 1997). Moreover, past works have stressed the multidimensional constructs underlying psychological reactions to crime: personal fear of crime, social concern of crime, and perceived risk of crime have different predictors (Freudenberg, 1971; Van der Wuff, 1986; Amerio & Roccato, 2005).*

*The present study examined the correlates of distinct dimensions of insecurity in a sample of 226 university students in two different social contexts (123 in a mountain region not perceived as insecure by its inhabitants and 103 in a metropolitan city in Northern Italy). A self-report questionnaire was devised whose main variables were: victimization; personal well-being (Masse et al., 1998), perceived social support (Zimet et al., 1988), subtle and blatant prejudice (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995), perception of social and physical incivilities, perception of territorial markers, and place identity (Bonaiuto, Bilotta, & Fornai, 2004).*

*The first analyses confirm distinct constructs underlying insecurity. Main results reveal significant relationships between fear of crime and social (but not physical) incivilities, gender, depression and negative place identity, whereas concern of crime is linked to blatant prejudice, social support and territorial markers. Personal risk of crime is influenced by victimization and gender. Further analyses comparing the two different social contexts will be presented.*

Key words: fear fo crime, incivility, markers

Past works have stressed the multidimensional constructs underlying psychological reactions to crime: personal fear of crime, perceived risk of crime, and social concern about crime (Furstenberg, 1971; Van der Wuff, 1986; Amerio & Roccato, 2005).

Fear of crime is defined as the emotional response to the likelihood of becoming the victim of crime; it has possible behavioural consequences and is mainly influenced by individual psychological factors (vulnerability).

Concern about crime is defined as the evaluation of the seriousness of the crime issue (not specifically in one's own life environment); it does not seem to have consequences on daily behaviour and seems particularly associated with individual and collective perception of current social and political times (certainty of one's own socio-economic stability; presence of immigrants;

sudden significant changes in one's own life environment, etc.).

Perceived risk of crime is defined as the cognitive evaluation of the likelihood of becoming the victim of a crime and seems to be more greatly affected by previous episodes of direct or indirect victimization and by perception of vulnerability.

The differentiation between these three concepts arose from the need to explain several contradictions in the empirical evidence. The fear/victimization paradox (the most fearful social groups, women and the elderly, are the least victimized), the bias between perception and crime (areas with high crime rate and low fear or with high fear and low crime rate); the difference between socio-political attention to insecurity and individuals' behaviour.

The "broken window" thesis claims that by reducing signs of disorder, police can make lasting reductions in crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The presence of cues of decay or social disorder (graffiti, broken glass, dilapidated buildings, beggars, youth hanging around in the streets, etc.) in the physical and social environment is interpreted as a sign of diminished social control. Such lack of control, on the one side, allows and attracts deviant behaviours and criminal acts and, on the other, increases fear of or worry about becoming victims of crime in that territory. Other studies argue that changes in level of physical decay and social disorder do not lead to different crime rates: the latter seem mainly associated to socio-economic determinants (Taylor, 2002). However, all these studies, as well as several others, link disorder to insecurity: people who perceive incivilities become more fearful (Lagrange et al., 1992; Santinello et al., 1997).

## **AIMS**

The aim of the present research was to examine the "broken window" thesis in the Italian context, studying its influence especially on the three constructs of insecurity presented above.

Another aim was to check whether social and environmental life settings may determine connections between incivility and insecurity. A comparison was made between a small and relatively isolated community, Valle D'Aosta (a mountain valley of 120,000 inhabitants with few signs of physical and social decay and low crime rate) and a large community, the city of Milan (one and a half million inhabitants enclosed in a metropolitan area of about 4 million).

## **METHOD**

### **PARTECIPANTS**

A sample of 226 university students participated to the study, 71 male and 155 Female, age ranging from 18 to 32 (Mean age 22.1, SD 4.7).. Two different social contexts was analyzed: Aosta, a little city in a mountain region with low criminality (123 students) and Milan, a metropolitan city in Northern Italy with high criminality (103 students)

### **MEASURES**

A self-report questionnaire was devised whose main variables were:

- Fear of crime (FOC): a series of five stories, based on Van der Wuff's (1986) model, which measures level of fear on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The stories illustrate some daily situations with changes in two main dimensions: indoors/outdoors; presence/absence of threat (e.g., You are enjoying one evening at home. It is fairly late. The doorbell rings, but you are not expecting anybody...).



- Concern about crime (CAC): 3 items to measure evaluation of crime in one's own area, region, and in Italy on a 5-point Likert-type scale (decreased/on the increase). A list of 17 problem situations that characterize current society was presented and for each of them social worry was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (not so worried/very worried).
- Perceived risk of crime (PRC): percentage of likely victimization with regard to the seven main types of crime (bag-snatching/robbery; road accident; burglary; car theft; fighting; sexual assault; fraud).
- Self-protective behaviours: 2 items ("Do you usually check for intruders when you get back home?"; "Do you happen to lock your door when you are at home by yourself?"), measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (never/always).
- Perception of social and physical incivilities (SI and PI): perception in one's own life environment of 10 cues of physical decay (e.g., graffiti, damaged urban fittings, dirty streets), and 8 cues of social decay (e.g., drug addicts, immigrants, youth hanging around) measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (not there/very much there).
- Perception of social and physical territorial markers (SM and PM): perception in the area where one lives of 5 cues of territorial control (markers; e.g., tidy gardens, smart buildings, etc.) and social control (residents that clean the street in front of their place, friendly neighbours, etc.), measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (not there/very much there).

The following were also measured: personal well-being (Masse et al.'s Scale, 1998;  $\alpha = .80$ ), perceived social support (Zimet et al., 1988;  $\alpha = .90$ ), subtle and blatant prejudice (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995;  $\alpha = .83$  e  $\alpha = .71$ ), collective self esteem (CSE, Luthanen & Crocker, 1992;  $\alpha = .82$ ) and perception of the future (3 items,  $\alpha = .75$ ).

#### VARIABLE REDUCTION

An exploratory main-component factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on all the items on insecurity and 3 factors emerged: Fear of crime ( $\alpha .86$ ); Concern about crime ( $\alpha .78$ ); and Perception of risk ( $\alpha .75$ ). For each of them an overall index was computed by summing the related items.

An exploratory main-component factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on all the items on physical and social signs and 4 factors emerged: Physical Incivility (PI;  $\alpha = .78$ ); Social Incivility (SI;  $\alpha = .75$ ); Physical Markers (PM,  $\alpha = .73$ ); Social Markers (SM,  $\alpha = .63$ ). For each of them an overall index was computed by summing the related items.

All scales show good reliabilities.

#### RESULTS

An 2x2 (Context by Gender) ANOVA was conducted on Fear of crime (FOC), Concern about crime (CAC) and Perception of risk (PR) (Figure 1). Girls are more frightened and report greater likelihood of being victims of crime ( $F(223,2) = 63.8$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $F(223,2) = 13.2$ ;  $p < .001$ ). No significant difference emerged between Valle d'Aosta and Milan youths. Girls are also more worried as regards CAC ( $F(223,2) = 14.1$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and a significant interaction is also found: the Aosta youths are more worried than the Milan youths ( $F(223,2) = 9.1$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

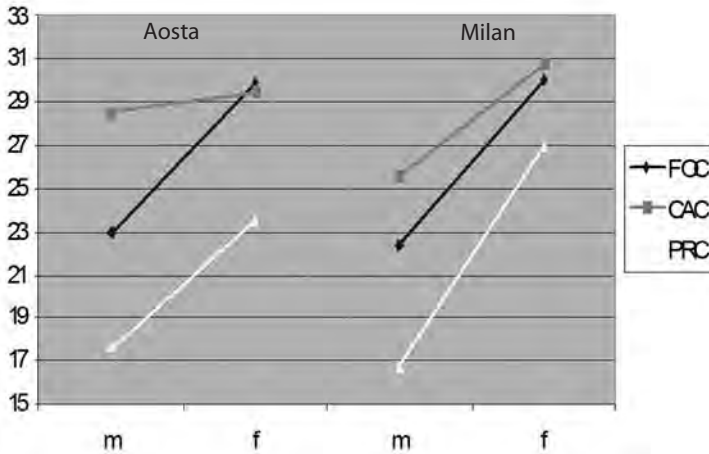


Figure 1: Anova context by Gender on Foc, Cac and PR.

An 2x2 (Context by Gender) ANOVA was conducted on markers and incivilities: social incivilities (SI), physical incivilities (PI), social markers (SM), and physical markers (PM). (Figure 2). No gender differences emerge with respect to environment perception (with the exception of SI, where a slight significance is found in favour of girls' higher perception:  $F(223,2) = 4.1, p = .045$ ).

As expected, higher perception of social and environmental incivility is recorded in Milan ( $F(223,2) = 8.7; p < .005; F(223,2) = 20.7, p < .001$ ). In marker perception, on the contrary, no significant difference emerges with regard to context or gender.

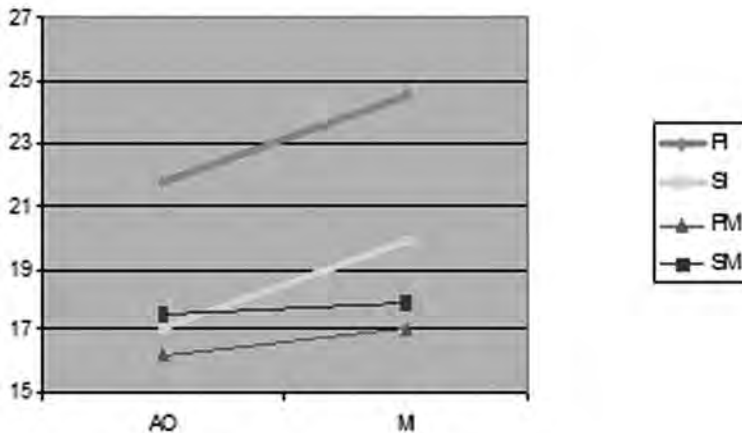


Figure 1: Anova context by Gender on PI, SI, PM and SM.

**CORRELATIONS**

Correlations, separately for Milan and Aosta, were examined for FOC, CAC and PR with the main determinants considered (see Table 1). In both settings a correlation, albeit weak, emerges between physical/ social signs and insecurity. Incivilities (especially environmental ones,

less so the social ones) are associated with fear of crime in Aosta and with concern about crime in Milan. On the contrary, the markers do not seem to be associated with any of the three insecurities considered, except the environmental ones in Aosta.

In Aosta future expectations do not seem to particularly affect any of the insecurities considered. In Milan, too, fear of crime is not associated with the evaluation of one's own social stability, but a negative significant correlation emerges between the overall evaluation about the future and concern about crime. In addition, in both settings fear of crime is associated with wellbeing, and concern about crime with blatant prejudice towards immigrants. In the metropolitan setting, however, significant correlations also emerge between concern about crime and subtle prejudice and social support. Lastly, blatant prejudice is correlated with PR in Milan.

	AOSTA			MILANO		
	FOC	CAC	PRC	FOC	CAC	PRC
PI	.29	.14	.20	.04	.30	.20
SE	.20	-.17	.17	.00	.19	.16
PM	-.07	-.24	.09	.05	-.12	.15
SM	.00	-.15	.05	.06	-.05	.06
Future	.08	-.12	-.02	.06	-.30	-.13
Social Support	-.06	-.07	.10	.13	.21	.19
Well Being	-.23	.11	-.08	-.21	-.22	.03
CSE	-.12	-.19	.07	.08	.10	.08
Blatant Pr.	.11	.22	.03	.19	.29	.22
Subtle Pr.	.05	.08	-.06	.21	.31	-.16

Table 1: Correlations of FOC, CAC and PR with the determinants in two social context

## DISCUSSION

Our findings confirm the presence of distinct constructs underlying the concept of insecurity. The factor analysis has confirmed a three-dimension structure, one linked to fear and behaviours; one linked to likelihood; and the last one linked to worry about the social issue. The different settings that we have analysed seem to significantly affect perception of insecurity (especially fear of crime and concern about crime), perception of incivilities, and the relation between the two.

In Milan environmental incivilities correlate with social incivilities, but also negatively with the markers (environmental decay is perceived as contrasting with signs and symbols of territorial control). In such a metropolitan setting, where perception of incivilities is high, fear of crime seems to be particularly connected to individual dimensions (wellbeing and gender), but does not seem to be strongly affected by perception of the environment (incivilities and markers) and by other social variables. On the contrary, concern about crime is significantly associated to perception of incivilities, to evaluation of the future (stability of one's own condition), to relationship with immigrants.

In Valle d'Aosta (few inhabitants, less crime, more cohesive socio-environmental setting) incivilities and markers do not seem to be associated (decay and territorial control emerge as

unconnected variables). In a reality where the impact of environmental and social decay is lower, its presence seems to be associated to fear of crime rather than to concern about crime. It is only in this setting that a significant influence emerges of territorial control symbols (environmental markers), which are negatively associated to concern about crime. Concern about crime does not seem to be as greatly influenced by other social variables as happens in the Milan setting: no significant correlation emerges with regard to the future or subtle prejudice, while a significant relation emerges with regard to blatant prejudice. This indicates that intergroup confrontation with immigrants has an important role in concern about crime, regardless of social reference contexts.

If our study seems to confirm the relation between insecurity and perception of incivilities, the social reference setting emerges as extremely important in determining which role the former may play in triggering such different responses: in a metropolitan reality, where the incidence of incivilities is higher, decay is associated with increased fear of crime; in a mountain setting with low crime rates, where the perception of incivilities is lower, decay is associated to increased concern about crime.

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## Judicial environment and poor families: risk or protection for relationships?

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### **Abstract**

The quality of family relations has an expressive role over the human existence and may constitute a context for processes of development and learning of competencies. It also contributes to the improvement of social structures. The bioecological approach of human development puts forward the importance of those and other interactions. This study aims to investigate the relational processes and mechanisms operating in the judiciary environment that attend poor families involved in judicial conflicts. The objectives are: to analyze the form of interactions established in the reception of families and to investigate factors which may decrease or increase familiar conflicts, turning into risk or protection conditions. The ecological engagement method was employed. Data collection instruments were: field book with in loco observations and interviews with district attorneys, judges, public defenders, social workers and members of the families in judicial conflict. Data interpretation followed procedures of textual analysis. Results indicate a belief system which involves the professionals and influences the quality of the connections between them and the families. On the other hand, the studied families denoted a distorted perception of the judicial system, which is not recognized as a locus of Estate power offered to the population to preserve its interests. The absence of understanding among the people who are involved in the process must be emphasized, since the distance between the population and the professionals is detected by a specific language employed by the judicial system. Another finding was the frequency of few and short meetings between both sides, professionals and families. These results point towards a disconnection between the professionals representing the judicial system in cases of family conflicts and the general population which may cause difficulties in the solution of the processes that should be under the protection established by the Federal Constitution as a duty of the Brazilian Estate.

Key-words: family relations, poor families, judicial environment

Estudiosos de vários campos de conhecimento apontam a família como um dos mais importantes contextos de desenvolvimento humano. Este fato reitera a importância de estudos que focalizem os mais variados aspectos desta histórica e humana instituição relacional. O presente texto é um recorte de um estudo que teve como principal objetivo compreender como são processados os conflitos familiares no âmbito dos contextos dos ambientes e espaços judiciais. Dentre os vários aspectos que compõe o referido trabalho, a visão dos profissionais do ambiente judiciário sobre as famílias atendidas - em especial sobre as famílias pobres, foram focos deste

estudo. Alguns elementos de destaque foram a influência que as crenças dos profissionais exercem sobre a condução das lides processuais. Assim, partindo de uma análise da família enquanto contexto de desenvolvimento humano e passando pela concepção jurídica da família, o artigo adentra os objetos de pesquisa propriamente ditos, tais quais apresentar os dados obtidos sobre as concepções de família para os operadores jurídicos e as influências destas visões na condução dos conflitos judicializados em casos de famílias pobres que fazem uso de um serviço gratuito.

### **A Família como Contexto de Desenvolvimento Humano em Situação de Pobreza**

Não há sociedade, ao longo da história que tenha vivido à margem de alguma forma de instituição familiar ou de alguma forma de institucionalização das relações entre seus membros. No entanto, há autores que remarcam que “a família não é algo biológico, algo natural ou dado, mas produto de diferentes formas históricas de organização entre os humanos que aos poucos foram sendo institucionalizadas na forma de organizações familiares”. (Narvaz, 2005, p. 25). Outros pensadores (Áries, 1981) trazem a idéia de que a família da atualidade é uma invenção moderna, que deixou de ser apenas uma instituição de direito privado para a transmissão do nome e dos bens, para assumir uma função moral e espiritual, “passando a formar os corpos e as almas”. (p. 277)

Vale dizer que o conceito de família é polissêmico. No sentido mais restrito, refere-se ao núcleo familiar básico. No mais amplo, ao grupo de indivíduos vinculados entre si por laços consanguíneos, consensuais ou jurídicos e constituem complexas redes de parentesco atualizadas de forma episódica por meio de intercâmbios, cooperação e solidariedade. Os limites variam de acordo com cultura, região e classe social. (Salles, 1999; 2002, Tuirán, 2002)

Carvalho (2003) afirma que:

*A família é apontada como elemento-chave não apenas para a "sobrevivência" dos indivíduos, mas também para a proteção e a socialização de seus componentes, transmissão do capital cultural, do capital econômico e da propriedade do grupo, bem como das relações de gênero e de solidariedade entre gerações. Representando a forma tradicional de viver e uma instância mediadora entre indivíduo e sociedade, a família operaria como espaço de produção e transmissão de pautas e práticas culturais e como organização responsável pela existência cotidiana de seus integrantes, produzindo, reunindo e distribuindo recursos para a satisfação de suas necessidades básicas. (p. 109)*

A família é, portanto, um contexto de desenvolvimento humano, no qual se processam interações significativas entre pessoas (Bronfrenbrenner, 1996; Rodrigo & Palacios, 1998). Assim, estimular o desenvolvimento saudável das relações familiares significa promover o desenvolvimento positivo dos seres humanos integrantes dessas famílias, bem como relevar sua tarefa socializadora. Segundo Gomes (1992), “ela faz a primeira inserção da criança no mundo social objetivo, à medida que promove a aprendizagem de elementos culturais mínimos: linguagem, hábitos, usos, costumes, papéis, valores, padrões de comportamento e de atitudes, etc.” (p. 96)

Rodrigo e Palacios (1998) apontam que a família é um cenário de construção de pessoas adultas, de auto-estima e bem-estar psicológico. É um lugar onde se aprende a enfrentar desafios e

assumir responsabilidades e compromissos. Representa, outrossim, para os autores mencionados, não apenas um contexto de desenvolvimento e realização pessoal dos adultos, mas é cenário de encontro intergeracional. Além de formar uma rede de apoio social para os filhos, a família tem a função de assegurar a sobrevivência dos mesmos, seu crescimento, socialização e proporcionar um clima de afeto que possibilite estímulos para os seus relacionamentos com o ambiente físico e social. A função educacional da família se destaca. A educação é um espaço de descobertas e de invenção de novos gestos, de novas ações. Para Valadares (1999), “A família foi um lugar inicial de educação e, seja qual for a família, de forma melhor ou pior, ela acolhe e sustenta, ensina continuidades e cortes próprios da vitalidade” (p.26).

Os aspectos aqui abordados têm especial importância quando se fala das famílias pobres, pois muitas crenças a respeito da pobreza se alimentam da raiz da patologia social, que ameaçam os projetos de vida e de ascensão social das classes médias. De acordo com Mello (1995), a família pobre é quase sempre declarada incompetente. A autora reitera: “Seus membros adultos são desqualificados culturalmente. Suas funções essenciais de socialização são responsáveis pela geração de ‘personalidades deformadas’, ou seja, inaceitáveis, capazes de cometer as mais bárbaras atrocidades” (p. 52). Assim, a representação da família, embora compreensível para o senso comum, não é e nem poderia ser idêntica. É preciso saber de qual família estamos falando, em que contexto ela está inserida, situá-la no tempo e identificar os processos pelos quais passou ou está passando, e isso vale também quando falamos de famílias pobres.

O avanço no enfrentamento da questão da pobreza mostra que as pessoas não deixam de trabalhar por vontade própria: o sistema produtivo é que é incapaz de absorver a população (Valadares, 1991). Tais considerações precisam ser feitas e refeitas, pensadas e repensadas, sob pena de não somente culpar as famílias por sua condição de pobreza, mas, sobretudo de não se fornecer a elas, a estrutura social adequada ao seu desenvolvimento. Isso nos conduz a dar especial atenção aos estudos sobre a importância da situação familiar dos pobres e o seu desenvolvimento psicossocial. Segundo Rosemberg (1994), o cuidado no estudo com famílias pobres deve ser acurado no sentido de que, ao orientar o discurso a respeito das mesmas, não se redunde em processos de estigmatização. De acordo com a autora, a ênfase reducionista de grande parte das ações previstas para famílias pobres gira em torno de dois eixos principais:

*1. O subdesenvolvimento é homoganeamente idêntico através dos continentes e dentro de um mesmo continente. A América Latina é homogênea e seus pobres são iguais.*

*2. Nesse contexto de pobreza, as famílias pobres praticam excessos que colocam em risco sua prole. Nas famílias pobres, as mulheres são vistas, antes de tudo, como reprodutoras descontroladas, que causam a perpetuação da pobreza e colocam em risco a ecologia global. (p. 29)*

Estas crenças são reforçadas diariamente, seja através das políticas que excluem, ao invés de incluir, seja através da maneira como os problemas sociais são enfrentados, principalmente, pela mídia, que tem o poder de fazer crer naquilo que faz ver e ouvir. Rosemberg (1994) completa seu raciocínio manifestando sua preocupação de que o imaginário que informa tais imagens da pobreza de famílias pobres seja estigmatizante e reforce os processos de exclusão social, através

de políticas públicas excludentes. O adjetivo estigmatizante pode ser melhor compreendido a partir do conceito de estigma (Goffman, 1988), e é definido como uma atribuição social de desvio, incorporada numa identidade deteriorada atribuída a uma pessoa numa relação que implica desvalorização. O estigma é empregado para produzir e reproduzir relações e desigualdades sociais legitimadas por saberes técnicos. As crenças, assim, transformam diferenças em desigualdades: de classe, de gênero, de idade, de raça ou etnia, de sexualidade ou orientação sexual. O estigma tem sido empregado para dar legitimidade ao status dominante dentro de estruturas de desigualdade social existentes.

Alguns autores (Carvalho & Guará, 1994; Draibe, 1994) quando se reportam à pauperização de enorme contingente da população brasileira, recomendam que a reforma das políticas e dos programas sociais coloquem a família como eixo e prioridade das ações governamentais nesse campo, propondo, para além do combate a pobreza e exclusão social, a implementação de programas de geração ou complementação de emprego e renda e de uma rede de serviços comunitários. Em sociedades como o Brasil, onde não se dispõe de um sistema de políticas sociais mais efetivo e abrangente, as condições de subsistência das famílias são determinadas por seu nível de rendimentos (Carvalho, 2003). Por isso mesmo, as mudanças e os fenômenos assinalados vêm tendo claros e fortes impactos sobre a organização e as condições de vida das famílias brasileiras, e afetam negativamente sua capacidade de atender às necessidades básicas de seus membros e propiciar-lhes efetiva proteção social.

Estudos recentes (Salles, 2002; Oliveira & Ariza, 2002; Goldani, 2002; Montali, 2000) têm ressaltado como essas questões afetam também os padrões de organização do grupo familiar. Nas classes populares, o homem ainda é considerado e valorizado como chefe e provedor da família, ao passo que as mulheres tendem a perceber o casamento como apoio moral e econômico e, muitas vezes, a oportunidade de deixar de trabalhar, para dedicar-se aos afazeres domésticos e à criação dos filhos. À medida que o desemprego e os baixos níveis de remuneração inviabilizam essa divisão sexual de responsabilidades, o projeto feminino de melhorar de vida pelo casamento é frustrado, enquanto o homem, impossibilitado de cumprir o seu papel, sente-se fracassado, enveredando muitas vezes pelo alcoolismo ou abandonando a família.

Atingida pelas mudanças assinaladas e por processos sobre os quais não tem controle, a família vem perdendo gradativamente sua capacidade de funcionar como amortecedor da crise e como mecanismo de proteção de seus componentes. A ruptura das possibilidades objetivas de manter o padrão de família culturalmente estabelecido e dominante pode implicar no aumento dos conflitos e parece estar contribuindo para o aumento das separações e das famílias monoparentais, chefiadas sobretudo por mulheres (Garcia & Yunes, 2006). Diversos estudos têm analisado como, na história brasileira, os desafios de combate ao pauperismo e de regulação e controle das desigualdades e das injustiças nunca foram priorizados e efetivamente enfrentados. (Carvalho, 2001; Mello, 1995; Sarti, 1996; Szymanski, 2004). Some-se a tudo isto o fato de que os profissionais sociais que trabalham com essas famílias nos programas de intervenção, principalmente governamentais, têm a sua prática coordenada por crenças nada otimistas em relação ao público alvo.

Com efeito, investigações realizadas junto a diferentes categorias de trabalhadores sociais brasileiros (Yunes, Miranda & Cuello, 2004) revelaram que suas práticas profissionais com famílias de baixa renda são pautadas por teorias implícitas pessimistas explicadas como “desestrutura”,



“acomodação”, “carência”, “violência” e “drogadição”. Foi constatado que tais elementos sublinham apenas as impossibilidades dos grupos pobres e têm considerável impacto no atendimento e nas interações profissionais-famílias. Os resultados “indicaram posturas “paralisadas” ou ações assistencialistas que não promovem autonomia e desenvolvimento humano”. (Yunes, 2001). Tais concepções são importantes para serem observadas e debatidas incansavelmente, vez que, se absorvidas sem crítica ou reação, servem de fundamento, justificativas ou argumentos para a perpetuação de “políticas especiais para a pobreza”. Importante ressaltar, no entanto, que tais políticas, longe de servirem como proteção às famílias, apresentam-se como políticas sociais preventivas e de emergência, em detrimento às políticas sociais para todos como reconhecimento da cidadania. Para a disposição de políticas sérias de proteção à família, é preciso resignificá-la a partir de novas atitudes em relação a ela, superando condutas que, para Carvalho e Guará (1994) são “pautadas na visão de família como incapaz, incompetente, desestruturada ou culpada” (p. 48).

### **A Família e o Direito**

A evolução legislativa no Brasil apresenta uma mudança bastante significativa nos últimos anos. Com efeito, para o código civil de 1916 que regulava a família do início do século passado, a mesma era constituída unicamente pelo matrimônio: impedia a dissolução, fazia distinções entre seus membros e trazia qualificações discriminatórias às pessoas unidas sem casamento e aos filhos dessas relações. As referências feitas aos vínculos extramatrimoniais e aos filhos ilegítimos eram basicamente punitivas e tinham por finalidade a exclusão de direitos. Corroborando o conceito, na constituição de 1946, família era “constituída pelo casamento de vínculo indissolúvel e terá direito à proteção do estado”, dispositivo que foi repetido na Constituição Federal de 1967. Até o advento da Constituição de 1988, a família somente seria juridicamente reconhecida através do casamento civil. Naquela época, validar qualquer outro tipo de união diversa do casamento civil era tarefa bastante árdua.

Sucessivas alterações legislativas buscavam adequar a lei às situações fáticas que passaram a aparecer com maior freqüência, regulando, dessa forma os direitos dos cônjuges, eliminando a idéia da família como instituição sacralizada. Hoje, o conceito constitucional de família é bem mais amplo e acabou por definir, que “a família, base da sociedade, tem especial proteção do Estado”, acrescentando que “para efeito de proteção do Estado, é reconhecida a união estável entre o homem e a mulher como entidade familiar, devendo a lei facilitar sua conversão em casamento”.

No entanto, a abertura necessária para a análise do contexto familiar é pouca ou nenhuma no âmbito legal já que, em grande parte, a doutrina jurídica contempla com a expressão “desorganização familiar” a causa da atual “crise profunda” (Cahaly, 2000) pela qual passa a instituição. Embora para alguns juristas, essa “crise” seja mais aparente do que real, é bem verdade que, assim mesmo, continuam utilizando o termo para designar o que pode perfeitamente ser entendido como polimorfismo familiar. A doutrina jurídica é firme em apontar que houve uma mutação de conceitos básicos, e, por conseguinte,

*o enfraquecimento gradativo da disciplina familiar e a desconsideração paulatina do significado do vínculo matrimonial, pelo relaxamento dos costumes, pelas liberdades e concessões de toda ordem como justificativa do descarte de*

*preconceitos tradicionais. (Cahaly, 2000, p. 19)*

O modelo de família idealizado no imaginário social da contemporaneidade, que é o da “família nuclear burguesa com conotação normativa” (Szymanski, 1995, p.26), é visto como a situação ideal dentro da conceituação jurídica, sendo considerada “desorganizada” a família que foge ao padrão de composição mãe, pai e filhos. Segundo Mello (1995),

O caráter marcante desse modelo é o seu isolamento e a ausência de conflitos quer internos, quer externos. O sistema de relações que representa não deve nada ao mundo exterior ou ao ambiente doméstico. Trabalho, escola, parentes e amigos, toda a extensa rede de relações que compõe a vida cotidiana não passa de pano de fundo para o que se desenrola no interior da família. O mundo desta família gira em torno de si mesmo. (p. 56)

Importante ressaltar que tal é a crença que vigora ainda nas varas judiciais especializadas em direito de família, onde as partes são recebidas sempre com reserva, já que “não conseguiram” evitar o conflito ou não optaram por resolvê-los dentro do “âmbito familiar”. Nesse sentido, as famílias, principalmente as pobres, já são recebidas sob a égide da “incompetência”. Rosemberg (1994) afirma que os pesquisadores e técnicos, ao absorverem e reproduzirem, sem crítica, concepções estigmatizantes sobre as famílias pobres, acabam por oferecer argumentos e justificativas para as políticas especiais para a pobreza. Nesse diapasão, o enfoque jurídico, lato sensu, não considera que cada família “circula num modo particular de emocionar-se, criando uma cultura familiar própria, com seus códigos, com uma sintaxe própria para comunicar-se e interpretar comunicações, com suas regras, ritos e jogos” (Szymanski, 1995, p. 25). Ao contrário, exige uma adequação universalizada aos ditames do modelo monogâmico nuclear, burguês e patriarcal.

No entanto, esse “modelo ideal de família” não corresponde às possibilidades reais das famílias que vivem na pobreza, não somente do ponto de vista econômico-financeiro, mas sobretudo, na pobreza de diversos fatores sociais e políticos. De um modo geral, as famílias não estão “desorganizadas”, mas organizadas segundo necessidades que lhes são peculiares. Os processos que visam normatizar as famílias segundo o que é considerado o normal, o adequado, estigmatizam, violentam aquelas que fogem ao padrão.

### **A Família na Visão do Profissional do Direito: Implicações Diversas**

Objetivando discutir estas entre outras tantas questões, foi realizado um trabalho de pesquisa e uma das preocupações era saber como o ambiente judiciário recepcionava as famílias pobres cujos conflitos estavam sendo processados. O trabalho foi realizado utilizando-se como instrumento a inserção ecológica (Ceconello & Koller, 2004), tendo sido realizada a coleta de dados através de diário de campo, onde foram anotadas as observações feitas nos vários locais que compõem o ambiente judiciário – varas de família, salas de audiências, balcões de atendimento, defensoria pública e assistência judiciária da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande. Foram também realizadas entrevistas semi-estruturadas com os operadores do direito, ora identificados pelas letras “k”, “x”, “y” e “z” e os integrantes de uma família cujo conflito encontrava-se judicializado. A análise dos dados seguiu a análise textual discursiva (Moraes, 1999).

Inicialmente, foi importante compreender o que os integrantes do ambiente Judiciário entendiam como família. Interessante observar que, embora os conceitos definidores de família

fossem bastante abertos, abrindo espaço para as mais modernas concepções, baseados nas relações afetivas, os comportamentos e as atuações práticas conduziram para conclusão diversa. Apenas um dos discursos apontava a família como organização, regras, estrutura:

*pra mim eu sempre entendi esta questão de família , né, homem e mulher se juntando, enfim, com interesse de prole. Aquela história das pessoas se relacionarem sem nenhum tipo de regramento, sempre deu uma confusão muito grande no momento de se estatuírem direitos, por isso houve uma necessidade de formação de família, com prole, descendência, ascendência e sucessão e direitos, que vieram... (x)*

Os demais apontaram a família como ambiente de afeto, convívio, cuidado:

*Neste contexto social, assim... é meio complicado definir família... É a gente com quem a gente conta. Família eu acho que é aquela que te oferece recursos afetivos, que promove o bem-estar de seus membros, que tem um papel decisivo na educação formal, informal, é o local onde se desenvolve a solidariedade, onde estamos transmitindo valores, eu acho que o que mais importa são os laços de solidariedade e afetividade. (k)*

Nesse contexto, os discursos sobre a família, na ótica dos profissionais atuantes na Justiça Familiar, estão afinados com os tempos atuais, com a família contemporânea e com os mais novos posicionamentos sobre o direito “das famílias” (Dias, 2005). Em sua recente obra, Dias (2005) declara que:

*A entidade familiar, apesar do que muitos dizem, não se mostra em decadência. Ao contrário é o resultado das transformações sociais. Houve a repersonalização das relações familiares na busca do atendimento aos interesses mais valiosos das pessoas humanas: afeto, solidariedade, lealdade, confiança, respeito e amor. (p. 32)*

Por seu turno, Ost (2005) alega que:

*É preciso render-se à evidência: de instituição garantindo a transmissão de patrimônios e garantindo a ordem simbólica dos lugares, a família transformou-se atualmente em uma ‘rede de relações afetivas e de solidariedades’, da qual o desafio é a construção de identidades pessoais nas trocas intersubjetivas. (p. 362)*

No entanto, embora atuando na condução do conflito judicializado, os profissionais ainda expressam a idéia de que os conflitos familiares devem permanecer intramuros, não devendo ser discutidos perante outras pessoas: “Aquilo que, pra nós, que pra mim, por exemplo eu acho que seria, ninguém tem que ficar sabendo, ninguém tem que ficar discutindo, não”. (y)

O discurso deixa bastante claro que a imagem de família desse profissional é a da tradicional família nuclear burguesa, cujos problemas devem ser resolvidos no recesso do lar, longe dos olhares estranhos. E que tais problemas não devem ultrapassar os limites da casa para chegar ao conhecimento alheio, ou seja, os problemas devem ser escondidos, no afã de demonstrar

a harmonia familiar que interessa à sociedade. Tal visão de família passou a coexistir em nossa sociedade, a partir do século XVII, a partir de quando começam a aumentar as preocupações dos familiares e a expectativa social com relação à educação e cuidado das crianças (Aries, 1981; Biasoli-Alves & Sigolo, 1992; Macedo, 1994). Áries (1981) afirma que a família moderna se reorganiza em torno da criança e ergue entre ela mesma e a sociedade o muro da vida privada, devido a uma “necessidade de intimidade”. As famílias passam a representar pequenas sociedades, distribuídas por classes. A família burguesa “retirou-se da vasta sociedade polimorfa para se organizar a parte, num meio homogêneo, entre suas famílias fechadas, em habitações previstas para a intimidade, em bairros novos, protegidos contra toda contaminação popular” (p. 279)

Ocorre que tal convicção, longe de demonstrar uma forma de manter a privacidade dos integrantes do grupo familiar, pode representar fator de risco para o desenvolvimento humano desse “núcleo” concebido como fechado. Sob a égide da privatização absoluta das relações e da manutenção do isolamento dos integrantes naquele núcleo, podem ser cometidos abusos entre os familiares, como os incontáveis casos de violência doméstica. As crenças dos profissionais que lidam com a proteção da família se operam de maneira efetiva na forma como conduzem a intervenção. Abusos podem ser desconsiderados por convicções do tipo: “filho tem que ficar com a mãe” ou “em briga de marido e mulher ninguém mete a colher”.

Ao estabelecer o foco na estrutura e não na qualidade das inter-relações familiares, distancia-se do problema e aceitam-se implicitamente os valores, as regras, crenças e padrões emocionais do modelo nuclear, e se lida com a família idealizada e não com a que está posta na vivência diária. Os componentes da família “vívida” (Szymanski, 1998) passam a idealizar suas relações no modelo nuclear, aceitando a pecha de “incompletas” e “desestruturadas”, o que gera sentimentos de incompetência entre os membros.

Toda essa estrutura de crenças conduz ao caminho inverso do que deveria ser percorrido. Os conflitos de interesses têm efeito para que ocorra a intervenção do Estado, no sentido de coibir abusos e gerar a efetiva proteção estatal, principalmente no que diz respeito à família. É um dos importantes fatores para a organização de uma sociedade equilibrada. Pensar nos interesses emocionais somente como algo isolado e próprio de cada indivíduo, fechado em seu casulo, ou em seu pequeno grupamento familiar isolado da sociedade representa um retrocesso, ainda mais quando se trata de famílias em situação de vulnerabilidade socioambiental. Ademais, importante ressaltar que o Estado, ao intervir nas relações de direito privado, o faz sempre com vistas à proteção não somente do indivíduo, mas fundamentalmente para atender aos interesses da coletividade. Por isso, as normas de direito de família, embora estejam inscritas no âmbito de direito privado, são entendidas como normas de interesse e ordem pública, “assim entendidas as regras que tutelam o interesse geral, atendendo mais o interesse da coletividade do que do indivíduo”. (Dias, 2005, p.32)

Cumprir frisar que as crenças e a postura dos profissionais que fazem parte da rede de apoio social apresentam-se como contextos ecológicos de influência das famílias (Bronfenbrenner, 1996). Estando ligados diretamente às políticas públicas de atendimento às populações em situação de risco, tais profissionais podem atuar como agentes mantenedores das desigualdades existentes ou como agentes potencializadores de mudança e de transformação da realidade das famílias atendidas.

Não bastassem estas convicções, a pobreza foi um fator apontado como um dos principais

problemas na condução dos conflitos. Os profissionais se manifestaram da seguinte maneira:

*...não sei se é porque aqui também a gente trabalha com pessoas de baixa renda, eu acho que os problemas surgem muito em função disto... .Eu fico com esta visão porque eu estou acostumada a atender estas pessoas, um público em que um dos principais problemas é a falta de dinheiro. (y)*

Este discurso mostra que as convicções dos profissionais são bastante preocupantes e seguem um modelo de discurso que aponta a pobreza como a raiz de grande parte dos problemas familiares. É como se entre as camadas de maior poder aquisitivo não houvesse conflitos nas famílias, ou ocorressem em escala menor. No entanto, a grande distinção existente entre essas populações e as populações pobres é que a última costuma ser atendida pela rede pública, pelos serviços postos a sua disposição, independente de sua simpatia ou confiança na capacidade do profissional que não pode escolher, enquanto que as outras têm atendimento na esfera privada, por profissionais contratados segundo sua escolha e conveniência.

*E não é outro o entendimento dos profissionais, que, a despeito de culpabilizarem a situação financeira pelos conflitos, entendem que não há para as famílias em questão outra saída: “É diferente atuar com famílias de baixa renda, pois elas chegam ainda muito mais vulnerabilizadas”. (k)*

Nesse sentido, a vulnerabilidade social atinge até mesmo a capacidade da busca pela rede de serviços. Feijó e Assis (2004), ao falarem do contexto da exclusão social, ressaltam os efeitos da segregação, que “priva o indivíduo de obter escolaridade, que é o instrumento para maiores chances de um emprego com melhor remuneração, assim como de ter acesso a informações que o habilitem a exercer a sua cidadania de forma plena”. Aduzem as autoras mencionadas (2004) que a exclusão social é fator de classificação dos indivíduos como “seres inferiores e diferentes, impedindo que usufruam plenamente dos bens de consumo, da escola, de serviços de saúde, alijando-os do convívio sadio e produtivo na comunidade”. E, nesse sentido, os profissionais parecem não perceber que são esses aspectos macrossistêmicos que impõem à população pobre a vulnerabilidade da qual são vítimas:

*É muito fácil, tu tá desempregado e aí tu não tem o que fazer - e o que se diz ainda o chefe de família, não é, então tá desempregado e então bebe, passa o dia bebendo, porque não tem emprego, porque não tem como trazer dinheiro para casa, e chega em casa e bate, enfim...Também não sei se foi isto que aumentou de lá pra cá e por isso eu tenho esta sensação de que esses conflitos pioraram ou que se tornaram mais intensos. (y)*

Não se pode prescindir do entendimento de que os conflitos familiares estão ligados a toda uma rede que implica envolvimento dentro dos microssistemas, mas que são fundamentalmente influenciados por todos os outros sistemas nos quais os indivíduos estão inseridos, inclusive aqueles mais distantes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). Nesse sentido, existe o

entendimento dos profissionais, ao menos no que diz respeito ao fato de que as dificuldades financeiras contribuem para a vulnerabilidade social: “Essas dificuldades todas assim, porque nós fazemos parte de um mundo essencialmente capitalista, onde realmente o Deus é o dinheiro, sem dinheiro não se consegue praticamente nada”. (x)

As famílias, por sua vez, se ressentem do fato de que suas relações restam extremamente prejudicadas após o ajuizamento de uma ação. Com efeito, foi voz corrente o afastamento dos cônjuges entre si e dos pais com relação aos filhos. As falas do pai entrevistado demonstram que o andamento do processo cria uma barreira que impede a convivência, principalmente com os filhos:

*Agora eu nem vejo mais eles, muito difícil, mas criou uma barreira...*

*Eu queria poder ir lá ou eles virem até aqui, eu queria poder cobrar dos meus filhos o estudo, o comportamento, dar um foco neles, sabe, com a concordância da mãe deles.*

Foi observado que existe o bloqueio do diálogo ocasionado pelo andamento de um processo. Com efeito, o desgastado discurso “só falo com você na presença do meu advogado” parece não ser parte somente das falas de novelas. As pessoas efetivamente bloqueiam o diálogo tão logo se estabeleça a relação “processual”, que passa a vigir com uma força incrivelmente opressora. As iniciativas de acertos consensuais parecem encontrar terreno tão somente no ambiente Judiciário para dar “validade” aos diálogos. A chancela judicial toma uma proporção que vem demonstrar, mais uma vez, que a Justiça é vista pela população pobre como a própria lei, que não deve ser desobedecida em hipótese alguma e que, portanto, todo o diálogo deve obedecer ao rito do processo. A prática comum, todavia, era a “comunicação” somente ser estabelecida, se é que se pode falar em comunicação dentro da sala de audiências, principalmente entre as partes.

Para obter maiores informações sobre as ações, era mantido contato com as pessoas a respeito do motivo de sua presença no foro, e, na grande maioria dos diálogos estabelecidos, a fala mais comum era justamente esta: “Depois que a gente acionou a justiça, não conversamos mais”. (fala com variáveis, mas com o mesmo sentido). Também com relação aos filhos, não era diferente: “Eu não vejo meus filhos há muito tempo, desde que a ação começou”.

Pode-se creditar boa parte destas dificuldades como consequência das interações entre as famílias e os operadores do direito. A falha existente na comunicação entre as partes e seus advogados, entre as partes e os juizes, promotores era evidente. Em geral, as pretensões não restavam bastante claras aos profissionais, bem como as determinações, aconselhamentos, pareceres não eram sequer entendidos pelas partes. A reação mais comum observada durante a inserção ecológica era o ar de estranhamento das partes ao saírem das salas de audiências. Era corriqueiro ouvir das partes as frases: “Não entendi o que aconteceu lá dentro” ou “O que eu faço agora? Ficou ou não decidida a questão?”

### **Considerações finais**

Diante dos resultados apontados pode-se perceber, em primeiro lugar, que as questões relativas às concepções sobre família na ótica dos profissionais ainda se ressentem de uma abordagem mais contemporânea que contemple a diversidade de configurações familiares no mundo atual tanto pelos trabalhadores do judiciário como pela população atendida. As famílias

são identificadas de forma “naturalizada” e numa perspectiva tradicional nuclear burguesa. A naturalização das relações familiares, que devem estar adequadas ao “modelo” a ser seguido, conduz a discursos normativos que acabam por influenciar não somente a maneira de se conduzir os processos por parte dos profissionais, mas, sobretudo, a aceitação da população atendida. Estes fatores parecem representar interferências importantes na condução dos litígios. Uma vez que os conflitos não são elaborados de forma saudável por todos os atores envolvidos, poderão representar fatores a se somarem na sensação de incompetência das famílias e contribuir para a manutenção das teorias que permeiam o imaginário social de desestruturação como causa de aumento dos conflitos familiares. Tratando-se de famílias pobres, as “teorias” referidas assumem um caráter ainda mais marcante, ao instante em que a pobreza é percebida por algumas categorias de agentes sociais como uma das grandes causadoras dos conflitos familiares (Yunes, 2001)

Por outro lado, as dificuldades de interação entre as partes conflitantes se devem, em alguma medida, nas barreiras de comunicação existentes entre as mesmas e os operadores do direito, seja pelas teorias implícitas acerca dos modelos idealizados de família, seja pelas dificuldades de comunicação entre as partes e os profissionais. Tais questões representam verdadeiros fatores de risco na condução dos conflitos, principalmente se levarmos em conta a importância das intervenções estatais na promoção da saúde e bem estar familiar.

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# Desenvolvimento local e processos de educação formal e não formal – relações realçadas pela avaliação de projectos

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## **Abstract**

With this paper we intend to reflect on the articulation between educational intervention and local development processes. This reflection is based in three evaluations of intervention projects developed by the authors. Therefore we'll: i) discuss the articulation between formal and non-formal educational strategies and local development; ii) characterise sociocultural methodologies of community intervention; iii) appreciate how educational intervention can contribute to emphasize local development strategies.

The presentation and discussion of these dimensions will allow to argue about the importance of an educational intervention that articulating formal and non-formal educative strategies may promote local and community development dynamics.

Key Words: Local development, project evaluation, formal and non formal education

## **Introdução**

A partir da realização de trabalhos de avaliação externa de três projectos (Terrasêca, M; Costa, A. S, 2005; Caramelo, J, 2004) propomo-nos reflectir sobre modos de articulação entre intervenção educativa e desenvolvimento local. Os projectos aqui considerados foram desenvolvidos na zona sul do país pelo ICE – Instituto das Comunidades Educativas – uma associação de utilidade pública sem fins lucrativos, que intervém em meio rural e peri-urbano – e incidiram, essencialmente, na qualificação profissional e na prevenção primária da toxicodependência de populações juvenis em situação de desemprego.

Estes estudos de avaliação permitem destacar modalidades de intervenção educativa que implícita ou explicitamente se articulam com dinâmicas de desenvolvimento local. É a partir destas avaliações, e do que elas ressaltaram, que nos propomos discutir a pertinência de uma intervenção educativa que articule estratégias de educação formal e não formal, enquanto contributos para o aprofundamento de dinâmicas de desenvolvimento local.

## **Dos projectos em avaliação à avaliação dos projectos**

Os projectos avaliados, como já foi referido, decorreram sob a égide do ICE, uma associação de âmbito nacional que, desde 1992, tem vindo a desenvolver iniciativas e projectos de intervenção, promovendo o envolvimento de agentes diversos e o alicerçar de parcerias, revigorando relações de proximidade e perspectivando os diversos projectos de desenvolvimento como contributos para a recriação das comunidades, pelo "estabelecimento de redes de relações

densas e qualificantes dos indivíduos e das comunidades” (Correia, J. A; Caramelo, J, 1998). As linhas de força do ICE elegem “como objecto privilegiado de intervenção a comunidade local na perspectiva da sua afirmação e desenvolvimento”, trabalham “a dimensão educativa enquanto vertente de um desenvolvimento que só pode ser integrado e sistémico”, entendem “por dimensão educativa os níveis de educação formal, não formal e informal” (Sarmiento, M. J; Oliveira, J. M, 2005:115). O percurso desta associação tem vindo a consubstanciar-se numa intervenção em quatro níveis: a) criação de pólos de desenvolvimento que reconfigurem o local; b) re-animação de recursos que originem, ao nível das comunidades locais, bem-estar e qualidade de vida; c) estruturação de redes de cooperação que promovam a articulação interinstitucional; d) combate à exclusão social.

Dois dos projectos avaliados inscrevem-se no trabalho desenvolvido pela equipa do ICE no concelho da Moita. O sentido da intervenção do ICE é, neste contexto específico, norteado por alguns pressupostos e princípios orientadores que se procuram traduzir e explicitar a partir das ideias de:

- “Cidadania “como uma aposta na criação de sentido crítico e da vontade de produção de futuro”;
- Trabalho de parceria enquanto “aposta na negociação permanente”, articulação com diferentes sujeitos sociais e/ou institucionais”, “de forma flexível e numa geometria variável”;
- Formação como “oportunidade de questionamento da acção e de reconstrução do pensamento estratégico”;
- Alternativa procurando traduzir, no campo da intervenção, “formas diferentes de fazer” e “soluções que podem não emanar do sistema” (Plano de acção do ICE para o Concelho da Moita 2003/04, pp.2-3).

Ambos os projectos intervêm no domínio da prevenção primária da toxicodependência, ainda que, do ponto de vista da avaliação da sua intervenção, da abordagem globalizante das suas filosofias/modelos, das suas intenções/objectivos, bem como das acções desenvolvidas e da avaliação interna que realizam, se inscrevem assumidamente no campo mais abrangente da animação comunitária e do desenvolvimento local. Estes projectos enfatizam a dimensão social da educação e a dimensão educativa da intervenção social, como é sugerido, nas suas próprias palavras, procurando “produzir respostas educativas adequadas para situações sociais críticas que estão na base da exclusão” e apresentando-se como “estratégia de construção de um processo local e como resposta a uma situação de exclusão” (cf. Plano de acção do ICE para o Concelho da Moita 2003/04).

O projecto “Eu e os Outros” tinha como objectivo geral a articulação entre escolas, famílias e instituições locais e envolveu uma diversidade de parceiros institucionais, na expectativa de que o princípio da articulação de diversos actores sociais da comunidade potenciase naturalmente uma resposta integrada a partir da escola e dos seus intervenientes, numa lógica de intervenção sócio-educativa territorializada. Nesse sentido, parece-nos relevante destacar alguns dos princípios estruturantes da concepção de intervenção presente no projecto: a) valorização da especificidade do local; b) investimento na dimensão relacional/afectiva; c) recriação de uma identidade local

(cf. Relatório intermédio do projecto “Eu e os Outros”). Do ponto de vista da concretização destes princípios, o projecto desenvolveu, enquanto iniciativas próprias, um conjunto de acções tais como a Dinamização de espaços e tempos lectivos e extra-lectivos, Conversas em roda, Criação de grupos de pais, Ateliers de informação/formação, Intercâmbios escolares, Fórum de Associações, Actividades no Parque José Afonso ou ainda a Semana de Prevenção em Meio Escolar, tendo também participado em iniciativas que, sendo promovidas por entidades associadas ao projecto (neste caso, a Câmara Municipal da Moita e o ICE) transcenderam o seu âmbito restrito, destacando-se o envolvimento numa Feira de Projectos.

O projecto “Crescer Cool” propôs-se trabalhar fundamentalmente com adolescentes e jovens procurando “agir sobre os jovens em situação de abandono escolar, na perspectiva de os (trans)formar em cidadãos solidários com o território de pertença e em sujeitos de desenvolvimento” (cf. Projecto “Crescer Cool”). Tendo definido como potenciais participantes um grupo de alunos do ensino recorrente, houve necessidade de reequacionar quer o grupo com quem o projecto se desenvolveu, quer as acções promovidas, devido à alteração da vinculação dos jovens à escola e dos recursos disponibilizados para a intervenção, mas sobretudo em função da dinâmica de apropriação do projecto por parte dos jovens que redundou na concretização de actividades propostas por estes.

Alguns destes adolescentes e jovens eram potenciais destinatários de outros projectos presentes no mesmo espaço social (nomeadamente, o Programa Escolhas), tinham sido anteriormente alvo de medidas tutelares e sinalizados como “em risco” sendo que apenas alguns destes jovens – poucos – mantinham uma ligação ao sistema escolar. Da análise dos objectivos constantes do relatório final do projecto podemos inferir que a sua intervenção procurou incidir na transformação das relações dos jovens entre si e, especialmente, com a comunidade envolvente (território, instituições, actores sociais) no sentido do seu empoderamento e da consciencialização do seu papel como agentes de mudança, através do recurso a uma diversidade de metodologias características do campo da animação e, nas palavras do próprio projecto, “adoptando como regra a partilha de saberes e espaços em regime de igualdade de poderes”. Esta intervenção procurou “envolver as forças vivas e instituições da comunidade, os parceiros do projecto, e essencialmente a população alvo, na animação de novos espaços sociais reconstruídos” numa lógica de “(re) descoberta de relações comunitárias perdidas, tais como as relações entre o movimento associativo e a escola” (cf. Relatório final do Projecto “Crescer Cool”).

O terceiro projecto avaliado – o Projecto “Pró-Local – Formar Desenvolvendo” – surge na sequência de trabalhos que desde há diversos anos o ICE tem vindo a promover, no seio de uma intervenção local já enraizada e articulada entre si, na zona do litoral Alentejano. Este projecto é conceptualizado como uma intervenção de formação e de animação comunitária, no pressuposto de que “projectos assentes na problemática do local e construídos em interacção com a comunidade e os seus agentes educativos induzem um crescente envolvimento e mobilização destes e uma crescente co-responsabilização na construção de soluções sustentadas” (cf. Fundamentação do Projecto Pró Local – Formar Desenvolvendo”).

Os seus objectivos globais eram: “identificar e promover alternativas de desenvolvimento que recriem a vontade de futuro e dinâmicas de empowerment das comunidades, contribuindo para a construção de novas competitividades, a identificação de direitos e o exercício de cidadania no local; contribuir para a definição de uma política global de desenvolvimento educativo, social e

cultural criando condições de desenvolvimento pessoal e social” (idem).

A intervenção neste projecto foi pensada em torno de dois tipos de acções: as Acções Não-Formativas e as Acções Formativas. As primeiras tinham como destinatária a população das comunidades rurais. Estas acções estavam subordinadas a duas intenções, nomeadamente, a “Promoção da participação e da acção comunitária” e a “Melhoria das competências pessoais e sociais”, no pressuposto de que a intervenção será tanto mais eficaz quanto mais partilhada for pelos actores locais, por aqueles que, no local, identificam os seus problemas e são capazes de construir um conhecimento sobre eles e sobre modos de acção e de transformação social. As Acções Formativas, organizadas no sentido de possibilitarem, aos técnicos envolvidos no projecto, a reflexão sobre as suas práticas e sobre a acção desenvolvida, consistiram na organização de um curso de Animadores/Mediadores Comunitários para formação de técnicos de desenvolvimento que viriam a operacionalizar o projecto no terreno, e de seminários mensais para a promoção da Formação e Qualificação de Agentes de Desenvolvimento para técnicos do ICE e das instituições parceiras.

O que é de realçar é que, mais do que a coexistência no projecto destes dois tipos de acção – denominadas formativas e não formativas –, ambas com uma intencionalidade educativa mas definindo públicos distintos e formas de estruturação específicas, o que o projecto tem por intenção promover é a sua articulação, por referência à intervenção. Esta opção do projecto vai ao encontro de pressupostos defendidos pelo ICE no que respeita à articulação entre educação e desenvolvimento local, onde é central a ideia de que não pode ser vista enquanto uma “relação de causalidade linear, em que a qualificação (por via escolar) de recursos humanos constituiria um requisito prévio, necessário e suficiente, para desencadear processos de desenvolvimento.” (Canário, R, 1999: 64).

### **Os modos de avaliação**

O ICE solicitou às equipas de avaliação dos projectos a realização de uma avaliação externa, induzido pelas suas obrigações face às entidades financiadoras. As avaliações produzidas, no entanto, não correspondem exactamente ao figurino habitualmente definido para a avaliação externa, ainda que possamos identificar alguns traços teórico-metodológicos que lhe são eminentemente próprios: i) são realizadas a pedido da entidade que desenvolve o trabalho educativo e de formação a nível local e que face às equipas de avaliação assume o papel de demandante e principal interlocutor na contratualização da avaliação a realizar; ii) os avaliadores não mantêm uma vinculação institucional ou funcional com a entidade promotora dos projectos em apreciação e o seu estatuto decorre do reconhecimento de competências académicas e profissionais no domínio da avaliação de projectos; iii) o trabalho avaliativo constrói-se essencialmente a partir de documentos escritos produzidos no âmbito da candidatura e no âmbito do desenvolvimento dos projectos.

No entanto, o trabalho destas equipas de avaliação não quis confinar-se exclusivamente aos traços acima apresentados procurando, ainda, dar conta das lógicas subjacentes às acções educativas desenvolvidas, problematizando o sentido dessas intervenções e interpretando os modos como elas ocorreram não como conjuntos de sucessos ou de lacunas, mas enquanto oportunidades de questionamento das práticas e das suas razões fundadoras. As avaliações produzidas incorporam explicitamente uma preocupação com a restituição dos sentidos dos

diferentes actores sobre a acção desenvolvida e em que foram envolvidos, contrapondo-se a uma lógica meramente “verificacionista” face a objectivos previa e exteriormente traçados no que respeita a esses projectos. Assim, as avaliações não prescindiram de se constituir em processo formativo, porque problematizador do modo como decorreram os projectos nos seus modos de implementação, e propiciador de aprendizagens estruturadoras dos sentidos de futuras intervenções. Estes trabalhos de avaliação, como pensamos ter ficado claro, assumiram intencionalmente não se vincular exclusivamente a modos de avaliação estritos e assumiram a sua hibridez como factor de enriquecimento: a incorporação de características que transcendem a avaliação externa, tais como a preocupação com a dimensão crítica e formativa e a procura de construção de um sentido para a acção avaliada e para a avaliação.

A reconhecida dificuldade em estabelecer um consenso teórico sobre a caracterização e fronteiras de alguns dos conceitos que estruturam o campo da avaliação (Terrasêca, M, 2002) está bem evidenciada nestes trabalhos de avaliação. Com efeito, a existência de uma avaliação que do ponto de vista formal se define como externa (o contrato estabelecido, o momento em que surge o pedido, os tempos disponíveis para a realização da avaliação, a constituição da equipa), mas que do ponto de vista funcional escapou às limitações deste registo, resultou numa hibridez que proporcionou às equipas de avaliação um espaço de autonomia permitindo-lhes transcender a injunção da encomenda e confrontando-as com a necessidade de construir um sentido para a avaliação que estava em realização (o que lhes permitiu perspectivar a avaliação enquanto uma relação de alteridade).

### **Dimensões privilegiadas na avaliação dos projectos**

No sentido de nos adentrarmos nos projectos, o processo de avaliação iniciou-se com a exploração da documentação existente constituída por documentos com uma estrutura formalizada cuja origem é a sua entidade financiadora e por documentos de reflexão produzidos pelas equipas dos projectos. Estes documentos são de natureza diversa, já que se trata de documentos relativos ao acompanhamento interno do projecto, ao registo das dinâmicas desenvolvidas, à avaliação interna e à animação da formação. Trata-se de um processo iterativo e correlato da construção do objecto de avaliação e através do qual foi possível identificar dimensões a partir das quais se orienta o olhar avaliativo. É preciso realçar que estas dimensões não são imputáveis a um modelo de avaliação e passíveis de se replicarem noutros processos de avaliação, mas resultam do conhecimento que as equipas avaliadoras vão realizando acerca do projecto a partir da leitura reiterada dos seus documentos. A profunda articulação entre as dimensões relevadas e a natureza dos projectos explica porque é que nos projectos em causa as dimensões são diferentes. No caso do Projecto “Pró-Local – Formar Desenvolvendo” as dimensões de análise procuraram equacionar: i) a perspectiva de desenvolvimento endógeno subjacente à concepção e ao desenvolvimento do projecto, ii) o desenvolvimento local enquanto campo de práticas de educação de adultos.

Os projectos “Eu e os Outros” e “Crescer Cool”, tendo a prevenção primária da toxicodependência como finalidade comum, partilham também uma mesma perspectiva de intervenção que transcende lógicas de acção individualizada e terapêutica para se pensarem como uma intervenção centrada nas relações que os indivíduos estabelecem entre si e com o território, concebendo-a como uma intervenção promotora de dinamização sócio-comunitária. É

neste sentido que a avaliação destes projectos privilegiou como dimensão de análise a articulação da intervenção com dinâmicas de animação comunitária.

### **Articulação entre estratégias de formação formal e não formal e desenvolvimento local realçada pela avaliação**

A relação entre a intervenção sócio-educativa e o desenvolvimento local é assumida discursivamente pela entidade promotora e dinamizadora dos três projectos avaliados, na medida em que esta intencionalidade se inscreve na sua matriz de pensamento. O trabalho da avaliação consistiu em criar uma espécie de suspensão face a esta ideia programática da entidade promotora já que as avaliações, tal como as pensamos, de pouco préstimo são se obedecerem primordialmente a uma lógica verificacionista. É importante realçar que a avaliação se baseou na análise de documentos; no entanto o facto destes documentos serem de natureza muito diversa e produzidos por actores distintos e desempenhando papéis diferentes na dinamização dos projectos possibilitou que a equipa de avaliação tivesse acesso a pontos de vista heterogéneos, ainda que por vezes uníssonos, acerca da mesma realidade. Queremos com isto dizer que o trabalho de análise pode beneficiar da triangulação entre modos de olhar diferentes sobre uma mesma realidade e essa mesma realidade considerada de forma fragmentada ou equacionada a partir de pontos de vista diferentes.

Deste modo, o dispositivo de avaliação tornou-se mais capaz de evidenciar que a articulação entre a intervenção sócio-educativa e o desenvolvimento local é conseguida, nos projectos, através do investimento na criação e animação de redes de parcerias, na inscrição territorial da acção e na sua sustentabilidade e através de um trabalho que enfatiza a globalização da acção educativa.

#### **a) Parcerias: entre a rede de parcerias e o trabalho com rede**

A afirmação da articulação entre intervenção sócio-educativa e desenvolvimento local encontra no estabelecimento e dinamização de parcerias aquele que é, simultaneamente, um dos pontos fortes – no sentido do trabalho investido – e um dos pontos mais frágeis – do ponto de vista dos efeitos desse investimento. Todos os projectos aqui em questão assumem discursivamente a intenção de promover o estabelecimento de parcerias, legitimando argumentativamente a sua importância ao associar desenvolvimento integrado e desenvolvimento de um território, enquanto espaço físico, cultural e social, ou seja promovem o envolvimento de diversas instituições e de diversos actores sociais. Esta ideia corresponde a uma das dimensões da concepção de desenvolvimento integrado que associa a integração à relação que se estabelece entre diferentes instituições que partilham territórios, interesses e problemas comuns. Ora, se a aposta no estabelecimento de parcerias é uma linha de força dos discursos programáticos dos projectos, de facto alguns documentos dão conta de que os designados parceiros terão tido uma passagem efémera pelos projectos, tendo assumido neles funções distintas e especializadas (apoio logístico, legitimação política, representatividade sectorial). O que a avaliação realçou foi a existência de relações intermitentes mais do que propriamente a construção de uma ligação reticular que assegurasse a sua própria sustentabilidade e permitisse a inter-permutabilidade dos papéis dos elementos da rede, de modo a que a eventual fragilidade de um não significasse a desagregação da rede. Num dos projectos, perante algumas dificuldades em garantir e manter a adesão dos parceiros, a avaliação destacou, mesmo, a necessidade de reorientar a acção, isto é, de

alterar a estratégia de intervenção, que teria que passar, necessariamente, pelo questionamento do sentido da acção.

Concordando com a importância das parcerias, não individualmente consideradas, mas na sua estruturação em rede, um dos aspectos que queremos realçar reside no facto de os projectos de desenvolvimento local se constituírem como importantes contributos para a recriação das comunidades, necessitando para tal, de contribuir para o estabelecimento de redes de relações densas que são qualificantes tanto dos indivíduos como das comunidades. A consolidação de hábitos de trabalho em cooperação e de concertação inter-institucional pode ter uma grande importância na promoção de uma “cultura de desenvolvimento” (Melo, A, 1994) preocupada com a democraticidade e a deliberação enquanto referentes de legitimação da intervenção. Queremos assim salientar que o envolvimento num trabalho em parceria pode constituir-se numa relação mutualista na medida em que a comunidade se recria pelo enriquecimento mútuo que os parceiros promovem uns nos outros pelo facto de interagirem, de se interpelarem e de se reconhecerem na relação solidária.

O estabelecimento de parcerias deve ser objecto de uma constante vigilância que passa pela intensa negociação entre parceiros, activando a comunicação entre eles, promovendo a democracia participativa, sob pena de se passar do registo comunicacional da parceria para o registo meramente formal do partenariado.

#### b) Inscrição territorial e abordagem política integrada

Uma outra dimensão que os diferentes estudos de avaliação põem em destaque nos projectos avaliados é a que diz respeito à preocupação que lhes é inerente com a inscrição e sustentabilidade territorial das suas acções, referência que está inscrita na natureza e princípios afirmados pela entidade que os promove. A preocupação com a inscrição dos projectos num território para cuja definição contribuem revela-se, em primeira instância, ainda que ambiguamente, no modo como os projectos definem o “local” em que intervêm. Com efeito, esta definição é genericamente marcada pela caracterização e afirmação deste local a partir de um potencial inscrito no território e das dinâmicas relacionais, ainda que “adormecidas”, que aí se desenham e contra um olhar deficitário – reconhecendo recursos potencialmente mobilizáveis pela intervenção, afirmando-se contra uma visão essencialista e estigmatizadora, que associa estritamente a intervenção à existência e ocorrência de problemas sociais e pensando os projectos como dispositivos de construção dos seus próprios recursos – aproximando-se assim do olhar que caracteriza o desenvolvimento endógeno. Contudo, tal como a avaliação destacou, o olhar “pelo potencial” é palco de uma certa ambiguidade já que tanto a legitimidade dos projectos face às entidades financiadoras, como o modo como a intervenção por vezes se concretiza revelam uma lógica de “criar”/“pôr em relevo” problemas sobre os quais intervir, emergindo aí uma visão problemática e deficitária dos territórios e dos seus habitantes, construída, no caso de um dos projectos, por referência às suas características sócio-demográficas ou culturais (associadas à entropia do território e a uma visão desvalorizada da tradição) ou, no caso dos outros projectos avaliados, às relações estabelecidas entre indivíduos e instituições sociais, de que o exemplo mais significativo é a escola (a ruptura da relação entre jovens e escola é associada a um acréscimo das possibilidades de “desviância”). A ambiguidade assinalada não obsta a que se acentue que os projectos de intervenção se procuram definir por referência a uma identidade local, existente ou desejada, e por referência à valorização das suas constituintes sócio-culturais, entendidas como



pontos de ancoragem que permitirão a construção de sentido e de pertença por parte daqueles que os projectos envolvem, mesmo se esta referência se assume essencialmente como ponto de partida da negociação identitária dos territórios e seus intervenientes, enquanto envolvidos num processo de desenvolvimento local.

Neste sentido, nos projectos avaliados encontramos uma intervenção marcada pela intenção de (re)dinamização – que é também (re)criação – de relações comunitárias perdidas, frequentemente articulada com a animação de espaços sociais desvitalizados ou com a criação de novos espaços sociais de sociabilidade suscitados a partir de um trabalho de animação cuja preocupação central é a do desenvolvimento de relações de pertinência entre espaços sociais e seus dinamizadores para que se possam criar condições para a sustentabilidade das iniciativas e, concomitantemente, dos territórios em que se inscrevem. Esta lógica de intervenção, tal como a avaliação o apreendeu, integra características comumente associadas ao campo da animação sociocultural, nomeadamente, ao privilegiar iniciativas que assumem um carácter aberto – envolvendo protagonistas diferenciados na idade, sexo, qualificação escolar e estatuto social; protagonistas individuais e colectivos e com uma acção diferenciada ao nível dos territórios em que estão inseridos – protagonizadas de modo voluntário pelos sujeitos, com uma forte ênfase na promoção de relações de proximidade e afectividade e, essencialmente, ao fazer depender estrategicamente a intervenção da intencionalidade de criação de processos de participação. Mas se a participação emerge como componente da inscrição territorial da intervenção e da sua sustentabilidade, é igualmente importante relevar a sua articulação com uma outra dimensão destacada pela avaliação: a abordagem política integrada do desenvolvimento local. Queremos com isto significar, no prolongamento do que atrás salientámos a propósito da importância conferida às parcerias, que nos vários projectos avaliados nos encontramos perante uma abordagem multidimensional do território, das suas potencialidades e dos seus problemas. Esta multidimensionalidade convoca um olhar sistémico quer sobre o modo como se definem os problemas quer sobre o modo como se pensa a intervenção que subentende um envolvimento participativo de diversos protagonistas, singulares ou institucionais, e a potenciação das suas sinergias, dos seus conhecimentos e desconhecimentos das dinâmicas territoriais na construção da intervenção. Nos vários projectos avaliados encontramos-nos, portanto, perante o que designamos uma concepção política do território no sentido em que este, para além da sua realidade física, não pré-existe às relações que os actores estabelecem ou podem estabelecer entre si e em que, em consequência, a intervenção educativa toma como condição do seu sucesso a possibilidade de pôr em confronto uma pluralidade, mas essencialmente heterogeneidade, de olhares sobre o local e de interpelar as lógicas segmentadas de actuação para que o território se constitua numa arena pública de discussão política em torno do seu sentido e do seu projecto.

### c) Globalização da acção educativa

O modo como se assume o desenvolvimento destes projectos, no terreno, aponta para iniciativas que tendem a valorizar estratégias que permitam a fusão entre educação, formação e processos de desenvolvimento local, ao enfatizarem a dimensão social da educação e a dimensão educativa da intervenção social. A valorização desta estratégia é indiciada, nestes projectos, pela forma como promovem a participação e o protagonismo dos actores locais concebendo-as como oportunidades de aprendizagem colectiva e da sua consciencialização enquanto agentes de

mudança. Esta ideia traduziu-se, num dos projectos, através do processo de constituição de uma associação onde os jovens desempenham um papel de co-protagonistas e de responsáveis na definição global dos projectos e, enquanto tal, de agência social no sentido da mudança pessoal, mas igualmente comunitária. Noutro dos projectos, o protagonismo dos jovens em acções de produção cultural articula-se claramente com uma transformação da sua relação com a produção cultural, considerada fundamental na transformação da sua relação com o tecido social em que estão inseridos. Realce-se que a implementação deste tipo de estratégias para envolver os diversos parceiros em lógicas de intervenção implicada e activa, nem sempre resulta da melhor forma, uma vez que, tal como aconteceu num outro projecto, corre-se o risco dessas intervenções se tornarem em visões estereotipadas e cristalizadas de um local do passado, de um não-território onde dificilmente se podem criar e/ou afirmar espaços cívicos comuns.

Os laços sociais e a construção de sentidos partilhados para um território, faz-se, também, por este tipo de intervenção se ela tiver como missão projectar o desenvolvimento do território, apelando a uma cultura de participação e ao direito ao exercício de cidadania. Assim, o protagonismo dos actores locais, numa intervenção que procure a fusão entre formação e desenvolvimento local enfatiza não só uma lógica de endogeneidade no que concerne aos recursos que mobiliza, como uma lógica participativa que procura equacionar os espaços dos quotidianos em territórios de exercício e afirmação de cidadanias plurais.

A presença, nos projectos, de um modo de definir os problemas e de equacionar a intervenção segundo uma lógica sistémica, partindo de distintos “pontos críticos” cuja interacção é realçada, faz ressaltar a intenção de a intervenção promover uma abordagem globalizada da acção educativa, onde a uma diversidade de actores potencialmente educativos e a diferentes níveis de formalização da acção educativa se acrescenta a recriação de uma relação com um território comunitário capaz de realçar as suas possibilidades educogénicas.

Esta globalização da acção educativa, no que diz respeito às acções desenvolvidas, traduz-se, assim, na superação da exclusividade do modo escolar enquanto intervenção educativa. Com efeito, as acções desenvolvidas, nos diversos projectos, articularam diferentes níveis de formalização da acção educativa e constituíram-se em oportunidades de participação e protagonismo e, enquanto tal, de construção de saberes, por parte dos seus diversos intervenientes, mobilizando, numa lógica de desenvolvimento endógeno, aqueles que são os recursos mais importantes de uma região: as pessoas. Salienta-se, também, o desenvolvimento de dispositivos de formação experiencial e em contexto de trabalho dos agentes educativos, e a potenciação dos espaços de encontro enquanto espaços de reflexão sobre as práticas.

### **Educação e dinâmicas de desenvolvimento local**

As características dos modos de avaliar implementados na avaliação destes projectos, permitiram diluir algumas das características de controlo e de verificação que a avaliação externa frequentemente adopta. Deste modo, o trabalho de avaliação destes três projectos, permitiu destacar, nas intervenções previstas e realizadas, uma forte preocupação com uma articulação entre intervenção educativa e desenvolvimento local.

Esta articulação resulta do modo sistémico como se definem os problemas e a intervenção, assumindo os obstáculos como recursos estratégicos desta última. Esta perspectiva, resulta da defesa de um princípio que é definidor do modo de intervenção do ICE, e que assenta na defesa

de uma pedagogia do superavit por contraponto à do déficit, promovendo a construção de soluções alicerçadas nos recursos existentes. Esta visão contraria “uma representação espacial do social e que se inscrevem num processo de ‘naturalização’ de uma ideologia deficitária, de uma ideologia que tende a dissociar os dramas sociais e os sofrimentos sociais da problemática da desigualdade e da injustiça, para os encararem como uma expressão dos défices de qualificação dos seres sociais e dos espaços que eles habitam.” (Correia, 2005: 33).

Nestes projectos, a articulação entre intervenção educativa e desenvolvimento local não se faz através da sua adição linear, nem da mobilização de recursos humanos qualificados nem exclusivamente a partir do investimento numa maior qualificação das pessoas. Nos projectos aqui em consideração, a promoção do desenvolvimento local resulta, sobretudo, de uma articulação densa e intensa entre acções formativas, dinamização de associações locais, estabelecimento e dinamização de parcerias sólidas, da qualificação de recursos humanos e da mobilização emancipatória das pessoas do local e dos saberes que elas sabem.

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# Construyamos juntos una comunidad educativa libre de violencia

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## Abstract

*Let's build a violence free educational community together, is the slogan of an applied research project working with young men and women between the ages of 14 and 18 years, who are students in the Telebachillerato system in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, due to conclude at the end of 2009.*

*The project is formulated in four stages: 1) Inquiry, 2) Group intervention, 3) Development of support material and 4) Formulation of Public Policies.*

*This research demonstrates the results of the inquiries carried out on violence in communities.*

Key words: Educational community, prevention, violence, youth

## I - INTRODUCCION

Los resultados que se presentan en este escrito forman parte del proyecto: Programa De Formación Ciudadana Con Menores Veracruzanos En Edad Reproductiva Y En Situación Escolar Para Promover Una Vida Familiar Y Comunitaria Libre De Violencia; realizado por la Facultad de Psicología Xalapa de la Universidad Veracruzana, con apoyo de Fomix\_ Conacyt. El objetivo general del proyecto es: Poner en marcha y evaluar un proyecto de investigación aplicada integral, multidisciplinaria e innovadora de formación ciudadana que permita promover una vida familiar y comunitaria libre de violencia con la participación de sus beneficiarios.

Para cumplir este objetivo se diseñó un proyecto en cuatro etapas: 1) Indagación sobre la situación de violencia, 2) Intervención con grupos de las comunidades para promover la construcción de estrategias de prevención pertinentes, 3) Elaboración de Materiales de Apoyo para estimular la reflexión grupal en relación a las situaciones, 4) Con base en los resultados de las fases anteriores, la formulación de Políticas Públicas para prevenir- combatir la violencia ante las instituciones del estado. La indagación se realizó en 38 planteles de telebachillerato localizados en 38 localidades del estado de Veracruz; con cuatro grupos de población: estudiantes, padres-madres de familia, personal docente de las escuelas y personal de los centros de salud; y en relación a cuatro ámbitos significativos en la vida de los estudiantes: familia, escuela, relaciones de pareja y comunidad.

Los objetivos del presente trabajo son exponer los resultados que aluden los hechos experimentados u observados por estudiantes y padres-madres de familia en los espacios públicos de las comunidades que habitan; las formas en que las personas o los grupos la han enfrentado; así como las implicaciones de las situaciones de violencia en las formas en que la

comunidad ha visto modificada su capacidad para generar los satisfactores de subsistencia, protección y libertad que sus habitantes esperan y a los que tienen derecho.

Según datos de las Naciones Unidas, (2005) en América Latina viven 190 millones de niños y adolescentes menores de 18 años y cada año más de seis millones de niños y niñas sufren abuso severo, 80, 000 de los cuales mueren a causa de la violencia doméstica, lo que hace de esta región una de las de mayor índice de violencia en el mundo. Dicha violencia existe en una variedad de ámbitos y formas, a menudo arraigada en la violencia estructural de profunda y ancestral desigualdad y en prácticas culturales vistas como naturales, la violencia cruza las fronteras culturales, las diferencias de clase, el origen étnico y edad y se ejerce en todos los espacios de la vida cotidiana - aunque es más común en el hogar de parte de personas que forman parte del entorno inmediato de las víctimas, aunque no exclusivamente por ellas. Entre las personas que la ejercen se incluyen los padres y la familia ampliada, conocidos de la familia, el novio o novia, el cónyuge o compañero/compañera. También tiene lugar en la escuela y otros entornos educativos así como en espacios públicos como las calles, senderos, parques, canchas de deporte, lugares de diversión. De la violencia en espacios públicos trata este escrito.

Los resultados que presentamos han de examinarse dentro de varios conceptos clave: la comunidad, concebida como espacio geográfico, grupo social e histórico con el que se comparte membresía e identidad social; el desarrollo a escala humana, como propuesta novedosa que concibe las necesidades humanas como carencia y como potencial; y la violencia desde una concepción integral. El abordaje de las situaciones de violencia dentro de estas perspectivas permitirá visualizar los diferentes factores que las conforman, sus implicaciones sociales, así como las formas en que los grupos las están enfrentando; sin duda alguna, la violencia en cualquier acto concreto que examinemos es un fenómeno multicausado; luego, si es un fenómeno multicausado, las acciones pertinentes para prevenirlo o abatirlo podrán y deberán proceder de sus múltiples actores; si en alguna medida, con sin conciencia de ello, somos corresponsables de los hechos de violencia, podemos ser corresponsables de las soluciones.

## **LA VIOLENCIA**

Concebimos la violencia según Johan Galtung (2003) porque se trata de un modelo que rebasa la violencia manifiesta y permite la contextualización de los hechos particulares; este autor concibe la violencia como sufrimiento evitable; en este sentido, cualquier dolor, sufrimiento padecido por una persona, un grupo, y que pudiera haberse evitado es violencia; toda acción que coarte, restrinja, limite la realización humana es violencia. La violencia, dice Galtung, (1969) es lo que aumenta la distancia entre lo potencial y lo actual, entre lo que podría ser y lo que es.

El autor propone un triángulo con tres variantes para explicar la violencia (Galtung; 2003) En primer lugar describe la violencia: personal o directa, que puede ser física y/o verbal, visible y observable a través del comportamiento; como violencia manifiesta es la forma más severa y destructiva del poder físico; puede ser utilizada por individuos, grupos de personas, o por el estado; su carácter visible hace posible la identificación de los actores que la protagonizan y la medición de sus resultados: muertos, heridos, mujeres violadas, niños abusados, robos, asaltos, encarcelados, procesados. Sin embargo, a pesar de su aparente fuerza la violencia personal o directa no viene de la nada, se produce siempre en un contexto social e histórico que la favorece, la utiliza en determinadas circunstancias y la mantiene por diversos medios; es en este contexto

donde sitúa las otras dos variantes: la estructural y la cultural, lo peculiar de estas variantes es que son invisibles, de manera que sus consecuencias no pueden atribuirse a algún actor específico, no pueden deslindarse las causas que las producen ni las estrategias de manipulación utilizadas por diversas instituciones para evitar que se tome conciencia de ellas. Las dos variantes crean y refuerzan la violencia directa.

La violencia estructural (Cano, Cisneros; 1980; Galtung 2003) es la injusticia, la desigualdad y la inequitatividad; implícitas, contenidas en el seno de la propia sociedad; es el precio por vivir en una sociedad. Para las autoras la estructura de la sociedad tiene una composición heterogénea, lo que significa que algunos individuos, grupos y clases sociales tienen más poder y oportunidad que otros, ventaja que imponen a los que no lo tienen por diferentes medios, incluida la violencia física directa; la violencia estructural alude también a las instituciones de la sociedad: ejército, policía, sistema carcelario, escuela, familia y a sus normas, en las que las se establecen relaciones de poder y que en determinadas circunstancias se pueden tornar en esquemas que crean y mantienen la desigualdad entre los actores sociales.

Los grados de violencia estructural son los mismos que los de injusticia y desigualdad y en las sociedades modernas la desigualdad puede medirse mediante indicadores estadísticos relativos a los sistemas: económico, político y social; tanto la generación como el examen minucioso de estos indicadores demostrará con datos duros que hay sociedades más violentas que otras; regiones donde la violencia se concentra; períodos en la historia caracterizados por la violencia, grupos sociales excluidos de los beneficios del desarrollo en forma sistemática; desigualdades en educación, salud, empleo, acceso a la justicia, entre otras.

La cultura, esa segunda naturaleza como algunos la llaman, tiene el papel de restringir, expandir, configurar lo que la naturaleza nos ha asignado en cuanto humanos; por consiguiente las restricciones construidas e impuestas culturalmente sobre las personas pueden convertirse en violentas y en verse como naturales, sobre todo cuando se dan por hechas, cuando no se cuestionan. La violencia cultural se manifiesta en seis ámbitos (Galtung, 1981 en Torres Falcón, 2001) la religión, la ideología, la creación artística, el lenguaje, la ciencia empírica y la ciencia formal. Estos seis ámbitos no son violentos en sí mismos; lo son en tanto las, construcciones sociales, creencias, creaciones artísticas, el lenguaje, justifiquen, mantengan o produzcan la desigualdad y la injusticia. A lo largo de la historia, tanto corrientes teóricas como movimientos sociales, modelos educativos han hecho esfuerzos por develar los fines implícitos de los sistemas ideológicos, y de los religiosos que mediante procesos como la naturalización de los usos y costumbres, la sacralización de algunos rituales, la apelación a mitos de creación, la falta de palabras para nombrar los hechos, entre otros; han conseguido perpetuar la exclusión, estigmatización de grupos sociales completos, incluso con la aceptación de los mismos. El gran logro del movimiento feminista ha sido hacer visibles los significados de mitos, leyendas, creencias, expectativas; que las sociedades, las religiones, la ciencia empírica han creado para justificar el sistema patriarcal y con ello la subordinación de las mujeres que se manifiesta de diversas formas según los contextos sociales.

Las tres variantes propuestas se refuerzan y se vinculan de tal manera que cualquiera de ellas puede ser invocada para justificar y utilizar las otras dos.

Es necesario hacer una precisión importante en la propuesta de Galtung, (2003) y se refiere al malentendido que asegura que la violencia es propia de la naturaleza humana. El autor

agrega que tanto el potencial para la violencia como para el amor son propios de la naturaleza humana, pero son las circunstancias producidas por la violencia estructural y cultural, invisibles pero potentes las que condicionan la realización de dicho potencial; Marx, (1845) planteó una explicación en el mismo sentido en la sexta tesis sobre Fehuerbach: la esencia humana no es algo abstracto inherente a cada individuo. Es, en su realidad el conjunto de las relaciones sociales. En los seres humanos la oposición entre lo biológico y lo social es una falsa dicotomía, los seres humanos no devenimos como tales más que en sociedad. La precisión anterior es hoy más importante que nunca, en tiempos de violencia la tentación de igualar la naturaleza humana a la violencia es una solución simplista, fácil y peligrosa; simplista porque evade la complejidad que hay atrás de cada acto de violencia; fácil porque oculta la responsabilidad del estado y de sus instituciones en la generación de la violencia estructural y peligrosa porque apela casi siempre a soluciones de más violencia focalizada en grupos sociales concretos y que finalmente, no construye una solución para las raíces del problema.

Con esta aclaración tan significativa, queda delimitada la concepción: el énfasis está dirigido a la posibilidad de realización de las necesidades de las personas, que en situaciones de violencia se ve seriamente afectada, y no a los medios utilizados para ejercerla.

### **Violencia familiar y de género**

En el mundo occidental moderno, la familia es visualizada como un espacio amoroso, armonioso, pacífico, protector; en el que cualquier manifestación de desavenencia, conflicto, lucha; es vista como disfuncional; sin embargo, es en la familia donde se construyen los vínculos humanos más profundos y por consiguiente donde el conflicto es inherente, como lo es en toda clase de relación humana; no obstante esta condición inevitable, no es el conflicto en sí sino las formas de enfrentarlo las que pueden ser lesivas, violentas para quienes toman parte.

La resolución violenta del conflicto pretende imponer al que está en desacuerdo una forma de ser y de actuar. Con la violencia se pretende eliminar cualquier obstáculo al ejercicio del poder y al control del otro, por lo que necesariamente requiere de personas en relaciones desiguales de poder: un superior- un subordinado, maestro- alumno; madre- hija, hombre- mujer, hermano mayor- hermana.

La ley de acceso de las mujeres a una vida libre de violencia del estado de Veracruz, (2007) define la violencia de género como una modalidad de violencia dirigida contra las mujeres: " cualquier acción u omisión, basada en el género, que les cause a las mujeres de cualquier edad, daño o sufrimiento psicológico, físico, patrimonial, económico, sexual o la muerte tanto en ámbito privado como en el público y que se expresa en amenazas, agravios, maltrato, lesiones y daños asociados a la exclusión, la subordinación, la discriminación y la explotación de las mujeres y que es consustancial a la opresión de género en todas sus modalidades afectando sus derechos humanos. La violencia de género contra las mujeres involucra tanto a las personas como a la sociedad, comunidades, relaciones, prácticas e instituciones sociales, y al Estado que la reproduce al no garantizar la igualdad, al perpetuar formas jurídicas, judiciales, políticas androcéntricas y de jerarquía de género y al no dar garantías de seguridad a las mujeres durante todo su ciclo de vida." La misma ley incluye dentro de las modalidades de violencia contra las mujeres la violencia en el ámbito familiar, la violencia escolar y la violencia comunitaria.

## **LA VIOLENCIA COMO RESTRICCIÓN DE LA REALIZACIÓN DE LAS NECESIDADES HUMANAS**

En congruencia con el modelo para explicar la violencia que hemos expuesto; la propuesta de Desarrollo a Escala Humana (DEH) nos explica las formas en que la violencia en la sociedad en general y en la comunidad donde se habita se convierte en un obstáculo para la generación de los satisfactores necesarios para la realización de las necesidades humanas, a la vez que genera diferentes tipos de pobreza que afectan a sus habitantes.

El DEH principia su argumentación con la definición de sus objetivos. El desarrollo, dice su principal autor (Max-Neff y cols, 1986) se concentra y sustenta en la satisfacción de las necesidades humanas (NH) fundamentales, en la generación de niveles crecientes de autodependencia; en la articulación orgánica de los seres humanos con la naturaleza y la tecnología; de los procesos globales con los comportamientos locales; de lo personal con lo social; de la planificación con la autonomía y de la sociedad civil con el estado. Necesidades humanas, autodependencia y articulaciones orgánicas, son los pilares fundamentales que sustentan el DEH, pero estos pilares a su vez necesitan apoyarse en una base sólida que se construye a partir del protagonismo real de las personas, como consecuencia de privilegiar tanto la diversidad como la autonomía de espacios en los que el protagonismo sea realmente posible. Lograr la transformación de la persona objeto en persona sujeto del desarrollo es, entre otras cosas un problema de escala; porque no hay protagonismo posible en sistemas gigantes organizados jerárquicamente desde arriba hacia abajo.

### **Postulados del DEH**

1. El desarrollo se refiere a personas no a objetos, en el que se debe destacar un indicador más cualitativo que cuantitativo, para lo cual proponen el concepto de calidad de vida, misma que dependerá de las posibilidades que tengan las personas de satisfacer sus necesidades humanas fundamentales.

2. Las necesidades humanas son finitas, pocas y clasificables.

3. Las necesidades humanas fundamentales son las mismas en todas las culturas y en todos los períodos históricos; lo que cambia, a través del tiempo y de las culturas, es la manera o los medios utilizados para la satisfacción de las necesidades. Lo que está culturalmente determinado no son las necesidades humanas fundamentales, sino los satisfactores de esas necesidades.

4. Cada necesidad se satisface en tres contextos, a) en relación con uno mismo, b) en relación con el grupo social y c) en relación con el medio ambiente. Así mismo puede satisfacerse a niveles diferentes y con distinta intensidad; esto dependerá del tiempo, lugar y circunstancia.

Se ha creído tradicionalmente que las necesidades humanas tienden a ser infinitas, que cambian constantemente, que varían de una cultura a otra, y que son diferentes en cada período histórico. Para los autores de la propuesta, estas ideas son producto de un error conceptual que consiste en no hacer explícita la diferencia fundamental entre lo que son propiamente las necesidades y lo que son los satisfactores de esas necesidades.

Las necesidades humanas pueden desagregarse conforme múltiples criterios. El documento combina dos criterios posibles, según categorías existenciales y según categorías axiológicas. Esta combinación permite operar con una clasificación que incluye por una parte,



las necesidades de SER, TENER, HACER Y ESTAR, y, por otra, las necesidades de SUBSISTENCIA, PROTECCION, AFECTO, ENTENDIMIENTO, PARTICIPACIÓN, OCIO, CREACION, IDENTIDAD, LIBERTAD. Ambas categorías pueden combinarse con la ayuda de una matriz. De la clasificación propuesta se desprende que, por ejemplo, alimentación y abrigo no deben considerarse como necesidades, sino como satisfactores de la necesidad fundamental de subsistencia. Del mismo modo, la educación, el estudio, la investigación, la meditación son satisfactores de la necesidad de entendimiento; los sistemas curativos, la prevención y los esquemas de salud en general son satisfactores de la necesidad de protección.

No existe correspondencia biunívoca entre necesidades y satisfactores. Un satisfactor puede contribuir en forma simultánea a la satisfacción de diversas necesidades o, a la inversa, una necesidad puede requerir diversos satisfactores para ser satisfecha. Ni siquiera estas relaciones son fijas, pueden variar según el tiempo, lugar y las circunstancias. Cada sistema económico, socio y político adopta diferentes estilos para la satisfacción de las mismas necesidades humanas fundamentales. En cada sistema, éstas se satisfacen (o no se satisfacen) a través de la generación (o no generación) de diferentes tipos de satisfactores. Uno de los aspectos que definen una cultura es su elección de satisfactores. El cambio cultural es entre otras cosas, consecuencia de abandonar satisfactores tradicionales para reemplazarlos por otros nuevos o diferentes.

### **Las Pobrezas**

El sistema propuesto por Max -Neff permite la reinterpretación del concepto de pobreza. El concepto tradicional es economicista, limitado y restringido, puesto que se refiere exclusivamente a la situación de aquellas personas que pueden clasificarse debajo de un determinado umbral de ingreso; para sustituirlo sugiere no hablar de pobreza, sino de pobreza. De hecho, cualquier necesidad humana fundamental que no sea adecuadamente satisfecha revela una pobreza humana. Pero las pobreza no sólo son pobreza; cada pobreza, una vez que rebasa límites críticos en intensidad y duración, engendra y revela patologías.

Las necesidades revelan de la manera más apremiante el ser de las personas, ya que aquél se hace palpable a través de éstas en una doble condición existencial: como carencia y como potencialidad. Concebir las necesidades tan sólo como carencia implica restringir su espectro a lo puramente fisiológico, que es precisamente el ámbito en que una necesidad asume con mayor fuerza y claridad la sensación de falta de algo. Sin embargo, en la medida en que las necesidades comprometen, motivan y movilizan a las personas; son también potencialidad y, más aún, pueden llegar a ser recursos. La necesidad de participar es potencial de participación, tal como la necesidad de afecto es potencial de afecto.

Así entendidas las necesidades-como potencia y carencia- resulta impropio hablar de necesidades que se satisfacen o que se colman, ya que como proceso dialéctico, constituyen un movimiento incesante. De allí que quizá sea más apropiado hablar de vivir y de realizar las necesidades, y de vivirlas y realizarlas de manera continua y renovada.

### **LA COMUNIDAD**

Aunque es difícil estructurar una definición de comunidad que incluya todos sus componentes; Montero, (2004) con base en la revisión de varios autores, incluye una lista de aspectos constitutivos del concepto de comunidad; con base en ellos planteamos la acepción

que utilizamos en el presente trabajo. Comunidad como un espacio geográfico en el que las personas viven todos los aspectos de su vida; grupo social e histórico que implica membresía o identidad social compartida por los miembros, símbolos comunes, derechos y deberes; influencia, o la capacidad para inducir a otros a actuar de determinadas formas; integración y satisfacción de necesidades, se refiere a los beneficios materiales y psicológicos respeto, prestigio, que las personas pueden recibir por el hecho de pertenecer a esa comunidad; compromisos y lazos emocionales compartidos; pertenecer a una comunidad es compartir valores, fechas, celebraciones, mantener relaciones estrechas cara a cara. (Macmillan y Chasis, 1986 en Montero, 2004: 216ss); en el caso que nos ocupa sobre violencia en la comunidad; necesidades fundamentales (Max-Neef 1986) como: subsistencia, protección y libertad se verían en serias dificultades para generar los satisfactores necesarios para hacer posible un entorno social que favorezca la realización plena de los pobladores, los satisfactores de los que hablamos se describen de manera general en la siguiente matriz:

EXISTENCIALES AXIOLOGICAS	SER	TENER	HACER	ESTAR
SUBSISTENCIA	salud física, salud mental, adaptabilidad	alimentación, trabajo	alimentar, procrear	entorno vital entorno social
PROTECCION	cuidado, adaptabilidad autonomía equilibrio solidaridad	seguridad social legislaciones sistema de justicia	cooperar prevenir	contorno vital contorno social morada
LIBERTAD	autonomía, autoestima, pasión, voluntad, apertura, determinación, audacia, rebeldía, tolerancia	igualdad de derechos	discrepar, optar, diferenciarse, arriesgar, conocerse, asumirse, desobedecer, meditar	plasticidad espacio temporal

Max-Neef, M. y cols. (1986) Desarrollo a Escala Humana. CEPUR, Chile.

## II - EL CONTEXTO

La modalidad educativa de TELEBACHILLERATO en el estado de Veracruz tiene su origen en 1980; fue el primer intento por usar tecnologías modernas en educación a distancia, creado para llevar el nivel de bachillerato a bajo costo, a comunidades rurales y semirurales de difícil acceso. El primer experimento se basó en la creación de materiales audiovisuales que se transmitían desde una estación de televisión estatal a las escuelas; en los planteles se contaba con una antena que recibía la señal; las actividades escolares eran coordinadas por un docente en cada salón de clase, quien seguía con el grupo las lecciones y tareas hasta cubrir todos los requisitos del plan de estudios que era de dos años. En la actualidad este primer ensayo ha experimentado muchos cambios, el plan de estudios es ahora de tres años, y las lecciones ya no se transmiten por un canal televisivo; en cada escuela se cuenta con un maestro coordinador por año o sección escolar, con los materiales audiovisuales y escritos elaborados por el sistema, los que se proyectan

en un televisor. No obstante el modelo general que opera en todos los planteles, las escuelas concretas son heterogéneas; algunas con mejor infraestructura física y tecnológica, otras situadas en entornos mejor comunicados.

El sistema ofrece un programa de bachillerato en forma presencial para los estudiantes, quienes acuden a los centros diariamente en una sola jornada: matutina o vespertina. Los estudiantes, por su parte proceden en su mayoría de comunidades rurales, que tienen todos los indicadores de pobreza: pocas de fuentes de trabajo, ausencia de servicios básicos de salud, pocos años de escolaridad; la ocupaciones principales de los habitantes es la agricultura y los servicios por los que perciben ingresos muy bajos; toda esta situación vivida por décadas más la transformación de la agricultura en el estado, ha configurado en los últimos cinco años, un escenario propicio para la migración; la ola migratoria, de los hombres en su mayoría, se ha dado hacia las zonas urbanas del estado, a otras zonas del país y al extranjero; con estos desplazamientos la economía familiar y la de las localidades ha recibido un respiro, pero la estructura familiar y poblacional se ha visto modificada en muchos sentidos; al interior de las familias las relaciones de poder se han transformado, la situación de las mujeres que se quedan con los hijos en las comunidades está siendo redefinida, con ventajas y desventajas no siempre claras.

En el año escolar 2005– 2006 el sistema contaba con 894 centros de estudio con 3,143 docentes que atendieron a 79,017 alumnos pertenecientes a 201 municipios de los 212 que tiene el Estado, beneficiando a 3,580 comunidades. Además existían centros de Telebachillerato en nueve centros de readaptación social (instituciones carcelarias para adultos-as) y un centro de observación y adaptación social para niños y niñas en conflicto con la ley penal. ([www.secv.gob](http://www.secv.gob).)

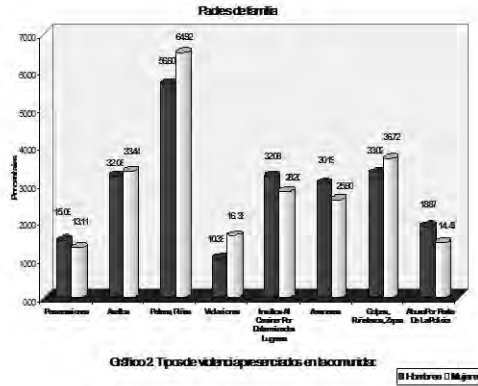
### **III - METODO**

En general la metodología del proyecto ha sido planteada como investigación-acción; la primera etapa, en la que situamos los resultados que dan origen a este escrito, fue una indagación, un estudio de campo de tipo descriptivo. El inicio de la primera etapa incluyó varias acciones como la vinculación con las autoridades del sistema de telebachillerato, la inducción al proyecto de investigación con docentes de las escuelas, lapsos de observación directa y participante en planteles y comunidades, entrevistas informales con estudiantes, padres de familia, maestros.

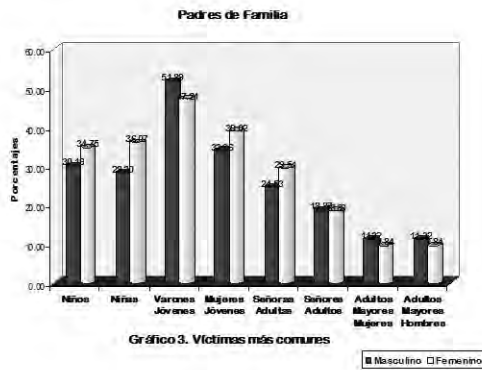
Los Participantes: fueron estudiantes hombres y mujeres, todos inscritos en alguna de las escuelas de Telebachillerato del estado de Veracruz en el ciclo escolar 2007-2008; tomaron parte en el proyecto 38 escuelas que incluyeron las diferentes regiones; además de padres - madres de familia de las mismas comunidades. Todo el trabajo de campo fue realizado entre octubre-diciembre de 2007.

Los instrumentos utilizados para recabar la información fueron dos: 1) un cuestionario para estudiantes que indagó hechos de violencia experimentados y/o presenciados en un lapso de tiempo determinado y en cuatro ámbitos: familia, escuela, pareja y comunidad que fue administrado en forma grupal en las escuelas; 2) un cuestionario para padres-madres de familia de los mismos estudiantes o de las comunidades; que incluyó situaciones de violencia (psicológica, física, sexual) experimentadas y/o presenciadas en la familia, escuela, comunidad; este cuestionario se realizó mediante entrevista individual. Ambos cuestionarios incluyeron algunas preguntas abiertas sobre situaciones de violencia así como la actuación de las víctimas,

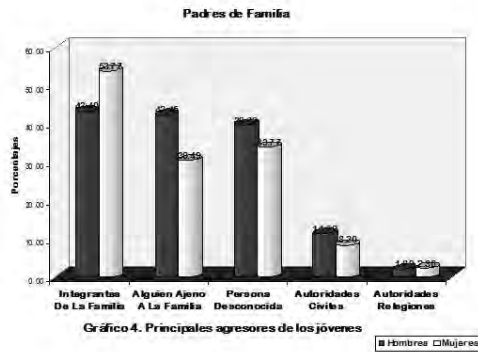




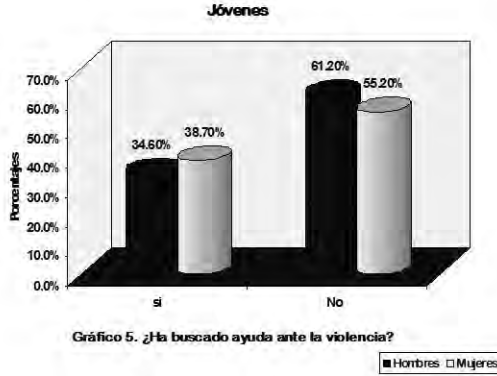
Fuente: Base de datos de la Investigación 2007



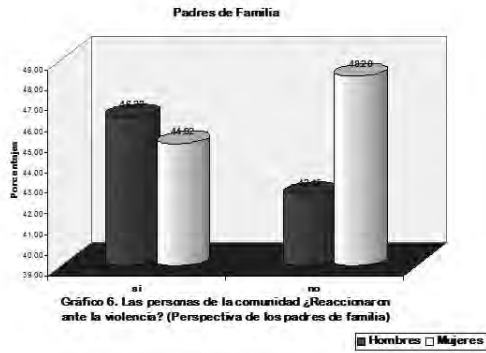
Fuente: Base de datos de la Investigación 2007



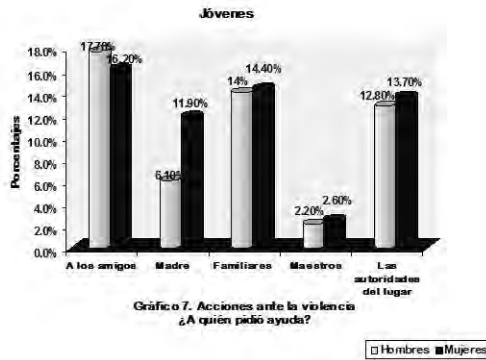
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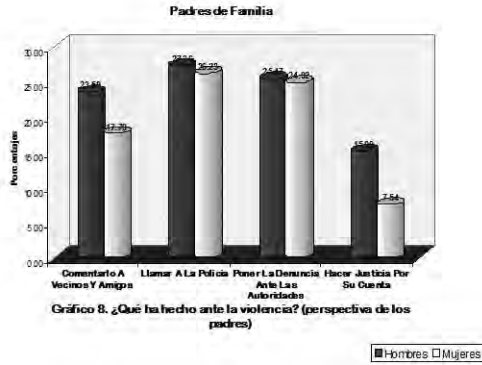
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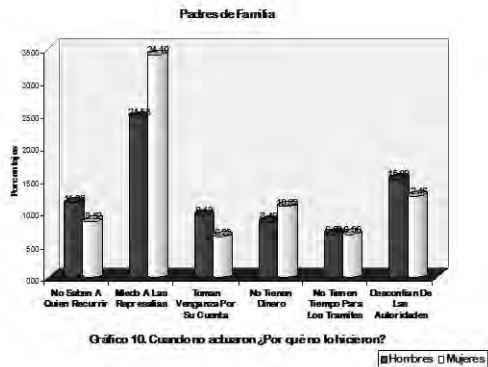
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Fuente: Base de datos de la Investigación 2007



Fuente: Base de datos de la Investigación 2007

## V - REFLEXIONES FINALES

Plantaremos a continuación una serie de reflexiones y puntualizaciones sobre los tópicos más significativos: En primer lugar el grupo social, los estudiantes, hombres y mujeres; menores en situación escolar y en edad reproductiva, que alude a personas dependientes, vulnerables a diferentes tipos de violencia tal y como se puso en evidencia en la indagación realizada; como menores están expuestos a la violencia de parte de los adultos, de las personas con más poder en la comunidad; es interesante constatar que los hechos experimentados o conocidos se refieren a la violencia psicológica: insultos, gritos, amenazas; ¿ qué implicaciones tiene este hecho? La violencia psicológica se ejerce por mecanismos sutiles, difusos o manifiestos, su objetivo es mantener al otro-a bajo control, negarle la capacidad de ser libre, desplazarse, agruparse, actuar; un insulto es recordarle al otro-a su poco valor, su procedencia indigna, su fealdad, torpeza; es al final de cuentas hacer uso de los estereotipos que la cultura del grupo ha construido para asegurar el dominio, la obediencia y en ocasiones excluir hasta de las actividades más rutinarias a quienes no se consideran personas con derechos; cuando estos procedimientos no surten el efecto esperado de mantener el control y la exclusión las amenazas dan un paso hacia adelante pues ofrecen violencia física, que en las localidades estudiadas es una realidad.

Como hombres y mujeres en edad reproductiva, la violencia también se refiere a la capacidad de ser hombre o mujer, a los modelos de masculinidad o feminidad; a los atributos sexuales y la violencia en los hombres; a la capacidad de seducción, a la conducta catalogada como libertina, en relación a las mujeres, y por supuesto al acoso y al abuso sexual; este tipo de insultos están ligados a las construcciones de género predominantes en el grupo que son rígidos y opresivos para ambos sexos, al menos a nivel de las creencias.

Es de particular importancia la poca confianza que los y las jóvenes manifiestan hacia las figuras formales de autoridad como maestros, autoridades civiles y religiosas de la localidad para la solución de los conflictos que subyacen a la violencia y ante este hecho cabrían varias explicaciones, es posible que los jóvenes utilicen patrones culturales que privilegian a las personas adultas de la familia o a los grupos de pares y que la poca recurrencia a las autoridades civiles locales no sea más que la repetición de la situación del país; en México la poca credibilidad de las autoridades civiles es un hecho conocido y cotidiano, sin embargo no es el caso de los maestros; la figura del maestro en las comunidades representa no sólo la razón sino la ciencia y si relacionamos esta desconfianza con el modelo de las escuelas de telebachillerato en las que un docente trabaja como coordinador único de un grupo durante un año escolar, la contradicción se hace evidente, sin embargo la existencia de la contradicción no es lo más grave, lo más grave es que la persona que podría plantear la negociación como forma de solución de los conflictos es dejada fuera. Este papel marginal de los maestros, en condiciones de ausencia de árbitros objetivos, necesita examinarse con más detalle, sobre todo por parte de los mismos maestros y de las escuelas.

La violencia física experimentada u observada por los padres y madres de familia muestra en forma cruda la vulnerabilidad de las personas y la inexistencia de formas de solución pacífica de las controversias, la poca presencia de mecanismos formales para frenar la violencia y la poca seguridad en las comunidades. Si retomamos la hipótesis que las necesidades no son sólo carencias sino también potencialidades, motivaciones e incentivos para actuar y buscar soluciones, los resultados nos revelan muy poco en este sentido; la indiferencia y la naturalización de la violencia



apuntan en sentido contrario, a dejar que el miedo llene los espacios que la poca participación más la ausencia de las instituciones civiles y religiosas comunitarias ha dejado vacíos.

En relación a las víctimas, los hombres jóvenes y las mujeres jóvenes principalmente, se nos dificulta pensar en ellas en un solo lado de la balanza, quienes han sido objeto de algún acto de violencia, lo más seguro es que ellas mismas en más de una ocasión hayan actuado o respondido de la misma manera; esta suposición se hace más creíble si nos detenemos en la violencia que procede de las personas de la familia y en la ausencia de instituciones o grupos que propicien la resolución no violenta de los conflictos que se suscitan en todas las relaciones humanas; la violencia parece ser una forma cotidiana de relación tanto en la familia como en la comunidad. El instrumento que utilizamos en la indagación no incluyó ninguna pregunta de control con este fin, pero varios de los resultados nos llevan a plantear esta suposición.

En resumen el triángulo propuesto por Galtung cobra vida cuando analizamos los hechos de violencia en las comunidades estudiadas: la violencia estructural se posiciona como la más poderosa al dejar excluidos de los productos del desarrollo del país y la región a los grandes grupos que las habitan, a esta pobreza material se añade las pobrezas generadas por la falta de seguridad en los entornos físicos y sociales, más la libertad coartada por las amenazas e insultos; la violencia cultural se manifiesta en las construcciones estereotipadas de género, de clase y de etnia utilizadas para rebajar a quien no sea percibido como representante de los grupos privilegiados en ese momento; la violencia directa y manifiesta no es más que la expresión de las otras dos. Para finalizar, es necesario referirnos a la comunidad educativa, título del presente trabajo. Por comunidad educativa nos referimos a las instituciones (Loureau, 2001) y los actores que intervienen en ella, en este caso en la educación formal: por una parte la escuela con sus estudiantes hombres y mujeres, maestros y maestras, normas oficiales, usos y costumbres; por otra parte las familias de los estudiantes con sus historias y luchas cotidianas y, en tercer lugar, la comunidad. Es en estas instituciones tan vitales, tan cercanas donde pueden gestarse parte de las soluciones; por ejemplo, en el caso de la escuela podría empezarse con una serie de interrogantes, con una clase de análisis elemental: ¿cuáles son los usos y costumbres de la escuela en relación a la violencia que llega a ella o la que se produce en ella?, ¿qué normas y procedimientos existen para resolver los conflictos entre estudiantes varones, mujeres, entre estudiantes y maestros-as?, ¿cómo se establecieron, quién impuso estas normas, quién puede revisarlas? ¿Se evalúan estas normas de alguna manera, están cumpliendo su papel?, ¿cómo participan estudiantes y padres de familia?, ¿qué experiencias exitosas ha tenido la escuela frente a la violencia que le llega?

El modelo de Galtung ha dejado claro que existen diferentes escenarios donde se puede actuar para encarar la violencia, algunos de estos escenarios están a nuestro alcance, es en ellos donde hay que trabajar. El entorno social del que la escuela forma parte activa nos construye, pero también podemos construirlo y esta construcción puede dar inicio de muchas maneras, con pequeñas acciones, con una gran campaña. Con esta premisa puede iniciarse una estrategia hacia el respeto y la convivencia pacífica.

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# Sesgo endogrupal, metaestereotipos y emociones hacia el exogrupo entre inmigrantes en España

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## Resumen

*Se presentan los datos preliminares de un trabajo realizado en la ciudad de Guadalajara (España) sobre una muestra de inmigrantes procedentes de países con bajos niveles de desarrollo. El trabajo pretende profundizar en los metaestereotipos, el choque cultural y las estrategias de integración de los grupos de inmigrantes más numerosos en la ciudad de Guadalajara, concretamente grupos de origen latinoamericano, de Europa del Este y África. Como criterios de inclusión muestral se consideró ser de origen extranjero, proceder de un país con un menor nivel de desarrollo que España, tener más de 14 años y llevar menos de 10 años de estancia en España. La muestra inicial se encuentra compuesta por 100 personas inmigrantes procedentes de Latinoamérica (55,4%), Europa del Este (23,8%) y África (20,8%). La muestra presenta una media de edad de 32,02 años y una media de estancia en España de 4,5 años.*

*La información se recogió mediante una entrevista estructurada de carácter heteroaplicada, dadas las dificultades idiomáticas que presentaba alguno de los entrevistados. Los datos preliminares indican la existencia de diferencias entre los tres grupos en lo relativo a los metaestereotipos que consideran tienen los españoles, el choque cultural padecido a su llegada a España y las estrategias de integración desarrolladas por los diferentes grupos.*

*En el trabajo también se analizan las diferencias existentes en relación a los metaestereotipos, choque cultural y estrategias de integración en función de variables como la edad, género, tiempo de estancia en España, nivel educativo, situación de regularidad, situación laboral, ingresos, clase social en el país de origen o ideología política.*

Palabras clave: inmigración, estereotipos, integración, choque cultural.

## 1. Introducción.

Desde el principio de la historia han existido flujos migratorios, si bien los mismos han tenido características diferentes en función del lugar y momento histórico en que se han producido. Actualmente, los flujos migratorios son causados principalmente por las fuertes diferencias económicas y sociales existentes entre los países más desarrollados y aquellos eufemísticamente denominados países en vías de desarrollo.

En la actualidad una gran cantidad de personas se trasladan desde los estados menos

desarrollados hacia los que presentan unos mayores niveles de desarrollo con el sueño de alcanzar una vida más digna, encontrar nuevas oportunidades a su desarrollo personal o huir de situaciones políticas difíciles en sus países de origen. En muchas ocasiones se trata de inmigrantes con niveles de educación media o superior, que ocuparán puestos no demandados por la población de acogida, se dedicarán a la economía sumergida y trabajarán con frecuencia en condiciones laborales precarias (Moreno y Vallejo, 2005).

El concepto “inmigrante” hace referencia a toda persona que traslada su residencia para establecerse en un país distinto al de su nacimiento, si bien en nuestro contexto cultural, y trasladado al presente trabajo, cabe hacer una distinción entre extranjero e inmigrante. Mientras consideraremos extranjeros a quienes trasladan su residencia a nuestro país procedentes de países desarrollados, en el presente trabajo se considera “inmigrantes” únicamente a quienes proceden de estados con bajos niveles de desarrollo buscando condiciones de vida más dignas. En este marco resultan, de especial interés tanto el estudio de las reacciones de la población de acogida como los mecanismos de adaptación social y psicológica de los individuos que acceden a nuestra sociedad procedentes de culturas en muchas ocasiones sumamente diferentes.

La adaptación psicosocial del individuo al nuevo entorno cultural depende de una gran cantidad de factores individuales y grupales, que varían tanto en función de aspectos individuales de la persona que traslada su lugar de residencia como en función de las características de las sociedades de origen y de acogida y de cómo ambas interactúan. Con el contacto entre culturas se produce el proceso de aculturación definido, hace ya más de medio siglo, como el fenómeno que tienen lugar cuando grupos de diferentes culturas tienen continuos contactos y, en consecuencia, se producen cambios en los patrones de la cultura original de uno o ambos grupos (Redfield, Linton y Herskovits, 1936). En este proceso de aculturación se experimentan cambios grupales e individuales que se corresponden con el aprendizaje de un nuevo repertorio conductual apropiado al nuevo contexto cultural, al desaprendizaje de algunos aspectos previos que no son adecuados en la cultura de acogida y a los conflictos culturales que puedan surgir. No solo se producen cambios en el grupo que emigra, sino también en el grupo de acogida y, de cómo se produce este proceso de aculturación, va a depender en gran medida el nivel de adaptación del inmigrante, el cual puede variar en un continuo que abarca desde la imposibilidad de permanecer en el nuevo contexto hasta la satisfacción por vivir en el mismo.

Diversas investigaciones en psicología social se han centrado en describir las consecuencias del proceso de aculturación, con un reflejo directo en el nivel de adaptación. En este proceso puede producirse el denominado “Choque Cultural”, proceso que hace referencia al estrés y ansiedad procedentes de la pérdida de símbolos y signos familiares de intercambio social que tienen lugar en la exposición a un ambiente extraño (Furham, 1984; Furham y Bochner, 1982; Brislin, 1980). Este choque cultural supone en el individuo una fuente de estrés intercultural que puede conllevar graves consecuencias psicológicas negativas (Moreno y Vallejo, 2005). En contradicción con el Modelo Unidimensional de Asimilación de Gordon (1964), consideran Moreno y Vallejo (2005) que el proceso de adaptación no tiene por qué seguir un curso lineal y progresivo, ni ser uniforme en todos los individuos. Por el contrario, modelos posteriores indican que en el proceso de adaptación se pueden producir saltos, aceleraciones, retrocesos, etc., que dependerán de un conjunto de características idiosincrásicas en cada individuo.

El presente trabajo pretende conocer en la ciudad de Guadalajara las dificultades

principales en el proceso de integración y las diferencias existentes al respecto entre diferentes colectivos de población de origen inmigrante, procedentes de Latinoamérica, Europa del Este y África (principalmente del Magreb)

## 2. MÉTODO

### 2.1. Participantes.

A fin de disponer de una muestra que permitiese realizar comparaciones, se decidió incluir en el estudio únicamente inmigrantes que habitasen en la ciudad de Guadalajara procedentes de Latinoamérica, Europa del Este y África, por ser los colectivos con mayor presencia en dicha ciudad. Como criterio de inclusión se utilizó ser de origen extranjero, mayor de edad y llevar menos de 5 años residiendo en España.

Se accedió a los entrevistados mediante diferentes estrategias, entre las que destacaron los contactos con asociaciones de migrantes, las entrevistas en lugares frecuentados por migrantes (especialmente locutorios y grupos religiosos) y entrevistas en la calle y lugares públicos

La muestra final se encuentra compuesta por 101 personas inmigrantes, de las que el 41% son varones y el 59% mujeres, con una edad media de 32,02 años (Dt = 8,55).

### 2.2. Instrumentos.

Para la recogida de información se utilizó una entrevista que permitiese su aplicación tanto de forma autoaplicada como heteroaplicada, dado que una gran parte de la población presentaba problemas con el idioma y con la capacidad de lectura, especialmente en español.

En el presente trabajo se utilizó el "Test de Sesgo Endogrupal Interétnico" (Rojas, García y Navas, 2003), una "Escala de emociones hacia los miembros del exogrupo" y un listado de posibles Metaestereotipos que los inmigrantes consideran que tiene la población de acogida.

El "Test de Sesgo Endogrupal Interétnico" presenta una serie de ítems cuyas opciones de respuesta oscilan ente 1 = "Muy malos" y 5 = "Muy buenos". Las preguntas que realiza el instrumento son las siguientes:

Piense en la personas españolas, ¿Cómo creen que son...

1. Sus formas de ser y de ver la vida?
2. Sus hábitos y costumbres alimenticias?
3. Sus hábitos de higiene y limpieza?
4. Sus hábitos de hablar y comunicarse con la gente?
5. Sus creencias sobre las relaciones hombre-mujeres?
6. Sus creencias y prácticas religiosas?
7. La educación que dan a sus hijos?

Piense en las personas de su propio país, ¿Cómo creen que son...

1. Sus formas de ser y de ver la vida?
2. Sus hábitos y costumbres alimenticias?
3. Sus hábitos de higiene y limpieza?
4. Sus hábitos de hablar y comunicarse con la gente?
5. Sus creencias sobre las relaciones hombre-mujeres?

6. Sus creencias y prácticas religiosas?
7. La educación que dan a sus hijos?

La “Escala de emociones hacia los miembros del exogrupo” presenta un grupo de ítems que permiten respuestas que oscilan desde 1 = “Nada” hasta 5 = “Mucho”. Los ítems que componen el instrumento son los siguientes:

¿Con qué frecuencia ha sentido usted las siguientes emociones por los españoles?

- Admiración
- Miedo
- Simpatía
- Inquietud
- Desconfianza
- Incomodidad
- Indiferencia

Para estudiar los metaestereotipos, tras la cuestión “Los españoles consideran que las personas de mi país somos...” se proponían a los entrevistado 20 adjetivos, positivos y negativos, seleccionados por los autores (trabajadores, pacíficos, machistas, limpios, emprendedores, sociables, políticamente moderados, ahorradores, racistas, vagos, violentos, cualificados, sucios, moderadamente religiosos, vulnerables/indefensos, educados, raros, peligrosos, solidarios, tenaces/luchadores/resistentes) que permitían opciones de respuesta que oscilaban entre 1 = “Muy en desacuerdo” y 5 = “Muy de acuerdo”

### 3. RESULTADOS

Las puntuaciones medias y las desviaciones típicas obtenidas en el “Test de Sesgo Endogrupal” por la muestra de inmigrantes entrevistados en la ciudad de Guadalajara se encuentran recogidas en las Tablas 1 y 2:

**Tabla 1: Puntuaciones medias en el Test de Sesgo Endogrupal Interétnico de los inmigrantes en la ciudad de Guadalajara**

Piense en españoles ¿cómo cree que son...	Media (dt)
sus formas de ser y ver la vida?	3,71 (0,73)
sus hábitos y costumbres alimenticias?	3,79 (0,87)
sus hábitos de higiene y limpieza?	3,66 (0,98)
sus formas de hablar y comunicarse con las personas?	3,71 (0,82)
sus creencias sobre las relaciones hombres-mujeres?	3,42 (0,92)
sus creencias y prácticas religiosas?	3,06 (1,04)
la educación que dan a sus hijos?	3,42 (0,82)
PUNTUACIÓN TOTAL EXOGRUPO	24,70 (4,13)

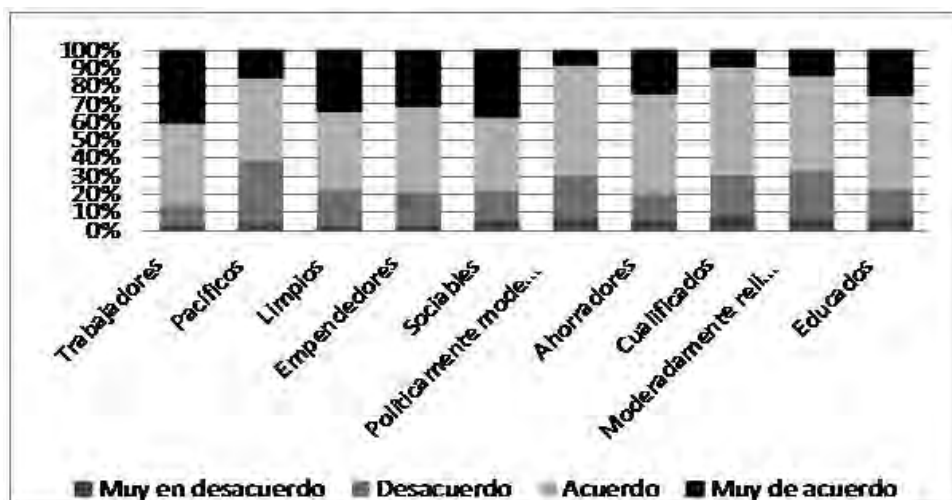
**Tabla 2: Puntuaciones medias en el Test de Sesgo Endogrupal Interétnico de los inmigrantes en la ciudad de Guadalajara**

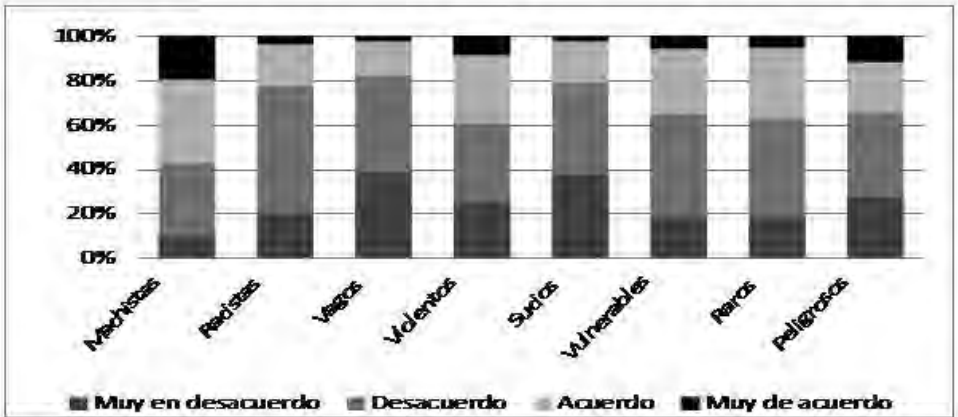
Piense en las personas de su propio país ¿cómo cree que son...	Media (dt)
sus formas de ser y ver la vida?	3,62 (0,61)
sus hábitos y costumbres alimenticias?	3,64 (0,82)
sus hábitos de higiene y limpieza?	3,84 (0,92)
sus formas de hablar y comunicarse con las personas?	3,78 (0,84)
sus creencias sobre las relaciones hombres-mujeres?	3,39 (0,95)
sus creencias y prácticas religiosas?	3,79 (0,87)
la educación que dan a sus hijos?	3,86 (0,69)
PUNTUACIÓN TOTAL ENDOGRUPO	25,99 (3,62)

De las Tablas 1 y 2 se extrae que el “Sesgo Endogrupal Interétnico”, es decir las diferencias entre la puntuación total del endogrupo y la puntuación total del exogrupo, se sitúa en una puntuación media de 1,26 (Dt: 5,01). No se observa entre los entrevistados diferencias significativas en el Sesgo intergrupala interétnico en función de la zona de origen de los inmigrantes entrevistados: África, Latinoamérica y Europa del Este.

**Figuras 1 y 2: Metaestereotipos del grupo mayoritarios percibidos por los inmigrantes en la ciudad de Guadalajara.**

Los españoles consideran que las personas de mi país somos...





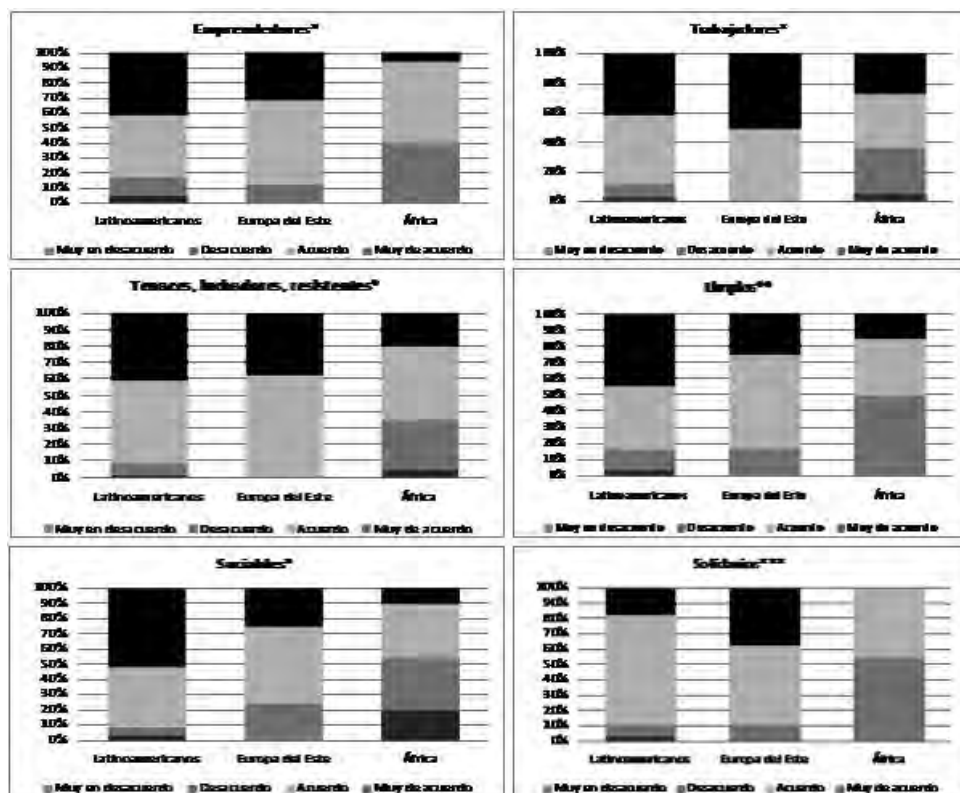
Como se observa en las Tablas 1 y 2, los inmigrantes perciben que los españoles en general tienen una buena impresión de ellos. Así, por ejemplo, los inmigrantes perciben que los españoles les consideran especialmente "Trabajadores", "Ahorradores", "Limpios", "Emprendedores", "Sociables" y "Educados", y en menor medida, "Cualificados", "Moderadamente religiosos", "Políticamente moderados" y "Pacíficos". De la misma manera, y en lo relativo a las características negativas, los inmigrantes perciben que los españoles les consideran "Machistas", y en muy escasa medida, "Vagos", "Violentos", "Sucios", "Vulnerables", "Raros" o "Peligrosos".

Cuando se analizan los metaestereotipos percibidos por los inmigrantes de Guadalajara en función de su zona de procedencia (Latinoamérica, Europa del Este y África), se observa que no existen diferencias significativas en lo referente a los atributos "Pacíficos", "Machistas", "Emprendedores", "Políticamente moderados", "Ahorradores", "Racistas", "Violentos", "Cualificados", "Moderadamente religiosos", "Vulnerables", "Educados" y "Raros". Sin embargo, se observa la existencia de diferencias significativas en función del origen de los inmigrantes entrevistados en los atributos "Trabajadores", "Limpios", "Emprendedores", "Sociables", "Solidarios", "Tenaces, luchadores...", "Vagos", "Sucios" y "Peligrosos".



**Figura 3: Metaestereotipos positivos percibidos por los inmigrantes en la ciudad de Guadalajara en los que se observan diferencias significativas en función del origen.**

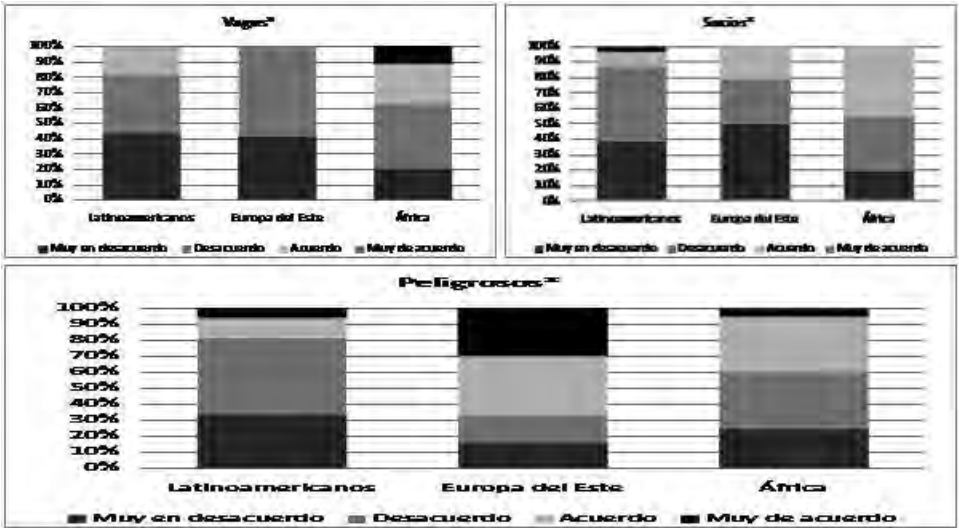
Los españoles consideran que las personas de mi país somos...



Como se observa en la Figura 3, son los inmigrantes procedentes de Europa del Este quienes consideran que los españoles tienen una mejor opinión de ellos, mientras los procedentes de África (en su mayoría procedentes del Magreb), son los que perciben que los españoles les atribuyen en menor medida características positivas, especialmente en los referente a los atributos "Limpios", "Sociables" y "Solidarios". Por su parte, los inmigrantes procedentes de Latinoamérica mantienen una percepción de la opinión que de ellos tienen los españoles casi tan positiva como la de los inmigrantes procedentes de Europa del Este, incluso mejor en el atributo sociabilidad.

**Figura 4: Metaestereotipos negativos percibidos por los inmigrantes en la ciudad de Guadalajara en los que se observan diferencias significativas en función del origen.**

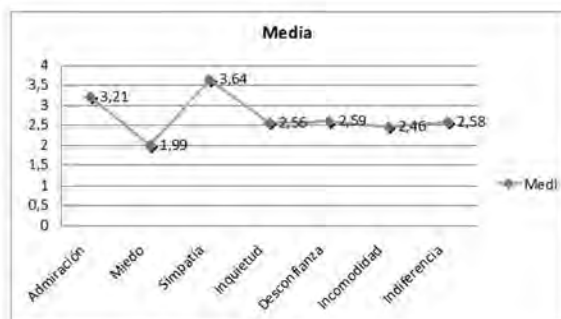
Los españoles consideran que las personas de mi país somos...



De la Figura 4 se desprende que, en lo referente a tres características negativas que los inmigrantes consideran que les atribuyen los españoles ("Vagos", "Sucios" y "Peligrosos"), los entrevistados procedentes de Europa del Este se muestran en total desacuerdo con que el exogrupo les considere "vagos", un ligero acuerdo con que les considere "sucios" y un gran acuerdo con que les considere "peligrosos". Por su parte, los entrevistados procedentes de África muestran un cierto nivel de acuerdo con que los españoles les atribuyen las tres características, mientras los procedentes de Latinoamérica tan solo muestran unos niveles de acuerdo muy bajos con que el exogrupo les atribuya ambas características.

Por otro lado, tras analizar las emociones que los inmigrantes manifiestan haber sentido hacia los miembros del exogrupo (en este caso los españoles), las puntuaciones medias obtenidas en relación a cada una de las emociones aparecen recogidas en la Tabla 5.

**Figura 5: Puntuaciones medias en la Escala de emociones hacia los españoles de los emigrantes de la ciudad de Guadalajara.**



Las puntuaciones oscilan entre 1 (Nada) y 5 (Mucho)

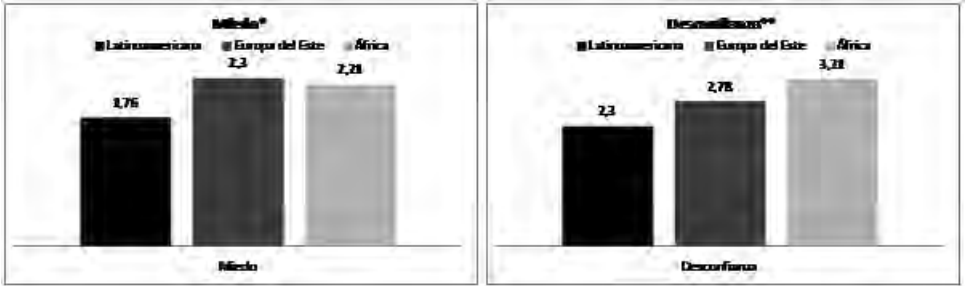
Como se desprende de la Figura 5, las emociones que los inmigrantes en mayor medida han sentido hacia los españoles han sido “Simpatía” y “Admiración”. Por contra, la emoción que menores puntuaciones ha obtenido es “Miedo”, ocupando lugares intermedios las emociones hacia los españoles de “Inquietud”, “Desconfianza”, “Incomodidad” e “Indiferencia”.

Cuando se analizan las puntuaciones medias en la escala de emociones hacia los españoles en función del origen de los inmigrantes entrevistados (Latinoamérica, Europa del Este y África), no se observan diferencias significativas entre en las emociones “Admiración”, “Simpatía”, “Inquietud”, “Incomodidad” e “Indiferencia”. Sin embargo, en dos emociones de carácter negativo (“Miedo” y “Desconfianza”) si se parecen existir diferencias significativas.

Así, como se observa en la Figura 6, los inmigrantes procedentes de Europa del Este y África son los que en más ocasiones han sentido “miedo” hacia los españoles, mientras los procedentes de Latinoamérica han sido quienes menos han experimentado dicha emoción, si bien en todos los casos se observan puntuaciones relativamente bajas, indicativo de que las emociones sentidas han sido esporádicas. Sin embargo, especialmente preocupante son las diferencias en la emoción “desconfianza” hacia los españoles, donde los inmigrantes procedentes de África manifiestan haberla sentido con mucha frecuencia y los Europeos del Este con bastante frecuencia, mientras los procedentes de Latinoamérica solo han experimentado dicha emoción de forma más esporádica.

**Figura 6: Puntuaciones medias en la escala de emociones hacia los españoles de los emigrantes de la ciudad de Guadalajara donde se han observado diferencias estadísticamente significativas en función del origen.**

¿Con qué frecuencia ha sentido por los españoles...



Las puntuaciones oscilan entre 1 (Nada) y 5 (Mucho)

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## Prejuicio hacia los inmigrantes entre los jóvenes de Guadalajara (España)

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### Resumen

*En el trabajo se analizan las diferencias en actitudes racistas entre los jóvenes de Guadalajara, evaluadas mediante la "Escala de racismo moderno" (Navas, 1998; García, Navas, Cuadrado y Molero, 2003).*

*Sobre una población de 16.744 jóvenes de entre 14 y 30 años censados en la ciudad de Guadalajara se realizó un muestreo aleatorio estratificado por sexo, edad y área de residencia. A fin de reducir el error de muestreo hasta 0,03, se estableció el tamaño muestral en 1.044 jóvenes. La muestra final se compone por 541 varones (51,8%) y 503 mujeres (48,2%), siendo la media de edad de 22,7 años.*

*De los datos obtenidos se desprende que, en general, los jóvenes de Guadalajara muestran un cierto acuerdo con el conjunto de los ítems que componen la Escala de Racismo Moderno, situándose la puntuación media de la muestra en 41, es decir por encima de la puntuación media de la escala (cuya puntuación total oscila entre 10 y 70).*

*Las puntuaciones más elevadas en la escala se dan entre los jóvenes con actitudes más conservadoras: de clase media-alta (o media), políticamente de derechas y católicos en materia religiosa, ya fueran o no practicantes.*

*Por el contrario, las puntuaciones más bajas en la Escala de Racismo Moderno fueron manifestadas por los jóvenes con actitudes más progresistas: de clase media-baja o baja, "no creyentes" en materia religiosa y políticamente de izquierdas.*

*Otras variables relacionadas con las actitudes o creencias racistas fueron el género (los varones tienden a puntuar más alto en la escala que las mujeres) y el nivel educativo. No se observa relación entre racismo en los participantes y su situación o condiciones laborales.*

**Palabras clave:** Prejuicio, Inmigración, Juventud

## 1. Introducción.

El presente trabajo tiene como principal objetivo analizar las diferencias en actitudes racistas de los jóvenes de la ciudad de Guadalajara (España), estableciendo la existencia de diferencias a este respecto en función de determinadas características sociodemográficas, su nivel de formación, su situación laboral, sus creencias religiosas y diferentes actitudes políticas.

## 2. Método.

### 2.1. Participantes.

Sobre una población de 16.744 jóvenes de entre 14 y 30 años censados en Guadalajara (INE, 2004) se realizó un muestreo aleatorio estratificado por sexo, edad y área de residencia. La estratificación por edad y sexo se realizó a partir de los datos aportados por el Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) referentes a la ciudad de Guadalajara. La estratificación en función del área de residencia se realizó a partir de los datos aportados por la Sociedad Estatal Correos y Telégrafos S.A. sobre el número de buzones en viviendas de los diferentes distritos postales de la ciudad de Guadalajara.

Manteniendo una hipótesis conservadora de varianza máxima ( $p = q = 0,50$ ), para un nivel de confianza del 95%, con un error de muestreo de 0,03 y asumiendo un margen de error del 5% ( $Z = + 2$ ) el número de entrevistas a realizar se determinó en 1.044. Para determinar el tamaño muestral se empleó la siguiente fórmula, a partir de los datos aportados por el Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE, 2004):

$$n = \frac{N * K^2 * P * (1-P)}{(N-1)*e^2 + K * P * (1-P)}$$

Tamaño de la muestra	n
Tamaño del universo	N = 16.744
Nivel de confianza	K = 2 = 0,95
Varianza poblacional	P = 0,5
Error de muestreo	e = 0,03
n = 1.044	

Utilizando unos parámetros habituales (error de muestreo = 0,05), y a partir del diseño de estratificación seleccionado, sería necesario realizar 392 entrevistas. En el presente estudio, con la finalidad de reducir el error de muestreo hasta 0,03, se estableció el tamaño muestral en 1044 jóvenes. La muestra final se encuentra compuesta por 1.044 jóvenes, 541 varones (51,8%) y 503 mujeres (48,2%). La media de edad de los entrevistados/as es de 22,71 años.

El criterio de inclusión en la muestra se determinó de la siguiente manera: jóvenes censados en la ciudad de Guadalajara que, en el momento de la entrevista, tenían una edad comprendida entre los 14 y 30 años. Se consideraron no aptos/as para ser incluidos en la muestra aquellos/as jóvenes que presentaban un discurso incoherente -derivado de déficits cognitivos- o quienes, por encontrarse bajo los efectos del alcohol u otras sustancia psicoactivas, se considerara que no se

encontraban en disposición de aportar datos suficientemente consistentes.

## **2.2. Instrumento.**

Se utilizó una entrevista estructurada de carácter heteroaplicada que incluía todos aquellos aspectos considerados de relevancia. La selección de las variables e ítems se llevó a cabo conforme al siguiente procedimiento:

Revisión bibliográfica y documentación sobre estudios realizados en el área de la juventud.

Consideración de los aspectos más relevantes obtenidos en el estudio realizado en Guadalajara en el año 1993

Contactos con expertos/as en investigación y en el trabajo directo con jóvenes

Elección inicial, a partir de las diversas fuentes consultadas, de las variables objeto de estudio y determinación inicial de los ítems orientados a evaluar cada una de las áreas seleccionadas.

Construcción de un instrumento piloto.

Envío de copias del instrumento piloto a expertos/as, exponiendo el objetivo de la investigación y solicitando que, tras la revisión del instrumento, remitieran su opinión sobre la selección de áreas de contenido, la representatividad de los ítems y su adaptación a la población objeto de estudio.

Inclusión de los comentarios remitidos por los/as expertos/as y elaboración de un borrador del instrumento final.

Administración de 50 cuestionarios a población general con el fin de pilotar su funcionamiento. El estudio piloto permitió la corrección de defectos de forma y el entrenamiento de entrevistadote/as y codificadores/as.

La entrevista recogía información relativa a los siguientes aspectos relacionados con la problemática, necesidades y demandas de la juventud: "Características sociodemográficas", "Residencia y convivencia", "Nivel educativo", "Situación laboral", "Autonomía económica", "Situación económica familiar", "Relaciones sociales", "Empleo de ocio y tiempo libre", "Salud", "Valores", "Opinión política", "Intereses y expectativas", "Movilidad y transporte", "Participación social y asociacionismo", "Necesidades y demandas", "Los jóvenes y la administración municipal". La duración media de las entrevistas fue de 45 minutos.

En el presente trabajo únicamente se utiliza los datos aportados por la "Escala de Racismo Moderno" (García, Navas, Cuadrado y Molero, 2003), incluida en el apartado "Valores", si bien los datos obtenidos con la misma se cruzan en función de diferentes variables extraídas de diferentes apartados del cuestionario. La "Escala de Racismo Moderno" ofrece la oportunidad al entrevistado de puntuar cada uno de los 10 ítems recogidos a continuación en una escala que oscila entre 1 = "Completamente en desacuerdo" y 7 = "Completamente de acuerdo". Los ítems que incluye la escala son:

En los últimos años, los inmigrantes han conseguido económicamente más de lo que merecen

En los últimos años, el gobierno y los medios de comunicación han mostrado más respeto y consideración por los inmigrantes del que se merecen

Es comprensible que los inmigrantes que viven aquí estén descontentos

Los inmigrantes están siendo demasiado exigentes en su lucha por la igualdad de

derechos

Los inmigrantes tienen más influencia sobre las decisiones de los políticos de la que deberían tener

Los inmigrantes están ahora mejor de lo que nunca han estado

Los inmigrantes que reciben ayuda social podrían salir adelante sin ella si lo intentaran de verdad

En general, los funcionarios públicos dedican más atención a las peticiones y quejas de los inmigrantes que a las de un ciudadano español

Todos los españoles deberíamos apoyar a los inmigrantes en su lucha contra la discriminación

Los inmigrantes no deberían estar donde no se les quiere

La puntuación total del instrumento se obtiene sumando de las puntuaciones de cada ítem tras invertir las puntuaciones de los ítems 2 y 8.

### **2.3. Procedimiento.**

Se formó un equipo de 15 entrevistadores/as que recibieran entrenamiento específico en la utilización del instrumento y en el trato social con los/as jóvenes. Al equipo de entrevistadores/as se sumaron 8 codificadoras/es, supervisados/as por una coordinadora. Una vez estratificada la muestra y determinado el número de entrevistas a realizar en cada grupo de edad, género y área residencial, la selección de cada una de las personas a entrevistar se realizó, igualmente, de forma aleatoria.

Todas las entrevistas se realizaron de forma anónima, protegiendo la privacidad de los datos. Tras seleccionar la persona a entrevistar, el/la entrevistador/a inicia el contacto confirmando los criterios de inclusión en la muestra. Tras explicar el objeto de la investigación y la confidencialidad de los datos se solicitó el consentimiento del entrevistado/a para realizar la entrevista. A fin de motivar a los/as jóvenes para participar en la entrevista se les obsequiaba con la posibilidad de participar en el sorteo de un ordenador personal y entradas para conciertos organizados por el Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara. Cada entrevista realizada fue revisada por la codificadora y la coordinadora a fin de asegurar su correcta cumplimentación y optimizar la fiabilidad y validez de los datos. Posteriormente los datos fueron codificados en una base informatizada.

Para diseñar la base de datos y procesar los mismos se utilizó el sistema de análisis estadístico y de gestión de datos SPSS (versión 12.0 para Windows). En primer lugar, se analizó la representatividad de la muestra respecto a la población estudiada, tras lo que se procedió al análisis descriptivo de las variables consideradas. Los análisis de las diferencias entre porcentajes de las variables nominales sexo y edad se realizaron utilizando el estadístico Chi Cuadrado. En el caso de las variables continuas se aplicaron pruebas "t" de *Student* para medidas independientes.

### **3. Resultados.**

Las puntuaciones medias y las desviaciones típicas de los jóvenes de la ciudad de Guadalajara en cada uno de los ítems de la Escala de Racismo Moderno se encuentran recogidas en la Tabla 1.



**Tabla 1. Puntuaciones medias en los ítems de la Escala de Racismo Moderno de los jóvenes de Guadalajara**

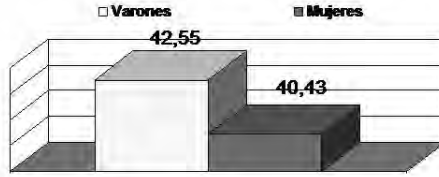
Ítems	n	Media (dt)
En los últimos años, los inmigrantes han conseguido económicamente más de lo que merecen	1040	3,90 (2,03)
En los últimos años, el gobierno y los medios de comunicación han mostrado más respeto y consideración por los inmigrantes del que se merecen	1038	3,90 (2,03)
Es comprensible que los inmigrantes que viven aquí estén descontentos	1005	3,10 (1,89)
Los inmigrantes están siendo demasiado exigentes en su lucha por la igualdad de derechos	1040	4,33 (2,01)
Los inmigrantes tienen más influencia sobre las decisiones de los políticos de la que deberían tener	1038	4,10 (2,04)
Los inmigrantes están ahora mejor de lo que nunca han estado	1039	4,77 (1,88)
Los inmigrantes que reciben ayuda social podrían salir adelante sin ella si lo intentaran de verdad	1040	4,79 (1,96)
En general, los funcionarios públicos dedican más atención a las peticiones y quejas de los inmigrantes que a las de un ciudadano español	1041	4,04 (2,00)
Todos los españoles deberíamos apoyar a los inmigrantes en su lucha contra la discriminación	1040	4,47 (2,01)
Los inmigrantes no deberían estar donde no se les quiere	1039	3,36 (2,15)
Puntuación total	992	41,53 (14,64)

Puntuaciones entre 1 (Completamente en desacuerdo) y 7 (Completamente de acuerdo).

De la Tabla 1 se desprende que, en general, los jóvenes de Guadalajara muestran un cierto acuerdo con el conjunto de los ítems que componen la *Escala de Racismo Moderno*, pues la gran mayoría de los ítems presentan puntuaciones superiores a 3,5. La puntuación media de la muestra se sitúa en 41,53, es decir por encima de la puntuación media de la escala (cuya puntuación total oscila entre 10 y 70). Si nos atenemos a la intencionalidad de la escala cuando fue diseñada por los autores, se puede afirmar que los jóvenes de la ciudad de Guadalajara presentan actitudes ligeramente racistas en relación a los inmigrantes.

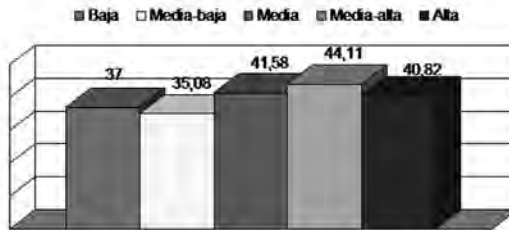
Cuando se analizan las puntuaciones medias totales en la *Escala de Racismo Moderno* en función de determinadas características sociodemográficas de los jóvenes se observa que, si bien no existen diferencias significativas en de su Estado Civil, si existen diferencias a este respecto en función del sexo y la clase social percibida de los entrevistados.

**Figura 1: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función del sexo.**



Como se observa en la Figura 1, los varones obtienen en la Escala de Racismo Moderno puntuaciones medias superiores a las de las mujeres (42,55 para los varones y 40,43 para las mujeres).

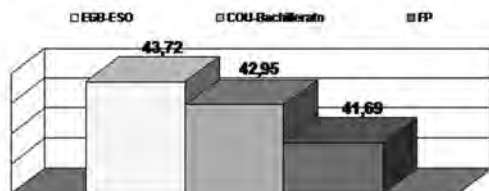
**Figura 2: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de la clase social percibida.**



De la Figura 2 se desprende que son los jóvenes que consideran pertenecer a las clases Media y Media-alta son quienes presentan las puntuaciones medias más elevadas (44,11 y 41,58 respectivamente), en tanto que las puntuaciones medias más bajas aparecen entre quienes se consideran de clase Media-baja (35,08) y clase baja (37). Los estudiantes que se consideran de clase Alta obtienen puntuaciones intermedias (40, 82), si bien por debajo de la media de los jóvenes de Guadalajara.

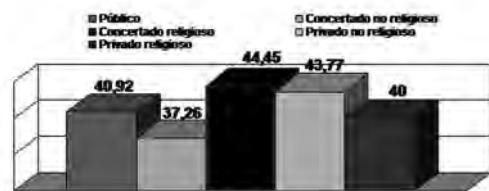
Por su parte, al analizar las puntuaciones medias totales en la Escala de Racismo Moderno en función de los estudios finalizados por los jóvenes de Guadalajara, se observa que no existen diferencias significativas en función de “Encontrarse estudiando (o no)”, del “Tipo de centro (público, privado, concertado) en que estudiaron la educación primaria” o el “Tipo de universidad (pública o privada) en que estudiaron”. Sin embargo, si se observa la existencia de diferencias en función de los “Estudios finalizados”, “El tipo de centro (público, privado, concertado) en que estudiaron la educación secundaria” los entrevistados.

**Figura 3: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de los estudios finalizados que poseen.**



Como se observa en la Figura 3, únicamente los jóvenes universitarios presentan puntuaciones medias en la escala inferiores a la media (39,05). Por su parte, el resto de jóvenes presentan puntuaciones por encima de la media, pareciendo desprenderse de la Figura 3 que, a meno nivel de formación de los entrevistados se obtienen puntuaciones medias más elevadas en la *Escala de Racismo Moderno*.

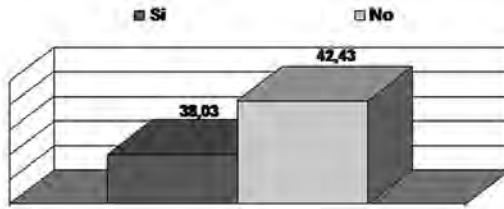
**Figura 4: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función del tipo de centro en que estudiaron la educación secundaria.**



Se observa en la Figura 4 que son los jóvenes que cursaron sus estudios de secundaria en colegios “Concertados no religiosos”, “Privados religiosos” y “Públicos” los que presentan las puntuaciones medias más bajas en la Escala de Racismo Moderno (37,28; 40,00 y 40,82 respectivamente). Por su parte, los jóvenes que estudiaron la educación secundaria en colegios “Privados no religiosos” y, especialmente, quienes la estudiaron en colegios “Concertados Religiosos”, son quienes muestran unos mayores niveles de racismo hacia los inmigrantes, con puntuaciones medias en la escala de 43,77 y 44,46 respectivamente.

Cuando se analizan las puntuaciones medias totales en la Escala de Racismo Moderno en función de determinados aspectos laborales de los jóvenes, se observa que no existen diferencias significativas en función de “Realizar o no alguna actividad económica remunerada”, del “Tipo de contrato” que tienen o la “Satisfacción o insatisfacción con los ingresos derivados del trabajo”. Si se observan diferencias a este respecto en función de si los entrevistados se encuentra o no “Buscando trabajo”.

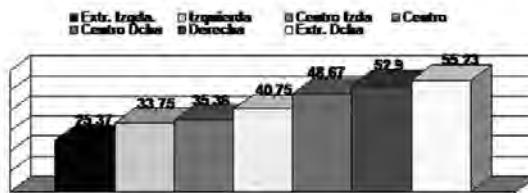
**Figura 5: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de se encuentran buscando o no trabajo.**



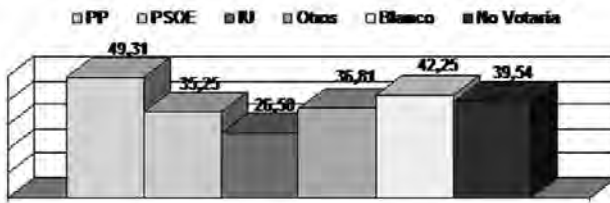
De la Figura 5 se desprende que, en contra de las expectativas previas de los investigadores, son los jóvenes que se encuentran buscando trabajo quienes presentan en la escala puntuaciones medias muy inferiores a la media (38,03), mientras quienes no buscan trabajo (bien porque se encuentren trabajando, bien porque desarrollen alguna otra actividad) presentan las puntuaciones medias más elevadas (42,43).

Por su parte, el análisis de las puntuaciones medias totales en la Escala de Racismo Moderno en función de las actitudes políticas de los jóvenes de Guadalajara muestra la ausencia de diferencias significativas en lo relativo haber “Ejercido (o no) el derecho al voto en las últimas elecciones”, si bien se observan diferencias en función de variables como la “Ideología política” manifestada o las “Intenciones de voto” en las futuras elecciones municipales, dos variables por otro lado fuertemente asociadas.

**Figura 6: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de la ideología política.**



**Figura 7: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de la orientación de voto en unas futuras elecciones municipales.**

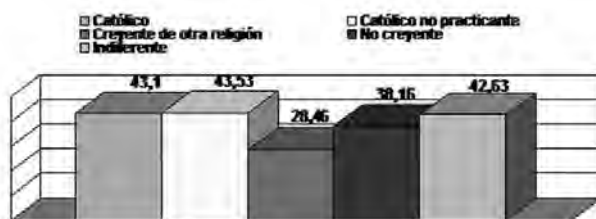


Como se observa en la Figura 6, conforme más de derecha manifiestan ser los jóvenes entrevistados, mayores son las puntuaciones medias obtenidas en la escala, indicativo de mayores actitudes racistas hacia los inmigrantes. En esta línea, las puntuaciones presentan fuertes oscilaciones, desde 25,37 y 33,75 de quienes se consideran respectivamente de “Extrema Izquierda”

e “Izquierda”, hasta puntuaciones de 55,23 y 52,90 entre quienes manifiestan ser respectivamente de “Extrema Derecha” y “Derecha”. Las puntuaciones superiores a la media aparecen a partir de quienes manifiestan ser de “Centro Derecha” (48,67), presentando quienes se consideran de “Centro” y “Centro Izquierda” unas puntuaciones medias de 40,75 y 35,36 respectivamente. En la misma línea, se observa en la Figura 7 que son quienes manifiestan que votarían al Partido Popular en unas próximas elecciones municipales los que presentan las puntuaciones medias en la escala más elevadas (49,31), presentando las actitudes menos racistas hacia los inmigrantes quienes votarían a Izquierda Unida (26,58), seguidos los futuros votantes del Partido Socialista Obrero Español (32,35), ambos con puntuaciones inferiores a la media. Se desprende también de la Figura 7 que, mientras quienes votarían en blanco presentan puntuaciones medias superiores a la media (42,25), quienes no votarían o votarían a partidos minoritarios presentan puntuaciones medias en la escala inferiores a la media (39,54 y 36,81 respectivamente).

Finalmente, cabe señalar que se observan diferencias entre los jóvenes de Guadalajara en las puntuaciones medias totales en la Escala de Racismo Moderno en función de la religión que manifiestan profesar, tal como aparece recogido en la Tabla 8.

**Figura 8: Diferencias en las puntuaciones en la “Escala de Racismo Moderno” de los jóvenes de Guadalajara en función de la religión.**



Como se desprende de la Tabla 8, quienes manifiestan las puntuaciones medias más elevadas en la escala, siempre por encima de la media, son respectivamente los “Católicos no practicantes” (43,53), los “Católicos” (43,10) y quienes se consideran religiosamente “Indiferentes” (42,63). Por contra, los jóvenes que no manifiestan actitudes racistas hacia los inmigrantes son los que se consideran “No creyentes” (38,16) y, muy especialmente, quienes manifiestan ser creyentes de otra religión que no es la católica, con una puntuación media en la escala de 28,40.

#### 4. Conclusiones.

En general, los jóvenes de Guadalajara muestran un cierto acuerdo con el conjunto de los ítems que componen la Escala de Racismo Moderno, situándose la puntuación media de la muestra en 41, es decir por encima de la puntuación media de la escala (cuya puntuación total oscila entre 10 y 70).

Las puntuaciones más elevadas en la escala se dan entre los jóvenes con actitudes más conservadoras: de clase media-alta (o media), políticamente de derechas y católicos en materia religiosa, ya fueran o no practicantes.

Por el contrario, las puntuaciones más bajas en la Escala de Racismo Moderno fueron manifestadas por los jóvenes con actitudes más progresistas: de clase media-baja o baja, “no creyentes” en materia religiosa y políticamente de izquierdas.

Otras variables relacionadas con las actitudes o creencias racistas fueron el género (los

varones tienden a puntuar más alto en la escala que las mujeres) y el nivel educativo. No se observa relación entre racismo en los participantes y su situación o condiciones laborales.

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# Sentido de comunidad y bienestar en usuarios de asociaciones sociales de salud

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## Resúmen

*Las asociaciones sociales son contextos comunitarios que contribuyen al bienestar de sus usuarios a través de los procesos de influencia social que desarrollan. El objetivo de este estudio es analizar en qué medida las asociaciones, al formar parte de la red de apoyo de los usuarios, contribuyen al desarrollo de un sentido de comunidad en sus miembros y en qué grado éste determina el bienestar psicológico a través de procesos sociocognitivos. La muestra está formada por 113 sujetos afectados por problemas de salud de entre 13 y 80 años que recibían servicios de 22 asociaciones sociales y de salud. Se realizó un diseño de investigación cuasi-experimental de tipo transversal. La información se recabó a través de entrevista personal. Se midieron tres tipos de variables: de integración social (apoyo social percibido, sentido de comunidad), de potenciación psicológica (autoeficacia de afrontamiento) y de bienestar psicológico (estrés psicosocial y satisfacción vital). Los resultados muestran que: 1) el sentido de comunidad influye positiva y directamente en la satisfacción vital y directa y negativamente en el estrés psicosocial. 2) el sentido de comunidad influye indirectamente en el bienestar a través de la autoeficacia de afrontamiento cognitivo y de afrontamiento social, de forma que aquellos usuarios que con el apoyo de la asociación han logrado un mayor sentimiento de pertenencia comunitaria, también han desarrollado mayor potenciación intrapersonal, lo que les lleva a experimentar un incremento en su bienestar psicológico. Se discuten las implicaciones prácticas que se derivan de estos resultados.*

## INTRODUCCIÓN

Las asociaciones de salud o de ayuda mutua forman parte de la red de apoyo social natural de personas que están pasando por situaciones de salud que les fuerzan a solicitar y recibir ayuda del entorno social. Son, por tanto, contextos comunitarios de influencia social que condicionan el estilo de vida de sus usuarios y contribuyen a mejorar su calidad de vida. Las personas afectadas pasan por momentos de crisis y de preocupación por lo cual proporcionarles información, consejo, orientación, asistencia o afecto, entre otras atenciones, resultan ser herramientas indispensables para lograr el funcionamiento saludable del individuo.

Estas asociaciones suelen ofrecer ayudas que complementan, completan o suplen las ofrecidas por los sistemas públicos de salud y sociales. Estos últimos constituyen redes de apoyo reglado de baja accesibilidad que ofrecen un limitado abanico de servicios prestados en función de un complejo entramado de normas y burocracias administrativas que limitan la capacidad de actuación de los profesionales ofreciendo una pobre respuesta a las demandas sociales no sólo en el terreno técnico sino también en el de la relación profesional-usuario (Gottlieb, 1981). No obstante hay que tener presente que los sistemas informales, las asociaciones de ayuda mutua,

suelen carecer de los medios profesionales y los conocimientos científico-técnicos especializados que se precisan para atender adecuadamente a los usuarios y para hacer frente a circunstancias y tratamientos muy específicos.

Las personas afectadas acuden a las asociaciones por percibir las altamente disponibles y accesibles y por suministrar una ayuda más ajustada a las demandas de los usuarios al estar organizadas por iguales. En este contexto, los miembros de la asociación actúan como modelos de rol transmitiendo actitudes, estrategias de afrontamiento, habilidades, afectos y valores que infunden seguridad y confianza. Por ello la participación en asociaciones de salud y el soporte que se recibe de ellas, siguiendo a Levine y Perkins (1987), cumplen la función de promover el sentido psicológico de comunidad, entendido como el sentido de pertenencia grupal y la identificación con los miembros de la comunidad (Chavis y Wandersman, 1990) y la de normalizar pensamientos, sentimientos y conductas previniendo el aislamiento social y fomentando la integración social.

Se parte de la idea de que las organizaciones sociales de salud, al representar una fuente de apoyo social, influyen en el bienestar de las personas (López-Cábanas y Chacón, 1997). El apoyo social es definido como proceso de transacciones interpersonales de recursos de tipo emocional, instrumental e informativo dirigido a potenciar, mantener o restituir el bienestar del receptor (Martínez y García, 1995).

El participar en la asociación proporciona una red de relaciones sociales que normaliza pensamientos, sentimientos y conductas previniendo el aislamiento social de afectados y familiares y promoviendo la integración en la comunidad. A su vez la falta de integración social o soledad social (Weiss, 1976) se explica como un factor incompatible con el bienestar psicológico, el cual es definido en esta investigación como un bajo nivel de estrés experimentado por la persona con motivo de su problema y un alto grado de satisfacción vital.

En las organizaciones de salud las personas, al compartir su experiencia con iguales, al sentirse aceptados y valorados, interpretan que su vivencia es más social que personal, no se perciben como culpables de lo que le pasa, están más dispuestos a compartir sentimientos y a ayudar a los demás, lo que hace que disminuyan las autoevaluaciones negativas, se sientan más autoeficaces, reduzcan su nivel de estrés y aumenten su satisfacción vital (Diener, Emmons, Larsen y Griffin, 1985). El que una persona con algún tipo de enfermedad o problema se sienta capaz de realizar aquellas acciones necesarias para mantener o ganar salud y bienestar es indicador de que la persona está psicológicamente capacitada para afrontar su situación-problema. La autoeficacia representa, por tanto, la potenciación psicológica o intrapersonal.

La Teoría Social Cognitiva de Albert Bandura (1987, 1997) define la autoeficacia como el juicio personal sobre la capacidad para abordar los retos cotidianos y las dificultades en momentos críticos. Bandura considera que la autoeficacia es un predictor significativo de la conducta del individuo en la medida en que las tareas sean percibidas con cierto grado de dificultad por parte de las personas. Ante situaciones valoradas como que no entrañan dificultad la autoeficacia no determina el comportamiento de forma significativa.

La experiencia en la asociación de ayuda mutua y el soporte aportado por ella contribuye a generar en los usuarios juicios de autoeficacia en la medida en que la asociación sea considerada una fuente significativa de influencia social. A partir del contacto con otros afectados y familiares las personas adquieren confianza personal para afrontar psicológicamente los requerimientos de su situación y para buscar la ayuda que precisen. Ello está relacionado con otra función propia



de las asociaciones de salud que destacan Levine y Perkins (1987), la de transmitir estrategias efectivas de afrontamiento de los problemas diarios. Los recursos que funcionan para algunos usuarios de la asociación pueden llegar a ser adecuados para otros.

La autoeficacia hace que las personas tengan sentimientos de control sobre su vida y que interpreten sus dificultades como retos; que ante los diversos obstáculos no se amedrenten y sigan haciendo intentos por superar sus problemas buscando recursos y poniendo en práctica nuevas estrategias para solucionarlos. De esta manera la autoeficacia logra influir positivamente en el bienestar reduciendo o previniendo el estrés y generando satisfacción en la vida

## OBJETIVOS

A pesar de que en los últimos años en España han proliferado este tipo de asociaciones, poco se conoce, desde una perspectiva psicosocial, acerca de su impacto en el bienestar y calidad de vida de los usuarios. Por tal motivo, en la presente investigación se plantea que (véase la figura 1):

a) el apoyo social percibido de la asociación contribuye a generar el sentido de comunidad. Se entiende que el apoyo social y el sentimiento de comunidad son indicadores del grado de integración social del usuario.

b) hay una relación directa entre integración social y bienestar psicológico.

c) tanto el apoyo social como el sentimiento de comunidad generan pensamientos de capacidad personal.

d) la autoeficacia de afrontamiento (cognitivo y social) actúa de mediador sociocognitivo entre la integración social y el bienestar psicológico de los afectados. Se define el bienestar psicológico como un bajo nivel de estrés experimentado por la persona con motivo de su problema y un alto grado de satisfacción vital.



Figura 1. Proceso sociocognitivo del bienestar psicológico en afectados.

## METODOLOGÍA

### MUESTRA

La muestra estaba constituida por 113 sujetos afectados por un problema sociosanitario y que recibían servicios de asociaciones de ayuda mutua de la ciudad de Salamanca (se trabajó con 22 asociaciones, entre ellas se pueden destacar: Asociación salmantina de hemofilia, Asociación de ayuda al toxicómano Nueva Gente, Asociación de enfermos de Parkinson de Salamanca, Asociación de afectados por trastornos alimenticios, Asociación de padres de niños sordos de Salamanca, entre otras). La edad de los sujetos iba de los 13 a los 80 años.

La muestra puede ser considerada como representativa ya que a un nivel de confianza del 95% presenta un error de muestreo de  $\pm 0,08$ .

## DISEÑO Y PROCEDIMIENTO

Los datos se recogieron mediante un diseño transversal de tipo cuasi-experimental. Se elaboró un cuestionario expresamente elaborado para los fines teóricos-aplicados de la investigación. La obtención de información se realizó mediante dos procedimientos según lo que permitieran los responsables de la asociación: 1) realización de entrevistas semi-estructuradas de carácter individual por entrevistadores formados, 2) aplicación de cuestionarios dejándolos a un representante de la asociación que luego se encargaba de entregarlos a las personas interesadas en colaborar.

En el primer procedimiento se solicitaba cita previa con las personas que voluntariamente querían participar. En ella los entrevistadores resaltaban lo importante que era que respondieran con sinceridad puesto que simplemente se les preguntaba por su opinión y experiencia. También se recalca el hecho de que los datos recogidos iban a ser tratados de forma confidencial y con rigor científico. En el segundo procedimiento y durante el mes siguiente a la fecha en que se habían dejado los cuestionarios, los investigadores se pasaban cada semana por las asociaciones para recoger los cuestionarios contestados.

## INSTRUMENTOS DE MEDIDA

- Integración social:
  - Apoyo social percibido ( $\alpha=0,87$ ): apoyo social percibido: grado en que las personas consideran que la asociación les ha ayudado y apoyado proporcionándoles recursos de diversa naturaleza: afectivos, informacionales y materiales. Ej., Si algo me preocupa hay personas a las que puedo pedir consejo. Los ítems fueron adaptados de las escalas de apoyo social de Herrero, Gracia y Musitu (1996) y de Gottlieb (1981). La escala de medida final estaba conformada por 7 ítems con un patrón de respuesta que iba de 1 a 5 (desacuerdo-acuerdo).
  - Sentido de comunidad ( $\alpha= 0,72$ ): percepción que posee el individuo sobre su posición en un contexto social y comunitario. Ej., Mis opiniones son bien recibidas por los demás. La escala estaba compuesta por 6 ítems de 1 a 5 grado de desacuerdo-acuerdo, adaptados de la escala de sentido de comunidad de Prezza, Amici, Roberti y Tedeschi (2001) y de la escala de integración social de Herrero y cols. (1996).
  - Potenciación psicológica (AUTOEFICACIA): Se utilizaron siete ítems, algunos pertenecientes a la escala de Bähler y Schwarzer (1996) y otros a la escala de afrontamiento de diabetes elaborada por las autoras para otra investigación. La escala de respuesta iba de nada capaz a totalmente capaz (0-10). Los ítems se distribuían en dos factores:
    - De afrontamiento cognitivo ( $\alpha=0,78$ ) referida la valoración de su capacidad personal para encontrar y poner en práctica estrategias que funcionen. Ej., de ítem: Resistir la tentación de hacer aquellas cosas que pueden perjudicar su bienestar.
    - De afrontamiento social ( $\alpha= 0,68$ ) referida a la valoración de su capacidad para buscar el apoyo y la ayuda que requiere en personas del entorno cercano y en profesionales. Ej: Pedir ayuda a amigos o familiares cuando lo necesita.

- Bienestar psicológico:
  - Estrés psicosocial ( $\alpha= 0,84$ ) estado de desequilibrio real o percibido entre las

demandas recibidas por el sujeto y las capacidades biológicas, psicológicas y sociales (Lazarus y Folkman, 1986). Ej., Ha sentido que las dificultades se le amontonaban sin poder solucionarlas. Seis ítems pertenecientes a la escala de estrés de Herrero, Gracia y Musitu (1996) referidos a distintos sentimientos y pensamientos experimentados en el último mes constituían la escala de medida.

- Satisfacción vital ( $\alpha = 0,75$ ) valoración subjetiva con la que el individuo juzga en qué medida las circunstancias por las que ha pasado a lo largo de su vida se consideran valiosas (Diener y cols., 1985). Se trata de valorar sus experiencias de vida mediante 3 ítems con un patrón de respuesta de 1 a 5. Ej: Hasta ahora he conseguido las cosas importantes que deseo en la vida.

### RESULTADOS

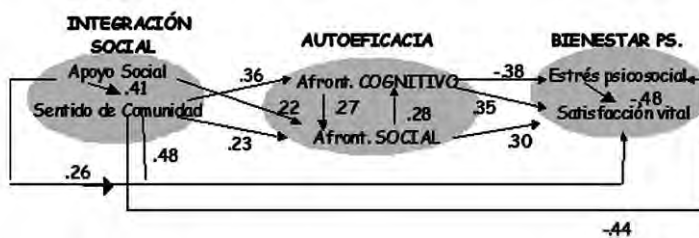
Los resultados derivados de los análisis de regresión múltiple realizados para analizar los objetivos de esta investigación se encuentran en la figura 2. En la figura se destacan los coeficientes de regresión estandarizados significativos y se constata que:

1) el apoyo social percibido de la asociación contribuye de forma positiva a que el afectado se sienta integrado en la comunidad ( $\text{Beta} = 0.41$ ).

2) el sentido de comunidad influye positiva y directamente en la satisfacción vital ( $\text{Beta} = 0.48$ ) y directa y negativamente en el estrés psicosocial ( $\text{Beta} = -0.44$ ).

3) el sentido de comunidad influye indirectamente en el bienestar a través de la autoeficacia de afrontamiento cognitivo y de afrontamiento social de forma que aquellos usuarios que con el apoyo de la asociación han logrado un mayor sentimiento de pertenencia comunitaria, también han desarrollado mayor potenciación intrapersonal, lo que les lleva a experimentar un mayor bienestar psicológico. Aunque ambas autoeficacias influyen en el bienestar psicológico de los afectados, la autoeficacia de afrontamiento ejerce un efecto más determinante al aumentar la satisfacción vital y reducir el estrés ( $\text{Beta} = -0.38$  y  $0.35$  sobre estrés y satisfacción respectivamente).

4) se constata también la influencia directa y positiva del apoyo social percibido por los usuarios de los grupos de ayuda mutua sobre el bienestar, al determinar la satisfacción vital ( $\text{Beta} = 0.26$ ), de forma que aquellas personas que perciben que han recibido más apoyo de la asociación son las que experimentan mayor satisfacción en su vida.



beta > 0,30, p < 0,001, beta > 0,25, p < 0,01, beta > 0,22, p < 0,05.  
 Figura 2. Proceso sociocognitivo del bienestar psicológico en afectados.

### CONCLUSIONES

La principal conclusión que se deriva de este estudio es la importancia que tienen los grupos de ayuda mutua de cara a favorecer la integración social de las personas que pasan por dificultades sociosanitarias. También se demuestra que el bienestar se consigue ayudando a las

personas a tener un sentimiento de pertenencia social.

El apoyo social de la asociación ha actuado más generando integración en la comunidad que induciendo potenciación psicológica. Por consiguiente, las asociaciones de salud con las que hemos trabajado deben de volcarse en normalizar la situación social del afectado proporcionándole ayuda para integrarse. El que los afectados consideren que están integrados en la comunidad es crucial ya que les hace sentirse personas normales y corrientes que piensan, sienten, actúan y se relacionan con los demás como cualquier otra persona. A pesar de lo elemental que es para ellos el sentirse un miembro más de la comunidad se constata su bajo nivel de participación activa en la comunidad. Se deduce que en algunos casos la falta de implicación está ocasionada por limitaciones físicas, aunque en otros es el desinterés y la ausencia de motivación lo que lo condiciona. En este sentido las organizaciones de salud deben aumentar sus esfuerzos organizando actividades plenamente integradas en la comunidad y motivando el interés de los afectados en la colaboración y participación activa en estas actividades

Por tanto las asociaciones deben trabajar el contexto social para así, en último término, inducir cambios en los procesos psicosociales de la persona, lo cual refleja uno de los principios de actuación de la Psicología Comunitaria (Sánchez, 1996, 2007). Esta estrategia resulta efectiva si tenemos en cuenta que condiciona positivamente el bienestar de los individuos.

Otra conclusión que se deriva de este trabajo es que la integración en el entorno social cercano favorece el desarrollo de creencias personales de capacidad para buscar y poner en prácticas estrategias que le permitan resolver sus problemas diarios y aquellas situaciones más difíciles con las que se encuentre. La autoeficacia hace que las personas tengan sentimientos de control sobre su vida y que interpreten sus dificultades como retos; que ante los diversos obstáculos no se amedrenten y sigan haciendo intentos por superar sus problemas buscando recursos y poniendo en práctica nuevas estrategias para solucionarlos. De esta manera la autoeficacia, el hecho de que las personas se sientan potenciadas psicológicamente y con recursos personales, logra influir positivamente en el bienestar reduciendo o previniendo el estrés y generando satisfacción en la vida. Por tanto la integración social condiciona el bienestar a través de mecanismos sociocognitivos.

Dado que el modelo sociocognitivo es capaz de explicar cómo generar el bienestar psicológico en los afectados, ello significa que, prioritariamente, las asociaciones deben trabajar desarrollando actividades que induzcan en sus miembros la valoración personal de capacidad y, en particular, la percepción de capacidad para encontrar y poner en practica estrategias cognitivas efectivas para afrontar los problemas. Por ejemplo, se debe enseñar al sujeto habilidades para resistir la tentación de hacer cosas que pueden perjudicar la salud o enseñarles a ser capaces de reducir o evitar las consecuencias que puede provocarle el problema que tiene.

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# Leisure, information needs and social participation of outskirts young people in Murcia (Spain)

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## Abstract

*A representative stratified sample (age mean=22.7 years; sex: 50.8% males, 49.2% females) of 626 young people was randomly selected in a group of suburbs and minor rural localities (pedanías) of Murcia Borough (Spain). The outskirts young were interviewed and responded a wide questionnaire including among others a set of items already verified in conventional youth surveys. Means comparisons, factorial analysis and logistic regression (SPSS v. 14) summarize compile data. The aims of study were to explore practices and opinions about weekly and weekend leisure, information needs and problems and opportunities for social participation, in order to improve the action of a Youth Information Centre (InformaJoven).*

*Various and numerous are national studies on youth in Spain. A diversity of facets of the young people behaviour and opinion were described in specific literature, but a small number are about non-urban settings and much less information has been compiled on young people in suburbs and rural populations.*

*Factor analysis reveals three components in leisure preferences and practices of outskirts young people. Moreover interesting results appear in relation to perception of information need and opportunities that influence their difficulties for social participation. Similarities and differences regarding other national samples of urban young people are considered.*

Keywords: social survey, participation, mobilisation, leisure, outskirts youth

## Intro

Some authors affirm that diverse facts in the European countries are manifesting a group of strong social tendencies, which is connected to the new logic of the inequalities, and in those that the youths appear as special main characters and subject with an outstanding potentiality of prominence. (Díaz, 2007; Tezanos, 2007, p. 119). Also, they point out that it creates a new political agenda and arena that of the fights for the citizenship, which is understood as equal, full and universal citizenship (Tezanos, o.c.).

It is not only spoken of risks of the youths' political alienation in terms of more electoral abstention and high grade of organizational self-exclusion (for crisis of interest and lack of credibility and motivations), but also in the context of the crisis of the social capital that affects the youth more. If a bigger social exclusion (juvenile unemployment, labour precariousness and irregularity, housing access difficulty, delay in the average age for emancipation) spreads to create a bigger political exclusion that is generating a citizenship of second category, more devaluated,

limited and with less power.

At the same time is proven in the last years the emergence of new forms of action, protests and mobilization, with a certain capacity of social and cultural impact just as sectorial social movements (feminists, against gender violence, squatters, anti-war of Iraq...), express actions (summoned by mobile phone or Internet), mobilizations for concrete demands (worthy housing, labour or educational reforms, volunteers in the Prestige' catastrophe). In the Social Tendencies Surveys (v. Díaz, o.c.) are observed the progressive lost of importance of perceived power of the unions (although it has stayed stable regarding the political parties) and a vague presence or implication in both types of social organizations. However, more than half of the youth (under 30 years) recognize an increase of the influence of social movements and believes that they will follow having it in next decade.

### **Objective**

There is already a certain extent and tradition of national studies on youth in Spain and are numerous the works published on diversity of facets of the young people behaviour and opinion. However in a majority of cases the interviewees come from urban settings and much less information has compiled on young people in suburbs and rural populations.

A series of psychosocial variables (e.g. motivations and associative behaviour, perception and valuation of different forms of social participation and action), socio-demographic factors (age, sex, marital status, education, occupation) and locality's features (distance, population, socioeconomic domain) were interrelated in an wide study about non urban centre young people preferences and difficulties for the social participation and access to the information about juvenile topics and concerns.

### **Design & Method**

#### Persons

In 28 suburbs and pedanías (minor rural localities) of Murcia Borough (Spain) a representative stratified sample by age (mean=22.7 years, t.d. =4.35) and sex (50.8% males, 49.2% females) of 626 young people was randomly selected.

#### Measures

They were interviewed and responded a wide questionnaire including among others a set of items already verified in conventional youth studies in Spain. Data were analyzed by means comparisons, anova, factorial analysis and logistic regression with SPSS v. 14.

See [http://www.informajoven.org/info/servicios/necesidades\\_info.html](http://www.informajoven.org/info/servicios/necesidades_info.html).

### **Results**

#### Valuation of the utility of the participation forms

In a range from 0 (nothing useful) to 10 (very useful) youngsters of the sample expressed their opinion on a series of forms of participation and social action. It is a field of usual content in youth surveys and it can adopt different formats. The alpha coefficient of the valuations of the utility of the participation forms was .84, indicating a high internal consistency (reliability) of the enquired youngsters' answers.

**Table 1. Perceived Utility of the participation forms (means in descending order)**

	All	Sex	
		M	Wr
To vote in elections	6.51	6.42	6.62
To Participate in a strike	6.28	6.29	6.26
To Go on a demonstration or concentration	6.16	6.21	6.10
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to an environmentalist, human rights associations, etc.	5.89	5.71	6.10
To Sign a petition, report or support text to something or somebody	5.67	5.52	5.84
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to a neighbourhood and local associations (* *)	5.65	5.38	5.95
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to an union	5.46	5.30	5.66
Frequently follow the political information in the media	4.79	4.67	4.93
Taking part in a boycott (*)	4.63	4.89	4.35
Taking over a building	4.51	4.75	4.24
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to a political party	4.49	4.43	4.56
Frequently defend and speak of political topics with other people	4.14	4.11	4.18
Try to convince somebody that he/she votes or joins to a party	3.39	3.37	3.41
Direct Actions that could involve violence	1.61	1.73	1.48

(\*)  $p < .05$ -- (\*\*\*)  $p < .01$  Significance by sex

If we observe the average ranking of different forms of social participation-action, we notice that the three first in average are usual and conventional forms of participation within the usual democratic system. All with the shade of being precise actions, the one at the moment of the call (elections, strike, and demonstrations) is done and the later dedication or more extended commitment is unknown or it is not possible to be inferred. One of the four following (with a medium level of average approval of utility) follows the same style as the first three (signing a request...) and it is also identified, nowadays, as a conventional operation although some decades ago it was described as a non-conventional political activity in the studies on new forms of political participation (v. Albach, 1989; Baker, Dalton y Hildebrant, 1981; Bynner y Ashford, 1994; Deth, 1990; Gibbins, 1989; Tarrow, 1988). The other three forms in this position state the membership and collaboration with organisations or participation entities (but not a political party specifically) and imply a more constant commitment, even remaining in the parameters of the conventional social or civic action. Below the subjective average score of approval (below 5) there would be forms of commitment or both conventional (belonging to a party, convincing to vote or joining a party) and non conventional (taking part in a boycott, taking over a building, direct action that could involve violence) and the informative or communicative commitment (mental or cognitive activism). Activities such as proselytism and specially direct action with the possibility of violence are not approved by respondents.



We can verify that the differences based on sex are only significant in two items: girls more than boys consider more useful belonging and collaborating with local associations. The participation in a boycott is considered more useful by boys than girls. By age groups, differences in the average of utility of the different forms or actions of social participation focus on:

- Youngsters in the interval of more age (>24 years) stand out in almost all items that are significant, whose averages are ordered in size as the age increases. Thus, they emphasise collaboration with a union, voting, following the political information, defending and dealing with political subjects, trying to convince and to affiliate, and collaborating with a party. Almost all of them can be fitted in what we consider conventional political behaviour.
- The exception to the previous rule occurs in collaborating with local associations where youngsters of intermediate and lower age stand out.

However, a different view is shown by the classification by educational level reached in the crossing of categories with the different forms of action or social participation. A relatively wide number of items show significant differences; yet, preferences reflect different directions:

- The higher the level of education is, higher utility level perceived in company/signature requests and voting in the elections, But that increasing order up to the highest score of those who have higher education does not occur with equal precision in following political information, defending and talking about politics, convincing and joining a party, collaborating- belonging to a party.
- Those who have studied vocational training stand out in collaborating with local associations, and attending a demonstration.
- Those who have no education or these are the basic one, are before the others (often followed by those who have studied vocational training) in collaborating with a union, participating in a boycott, taking over a building.

**Table 2. Perceived Utility of the participation forms (means)**

	Education			
	Primary	Vocational training	Secondary	University
To sign a petition, report or support text to something or somebody (**)	4.93	5.78	5.87	6.29
To collaborate/ Affiliate to a neighbourhood and local associations (*)	5.65	6.31	5.02	5.92
To collaborate/ Affiliate to an union (**)	5.91	5.81	4.56	5.75
Taking part in a boycott (**)	5.63	5.49	3.39	4.24
To go on a demonstration or concentration (**)	6.21	6.70	6.12	5.66
To vote in elections (**)	6.09	6.46	6.61	7.03
Taking over a building (**)	5.65	5.33	3.07	4.26
Frequently follow the political information in the media (**)	4.57	4.99	4.34	5.56
Frequently defend and speak of political topics with other people (**)	4.05	4.40	3.43	4.99

	Education			
	Primary	Vocational training	Secondary	University
Try to convince somebody that he/she votes or joins to a party (**)	3.68	3.75	2.47	3.92
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to a political party (**)	3.77	4.54	4.42	5.48

(\*)  $p < .05$  (\*\*)  $p < .01$

Following table shows the factorial analysis of main components with Varimax rotation that revealed the existence of three basic factors which motivate valuations of the utility of participation forms. From them, new variables are created:

**Table 3. Factorial Structure of utility of participation forms (Varimax Rotation. Factor Analysis)**

	FACTOR I	FACTOR II	FACTOR III
To Sign a petition, report or support text to something or somebody	0.551	----	----
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to a neighbourhood and local associations	0.762	----	----
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to an environmentalist, human rights associations, etc.	0.825	----	----
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to an union	0.421	0.396	----
Taking part in a boycott	----	0.897	----
To Go on a demonstration or concentration	0.431	0.554	----
To vote in elections	0.415	----	0.428
To Participate in a strike	----	0.529	----
Taking over a building	----	0.788	----
Frequently follow the political information in the media	----	----	0.732
Frequently defend and speak of political topics with other people	----	----	0.810
Try to convince somebody that he/she votes or joins to a party	----	----	0.713
To Collaborate/ Affiliate to a political party	----	----	0.650
Direct Actions that could involve violence	----	----	----
Variance explained	32.24	33.87	33.89
Guttman-Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	.77	.81	.82

o Variable UTIL1 (Factor I) results from adding the answers given by people to options 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of that question. It includes the perception-valuation of favourable forms of civic action to the collaboration-membership to different types of associations (from local ones to unions), and it also has a certain preference for conventional forms of participation (signing requests, attending a demonstration, voting in elections).

o Variable UTIL2 (Factor II) results from adding the answers given by people to options 4,

5, 6, 8 and 9. This factor groups answers that are related to more radical or less conventional cut actions (participating in a boycott, taking over a building, taking part in strikes and demonstrations and collaborating- belonging to a union).

o Variable UTIL3 (Factor III) results from adding the answers given by people to options 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Here, answers related to the partisan political participation are included (convincing to vote or to join a party, belonging to it, following the political information and defending and talking about these subjects, voting in elections).

### **Actions by which the young people would mobilise themselves**

Youngsters are asked about their reasons for mobilisation, and they are allowed to answer one or more of the items. This factor in different formats is usual in youth surveys and is an indirect referent of values or social rights they wish (employment, distribution of wealth, security, equality, protection of the weak ones, environment, peace, etc.). The results show a percentage of those polled have mentioned that item.

**Table 4. Actions by which the young people mobilise themselves (% in descending order)**

		All	Sex	
			M	W
1.	Finding a job	81.5%	52.4%	47.6%
2.	Housing	53.7%	43.8%	56.3%
3.	Improving public services (Education., Health)	53.0%	48.5%	51.5%
4.	Avoiding delinquency	43.9%	49.5%	50.5%
5.	Better distribution of the wealth	40.9%	47.3%	52.7%
6.	Protecting weak ones rights	37.4%	48.3%	51.8%
7.	Obtaining peace (end of wars)	32.4%	48.3%	51.7%
8.	Protecting the environment	28.8%	46.7%	53.3%
9.	Defending Spain	25.6%	53.7%	46.3%
10.	Preserving my right to have fun	21.7%	60.3%	39.7%
11.	To do what I feel like, I want	16.8%	55.2%	44.8%
12.	To defend my religious and/or moral convictions	16.6%	44.2%	55.8%
13.	To prevent the immigrants from taking away our things	15.7%	59.2%	40.8%
14.	To improve the situation of the immigrants	08.9%	46.4%	53.6%

### **Observation of ranking of expressed reasons shows that:**

Finding a job is, by far, the most widespread preoccupation or motivation. Housing and improving public services are equal in proportion. In a third place, relatively close we would find avoiding delinquency and a better distribution of the wealth. More altruistic aspirations are located in central positions of the ranking: protecting the weak ones, obtaining peace, protecting the environment and defending Spain. It attracts our attention the low percentage of follow-through of some items that have tendencies and directions of evaluative or social positioning: right to have fun, to do what I want; to prevent the immigrants from taking away our things, and

in another aspect to defend moral and religious convictions and to improve the situation of the immigrants.

Also, it is possible to carry out a factorial analysis of answers to verify if components or interpretable dimensions in preferences of the enquired youngsters are created. The Varimax rotation offers three components that have created new variables in the question regarding motivations for the social mobilisation.

o Component MOVIL1 (Factor I): it groups answers and preferences that in literature on values and social attitudes have been bound to a social universalistic-justice orientation (v. Gouveia, 2001, Schwartz, 2001, Vera 1995, Vera, Martín, Martínez y Paterna, 2004) where the others' well-being is the main concern, together with the environment and to go beyond selfish interests (the own well-being goes together with the social and ecological welfare, it has components of altruistic or post-materialistic ethics).

o Component MOVIL2 (Factor II): it gathers items that show a more ego and ethnocentric position, the aim is to preserve rights of hedonistic or individualistic type, and to protect the in-group of external threats.

o Component MOVIL3 (Factor III): here answers are concentrated that are not polarised in the other ends (neither in the collectivist of universalistic type nor in the defensive individualist), it is about preoccupations and personal interests but which are designed for the social sphere or they need the harmony or well-being in society: housing, job, peace, public services, security.

**Table 5. Factor Analysis. Varimax Rotated Components Matrix**

	Component		
	1	2	3
Better distribution of the wealth	,634	,078	,051
To improve the situation of the immigrants	,625	,064	-,030
Protecting weak ones rights	,609	-,030	,194
Protecting the environment	,516	,163	,411
To defend my religious and/or moral convictions	,511	,013	,066
To do what I feel like, I want	,288	,678	-,148
Defending Spain	-,114	,646	,404
Preserving my right to have fun	,310	,613	-,119
To prevent the immigrants from taking away our things	-,273	,557	,087
Housing	-,035	-,048	,632
Obtaining peace (end of wars)	,292	,395	,549
Avoiding delinquency	,161	,290	,505
Improving public services (Education., Health)	,232	,041	,502
Finding a job	-,031	-,221	,446

The contrast of proportions of mention (how many see in the successive items a reason for action) based on sex does not offer significant differences in many of the questions. Yet, they do appear in defending right to have fun much more extended among boys than girls ( $p=.012$ ); and

also in being able to have access to housing where girls surpass boys ( $p=.000$ ).

According to the age groups, the most relevant differences are the following ones:

- As the age increases, there exists more motivation to be able to have access to housing.
- As the age increases, there exists less motivation to improve for the conditions of the immigrants, to preserve the right to have fun, protection of the environment, to be able to do what you want.
- The 20-24 year-old group, followed by >24 years, are more motivated to be able to find a job: (a 88% and 82.6% as opposed to 72.4%)
- The youngest group is the one that points out avoidance of delinquency (14 percentage points over: 54.6%), followed by the other two groups almost in the same magnitude (around a 40% of each group)

According to the categories of occupation, it is possible to find remarkable differences in the proportion of youngsters of each sub-group that emphasises these motivations for the mobilisation. It seems that:

- The two groups that work have more motivation to find a job, being ten percentage points under the other two groups.
- The two groups that study make more emphasis in preserving their right to have fun, in protecting the environment, and in a certain way also in improving the conditions of the immigrants and achieving the end of wars (in these reasons the proportion decreases as we go from group 1 to 4). Also defending the rights of the weakest and best distribution of the wealth (here the group that studies and works stands out).
- In being able to do what they want the group that study and the one that neither works nor studies stand out, being in a lower position the group that works.
- The grouping of the people of the sample according to their level of education obtained so far, shows differences in almost all the items in this variable (all but three) regarding the reasons to mobilise themselves. This doesn't mean that all the differences are equally intense, neither ordered nor proportional. Although in general it would be possible to say that there is much motivation for the mobilisation in those who have secondary education in most items, they are the ones who would mobilise more or the second ones in doing so.

### **Obstacles that hinder the participation of youngsters (PART)**

The analysis of the obstacles that, in the own perception of the respondents, hinder the social participation of youngsters offers interesting considerations.

**Table 6. Obstacles that hinder participation of youngsters (%)**

		All	Sex	
			M	W
PA1	The legal framework that regulates the processes of civic participation	11.3%	60.6%	39.4%
PA2	The lack of education and culture for the participation	30.7%	47.9%	52.1%
PA3	The demotivation, youngsters don't want to participate, "this is not good for anything"	50.0%	47.6%	52.4%
PA4	The institutional inflexibility	14.5%	50.5%	49.5%
PA5	Lack of spaces, premises and time for the participation	27.8%	46.6%	53.4%
PA6	The dominant social values: individualism, competitiveness, consumerism, comfort, conformism	27.8%	44.3%	55.7%
PA7	Few participation means exist, and they are not well-known or they are not used well	39.0%	49.6%	50.4%
PA8	The time that I devote to Internet or video games	5.0%	61.3%	38.7%
PA9	The institutions don't favour the participation. I believe that don't exist a clear political will of fomenting it...	14.1%	56.8%	43.2%

Firstly, (see the table below) it is outstanding the significant role that is attributed to the participative demotivation, apathy or disillusion. Half of the sample points out that this obstacle, a difficulty if you want to call it internal, is typical of the section of population that is being surveyed. The other difficulty, purely internal, devotion to the Internet or videogames, it is hardly admitted by a 5%.

The other outstanding factors of difficulty are of two types, some infrastructural or instrumental, other normative or cultural ones. This way, the lack of means or its ignorance or misuse, almost reaches 40% of the mentions of the respondents, and also the lack of spaces, premises and time is outstanding in 27.8%. The cultural and educative deficiencies and the prevailing values (whereas they promote lack of social commitment) are outstanding in 30.7% and 27.8%. The institutional problems such as the institutional inflexibility, the lack of will or participative facilitation and the legal framework also bring together non despicable percentages (14.5%, 14.1% and 11.3%, respectively).

These data can also be read under another classification:

- Motivacional Factors (that include the values or goals socially valid and desirable) and cultural ones (education and culture for the participation), that would have more to do with the participative mentality and conscience. The difficulty would lie in the absence of a construction of participative citizen conscience.
- Factors for the support or canalization of the participation: means, spaces, institutions that support, norms that facilitate, etc. The difficulty would lie in the deficiencies, bad design or inflexibility in the social infrastructure for the participation.

If we take sex into account for the perception of the difficulties, we should point out that the differences are not significant, with the exception of the difficulty regarding the prevailing social values that oppose the social implication and participation. In this case, 31.5% of the girls

stand out this difficulty as opposed to the 24.2% of the boys.

The variable age does not offer enough elements of comparison among groups of youngsters based on the difficulty of participation. Perhaps we should point out that those over 24 years old internally emphasise a little more than the other groups that precede them the problem of the legal framework (15.8% as opposed to 7.8% and 8.6%) and of the predominant social values (of more or less age the percentages are 33.2%, 24.4% and 23.6%). That the 20-24 –year-old group is the one that less mentions the lack of education and culture of participation (23.3% as opposed to 32.2%, 35.1%). , Nevertheless, the youngest (< 20 years) are those that less see the problem of the lack of motivation (38.5% in this group as opposed to 50.8% and 57.1% in the age groups that follow them). It could possibly be said that the older the enquired youngsters are, and not strictly in a linear way, the higher the perceptions of demotivation, unfavourable values, etc.

If we consider the level of education, we find a panorama of diversity of intragroup profiles but which does not seem to point at a fixed direction. At most, we can point out some contrasts between the percentages of the two first groups as opposed to the second ones (that is to say, without basic education and vocational training, as contrasted with secondary school and college students). For example, the difficulties with the means of participation are emphasized by the 46% of the youngsters of the two first educational levels, whereas in the two second ones it decreases down to about 32%. It is the other way round with the lack of motivation of youngsters: a 56.6% and a 55.5% of secondary school and college students, respectively, emphasise this factor, whereas in titleholders in VT it decreases to 48.4% and 43.3% in basic education or without education. Also the difficulty with predominant social values is relevant in the third and fourth group than in the two first ones (36.4% and 30% as opposed to 22.9% and 21.4%).

The contrast of percentages of youngsters who point out a certain factor of difficulty based on their classification by occupation does not offer relevant differences between them.

### **Correlations between utility and mobilisation components and perceptions of difficulty for the participation.**

The correlations matrix that appears below summarises to what extent utility variables and why young people would mobilise themselves are related to each other and with the difficulty to participate. In this sense it is outstanding that:

**Table 7. Correlations**

		util1	util2	util3	movil1	movil2	movil3
util1	Pearson corr.	1					
	Sig. (bilateral)						
util2	Pearson corr.	,590(**)	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000					
util3	Pearson corr.	,564(**)	,310(**)	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,000				
movil1	Pearson corr.	,191(**)	-,052	,085(*)	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,226	,046			
movil2	Pearson corr.	-,039	-,073	-,046	,203(**)		1
	Sig. (bilateral)	,361	,090	,284	,000		
movil3	Pearson corr.	,115(**)	-,178(**)	,010	,345(**)	,270(**)	
	Sig. (bilateral)	,007	,000	,823	,000	,000	
part	Pearson corr.	,151(**)	,153(**)	,064	,258(**)	-,009	,247(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,000	,134	,000	,815	,000

\*\* Significance to a 0,01 level (bilateral). \* Significance to a 0,05 level (bilateral).

- There exists a significant, positive and moderately high relation among UTIL1 and UTIL2 and UTIL3 (the two other profiles of perception of social utility). That is to say, between the perceptions of utility of the participation related to associations and other conventional and not so conventional forms of participation and social action. This is so because they even share some item in their configuration. Nevertheless, the relation between UTIL2 and UTIL3 is positive but lower. There is less correlation between the less conventional style (alternative or not integrated) and the most partisan one (bound to political parties and to the political proselytism).

- There exists a significant, positive and more moderate relation among the three components identified in reasons for the mobilisation, which can be considered coherent with the interpretation on social directions, values and attitudes that is usual on the matter. The citizens can consider valid or useful different ways of social participation-action (understood as means of action), even though those means are varied and can involve some kind of complication from the point of view of the more or less conventional democratic participation. What it is not so understandable is that the aims or reasons for that participation (action or reaction) can, in their diverse nature, be compatible, since there can be values and goals or social aspirations to a certain extent incompatible or difficult to harmonise.

- Therefore, it is logical to some extent that between MOVIL1 and MOVIL3 (that is, for universalistic and personal-social well-being reasons) the highest positive correlation occurs (.345) and that, in addition, it is higher than the rest of correlations, and that there exists a more limited coincidence or correlation (although also positive) with MOVIL2 (respectively .203 and .270) that was related to more hedonists, individualistic and ethnocentric reasons. In the sample studied, however, we notice that the three groups of motivations for the social action are associated positively (there are no negative correlations among them), which can be indicative that some citizens can have a heterogeneous and dependent profile of motivations of different directions



(defending some social interests and simultaneously some privative or protectionist ones), and that there can also be incongruence among such preferences.

- Much lower and sometimes negative are the correlations between the variables of utility of the participation and the reasons to mobilise. Thus, UTIL1 (it values conventional associations and civic actions) is significantly related to MOVIL1 (universalistic and pro-social motivation) and a little less to MOVIL3 (concern about personal interests with social projection). It does not happen (and the tendency is negative) with MOVIL2 (more individualistic or defensive motivations). UTIL2 (valuation of less conventional actions) is negatively related to MOVIL3 (the motivation for the personal and social well-being — social work, housing, peace, security and social services). The valuation of the utility of the partisan political participation (UTIL3) is very slightly related to the motivation for universalistic or pro-social type (MOVIL1).

- When affirming the existence of more obstacles that hinder participation (PART) the number of youngsters who value more profiles of participation UTIL1 and UTIL2 is outstanding (associative-conventional and less conventional) and also specially those whose answers are grouped in component MOVIL1 (motivations of universalistic-egalitarian type) and MOVIL3 (it gathers motivations of personal and social welfare type: work, housing, peace, security).

Obstacles that hinder the participation of youngsters according to socio-demographic and social participation-mobilisation variables

The table below reflects the profiles of factors that hinder the participation of youngsters in groups (selected from each logistic regression analysis those who obtained statistical meaning to  $n.s. \leq .05$ ,  $R^2$  Nagelkerke non-higher than 220, and global percentage of correct classification of cases around a 70%).

**Table 8. Coefficients of logistic regression analysis.**

	Sex	Age	Util1	Util2	Util3	Movil1	Movil2	Movil3
PA1	-.792			.044				
PA2				.032			-.326	.339
PA3		.065				1.159		.242
PA4						-.239		.635
PA5			-.056	.072	.031	.234	-.248	.292
PA6		.063			-.040	.372	-.418	
PA7			-.054	.057	.046	.250		
PA8			-.070			.519		
PA9				.055				

The most outstanding interpretations are:

- The first and last difficulty: legal framework that regulates the participation and the institutions does not favour the participation does not allow a fitted and reliable regression equation with the considered covariables (although some of them as UTIL2 seem to have some kind of positive relation with them).
- Mentioning lack of education and culture for the participation has a more moderate

negative association with MOVIL2 (a more defensive profile of motivations for mobilisation). It is also positively related to MOVIL3 (pro common citizen rights) and very slightly to UTIL2 (it values the less conventional social participation-action).

- The difficulty lack of motivation, youngsters do not want to participate, this is useless, has a strong positive association with MOVIL1, that is, it is more mentioned by youngsters who assign to a profile of universalistic right mobilisation pro and of social justice (perhaps as a complaint or reaction for their aspirations) and slighter but also positive with MOVIL3 (mobilisation by usual constitutional rights). The positive relation with the age is hardly remarkable.
- Inflexibility of public institutions, is remarkably related, in a positive way, to profile MOVIL3 (more emphasized by these respondents) and in a negative way, more moderately, to MOVIL1.
- Lack of spaces, premises and time for the participation is the difficulty indicator that more relation has with the different covariables, although not all of equal magnitude and importance. Thus, in a positive way, it is more mentioned when there is a profile of mobilisation MOVIL3 is had (by more usual rights of well-being) and MOVIL1 (profile social universalistic-justice), and very slightly with UTIL2 and UTIL3 (they value non-conventional or bound to parties participation). Negatively, with profile MOVIL2 (more endogrupal defensive) and very scarcely with UTIL1 (valued participation of associations and conventional action).
- Mentioning that the predominant social values are not favourable to the participation is, in contrast, associated with two profiles of mobilisation. In a positive way with those of MOVIL1 (of a social universalistic-justice orientation that are more critical with these values and mention more often this difficulty). In a negative way with MOVIL2 (more hedonistic and in-group biased) that mentions less, and very scarcely with MOVIL3.
- The perception that there are few means of participation, and those that we have are not known or they are not well used is related positively but in a moderate way to MOVIL1, UTIL2 and UTIL3, as well as to the minor size of population, and very slightly in negative with UTIL1 (the inclined ones to the conventional and associative participation notice this difficulty less).
- Pointing out the time that I devote to the Internet or video-games is remarkably related to, and is, to a certain point contradictory, to MOVIL1 (universalistic motivation) and very little, in negative, with UTIL1 (it values the conventional associative and civic participation).

### **Weekly and week-end leisure patterns and social mobilisation and participation**

The factorial analysis identified a three-dimensional structure in the answers of the interviewees relating to activities that they made with their friends during the week, and which they have been transformed into new grouping variables as is specified now:

OCIO1 (factor I that include/understand items 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 14) that it has to do basically with activities related to the computer, videogames and Internet, although also get up activities like watching, go out with friends and to practice sport.

OCIO2 (factor II that includes items 9, 11, 13, 15 and 16) relating to activities of cultural

type, such as to go to the cinema, to visit museums, to attend exhibitions and to make trips or excursions.

OCIO3 (factor III that includes items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) reveals a sedentary pattern of activities where the study is included, and not directly concerning with the computers or Internet.

Table 9. Factorial structure of leisure activities realised during week

		FACTOR I	FACTOR II	FACTOR III
1.	Online Chat	0.733	----	----
2.	Surfing the Net (no chat)	0.708	----	----
3.	Listen to Radio	----	----	0.566
4.	Read books, magazines, comics	----	----	0.801
5.	Study	----	----	0.404
6.	Listening to CDs, audiotapes, etc.	0.426	----	0.518
7.	Watch TV	0.536	----	0.368
8.	Play video-console games, etc.	0.650	----	----
9.	Visit museums, exhibitions, etc.	----	0.502	0.370
10.	Go to PC games rooms	0.342	----	----
11.	Go to live music concerts	----	0.678	----
12.	Go out with friends	0.501	----	----
13.	Travel, go on a day trip	----	0.627	----
14.	Practice sport	0.466	----	----
15.	Go to disco, pubs, etc.	----	0.564	----
16.	Go to cinema, theatre, etc.	----	0.684	----
17.	Collaborate on associations, NGOs	----	----	----
	Variance explained	15.68	13.03	11.37

Also, the factorial analysis revealed a two-dimensional structure of leisure on weekend which allows creating two new variables to summarize data:

OCIO4 (that groups gathered activities in items 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14 and 15) have to do with computers, videogames and Internet, besides to go out with friends, to watch, to go to disco and to practice sport;

OCIO5 (contains items 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 16) groups activities that are related to studying, listening to radio and tapes, to visit museums, to go music concerts and go to cinema or theatre.

It is possible to consider interrelation between the leisure factors with the factors grouped in participation or social action evaluation and motivations for mobilisation variables. The next table shows correlations between these variables.

**Table 10. Correlations between leisure, mobilisation and participation patterns**

		movil1	movil2	movil3	util1	util2	util3
Ocio1	Pearson corr.	,021	,337(**)	,246(**)	-,132(*)	-,198(**)	-,083
	Sig. (bilateral)	,691	,000	,000	,017	,000	,137
Ocio2	Pearson corr.	,132(*)	,208(**)	-,008	,022	,023	,086
	Sig. (bilateral)	,014	,000	,880	,690	,682	,122
Ocio3	Pearson corr.	,232(**)	,232(**)	,422(**)	,132(*)	-,241(**)	,166(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,000	,000	,017	,000	,002
Ocio4	Pearson corr.	,016	,308(**)	,176(**)	-,160(**)	-,133(*)	-,075
	Sig. (bilateral)	,770	,000	,001	,004	,016	,176
Ocio5	Pearson corr.	,180(**)	,030	,187(**)	,100	-,202(**)	,224(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)	,001	,585	,000	,072	,000	,000

Concerning pattern OCIO1, a positive relation with MOVIL2 is observed, that is to say, with motivations of endogrupal and hedonistic defensive nature and also with MOVIL3, preoccupation by basic individual rights of well-being. Nevertheless, correlation is negative and practically null with factors of valuation of the social participation-action, especially with UTIL2 (less conventional participation) and UTIL1 (associative participation).

OCIO2 correlates also, although more moderately than the previous one, with MOVIL2 (defensive mobilisation) and hardly with MOVIL1 (universalistic and social justice mobilisation), which indicates that it occurs slightly in both motivacionales profiles; but not in a significant way with the factors of utility of the social participation.

The third pattern of weekly leisure (OCIO3) is going to correlate with all the factors considered here. In negative with UTIL2 (the valuation of the participation of less conventional court partially is against this scheme of leisure). In positive and outstanding form with MOVIL3 and more slightly with the rest of factors. This can be interpreted, partly, because this pattern of leisure does not reflect a clear differentiation between mobilisation schemes (although is notable on the basic citizen rights oriented one).

About leisure on week-ends, OCIO4 behaves like OCIO1: positive and moderate relation with MOVIL2 and insignificant with MOVIL3 as well negligible and negative correlations with valuation profiles of social participation ways. On the other hand, OCIO5 approaches the scheme of OCIO3, but generally with less in size and number of correlations. Outstanding correlations are: positive with UTIL3 and negative with UTIL2.

## Conclusions

The social and political participation of the young people in rural habitats seems to move away of the party conventional forms, to be oriented to more precise or immediate actions and towards a tenuous one and not very extended collaboration with civic associations [As it confirms the data on associativism not analysed in this paper]. The most radical forms of direct action do not receive acceptance either.

The motivations and values for the mobilisation that the interviewed young people declare are oriented to reach or to preserve individual rights of well-being and social benefits. Minor is the

motivation towards more universalistic aims or of social justice and a more minority group of the sample of young people points at individualistic motivations of hedonistic and defensive type.

The main attributions on difficulties for the participation fall to deficiencies of two types: on the one hand, motivations, confidence and participative culture of the young people (and within this one the presence of dominant values opposite to the social commitment), On the other hand, lack of resources, means, spaces, supports, etc., for the participation. The young people recognise their own deficiencies facing the social implication although also they indicate to the society and the institutions like little favourable to participation.

The interrelations between factors of mobilisation, utility of different participation forms and the difficulties that the young people find to participate are diverse and complex. The slight relation can be emphasised (but significant) that they have the profiles of perception of utility with some of the participative difficulties, and a more remarkable and clear relation with the motives and orientations for the mobilisation specially the universalistic and social justice orientation, as well as the individual rights and social welfare orientation.

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# Hemophilia: Promoting health in children

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One of the main goals in childhood is to be independent. It is an ability normally developed by children when they have good conditions. But, when children have a chronic illness such as hemophilia, they have affliction and experience stress especially when they have to be in hospitals and have diagnosis and therapeutic processes that can be aggressive and painful. The reason for this affliction is because they have not developed good coping strategies and, as they grow up, they get more conscious of their illness, and it makes them feel uncertainty. So, children need psychological and social support and it is also important to be well informed about the illness. This paper describes the Participatory Action Research (PAR) done under the Health Psychology perspective with four to twelve years old children with hemophilia or who have any relative with that illness. The PAR first phase detected the principal needs, including the need for knowledge about the hemophilia, and the need to promote healthy behaviors.

## Introducción

Tradicionalmente, el concepto de salud se le ha definido como la ausencia de enfermedad y ha estado estrechamente vinculado a aspectos biológicos. Sin embargo, en 1984, en el Congreso de Constitución de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), definió un nuevo concepto en salud, en términos del estado de absoluto bienestar físico, mental y social y no la mera ausencia de la enfermedad (OMS, 1978). En esta definición se incorporan lo físico, lo psicológico y social dándole en enfoque más integral en el cual no se enfatiza únicamente la relación de la salud con la ausencia de enfermedad, sino que se concentra en la idea de que la salud es un valor en sí mismo, un derecho humano fundamental y una meta social para todo el mundo que resulta ser una condición indispensable para el avance de una nación.

Por tanto, la salud es entendida en un sentido amplio como el bienestar físico, psicológico y social, que va mucho más allá del esquema biomédico, abarcando la esfera subjetiva y del comportamiento del ser humano. No es la ausencia de alteraciones y de enfermedad, sino un concepto positivo que implica distintos grados de vitalidad y funcionamiento adaptativo (Labiano, 2006).

Los objetivos de la Psicología de la salud se pueden dividir en cinco grandes grupos. 1) La promoción y mantenimiento de la salud, que se centra fundamentalmente en la educación sanitaria, el control de variables actitudinales y motivacionales, así como afecto-emocionales, la generación de hábitos y estilos de vida saludables, el aprendizaje de competencias básicas encaminadas a mejorar la salud. 2) La prevención, que se basa fundamentalmente en el control de variables actitudinales y motivacionales de riesgo, en la modificación de conductas y hábitos de riesgo, en la detección e intervención ante problemas y en la disminución de las secuelas o consecuencias de una enfermedad, así como la prevención de las posibles recaídas. 3) La evaluación, tratamiento y rehabilitación de trastornos específicos. 4) El análisis y mejora del sistema y atención sanitaria, la potenciación de la actuación de otros profesionales de la salud, la

mejora de la relación profesional - usuario y a mejora de la adherencia a los tratamientos. 5) La formación de los profesionales, paraprofesionales y las tareas de gestión (Godoy, 1994 en Simón 1999).

Más ampliamente, la promoción de la salud se define como el conjunto de medios y estrategias encaminadas a procurar la adopción de unos hábitos de vida saludable. Este concepto está íntimamente relacionado con la Educación para la salud, que Costa y López (1996) conciben como “un proceso planificado y sistemático y de enseñanza-aprendizaje orientado a hacer fácil la adquisición, elección y mantenimiento de las prácticas saludables, y hacer difíciles las prácticas de riesgo”. Así pues, la educación para la salud es una estrategia inherente a la promoción de la salud.

Una concepción moderna de la promoción de la salud debe tener como objetivo no sólo conseguir una vida sana, sino también lograr que la enfermedad se afronte adecuadamente y se conviva con ella de manera aceptable. Es decir, también es importante una educación para la enfermedad, pues la enfermedad convive interrumpida o ininterrumpidamente con nosotros desde que nacemos o incluso antes. Por ello, en el correcto tratamiento y cuidado del enfermo, deben incluirse aquellas medidas que contribuyan a recobrar o mejorar su estado de salud, a prevenir recaídas, y a favorecer su calidad de vida y la de quienes le rodean (Gallar, 2006).

Particularmente, el trabajo realizado en la Asociación Juntos por la Hemofilia de Yucatán, cumplen con los objetivos de la psicología de la salud, ya que es una área de la psicología orientada a mejorar la calidad de vida de las personas, a través de programas preventivos que favorezcan el autocontrol y la autorregulación física y psicológica así como a planificar acciones que intentan modificar la probabilidad de ocurrencia de procesos mórbidos (Labiano, 2006).

La hemofilia es un padecimiento que está presente durante la vida de algunas personas. La frecuencia con la que se presenta es aproximadamente uno en 10,000 nacimientos, el número de personas afectadas a escala mundial se calcula en cerca de 400,000, de los cuales casi todos son hombres (Sánchez, s/f).

En México existen 3387 personas con hemofilia (Federación de Hemofilia de la República Mexicana, A.C., 2006), de las cuales, de acuerdo a la Asociación Juntos por la Hemofilia de Yucatán, se estima que en Yucatán hay entre 200 o 250 personas con hemofilia, registrados únicamente 109 personas. Este 7.3%, es debido posiblemente en que existen algunas familias que por desconocimiento de la herencia familiar se han casado entre varón con hemofilia y mujer portadora, por lo que los hijos varones nacen casi necesariamente con hemofilia.

Afirma Papalia (1994, en Gallar 2006) que, frente a los sanos, los niños enfermos sufren un mayor nivel de angustia y con una mayor frecuencia. Los niños experimentan un intenso estrés cuando padecen una enfermedad, y muy especialmente cuando ésta les obliga a una hospitalización a la aplicación de procedimientos diagnósticos y terapéuticos que pueden ser agresivos o dolorosos. La razón de esto radica en que los niños pequeños no han desarrollado aún mecanismos y estrategias de afrontamiento adecuados. Pero a medida que van creciendo, la conciencia de enfermedad, incertidumbre y los citados procedimientos, siguen contribuyendo a mantener el estrés y la ansiedad, especialmente si no se ha recibido una educación para la enfermedad en el ámbito escolar y familiar.

La hemofilia es una enfermedad hemorrágica, hereditaria con carácter recesivo ligada al cromosoma X (IMSS, 2006). Existen 3 tipos de hemofilia: 1) Hemofilia A o clásica), su principal



característica es la deficiencia de la actividad coagulante del factor VIII (FVIII) del plasma; 2) La Hemofilia B o enfermedad de Christmas, ésta se caracteriza que da por resultado una deficiencia de la actividad coagulante del factor IX (FIC) y 3) Enfermedad de Von Willebrand, en ésta existe reducción de parte de la molécula del factor VII, denominado factor Von Willebrand o ristocetina, la deficiencia de este factor produce un tiempo de sangrado prolongado debido a que las plaquetas no pueden adherirse a las paredes de los vasos sanguíneos para formar un trombo que detenga el sangrado.

Desde el aspecto médico – clínico, se han enfocado en el estudio de formas de tratamientos menos dolorosos, alternativas medicamentosas, rehabilitación adecuada, entre otros. Sin embargo, los aspectos psicosociales han recibido una menor atención en comparación con su sintomatología clínica. En cuanto a los niños con hemofilia, se enfrentan a este padecimiento y a su tratamiento, por lo que es imprescindible educarlos sobre el desarrollo y manejo del padecimiento con el propósito de ayudarles a mejorar su calidad de vida y el de sus familiares y allegados.

Sarmiento, Carruyo de Vizcaino y Carrizo (2006), tras una investigación realizada en Caracas Venezuela, describen el funcionamiento social de los niños con hemofilia. Las secuelas físicas debidas al padecimiento de la hemofilia, afectan las actividades diarias de los niños, o son causa de períodos repetidos de hospitalización o visitas ambulatorias frecuentes, además de la necesidad de múltiples cuidados diarios y no poder participar en las actividades con sus compañeros, ocasionando dificultad en su crecimiento y desarrollo integral. Se evidenció que la mayoría de los niños con hemofilia estuvieron en las categorías de salud mental patológico o dudoso, resaltando de esta manera, la afirmación de que un porcentaje notable de niños que padecen una enfermedad crónica, se enfrentan a numerosos factores de riesgo psicosociales desde muy pequeños y se hacen vulnerables a los mismos.

En Yucatán aún no se tienen datos sobre la salud mental en niños con hemofilia, pues apenas se están comenzando a realizar acciones para tener un conocimiento mayor acerca de las personas con hemofilia en el estado, realizando encuestas sobre la sintomatología del padecimiento: qué personas lo padecen, qué tipo de hemofilia, en qué grado. Dichas encuestas han estado a cargo de la Asociación Juntos por la Hemofilia de Yucatán.

La severidad de la enfermedad, el deterioro de las articulaciones y la incapacidad en los niños con hemofilia, son parámetros para definir antecedentes de bienestar tanto físico como mental. En este sentido, al relacionar el grado de severidad de la hemofilia con los estados de salud mental, se observó que en la categoría normal predominaron los casos de hemofilia leve y moderada, mientras que el riesgo de salud mental (patológico y dudoso) se ubicó en los niños con hemofilia moderada y severa. Esto pudiera sugerir que el funcionamiento social de los hemofílicos está probablemente relacionado con el grado clínico de intensidad de la hemofilia.

Sin embargo, en nuestra opinión, al parámetro del grado de severidad que señala Sarmiento, Carruyo de Vizcaino y Carrizo (2006), debe agregársele otros como el apoyo social (brindado por la familia y amigos) y las habilidades de afrontamiento a problemas que posee el niño, así como las estrategias que tiene para tomar decisiones que cuiden su salud, para entonces definir antecedentes de bienestar tanto físico como mental.

Se consideran tres grandes tipos de riesgos psicosociales en el niño con hemofilia: riesgos personales, familiares y socio-educativos. Los riesgos personales, son aquellos inherentes al propio comportamiento y personalidad del niño hemofílico. Los riesgos familiares, son aquellos

inherentes a las pautas de educación familiar. La sobreprotección, la excesiva permisividad, las normas educativas inconsistentes, el culpabilizar y las excesivas limitaciones, generan vulnerabilidad psicológica, y como consecuencia los niños no adquieren confianza y autolimitan sus posibilidades de exploración y desarrollo. Entre los riesgos sociales y educativos, el tener amigos y compartir con ellos juegos y experiencias sociales, es uno de los nutrientes fundamentales que los niños tienen para el desarrollo de su personalidad (Sarmiento, Carruyo de Vizcaino y Carrizo, 2006).

Los niños con hemofilia comparados con otros que no padecen alguna enfermedad crónica, presentan mayores dificultades emocionales, familiares y de conducta, presentando habilidades sociales pobres como la dificultad para comunicar sus necesidades y preocupaciones, dificultad para empezar relaciones con el grupo de iguales y para manejar situaciones de estrés; la mayoría de los niños con hemofilia presentan comportamientos extremos: pasivos o agresivos. Sin embargo, se dice que estas dificultades pueden estar más relacionadas con los modelos educativos seguidos que con la hemofilia en sí (Sarmiento, Carruyo de Vizcaino y Carrizo, 2006).

Este padecimiento limita diversos aspectos de la vida "normal" de las familias con un miembro con hemofilia, puesto que conlleva a secuelas físicas debidas al padecimiento, afectan las actividades diarias de los niños, o son causa de períodos repetidos de hospitalización o visitas ambulatorias frecuentes. Además de la necesidad de múltiples cuidados diarios y no poder participar en las actividades con sus compañeros, ocasionando dificultad en su crecimiento y desarrollo integral. Otro aspecto importante es la presencia de la ansiedad por el riesgo a sangrar, el miedo a infecciones transmitidas por productos sanguíneos y la tendencia a la depresión. Que afectan no sólo al niño con hemofilia sino también a sus padres (Sarmiento, Carruyo de Vizcaino y Carrizo, 2006).

### **Metodología**

El trabajo realizado con los niños de la Asociación Juntos por la Hemofilia de Yucatán, A.C. se llevó a cabo en las instalaciones del Centro de Investigación Educativa y Formación Docente perteneciente al Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS) donde los miembros de la Asociación se reúnen un domingo de cada mes, para tratar temas de interés común y tener sesiones con el equipo de psicología. Cabe mencionar, que las sesiones se llevaron a cabo, en un comienzo en dos grupos: adultos y niños, y posteriormente en tres conjuntos: adultos, jóvenes y niños.

Los niños participantes, padecen hemofilia o tienen algún familiar con dicho padecimiento, y tienen entre 4 y 12 años de edad. Los que padecen hemofilia cuentan con diferentes grados de severidad del padecimiento, por tanto, hay niños con hemofilia leve, moderada o severa. En total son 11 niños y 2 niñas, de los cuales 4 niños tienen hemofilia severa (2 con discapacidad física en las piernas), 3 hemofilia moderada, 2 hemofilia leve y 4 no tienen hemofilia (2 niñas y 2 niños), pero tienen algún familiar con el padecimiento.

### **Procedimiento**

El trabajo con estos niños se realizó bajo la metodología de Investigación Acción Participativa (IAP). La investigación, es el proceso sistemático y crítico que busca comprender algún aspecto de la realidad con una finalidad práctica, la acción, asume la forma de realizar el estudio como un modo de intervención, en tanto que la investigación está orientada a la acción

y la participación, implica un proceso de construcción social en el que se involucran tanto investigadores del proyecto, como personas activas que conocen y son capaces de transformar su realidad. (Ander-Egg, 1990). La IAP consta de tres etapas o fases, las cuales son: diagnóstico, intervención y evaluación.

Este trabajo, en su totalidad, se ha desarrollado en 2 etapas. La primera, se realizó entre Febrero 2007 y Julio 2007, en donde se hizo una diagnóstico, intervención y evaluación de la misma. La segunda etapa, se realizó con los aprendizajes obtenidos en la fase anterior y desarrollando, al igual que en la primera, el diagnóstico, intervención y evaluación. Esta última etapa se realizó de Febrero a Julio de 2008.

La primera etapa de diagnóstico se realizó mediante talleres participativos para detectar las necesidades e intereses de los niños con respecto a su padecimiento utilizando diversos materiales: cuadernillo diagnóstico, cuento individual y tablero diagnóstico. En la segunda etapa se utilizó el cartel. Todos los materiales de la fase diagnóstica, están descritos en el apartado de Materiales.

Luego de conocer las necesidades e intereses de los niños, se realizó una planeación para poder intervenir en dichas necesidades, esta intervención también se realizó mediante talleres participativos en ambas fases de intervención, utilizando diversas técnicas y materiales psicoeducativos como lo son: los cuentos interactivos, el juego, la canción y el dibujo, también descritos en el siguiente apartado.

Con respecto a la fase de evaluación se realizaron diversas actividades: evaluaciones escritas, feria de juegos y laberinto, los cuales se describen en el apartado siguiente. Al finalizar cada taller, se realizó una evaluación escrita con el cuestionario de evaluación. El tablero, además de utilizarse para el diagnóstico, también se utilizó para evaluar el aprendizaje de los primeros 3 cuentos y mediante preguntas y respuestas orales se atravesó un laberinto para evaluar el aprendizaje de los cuentos 4 y 5.

### **Materiales**

a) Cuadernillo diagnóstico. Consiste en un cuaderno con 15 hojas donde los niños escriben en primera instancia su nombre y menciona con quien viven. Posterior a eso, señalan qué es lo que les gusta de ellos, qué es lo que no les gusta y qué es lo que cambiarían. Así también se les pregunta sobre lo que creen que los demás perciben ellos (familia y amigos), y luego sobre lo que ellos mismos perciben de sí mismos en diferentes ámbitos (en la escuela, con los amigos y amigas y con la familia). El cuadernillo diagnóstico, también indaga las situaciones en las que los niños sienten distintas emociones (alegría, enojo, tristeza y miedo), en diferentes ámbitos (en la escuela, con la familia, con los amigos y con el médico).

Otro aspecto que incluye el cuadernillo, son las cosas que los niños saben que pueden hacer y las que no, así como también, lo que hacen para afrontar algún problema o temor. El objetivo de este cuadernillo diagnóstico es conocer las emociones de los niños, percepción de sí mismos y su entorno, así como su vivencia del padecimiento.

b) Cuentos individuales. En cuanto a los cuentos individuales, consistieron en unos cuadernillos de hojas en blanco para que los niños realicen un cuento sobre lo que ellos realizan o saben del grupo de hemofilia, y las expectativas que tienen del trabajo de los psicólogos, con el objetivo de evaluar el conocimiento acerca del padecimiento, la Asociación y el trabajo del

psicólogo.

c) Tablero diagnóstico. Tablero de 1m. x 1m. con 8 caminos dirigidos hacia una meta. A través de respuestas correctas, cada niño podía avanzar hasta llegar a su meta. Las preguntas trataban sobre la hemofilia, sus características y las actividades que los niños con hemofilia pueden o no realizar, con el objetivo de evaluar el conocimiento adquirido sobre las temáticas revisadas y conocer nuevas necesidades. Este tablero se utilizó tanto para diagnóstico como para evaluación de los tres primeros cuentos, cuya recompensa última (por llegar a la meta del tablero) fue asistir a la feria de juegos.

d) Cartel. Se realizó un cartel entre todos los niños. Para hacerlo, cada niño contestó en una hoja de color con la forma de una patita de perro lo que le gustaría saber de la hemofilia, las actividades que quería hacer y los temas que quería aprender y la pegó en el cartel.

e) Cuento. Cinco cuentos que se presentan a través de proyecciones de diapositivas con la ayuda de un narrador(a). Los cuentos tratan sobre las aventuras de un perro llamado Manchita y sus amigos, los cuales fueron creados de acuerdo a la característica de los niños que acuden a la asociación y padecen hemofilia. A continuación se describe brevemente los personajes que se crearon para los cuentos:

Manchita es un perrito de 1 año que vive con su dueño Juanito en un vecindario, es muy curioso y preguntón, le gusta aprender cosas nuevas en cada momento, sus amigos dicen es el investigador del grupo y siempre lo acompañan en sus aventuras, además le gusta saber mucho para poder ayudar a Juanito.

Rayas es un gatito que es el mejor amigo de Manchita, tiene 7 años y vive en la calle. Es inquieto y travieso, le gustan las aventuras con riesgo y es muy descuidado en todo.

Lolo es un perico que es tan grande que ya se le olvidó su edad y vive con un doctor. Lolo es muy sabio y se la sabe de todas, todas.

Cito es un ratoncito de 6 años que vive con su papá. Es muy nervioso, tiene muchos temores y siempre se preocupa por todo, piensa que todas las cosas que hace y le pasan le van a salir mal.

Enseguida se describe de manera general el contenido de cada cuento:

En el cuento 1 titulado "Descubriendo un nuevo amigo", Manchita conoce a un gatito llamado Rayas y descubre que Rayas tiene hemofilia. Este cuento proporciona información acerca de la hemofilia.

En el cuento 2 titulado "¿Y qué puedo hacer?", Manchita y Rayas quieren jugar, pero como no saben qué actividades pueden realizar, van a casa de Lolo, un perico muy sabio que vive con un médico y él les enseña sobre la hemofilia y los cuidados que se deben tener, así como lo que pueden hacer en caso de algún accidente.

El cuento 3 se llama "Yo puedo decidir". En esta ocasión, Rayas y Manchita se encuentran en la encrucijada de decidir entre jugar en el parque fútbol o nadar en el lago. Este cuento proporciona al niño estrategias para la toma de decisiones.

En el cuento 4 llamado "Tengo miedo", Manchita y Rayas conocen a un nuevo amigo llamado Cito que es un ratoncito muy miedoso. Cito, al igual que Rayas tiene hemofilia, pero a diferencia del gatito, Cito no quiere jugar a nada por temor a que le suceda algo y posteriormente lo regañe su papá. Este cuento se enfoca en las emociones que viven los niños con hemofilia cuando tienen algún problema en el que requieren acudir a un adulto.

En el cuento 5 titulado “Puedo ayudarme”, Cito se lastima una patita, no se lo dice a ningún adulto y quiere hacer algo por sí mismo para cuidarse después de lastimarse. Él junto con Manchita y Rayas, van a casa de Lolo a preguntarle qué es lo que pueden hacer, por lo que Lolo, además de recalcarle que siempre debe decir a algún adulto si ocurre un accidente, les enseña sobre el botiquín de primeros auxilios.

f) Juegos. A modo de recreación y de muestra de actividades que pueden realizar sin lastimarse, los niños jugaron con lotería, dominó, boliche, burbujas, rompecabezas, memorama y títeres.

g) Canción. Es una recopilación de lo aprendido en los cuentos, nombrando a los personajes y sus características principales; incluyendo sobretodo las temáticas de toma de decisiones, manejo de emociones y cuidados personales.

h) El dibujo. Los niños colorearon los personajes de los cuentos, en un principio para su familiarización con los mismos y posteriormente para reforzar los conocimientos sobre las características y causas de la hemofilia y para que este conocimiento se reforzara también en casa, ya que los dibujos que los niños realizaban se los llevaban a casa para colocarlo en algún lugar donde lo vean frecuentemente (como puede ser el refrigerador o las paredes de sus recámaras).

i) Cuestionario de evaluación. Este cuestionario consiste en 5 preguntas relacionadas con el equipo de trabajo o facilitador, contenido de temáticas expuestas, convivencia del grupo y materiales de trabajo. Ante cada pregunta se puede responder: bien, regular o mal.

j) Laberinto. Laberinto de 1m. x 70cm. pintado con acuarela, que la figura de Cito tiene que atravesar con ayuda de las respuestas correctas de los niños, para poder llegar a sus amigos Manchita y Rayas.

## **Resultados**

Existe una gran heterogeneidad en el grupo de niños, esto en cuanto a las edades, niveles de desarrollo, presencia o no de la hemofilia, conocimiento sobre la hemofilia, así como las consecuencias de esta y sobre los cuidados especiales en cuando a dicho padecimiento. Se pudo notar que la mayoría de los niños lleva un desarrollo dentro de lo esperado; sin embargo, en otros el padecimiento ha hecho merma de sus capacidades físicas, lo cual ha afectado sus procesos de socialización y desarrollo físico, y en otros las condiciones familiares han sido las que más afectado su autoestima, autoconcepto y socialización.

Entre las primeras necesidades se encontró la importancia de llevar a todos a un mismo nivel de conocimiento sobre las causas, características y cuidados necesarios de la hemofilia, ya que en este punto nuevamente se observó la presencia de una gran diversidad en dicho nivel, no estando en todos los casos relacionado el conocimiento con la edad, sino que principalmente se relaciona con la preparación de los cuidadores, la comunicación que éstos entablan con el niño y la forma en que dicha comunicación se realiza. Este conocimiento es de suma importancia, pues tal como lo menciona Gallar (2002) informar al niño sobre su enfermedad y los procedimientos que se le van a aplicar, mediante palabras y argumentos lógicos asequibles a su capacidad de comprensión y razonamiento, hará que el niño sienta que controla la situación y se muestre mucho más colaborador y activo.

También, se detectó la necesidad de desarrollar capacidades en los niños en la toma de decisiones, a fin de poder planear y prever las consecuencias de sus acciones antes de

emprenderlas, para que de esa manera puedan protegerse.

Mediante modelamiento a través del uso de cuento, se enseñó a los niños los pasos que pueden seguir ante daños físicos, así como los pasos para tomar decisiones sobre las actividades que impliquen riesgos. Aprendiendo entonces a tomar decisiones en cuanto a los juegos que pueden realizar sin riesgo, o decidir por los que implican menor. Pero como también es importante que los niños tengan mayores opciones de recreación, mediante juegos, aprendieron a realizar actividades divertidas que pueden disfrutar y que no impliquen riesgo.

Durante la segunda parte diagnóstica, surgieron necesidades e intereses nuevos. Los niños manifiestan que debido a su padecimiento han vivido situaciones en las que las emociones negativas se expresan con mayor frecuencia, realizan conductas de riesgo y ocultan a sus iguales, maestros y conocidos el padecimiento. Por tanto, en las actividades, tanto en el cuento 4 como en las actividades realizadas en torno a él, se trabajó en el reconocimiento de las emociones, pero también en las consecuencias de las conductas de riesgo originadas por estas emociones.

Algo interesante, es que durante esta segunda etapa, los niños recién ingresados al equipo, manifestaron la necesidad de aprender sobre el padecimiento en sí, pero tanto ellos, como los que ya habían estado durante la primera etapa, expresaron su deseo de aprender a cuidarse ante los golpes, cortadas e inflamaciones; lo cual se trabajó mediante actividades y el desarrollo de habilidades para el autocuidado, así como la información acerca de las alternativas para cuidarse.

### **Conclusiones**

Las actividades y técnicas utilizadas con los niños, permitieron adaptar la información de las temáticas de forma adecuada al nivel de desarrollo de los niños. Lo anterior pudo ser observado cuando los niños respondían adecuadamente a las preguntas realizadas durante y después de dichas actividades.

La técnica de cuento permitió que los niños se apropiaran de la información mediante modelamiento a través del cuento, que participaran de forma espontánea y compartieran sus experiencias. Esta técnica mostró ser eficaz, aunque requiere de un tiempo considerable para su planeación, diseño y aplicación. Además, resulta necesario incluir a un narrador que sea constante y familiar para los niños, pues promueve una mayor participación de los mismos durante la presentación de los cuentos.

Debido a las características de la población, el juego resultó una estrategia útil para mantener la atención de los niños en las actividades, así como para socializar los contenidos y aplicarlos de forma adecuada. A través de esta misma estrategia se realizaron reflexiones de los contenidos y aportaciones de los niños.

En cuanto a la canción, se puede afirmar que ha sido útil para consolidar el aprendizaje de los niños y que, dadas sus características rítmicas y de sencillez, es una estrategia que permite esta consolidación a pesar del tiempo y el lugar en que se encuentren, es decir, los niños recuerdan lo aprendido, sin la necesidad de estar en el espacio que brindan los talleres participativos.

Durante las sesiones se promueve el intercambio con los niños, facilitando la reflexión de los contenidos, a la vez que compartan, desde su experiencia, cómo viven el padecimiento de la hemofilia, favoreciendo también el crecimiento de su círculo social, favoreciendo entonces a su desarrollo integral, pues tal como menciona Craig (1997) la pertenencia a un grupo suele mejorar la autoestima de los niños de las minorías y ajustar y facilitar su ajuste durante la niñez media.

Es importante continuar los trabajos realizados con los menores sobre las áreas de comprensión del padecimiento e implicaciones en su desarrollo, habilidades sociales para mejorar sus relaciones con sus pares y para informar de su condición, afrontamiento de situaciones de riesgo y de estrés, mejora de la percepción de la hospitalización y rehabilitación. Como menciona Gallar (2006), es importante que la persona conozca sobre su enfermedad pero también de las estrategias que pueden mejorar su salud y afrontar la misma.

Un siguiente paso a realizar es trabajar con toda la familia, es decir, que en ocasiones se realicen sesiones donde adultos y niños estén juntos en familia, para favorecer su convivencia, su comunicación, el desarrollo y el aprendizaje. Ya que de esta manera, los padres aprenden junto con los niños y pueden reforzar lo aprendido en casa, al mismo tiempo que se favorece la comprensión de ambas partes.

Sería recomendable en una siguiente etapa, trabajar con escuelas (maestros y niños), respecto a sensibilización y conocimientos acerca de la hemofilia y promoción de la salud, ya que en la actualidad en estos ámbitos se desconoce acerca de este padecimiento y las formas de manejarlo. Esta sensibilización e información se puede trabajar incluso con otros padecimientos frecuentes o no frecuentes, que los niños pueden presentar: diabetes juvenil, cáncer, etc, de tal manera, que quede incluido e implícito el respeto y la aceptación ante la diversidad de todas las personas. Esta recomendación se debe a que los niños en estas etapas (niñez temprana e intermedia), pasan la mayor parte del tiempo en la escuela y algo fundamental en sus vidas son los compañeros del colegio.

Es importante mencionar, que a lo largo de todo el proceso, ha existido una rotación de participantes e inconsistencia en la asistencia, lo cual no ha permitido avanzar en nuevas temáticas, evaluar los últimos talleres realizados, ni realizar una evaluación de impacto de todo el proceso.

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## Strategies to promote resilience in families of low income exposed to social and environmental risks

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### Abstract

*The investigations of processes and possibilities of resilience in families who live poverty is an issue related to the Positive Psychology movement. This discussion is important because it helps to question ideological concepts and build a new professional approach more oriented to healthy aspects of human development rather than the pathological ones. The framework of the key processes for family resilience considers that families can emerge stronger and more resourceful in meeting and coping successfully with challenges. The present work aims to propose strategies to promote the development of resilience in families at risk based on the improvement of the relational quality of the professional's services who deal with families. Qualitative studies on the discourses of Brazilian social agents showed that their patterns of interactions with families at risk are focused on pessimistic "implicit theories" about the characteristics of these groups. They are seen as dysfunctional, neglectful parents, passive to their situation of poverty, violent and substance users. These elements emphasize their vulnerabilities and have demonstrated a negative impact on the relationships of families and professionals. It also suggests that professionals do very little but donate supplies to help the families in a concrete manner. This proposal of psycho educational intervention worked with both families and social agents separately. The methodologies were: ecological engagement, reflexive interviews and focal groups. The groups aimed to critically discuss and analyze belief systems, patterns of communication, organization and social practices. The professionals were teachers or educators from public schools or institutions, law and health community agents. The results of intervention showed better communication among the different services of social family support network and there was an improvement in the advocacy's ability to recognize the real needs and risks lived by the families. All the participants reported more sense of connection in their jobs which offers opportunities of promoting resilience in families with different risk histories.*

Key-words: Resilience in families; Families in risk situations; Intervention with social agents.

Resiliência é uma palavra utilizada com frequência na Europa, Estados Unidos e Canadá. No Brasil, seu uso coloquial ou acadêmico ainda provoca estranhamento principalmente no contexto das Ciências Humanas e Sociais. Oriundo da Física, o conceito de resiliência refere-se à capacidade de um material absorver energia sem sofrer deformação plástica ou permanente. Em Psicologia, os estudos datam de cerca de trinta anos e apesar da constante busca dos autores por precisão conceitual, ainda é ampla a diversidade de definições e enfoques. Deve-se ressaltar que resiliência é um construto prioritário de investigações dos cientistas adeptos da Psicologia Positiva, movimento que vem se consolidando há cerca de dez anos. Este movimento científico

e acadêmico caracteriza aportes da Psicologia contemporânea que buscam compreender os aspectos potencialmente saudáveis dos seres humanos em oposição à psicologia tradicionalmente voltada para a compreensão das psicopatologias. Isso não quer dizer que a Psicologia deva ignorar as doenças psíquicas e seus sintomas, mas que seja possível construir uma ciência psicológica que estude tanto o sofrimento quanto a felicidade, bem como as interações entre estas duas dimensões humanas (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005).

Resiliência em famílias é um construto mais recente do que a resiliência individual e vem recebendo atenção específica nos últimos doze anos. Tanto no Brasil, como no exterior, os pesquisadores da resiliência em famílias vêm divulgando com frequência cada vez maior e mais intensa as suas discussões. Os artigos teóricos, metodológicos e intervencionistas (Ceconello, 2003; De Antoni & Koller, 2000; De Antoni, Barone & Koller, 2006; Garcia & Yunes, 2006; Hawley & DeHann, 1996; Libório, Castro & Coelho, 2006; McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Futrell, 1999; Ungar, 2004; Walsh, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2005; Yunes, 2001, 2003, 2006; Yunes & Szymanski, 2005, entre outros) refletem que muitos pensadores desta temática julgam necessário revisar o foco das investigações sobre a resiliência no indivíduo e reconsiderar as contribuições da família para o desenvolvimento psicológico da saúde e do bem estar individual e social (McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Futrell, 1999; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982; Walsh, 1996, 1998; Yunes, 2003; Yunes & Szymanski, 2001). É fato que em diferentes tempos, lugares e culturas os estudos sobre família vêm enfatizando os aspectos deficitários da convivência familiar (Walsh, 1993). Tais elementos negativos das interações familiares têm sido maximizados pela seqüência de situações veiculadas pela mídia e que envolvem relações abusivas entre pais/madras/madrastas e filhos (as) demonstrando que situações de extrema violência podem permear a intimidade do mundo familiar. Percebe-se que o que acontece entre "quatro paredes", muitas vezes coloca crianças, adolescentes e adultos em condições de altíssimo risco. Portanto, o interesse pela resiliência no contexto das famílias vem contribuir para flexibilizar as noções de privacidade familiar e focar os aspectos sadios e de sucesso do grupo familiar. No entanto, ainda há muitas facetas deste construto em fases iniciais de investigação.

A pesquisa bibliográfica indica que foi ao final dos anos 80 que as questões sobre coping, competência, desafios e adaptação do grupo familiar começaram a ser divulgadas. Um dos primeiros trabalhos desta área foi publicado por McCubbin e McCubbin (1988) sobre a "tipologia de famílias resilientes". Os autores partiram da definição de que famílias "resilientes" são aquelas que resistem aos problemas decorrentes de mudanças e "adaptam-se" às situações de crise. Os autores delinearão a importância dos trabalhos de intervenção com famílias, sem esquecer as relações destas com a comunidade, bem como, referiram-se à importância da formalização de programas públicos de apoio e atenção às famílias. Com a evolução desta efervescente discussão teórica, metodológica e política, emergiu mais tarde, sob liderança destes mesmos pesquisadores, novas perspectivas conceituais e metodológicas. Os autores referidos acima publicaram uma coletânea de resultados sobre resiliência em famílias que viveram diferentes situações de adversidades (McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Futrell, 1999), tais quais: infertilidade (Daly, 1999), homossexualidade dos filhos (Allen, 1999), membros familiares portadores de doenças do tipo AIDS (Thompson, 1999) ou diabetes (Chesla, 1999) e condição familiar pós-divórcio (Golby & Bretherton, 1999).

No que antecede estas notórias publicações, poder-se-ia afirmar que o potencial de

pesquisas e suas idiossincrasias nessa área de conhecimento já haviam sido deflagradas quando pesquisadores como Walsh (1996) e Hawley e DeHann (1996) passaram a preocupar-se em esclarecer, conceituar, definir e propor novas perspectivas teóricas para os estudos sobre resiliência em famílias. Pioneira na construção de um modelo teórico, Froma Walsh (1998, 2003, 2005) propõe que sejam estudados processos-chave da resiliência em famílias, os quais fundamentam a proposta de análise de "funcionamento familiar efetivo". A autora organizou seus conhecimentos na área de forma a propor um panorama conceitual de resiliência em três domínios: sistema de crenças da família, padrões de organização e processos de comunicação (Walsh, 1998, 2003, 2005). Segundo a autora, estes processos podem estar organizados e expressarem-se de diferentes formas e níveis, pois servem diferentes constelações, valores, recursos e desafios das famílias (Walsh, 1998). Estas afirmações sugerem a importância do estudo das histórias das famílias como estratégia de análise e compreensão dos processos de interpretações das situações de adversidade, que por sua vez "impelem ou impedem" indivíduos e grupos a buscarem soluções para suas dificuldades (Yunes & Szymanski, 2005). Portanto, resiliência deixa de ser compreendida como uma característica individual para ser conceitualizada como uma qualidade ou mais um elemento sistêmico da unidade familiar (Hawley & DeHann, 1996). Indo mais além, seja no indivíduo ou na família, resiliência é um fenômeno que evidencia expressivos componentes relacionais. Vários autores indicaram nos seus estudos, a influência de relações com pessoas significativas e contextos próximos que formaram uma situação de apoio imprescindível para a superação das adversidades da vida (Cyrułnik, 2004; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992; Werner, 1993; Ungar, 2004; Yunes, 2001, entre outros). De acordo com Walsh (1998), a maioria das pesquisas e teorias sobre resiliência tem abordado esse contexto relacional da resiliência de maneira limitada, considerando apenas a influência de uma única pessoa significativa numa relação diádica. Na ótica do desenvolvimento humano e tratando-se de resiliência como importante sistema de adaptação que visa a promover saúde e bem estar (Masten, 2001) a teoria bioecológica de desenvolvimento humano de Urie Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) apresenta-se como importante sustentáculo teórico e metodológico para a compreensão e análise destas interações e seus sentidos, pois auxilia a compreender relações que ocorrem em rede.

Em 1998, Urie Bronfenbrenner e Pámela Morris apresentaram um construto-chave denominado processo proximal (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) que se define como uma forma particular de interação das pessoas em desenvolvimento com os seus ambientes imediatos. Estes processos que operam ao longo do tempo são os primeiros mecanismos que produzem e movem o desenvolvimento humano na dimensão da reciprocidade de influências que ocorrem nos diferentes sistemas contextuais. Podem promover competências ou disfunções a depender das formas de interações entre pessoas e outras pessoas, pessoas e objetos ou símbolos que fazem parte dos ambientes de desenvolvimento. Portanto, é necessário compreender não apenas as complexidades das interações diádicas – triádicas e intrafamiliares, mas também das pessoas e famílias com os diferentes integrantes e aspectos componentes da rede de apoio social. Dantes destas considerações surgem as seguintes inquietações: Qual o papel desta rede no desenvolvimento dos processos de resiliência em famílias que vivem situações de pobreza e vulnerabilidade social e ambiental? A partir deste questionamento apresentamos algumas reflexões sobre a situação de pobreza e suas vicissitudes para se constituírem contexto de desenvolvimento humano.

## **Pobreza, Desigualdade Social e suas Implicações**

Muitos autores reconhecem que pobreza e miséria são importantes fatores de risco universal (Luthar e Zigler, 1991; Luthar, 1999) e que privação econômica pode constituir-se em uma das principais fontes de risco sociocultural para o desenvolvimento humano (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992, Fincham, Grych & Osborne, 1994). Entretanto, é preciso implementar o conhecimento científico sobre os fatores de risco que se apresentam nestes contextos, ou seja, é necessário identificar e compreender as ameaças sociais e as adversidades que permeiam a vida e o cotidiano das comunidades de baixa renda. Cabe ressaltar que estes fatores são processuais, dinâmicos e subjetivos, pois o que é risco na condição de pobreza para um indivíduo, grupo familiar ou comunidade, pode ser percebido como desafiador e mobilizador de recursos para outros.

Mais uma vez, o olhar ecológico sugere a importância de uma análise macrosistêmica e reflexiva sobre as expressões de desigualdade social na sociedade brasileira. Talvez uma destas manifestações seja o que alguns autores denominam violência estrutural. De acordo com Minayo (1990), a violência estrutural é "aquela que nasce no próprio sistema social, criando as desigualdades e suas conseqüências, como a fome, o desemprego, e todos os problemas sociais com que convive a classe trabalhadora" (p. 290). Esta compreensão dos macrosistemas requer o entendimento sistêmico das demais dimensões contextuais de influência no desenvolvimento humano (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). Muitas formas atuais de expressão de violência se enquadram "nos sistemas econômicos, culturais e políticos abusivos que conduzem à opressão de grupos, classes, nações e indivíduos, aos quais são negadas conquistas da sociedade, tornando-os mais vulneráveis que outros ao sofrimento e à morte" (Minayo, 1994, p. 8). Isso significa pensar nos valores, nas crenças, nas práticas e nas tradições que reiteram e coíbem oportunidades de bem estar e qualidade de vida a todos aqueles que integram os sistemas sociais numa comunidade. Mantendo esta elaboração no patamar do raciocínio ecológico e sistêmico, é possível pensar também, nas expressões de violência estrutural microsistêmica. Estas ocorrem através das conseqüências observadas no cotidiano de muitas famílias que são: a obrigação de viver com salários irrisórios, ter que abandonar as crianças pela impossibilidade de sustentá-las, manter crianças fora do ambiente escolar por falta de escolas ou de condições de enviá-las, acesso a cuidados de saúde inadequados ou ausentes, não ter saneamento básico na sua comunidade e perder progressivamente os seus direitos sociais e civis adquiridos (Minayo, 1994). Autores americanos consideram que estas formas de viver constituem-se em "ambientes socialmente tóxicos" que retratam a privação social e cultural à qual estas populações de baixa renda estão submetidas (Garbarino & Abramovitz, 1992), muitas vezes por ciclos de gerações. Estes autores referem-se à pobreza e aos riscos socioculturais como ameaças ao desenvolvimento de crianças e adolescentes e exemplificados como "falta de comida, de afeto, de professores carinhosos, de boas condições de atendimento médico e de valores coerentes com progresso intelectual e competência social" (p. 35), condições "corriqueiras" em muitas comunidades de várias cidades brasileiras. Apesar de todas essas vivências de risco social, muitas famílias pobres dão lições de superação das conseqüências nefastas impostas pelas inegáveis desigualdades de oportunidades.

### **Possibilidades de Resiliência em Famílias Pobres**

O que se conhece sobre os processos e a dinâmica de funcionamento de famílias brasileiras que vivem situações de pobreza ainda é insuficiente. Alguns estudos evidenciam que muitas vezes estes grupos familiares se mostram hábeis na tomada de decisões e na superação de desafios, transparecendo uma unidade familiar e um sistema moral fortalecido diante da proporção das circunstâncias desfavoráveis de suas vidas (Mello, 1995; Sarti, 1996; Szymanski Gomes, 1988; Yunes & Szymanski, 2006). Conforme já referido neste texto, não se pode negar que as condições indignas e a precariedade das contingências econômico-sociais castigam a maioria das famílias pobres brasileiras. Isso pode afetar de forma adversa o desenvolvimento de crianças, adultos e de suas comunidades. No entanto, não se deve tratar este fato como regra sem exceção, pois muitas vezes estes grupos desenvolvem processos e mecanismos de proteção que garantem sua sobrevivência, não só física, mas dos valores de sua identidade cultural, e conseguem transformar-se no contexto essencial de desenvolvimento para os seus membros.

Diante disso, temos utilizado o vocábulo - possibilidades de resiliência -, expressão que sugere potencialidades que todos possuem para enfrentar situações de sofrimento e dor. Como exemplo destas possibilidades, temos os resultados obtidos por Garcia e Yunes (2006) numa pesquisa desenvolvida com famílias monoparentais lideradas por mulheres pobres do extremo sul do Brasil. As pesquisadoras constataram fatores de risco vividos pelas "chefes" das famílias (monoparentalidade, moradia/ alimentação inadequada, desemprego, renda indigna e instável, a vivência das perdas afetivas e a falta de uma rede de apoio social eficiente, entre outros). O dinamismo interacional dos riscos na presença de mecanismos de proteção atestaram as habilidades de superação das mulheres diante de situações familiares difíceis, muitas vezes julgadas a partir de (pré) conceitos injustos ou crenças pessimistas dos operadores de serviços sociais acerca de suas saúde psicológica e qualidade de vida. Os "fatores de proteção" encontrados na história das famílias referem-se a questões internas da dinâmica familiar retratados pelos seguintes elementos: senso de coesão entre os membros (identificados pela presença de vínculos afetivos e o sentimento de união entre o grupo); o apoio afetivo e financeiro da família extensa; a explícita valorização do estudo e do trabalho por todos os componentes das famílias; o olhar positivo, ou seja, a forte crença na perspectiva de melhoria das condições de vida futura; e, a consciência política dos direitos como cidadãos e a disposição para reivindicação dos mesmos.

Um outro exemplo nessa mesma perspectiva advém de um estudo de caso realizado por Yunes e Szymanski (2006) com uma família de baixa renda, moradora de um bairro categorizado como "muito pobre" do extremo sul do Brasil. Os relatos retrataram as várias experiências de risco vividas pelo grupo, tais como: adoção de ambos os pais na infância, a privação de necessidades básicas (fome, frio, falta de moradia adequada), migração (mudanças de endereço do campo para cidade), desemprego, doenças e presença de alcoolismo na figura paterna por doze anos. A análise dos resultados denotou que dentre os indicadores de "superação de adversidades", o sistema de crenças da família emergiu como eixo norteador dos relatos. A família mostrou que valorizava as relações interpessoais através de interações intra e extrafamiliares formadas em padrões de ajuda, aprendizagem, afeto e solidariedade. Os relatos do grupo evidenciaram que diante de crises, a família buscava a compreensão e o sentido das dificuldades, buscando apoio na família extensa e na rede social para manter o controle da situação. Ficaram evidentes os sinais de planejamento e de organização para a tomada de decisões, o sentimento de respeito mútuo

e a coesão familiar pautada em uma comunicação aberta e explícita de sentimentos e emoções. Assim sendo, o período pós-adversidade era percebido como transformador e benéfico, e o grupo familiar se sentia mais forte e marcado por um sentimento de solidariedade. Chamou a atenção na análise desta família, a postura dos membros em relação à vizinhança: atitudes sempre ativas no sentido de promover o bem estar de outras pessoas (vizinhos) que compartilhavam com eles o mesmo endereço social. Entretanto, considerando-se a resiliência como um fenômeno relacional, qual é o papel das ações dos trabalhadores sociais em relações às premências das famílias de baixa renda que vivem situações de risco psicossocial?

### **As Práticas Sociais dos Trabalhadores e suas Teorias Implícitas sobre Pobreza**

As teorias implícitas são representações mentais que formam parte do sistema de conhecimento dos indivíduos com base no acúmulo de experiências pessoais oriundas do contato com práticas culturais e formas de interação social (Rodrigo, Rodríguez & Marrero, 1993). Outras terminologias, tais quais sistemas de crenças, esquemas ou ideologias também são usadas para explicar esse conhecimento de natureza social. Em geral, todos os termos remetem a um conjunto relativamente homogêneo e racional de idéias, conceitos, imagens, normas, valores e produtos culturais. Os indivíduos ou grupos sociais que sustentam determinadas teorias implícitas deixam transparecer a sua relação com a realidade social através de comportamentos orientados pelo conteúdo de suas idéias. Com o objetivo de conhecer as crenças e teorias dos agentes sociais que lidam com famílias pobres num município do extremo sul do Brasil, uma equipe de pesquisadores do CEP-RUA da FURG, Centro de Estudos Psicológicos sobre Meninos e Meninas de Rua da Fundação Universidade Federal de Rio Grande, vinculados ao Núcleo de Estudos e Atenção às Famílias (NEAF/FURG) realizou investigações junto às famílias pobres - para compreender suas necessidades e prioridades, e entrevistou trabalhadores sociais de diferentes formações para conhecer seus pensamentos e percepções sobre o funcionamento familiar dos que vivem em condição de pobreza.

Os agentes sociais entrevistados nas pesquisas forneceram informações que subsidiaram as reflexões deste texto e de outros trabalhos publicados pelos núcleos de pesquisa acima referidos (Yunes, 2001, 2007; Yunes, Mendes & Albuquerque, 2004, 2005, 2007) A maioria dos participantes era do sexo feminino e trabalhava direta ou indiretamente com famílias pobres. Eram cuidadores e dirigentes de instituições de abrigo, agentes comunitários de saúde, diretores e professores do ensino fundamental de bairros da periferia, assistentes sociais e profissionais do ambiente judiciário.

As famílias pobres que compõem o cotidiano do trabalho destes profissionais investigados foram descritas na maioria das vezes como acomodadas e submissas à situação de miséria, além de "desestruturadas", não apenas pela sua configuração não-nuclear, mas também pelas apontadas características de violência nas relações intrafamiliares: de abandono, de negligência das crianças e pela incidência do uso de drogas na família. Os profissionais acreditam que estas características podem ser transmitidas através das gerações, o que perpetua os mitos familiares de "acomodação" e "desestruturação".

Ao serem solicitados para descreverem famílias "que enfrentam as adversidades da pobreza, mas conseguem viver bem", muitos profissionais apresentaram dificuldades em organizar suas idéias, pois parecia difícil fugir da configuração inicial de seus sistemas de crenças

(formados por famílias pobres "acomodadas, carentes, desestruturadas, violentas") que insistiam em aparecer no seu discurso. Na opinião destes profissionais, as "famílias que superam" os desafios da pobreza podem encaixar-se em dois modelos não exclusivos categorizados de acordo com a análise de dados qualitativos: relacional e normativo/ organizador. O modelo relacional enfatiza a presença de pessoas significativas na dinâmica interna da família, tais como a mulher, no papel de mães ou avós e outros parentes femininos da família extensa. Talvez estas crenças tenham relação com algumas teorias de desenvolvimento feminino e masculino, que reforçam pressupostos tais como: "Os valores de cuidado, apego, de interdependência, relacionamentos e atenção aos contextos são primordiais no desenvolvimento feminino. Os homens definem-se em termos de trabalho e carreira, e as mulheres tendem a definir-se no contexto das relações humanas e julgam a si mesmas em termos de suas habilidades de cuidar" (McGoldrick, Heiman e Carter, 1993, p. 412). Estas crenças podem ao mesmo tempo ter suas raízes nas concepções de pobreza e suas relações com chefia feminina nestes contextos. Segundo Sarti (1996), "as famílias desfeitas são mais pobres, e, num círculo vicioso, as famílias desfazem-se mais facilmente". (p. 45). O papel do homem como provedor na família é o mais afetado na pobreza (Montali, 1991). São as mulheres que lideram as famílias, e a experiência das entrevistadas confirma este dado. A vulnerabilidade destas famílias chefiadas por mulheres é reconhecida por alguns pesquisadores (Lopes & Gottschalk, 1990), mas não o é integralmente por nossos profissionais, que percebem a mulher como "forte e poderosa" na dinâmica familiar monoparental. Este fato é confirmado pelos resultados de pesquisas já referidas acima neste mesmo texto (Garcia & Yunes, 2006; Yunes, Garcia & Albuquerque, 2007). Outras questões relacionais apontadas pelos profissionais como indicativas de famílias que "superam" as adversidades são a presença de "mentores" e a afetividade nas interações com as crianças e com o ambiente. O modelo de processos de resiliência em família de Walsh (1998, 2003, 2005) e apontados pela autora nas dimensões da importância dos processos de comunicação familiar confirma este achado.

O segundo modelo de crenças dos profissionais sociais intitulado normativo/organizador enfocou as prioridades de ocupação e reforçou o papel do estudo, do trabalho e das rotinas de organização e colaboração do grupo familiar. Estes aspectos também se alinham com uma outra dimensão do modelo de resiliência em famílias de Walsh (1998, 2003, 2005) denominada padrões de organização. Se focarmos a questão do trabalho na perspectiva de Sarti (1996) tal qual apresentada em seu estudo sobre a moral dos pobres, temos que: "é através do trabalho que os pobres demonstram não serem pobres" (p. 66) e buscam, como trabalhadores, a dimensão positiva de sua identidade e a força moral para "quando caírem no buraco, se levantar" (p. 67). Os resultados da análise das entrevistas dos profissionais neste estudo validam esta posição, na medida em que se pode encontrar na perspectiva dos agentes sociais que atendem as famílias, a qualificação do "pobre estudioso e trabalhador" como aquele que "dá certo na vida". Mas, demonstra também que os profissionais não reconhecem a perspectiva da exploração na forma como se organiza o trabalho na sociedade capitalista, nem tampouco os mecanismos da intitulada violência estrutural (Minayo, 1990). No sistema de crenças das profissionais, o grupo familiar que "vive bem", tem maiores chances se estiver no modelo nuclear tradicional, onde juntos vivem, pai, mãe e filhos. Nas concepções estudadas por Szymanski Gomes (1988) em famílias de baixa renda, a família nuclear é uma expressão da "família pensada" como a "boa", a "natural" e a "certa". Pode-se constatar que tal ideologia não está apenas presente nas representações das próprias famílias

pobres (Szymanski Gomes, 1988), mas faz também parte do ideário daqueles que atendem profissionalmente estas mesmas famílias de baixa renda e que talvez desqualifiquem aqueles que divergem do que julgam "certo".

Portanto, a compreensão da experiência dos profissionais entrevistados sugere que a maioria acredita que as famílias pobres têm escassas probabilidades de sucesso diante das adversidades da pobreza. O discurso dos entrevistados postula que sua clientela é formada basicamente por aqueles que "não superam" as adversidades. Os profissionais entrevistados revelaram de início suas idéias organizadas com base em preconceitos de pobreza e desvantagem socioeconômica, o que confirma a inspiração ideológica do construto da resiliência (Martineau, 1999; Yunes & Szymanski, 2001) e a "patologização" da pobreza (Yunes & Szymanski, 2003). Tais atitudes não são exclusividades de trabalhadores sociais brasileiros, pois alguns trabalhos americanos mostram que os profissionais da saúde mental apresentam uma visão de pessoas negras e pobres como "desmotivadas", "preguiçosas", "desorganizadas" e impossíveis de serem tratadas (Boyd-Franklin, 1993).

Estas reflexões nos fazem pensar no modelo de relações que tem sido adotado por estes agentes sociais no seu dia-a-dia com as famílias pobres. Os estudos e as reflexões ora apresentados trazem evidências suficientes sobre a complementação diádica de papéis na linha de "culpabilizar a vítima", o que parece servir para descrever o modelo das interações "agentes sociais e famílias pobres". Ao que parece, estes profissionais desconsideram a difícil trajetória política e social destas pessoas ao longo de um caminho de pobreza de oportunidades que vem de gerações anteriores. Conforme perguntado anteriormente: Qual o resultado desta relação? Com toda certeza não tem sido o reconhecimento das reais dificuldades vivenciadas historicamente por estas famílias, nem tampouco a relação empática e genuína capaz de gerar o desenvolvimento de uma identidade positiva e a consciência transformadora nestes grupos. Ao contrário, esta atitude negativa e de descrédito dos profissionais em relação às famílias, parece agir no sentido de provocar uma atuação "paralisada" e governada por um sistema de crenças que dita a incompetência das famílias pobres em modificarem suas condições de vida como se tudo dependesse apenas deles! E, a partir desta crença, os profissionais atuam como se não houvesse "o que fazer" por estas populações, cujo sofrimento vem se exacerbando diante de tanta desconsideração política e social... Desta forma, parece que, se depender dos operadores dos serviços sociais, educacionais e de saúde pública, a identidade destes grupos manter-se-á nos personagens da "desestrutura" e "desorganização", e a qualidade de vida e os fatores de risco permanecerão inalterados...Quais seriam as alternativas para mudar este cenário?

### **Estratégias de Intervenção: Programas de Reflexão junto aos Agentes Sociais**

Os resultados apresentados neste texto sugerem que é preciso dar uma atenção especial às conseqüências do "conhecimento prático" dos agentes sociais. É preciso investir tempo e dinheiro governamental em programas de educação que possam modificar a compreensão individualística e microssistêmica que os profissionais têm da condição de pobreza. Há que se promover o entendimento coletivo do fenômeno da pobreza sob a ótica da realidade vivida, a qual tem usurpado os direitos de muitas famílias à cidadania e à felicidade. Os elementos encontrados nas histórias de vida das famílias pobres se contrapõem claramente às crenças pessimistas dos agentes sociais, que, como já se demonstrou, mostram-se reticentes quanto às possibilidades de



superação das adversidades advindas da pobreza nestas populações. Conforme argumentado acima, nota-se que as famílias pobres que compõem o cotidiano do trabalho dos agentes são percebidas através de adjetivos que sublinham a vulnerabilidade e a fragilidade das dinâmicas familiares. As percepções otimistas de melhoria de vida e de superação das dificuldades ficam pouco salientes ou sequer são mencionadas por esses profissionais. É relevante citar que os agentes sociais reconhecem que as famílias vivenciam uma diversidade de dificuldades e citam condições de risco tais como: experiência de fome, baixa escolaridade, analfabetismo, diferentes formas de violência, falta de segurança, instabilidade econômica, poucas oportunidades de emprego. Entretanto, deve-se ressaltar que estes e outros fatores, como também os mecanismos abstratos, invisíveis e implícitos de exclusão social, são conseqüências da miséria, do desemprego e da carência de condições de moradia e recursos básicos necessários para a sobrevivência digna. Portanto, estão distantes do alcance ou controle dessas populações. Na maioria das entrevistas, este olhar macrossistêmico (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996) sobre a pobreza e as dificuldades enfrentadas pelas famílias, acima classificadas como violência estrutural e social, não se fazem presentes na descritiva dos profissionais.

A urgência na (re) formulação e (re) construção de programas públicos de educação que visem a auxiliar a (re) elaboração de visões dos agentes sociais e suas práticas educativas fatalistas, deterministas e pessimistas levou o CEP-RUA da FURG e o NEAF a proporem encontros de reflexão com as diferentes categorias de profissionais sociais (cuidadores de instituições de abrigo, agentes comunitários de saúde, conselheiros tutelares, profissionais do judiciário e professores do ensino fundamental).

O espaço conjunto em seminários, fóruns, jornadas e cursos temáticos foi capaz de garantir momentos de reflexões sobre ações e atitudes do cotidiano relacional não só das díades e tríades representadas por trabalhadores sociais - crianças/adolescentes - famílias, mas também sobre o funcionamento e a comunicação dos contextos que compõe a rede de apoio social. Um exemplo de um evento promovido nesta direção intitula-se "Cuidando dos cuidadores", um curso anual que se originou da constatação que a experiência de institucionalização de crianças e adolescentes pode trazer riscos decorrentes do despreparo dos cuidadores que estão no contato diário com estas populações. As reuniões de reflexão com diretores de abrigo, equipe técnica e cuidadores têm sido realizadas desde 2004 e propiciam trocas de conhecimentos acadêmicos (por parte dos formadores, mediadores e pesquisadores da universidade) e experiências e inquietações (trazidas pelos coordenadores, técnicos e cuidadores em geral). Muitos dos profissionais que participam dos encontros buscam informações imediatistas e/ou "receitas" para futuras intervenções em casos extremos e difíceis, como em situações de abuso e violência sexual contra a criança ou adolescente ou presença de uso abusivo de substâncias psicoativas em familiares. Apesar de ser dada a devida atenção às inquietudes dos agentes, a estratégia é de usar estes exemplos para ampliar as discussões teóricas e práticas, mostrando que as soluções emergem das elaborações do próprio grupo. Os resultados da avaliação destas formações apontam para a criação de mecanismos de inter-relações através das quais a rede humana interna (o corpo de funcionários dos abrigos) está cada vez mais próximo da rede social externa (conselho tutelar, ministério público, secretarias municipais, escolas, etc.) que atende as crianças e adolescentes institucionalizados. Uma das instituições participantes das jornadas criou uma "Escola para pais" e tem promovido grupos semanais de diálogo com as famílias das crianças e adolescentes abrigadas, o que evidencia

o esforço de aproximação por parte dos profissionais e uma reprodução da metodologia já vivenciada nos cursos de formação. Outra instituição flexibilizou os horários de visitação para os pais. Em consequência pode-se constatar um maior número de retorno de crianças para as famílias de origem ou reinserções familiares (preservação familiar).

Entende-se que desta forma, este conjunto de pessoas e de ambientes podem efetivamente oferecer proteção e desenvolvimento humano a todos os participantes. Outras categorias de profissionais sociais têm sido convidadas a participar de eventos com planejamentos similares. Para os professores de ensino fundamental, os cursos têm seguido o formato de módulos de 6 a 10 encontros temáticos (Miranda & Yunes, 2007) pois a demanda se caracterizou por solicitações de esclarecimentos de questões ligadas à violência doméstica e atendimento de famílias com suspeita de abuso sexual contra crianças e adolescentes. Este programa de intervenção tem sido específico para promoção de atitudes de denúncias que protejam todos os envolvidos: crianças/adolescentes abusados, familiares e profissionais da educação (Miranda & Yunes, 2007).

As observações, relatos e avaliações pós-cursos apontam para o aumento de sentimentos mútuos de confiança, empatia e reciprocidade nas interações com efeitos expressivos nos processos de vida de algumas famílias acompanhadas por nossos pesquisadores.

### **Considerações finais**

As estratégias de intervenção junto aos profissionais sociais almejam sumamente resignificar e reconstruir crenças e práticas estereotipadas de atendimento às famílias em situação de risco. Buscou-se ainda, redirecionar o foco das ações para os aspectos da saúde e da resiliência dos grupos. É fato que um conjunto harmônico integrado por pessoas que convivem em ambientes interconectados pode oferecer mais oportunidades de educação, aprendizagem e desenvolvimento humano a todos os participantes. Conforme Juliano (2005), o trabalho social conjunto e cooperativo torna as fronteiras das instituições mais permeáveis. A interação e o trabalho em rede dos atores sociais, certamente possibilita a efetiva proteção da criança e do adolescente conforme prevê o ECA (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente, 1990). Sabemos que apenas isso não basta e que muitas outras ações, intervenções e programas de apoio ainda serão necessários para humanizar o atendimento que tem sido disponibilizado às famílias que vivem diferentes ameaças sociais. Parafraseando Bronfenbrenner (2005), passamos por um momento histórico, político e social em que é urgente intervir em todos os segmentos das nossas sociedades para formar, informar e tornar mais humanos os seres humanos...

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# Sense of community in the work context. A study on members of a co-operative enterprise

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the psychological relationship between the individual, the work organization and the community context. In particular, the influence of organizational (Organizational Sense of community, Organizational identification, Organizational efficacy, Perceived Organizational values) and community variables (Sense of community referred to the local community) on workers' psychological well being was assessed, taking into account a particular work context: the co-operative enterprise.*

*A questionnaire was submitted to 805 workers of a large co-operative enterprise with different work status and tenure (67.7% partners and 32,3% employees).*

*Results confirmed that partners (vs employees) perceive the cooperative as more committed to its stated core values and acting consistently with them. Moreover, partners show a higher level of Organizational efficacy, Identification with the cooperative and Organizational Sense of community and a higher Sense of community referred to the local community. Workers with more than 10 years of tenure perceive the cooperative as more committed to its values and show a higher Identification with the cooperative and a higher Sense of community compared to younger workers.*

*Workers' psychological well being decreases with length of service and is positively influenced by Sense of community referred to the local community; however, organizational variables positively contribute to well being only among partners.*

Key words: Organizational sense of community, Organizational identification, Organizational values, Co-operative enterprise, Workers' well being.

## The work organization as a "community"

Today individuals often find sources of meaning, identity and support in the workplace since it is where they spend most of their time. From a Community Psychology perspective, a workplace community is identified both as a geographic locality and as a formal and informal networks of individuals who share a common association (Burroughs & Eby, 1996; Pretty & McCarthy, 1991; Lambert & Hopkins, 1995).

The study presented in this paper addresses the psychological relationship between the individual, the work organization and the community context; in particular the influence of organizational and community variables on workers' psychological well being was assessed. The work context considered is a co-operative enterprise.

Describing the psychological relationship between the individual and the work organization: theoretical constructs

The psychological relationship of individuals with the work organisation can be described by different indicators; in this context we focus on Organizational Sense of community, Organizational identification, Perceived Organizational efficacy and Perceived Organizational values.

### **Organizational sense of community**

Sense of community has been described as the extent to which a person feels part of a readily available, supportive and dependable structure; that one belongs to somewhere. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), Sense of community is “a feeling that members have of belonging and being important to each other, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met by their commitment together” (11). For these authors, sense of community includes four dimensions: belonging, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and emotional connection.

Research studies on Sense of community have focused the attention on different types of communities (e.g., town, school, virtual communities). A consistent finding is that SoC positively contributes to individuals’ well being (e.g., higher life satisfaction, lower feelings of loneliness) (Prezza et al., 2001). Moreover, research studies indicated that people who have resided in the community the longest tend to have the highest indicators of Sense of community; this may be related to the extent of residents’ current involvement as well as to past memories of their life course.

Besides residential communities, other contexts are important in individuals’ lives and may be experienced as “communities”; one of these is the workplace. According to Burroughs & Eby (1998) a psychological Sense of community can be created by individuals who choose a referent (e.g., a business organization) to bring structure and meaning to their life.

Workers with a high Sense of community recognise that their organization meets their needs, provides them with enhanced quality of life and expects them to be responsible citizens in the organization and in the society. Workers are more likely to experience Organizational SoC when supervisors are sensitive to their needs, supportive, the organization is fair in allocating promotions, provides challenging jobs, encourages interaction among workers, enables job mastery (Lambert & Hopkins, 1995). Workers with high Sense of community recognise the importance and the value of the welfare of the organization for the collective well being, and are less likely to feel isolated and alienated (Burroughs & Eby, 1998).

### **Organizational identification**

From a Social identity perspective (Mael & Ashforth, 1989), Organizational identification may be defined as the extent to which individuals define the self in terms of membership in the organization; the perceived oneness between self and organization. The more individuals identify with an organization, the more organization’s interests are incorporated in the self-concept, and the more likely the individual is to act with the organization’s best interests in mind.

Employee identification with the organization is thought to have a number of potentially important benefits both for the organization and for employees themselves. Employees who identify with their organization are presumed to be more likely to buy in to the organizations’



goals and activities and to be more motivated to work hard to achieve these goals. Organizations with high levels of employee identification can be expected to benefit more from a more cohesive work atmosphere and greater levels of cooperation and altruism, including greater levels of citizens' organizational behaviour and support for the organization. Employees can benefit from positive self esteem and the satisfaction of the human need to belong.

In the research literature there is evidence of the role of Organizational identification in affecting turnover intentions; limited attention has been devoted to the study of employee outcomes like psychological well being (Harris & Cameron, 2005).

### **Perceived organizational efficacy**

Organizational Efficacy (OE) is a generative capacity within an organization to cope effectively with the demands, challenges, stressors, and opportunities it encounters within the business environment. It exists as an aggregated judgement of an organization's individual members about their (1) sense of collective capacities, (2) sense of mission or purpose, and (3) a sense of resilience (Borgogna, Petitta & Steca, 2001). Organizational efficacy has been investigated as a product of leadership style (Bohn, 2002); we have less information on the impact of OE on job-related and worker-related outcomes.

### **Perceived organizational values**

Organizational values are beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate standards of behavior members should adopt to achieve these goals. Organizational values are related to organizational norms, guidelines or expectations that prescribe appropriate kinds of behaviour by employees in particular situations and control the behaviour of organizational members towards one another.

A critical issue in understanding the role of values for employee outcomes is the relationship between Organizational values and personal values of workers. According to Maslach and Leiter (2008), personal values are the ideals and motivations that originally attracted people to their jobs, and thus they are the motivating connection between the worker and the workplace, which goes beyond the utilitarian exchange of time for money or advancement. When there is a values conflict on the job (a gap between individual and organizational values) workers will find themselves making a trade-off between work they want to do and work they have to do. Conflict in values is related to burnout and decisions to leave the organization; consistency between organizational and personal values is associated with greater professional efficacy.

### **A particular work organization: the co-operative company**

The co-operative company can be defined as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. A cooperative may also be defined as a business owned and controlled equally by the people who use its services or who work at it.

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and equality. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

They are also legal entities with a range of unique social characteristics. Membership is open, anyone who satisfies certain non-discriminatory conditions may join (by contributing to its capital). Economic benefits are distributed proportionally according to each member's level of participation in the cooperative.

### **The context of the study**

The cooperative under study (C.) is a limited liability (producer) co-operative company, located in North Italy with 918 employees, of whom 585 are partners (e.g. contributed financially to become partners).

It is a leader enterprise in promoting and creating important and extensive projects: large-scale urban re-planning works; shopping, business centres and those for recreational purposes; logistic centres. It also builds infrastructures, i.e. it deals with the production of prefabricated structures, window and door frames, railway superstructures and office furnishing where it has reached the very top of these sectors, being able to offer high level proposals appreciated in Italy and throughout the world.

The partners (as co-owners) are the ones who make the basic decisions for the company. Each partner is entitled to vote regardless of the company capital he has paid. Most of the profits are usually added to the indivisible reserve, to back company developments and create new business opportunities. The assets are handed down from generation to generation, contributing towards the growth of the communities in question.

Its Mission is stated as follows: "Promote and implement projects able to improve the quality of people's life in the cities and places of work. Interpret society in its complexity and future, turn built-up areas to account, harmonise the needs of the environment, the social and cultural aspects and the economy".

#### **Aims and Hypotheses**

The first aim of the study was to investigate the quality of workers' relationship with the co-operative (Organizational Sense of community, Organizational identification, Perceived Organizational efficacy, Perceived Organizational values). In particular, we wanted to assess the differences between partners and employees and according to tenure (length of service).

Hypotheses were that organizational variables (Organizational Sense of community, Organizational identification, Perceived Organizational efficacy, Perceived Organizational values) should be higher among partners than employees (Hyp.1) and should increase with length of service (Hyp.2).

The second aim was to assess the impact of organizational variables (Organizational Sense of community, Organizational identification, Perceived Organizational efficacy, Perceived Organizational values) and Sense of community referred to the local community (town) on partners/employees' psychological well being.

Hypotheses were that organizational variables should enhance psychological well being only among partners (Hyp.3), whereas Sense of community referred to the local community should enhance psychological well being both among partners and employees (Hyp.4).

## **Method**

### **Instrument**

The instrument was a on-line self-administered questionnaire including the following sections.

**Organizational Sense of Community.** It was assessed using 19 items adapted from the Psychological Sense of Community at Work scale (Burroughs & Eby, 1998). Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Organizational identification.** Identification with the co-operative company was measured using an adaptation of the Organizational Identification scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Its 6 items add up to a single identification index which is strongly focused on the affective/motivational side and less on the cognitive one. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

**Social identification as a partner.** This section of the questionnaire was administered only to co-operative partners and it was based on 6 items adapted from the Social Identification scale (Cameron, 2004). Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .72$ ).

**Perceived organizational efficacy** was measured by the Perceived Collective Efficacy Scale for Producers Organizations (Borgogni, Petitta & Steca, 2001), measuring global efficacy and including 7 items. Response alternatives are provided on a seven-point scale (1 = completely disagree; 7 = completely agree) ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Perceived organizational values.** The perception of the extent to which the co-operative company lives up to its values was assessed by 32 items ad hoc created from the results of a pilot focus group study (e.g., "Everybody here can express his/her opinion, regardless of his/her role"; "Taking part in decisions is a right of all partners which is expressed by voting"). Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

**Sense of community** referred to the local community was assessed by Multidimensional Scale of Sense of Community (Zampatti, Prezza & Pacilli, 2007) including 26 items. Response alternatives are provided on a five-point scale (1 = completely disagree; 5 = completely agree) ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Psychological well being** was measured by Ryff & Keyes's (1995) PWB, short version (18 items), measuring positive psychological functioning (response alternatives from 1 = completely disagree, to 6 = completely agree) ( $\alpha = .80$ ).

### **Participants**

Participants included 805 workers (90% of the total population); 67.7% were partners and 32,3% employees. 76.6% were males and 23.4% females. As regards age, 13.3% were less than 30 years old, 28.6% were in the 30-39 years old range, 33.1% were 40-49 years old and 25.0% more than 50 years old.. 45.5% were employed for less than 10 years and 54.5% from more than 10 years (Table 1). As regards level of education, the distribution of the sample was the following: Primary school 26.8%; Secondary school 52.8%; University degree 19.8%.

**Table 1**  
**Participants**

	Length of service		
	Less than 10 yrs (%)	More than 10 yrs (%)	Total (%)
Partners (%)	168 (21.1)	372 (46.6)	540 (67.7)
Employees (%)	195 (24.4)	63 (7.9)	258 (32.3)
Total (%)	363 (45.5)	435 (54.5)	798 (100)

**Results**

Organizational efficacy, Organizational identification, Organizational Sense of community

Table 2 shows mean scores and standard deviations in organizational variables. Significant differences were found in all the variables according to work status: partners score higher than employees on Organizational efficacy,  $t(800) = -5.725, p = .000$ , Organizational Identification,  $t(801) = -7.905, p = .000$ , and Organizational Sense of community,  $t(799) = -3.270, p = .001$ . Moreover, Organizational Identification increases with length of service,  $t(796) = -3.257, p = .001$ .

**Table 2**  
**Organizational efficacy, identification, sense of community: Means and SD**

	Organizational efficacy <sub>a</sub>		Organizational identification <sub>b</sub>		Organizational SoC <sub>b</sub>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Partner/Employee						
Partners	5.81	0.79	3.93	0.69	3.49	0.52
Employees	5.44***	1.04	3.49***	0.82	3.35***	0.60
Length of service	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
< 10 yrs.	5.63	0.90	3.70	0.78	3.43	0.57
> 10 yrs.	5.74	0.89	3.87***	0.73	3.46	0.55

<sub>a</sub> range 1-7; <sub>b</sub> range 1-5      \* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$       \*\*\* $p < .001$

Among partners, social identification as a cooperative partner increases with length of service,  $t(535) = -2.081, p = .038$  (Table 3).

**Table 3**  
**Partner social identification (only partners)**

Length of service	Partner social identification <sub>a</sub>	
	M	SD
< 10 yrs.	3.78	0.62
> 10 yrs.	3.87	0.59

<sub>a</sub> range 1-5

**Perceived organizational values: factor analysis**

Factor analysis conducted on the 32 items lead to the extraction of the following factors:

- a) Cooperative democracy (6 items,  $\alpha = .75$ ); e.g. “Everybody here can express his/her opinion, regardless of his/her role”;
- b) Sustainable development and intergenerationality (6 items,  $\alpha = .70$ ); e.g. “This cooperative enterprise looks into the future”;
- c) Collective entrepreneurial subject (CES) (5 items,  $\alpha = .59$ ); e.g. “Taking part in decisions is a right of all partners which is expressed by voting”;
- d) Perception of negative elements (4 items); e.g. “As the cooperative grows bigger, it gets harder and harder to be consistent with cooperative values”. This factor will not be considered in further analyses.

Mean scale scores were calculated for each factor. Results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Perceived organizational values: means and SD**

	Organizational Values <sub>a</sub>					
	Cooperative democracy		Sustainable development		CES	
Partner/Employee	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Partners	3.48	0.73	4.28	0.51	3.96	0.59
Employees	3.33**	0.75	3.85***	0.61	3.66***	0.58
Length of service	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
< 10 yrs.	3.44	0.70	4.08	0.57	3.77	0.58
> 10 yrs.	3.43	0.77	4.20**	0.57	3.94***	0.62

<sup>a</sup>range 1-5      \*p <.05    \*\*p <.01    \*\*\*p <.001

Significant differences were found in the scores of perceived Organizational values according to work status: partners, more than employees, think that the co-operative acts consistently with its values, such as Cooperative democracy,  $t(802) = -2.695, p = .007$ , Sustainable development,  $t(802) = -10.663, p = .000$  and CES,  $t(802) = -6.757, p = .000$ . Workers with over than 10 years of service, more than others, think that the co-operative adheres to the values of Sustainable development,  $t(797) = -3.108, p = .002$  and Collective entrepreneurial subject,  $t(797) = -3.883, p = .000$ .

**Sense of community**

Mean scores of SoC are shown in Table 5. Results indicate that Sense of community referred to the local community is higher among partners,  $t(796) = -5.020, p = .000$ , and increases with length of service,  $t(791) = -3.937, p = .000$ .

**Table 5**  
**Local Sense of community and Psychological well being: means and SD**

	Sense of community (local community) <sub>a</sub>		Psychological well being <sub>b</sub>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Partner/Employee				
Partners	3,73	0,51	4,45	0,56
Employees	3,52***	0,59	4,40	0,60
Length of service	M	SD	M	SD
< 10 yrs.	3,58	0,54	4,56	0,60
> 10 yrs.	3,73***	0,54	4.34***	0,50

<sub>a</sub> range 1-5

<sub>b</sub> range 1-6

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.01

\*\*\*p<.001

**Psychological well being**

As displayed in Table 5, Psychological well being is quite similar in all the workers (partners and employees), and decreases with length of service,  $t(784) = 5.458, p = .000$ .

**Impact of organizational and community factors on individual well-being**

Hierarchical Regression Analysis was conducted to test the influence of organizational and community variables on well being. Analyses were conducted separately for employees (Table 6) and partners (Table 7).

**Table 6**  
**Regression analysis on Psychological well being (Employees)**

	Psychological well being			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Block 1				
Length of service	-,27***	-,22***	-,22***	-,24***
Block 2				
Cooperative democracy		,11	,09	,10
Sustainable development		,17*	,16*	,13
CES		,04	,02	,00
Block 3				
Organizational efficacy			-,03	-,02
Organizational identification			,08	,05
Organizational SoC			,01	-,11
Block 4				
SoC				,31***
R <sup>2</sup>	.07	.14	.15	.22
F	19,983***	10,230***	6,028***	8,353***
Df	1,250	3,247	3,244	1,243
F change	19,983***	6,537***	,506	21,144***

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.01

\*\*\*p<.001

**Table 7**  
**Regression analysis on Psychological well being (Partners)**

	Psychological well being			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Block 1				
Length of service	-,19***	-,22***	-,22***	-,25***
Block 2				
Cooperative democracy		,10	,05	,05
Sustainable development		,07	,07	,05
CES		,08	,06	,05
Partner social identification		,26***	,13*	,09
Block 3				
Organizational efficacy			-,04	-,04
Organizational identification			,13*	,11*
Organizational SoC			,15*	,08
Block 4				
SoC				,25***
R <sup>2</sup>	,03	,21	,23	,27
F	19,136***	27,736***	19,475***	21,794***
Df	1,528	4,524	3,521	1,520
F change	19,136***	28,876***	4,721**	31,291***

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Results show that, among employees, predictors of psychological well being are length of service and Sense of community referred to the local community. Among partners, significant predictors include also Organizational identification. Organizational Sense of community is no more significant when Sense of community referred to the local community is entered into the equation.

## Discussion

The first aim of this study, involving the whole worker population of a large co-operative company (both partners and employees) was to test the differences in organizational variables (Perceived Organizational values, Organizational efficacy, Organizational Identification and Organizational Sense of Community) according to workers' status and length of service.

Results confirmed that partners (vs employees) perceive the co-operative as more committed to its stated core values and acting consistently with them. Moreover, partners, compared to employees, show a higher level of Organizational efficacy, Identification with the cooperative and Organizational Sense of community and a higher Sense of community referred to the local community (Hyp.1). This finding is consistent with the higher personal involvement and investment (economic, emotional, etc.) of partners into the co-operative and the more "binding" relationship they have with it.

Considering differences according to length of service, workers with more (vs less) than 10 years of service perceive the co-operative as more committed to the values “Sustainable development” and “Collective Entrepreneurial Subject” and show a higher Identification with the cooperative. Moreover, workers with more years of service have a higher Sense of community referred to the local community (Hyp.2).

As regards the second aim of the study (to assess the impact of organizational variables on workers’ psychological well being), results show that length of service is an important contributor to well being both for partners and employees: for both groups an increase in the years of work is associated with a reduction in psychological well being. A possible explanation of this finding is that length of service co-varies with workers’ age, and the latter has been found associated with a decrease in scores of psychological functioning (Ryff & Keyes, 2005).

A significant result is that organizational variables are irrelevant for employees’ well being, whereas for partners, Social identification with the co-operative positively affects psychological well being (Hyp.3). Previous research investigating the role of Organizational identification on indicators of employee well being indicated that OI had limited impact on general well being (e.g., life satisfaction) (Cameron & Harris, 2005). This study positively adds to this literature showing that, in this specific kind of organisation, partners’ well being positively benefits from a high-quality relationship with their work organisation. Perceived organizational efficacy of the co-operative, even though higher among partners, does not affect their psychological well being.

Of particular interest is the role of Organizational Sense of community: Organizational SoC positively affects psychological well being among partners, but is irrelevant for employees. As regards Sense of community referred to the town of residence, results indicate that it is important for both partners and employees, thus confirming existing research literature that indicates that Sense of community positively contributes to individual’s well being (Prezza et al., 2001). For partners, the introduction of this variable reduces the impact of Organizational SoC suggesting that, in this group, a more complex relationship between different levels of belonging (town and work organisation) exists, requiring a deeper investigation. For example, it is important to consider the aims of this co-operative enterprise, which explicitly focus of the promotion of quality of life of people within different community contexts (as stated in its Mission: Promote and implement projects able to improve the quality of people’s life in the cities and places of work), and the attention toward the local community, in its social, cultural and environmental dimensions (e.g., harmonise the needs of the environment, the social and cultural aspects and the economy). All this suggests that this work organisation conceives of itself as strongly embedded into the local community and as a contributor to its growth in a global sense.

To conclude, organizational variables influence psychological well being only among partners further supporting the significant role of the ownership (“partnership”) of the co-operative company. The impact of Sense of community referred to the town on well being is consistent with expectations and with the literature (cf. Prezza et al., 2001).

These results emphasise the relevance and usefulness of further investigating the construct of Sense of community also in the organizational context (cf. Burroughs & Eby, 1998; Pretty & McCarthy, 1991; Lambert & Hopkins, 1995).



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# Empowerment evaluation for the participation and leadership of people with experience of mental illness.

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## **The Social/Community Context**

The purpose of this presentation is to describe how AEIPS services have used service evaluation as a tool for the empowerment process in a mental health community based organization program.

AEIPS was the first non-governmental organisation in Portugal that, in 1987, clearly had oriented its program towards inclusion, and participation in the community of the people with experience of mental illness.

Notwithstanding other former experiences in the community that attempted to value the experience of people with mental illness from the socio-cultural point of view throughout early 80's the main supports available to respond to the basic needs of people with mental illness (housing, nourishment, income, productivity, social participation, health, security) were provided by family and friends, and by psychiatric hospitals and public mental health departments through interment services and ambulatory consultations, some rehabilitation services (hospitals day care centres), and from private psychiatric consultations and clinics.

Also, along with a lack of community based services, until that date, regardless of 20 years experience of organisations of families of children with physical and mental disabilities, there were no family organisations nor of people with mental illness themselves.

It was within this national panorama that AEIPS outlined an intervention program which mission relied in the promotion of the community integration of people with mental illness. Therefore, only in the late 80's and in the course of the 90's, had emerged the first organizations outside of the public mental health system that created community centres, day care centres, group homes with or without permanent professional supervision which came to inspire, as well as the recommendations of international organisations, then, a still little developed legislative set that defines and frames the new body of community mental health services and supports in Portugal. Consequently, that there was a strong deficit of power and social participation by the people with mental illness that had to be surpassed.

However, the changing process for the inclusion and participation of people with mental illness is only made possible with the effective contribution of people with mental illness to the adequacy of supports to their interests, objectives and needs. According Zimmerman, (1998), participatory programs tend to be more relevant and adjusted to the needs of users, and therefore, could be successful in their results.

For the current presentation we follow the concept of empowerment viewed as a group-based, group-member driven, developmental process through which marginalized or oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives, enhanced access to valued resources,

and reduced societal marginalization (Maton, 2008).

### **AEIPS Context: The Centre for the Empowerment and Mutual Help (CEAM)**

Aiming to unfetter leadership processes, AEIPS intensified the deepening of empowerment mechanisms of its users through the involvement and participation in the organizational processes. To build this program it was relevant the definition of community leadership presented by the National Extension Task Force on Community Leadership (Langone, 1992) which refers that leadership involves influence, power and intervention in public decision making in one or more areas of activity, that may include an organization, an area of interest, an institution, a city, a place or a region.

In the same way other authors (Ramsay, K; Reed, B.; Vandenberg, L. & CLIMB Partners, 1998) consider that community leaders are people that participate, have a sense of community, are more empowered and take a very important role in building healthy and competent communities, who have common values and care for each other.

AEIPS having implemented a internal debate in 2001 about the possibilities and conditions of fostering recovery from mental illness, and on the basis of the results of that participative approach, made a restructuring of the services program, introducing new dimensions but one most significant was the implementation of a partnership relation between professionals and users.

Both parties, due to the advantages, benefits that could render in terms of support, resources and strengthening, considered this mutual collaboration desirable but its implementation implies a considerable effort of approaching to the culture of both groups. Therefore, a positive collaboration between professionals and users relies mainly in building trust relationships based on a regular and longitudinal practice, identification of common goals to achieve, flexibility of attitudes before different values and approaches, combined and continued reflection and sharing of responsibilities (Jorge-Monteiro, 2000).

Also agreeing with Maton & Salem (1995), the community organizations (eg. voluntary associations, mutual help groups, neighborhood organizations, churches) may constitute relevant settings where individuals, through active participation in community environments, can attain power and resources and achieve their personal goals.

Putting in practice this collaborative orientation it led us to implement the Study of Empowerment with the majority of users of services (AEIPS, 2001) in order to obtain a first look into user opinion about the services. This research was performed by a team composed of professionals and people with mental illness who carried out the translation and adaptation of the study by Rogers, S., Chamberlin, J., Ellison, M.L., Crean, T., 1997) who identified significant empowerment processes to people with mental illness and its implications to the rehabilitation programs and mental health (Chamberlin, J.,1997).

In our study (AEIPS, 2001), the crucial results were related with the access to information, possibility to make choices and decisions, have critical awareness, unlimited learning perspectives and changes, among others.

The results/ outcomes were, however, medium satisfactory in some scales used in the study. Regarding the extent of the power of individual decision, the wide majority of participants revealed a good perception of itself and its skills but the group was divided in half about the

sometimes to feel alone. About the aspects related to the involvement and active participation in the community context, was demonstrated a strong determination to involvement in the group and in the community experiencing however revealing a necessity of development of critical awareness in several processes towards organizational transformative change.

In the year 2000, Marc Zimmerman, made relevant contributions deepening reflexions on empowerment theory and offered an understanding for organizational empowerment, and establish the definitions for empowering and empowering organizations. Empowering settings are those that produce empowerment outcomes for individual members as a result of their organizational process, while empowered settings are those that influence the larger system of which they are part (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004).

In a former study, Maton & Salem (1995), used an inductive process to synthesize findings from an inductive study identifying organizational characteristics of community settings that appeared to generate member psychological empowerment, the key facets of those empowering setting are the group-based belief systems, opportunity role structures, support systems, and leadership.

For AEIPS empowerment partnership it was rendered concrete by the process of increased involvement of users in all decision-making areas and service delivery and by the creation of a pilot program exclusively controlled by users and dedicated to the promotion of participation and leadership within the organisation as well as in the community which is coordinated by 6 users in order to develop a transformative leadership so this group of users main function will be to put into practice collective action, critical awareness and resource mobilisation according with the conceptual definition of empowerment (Rappaport, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000). This program became known as CEAM – Centre for the Empowerment and Mutual Help.

This program also came to benefit from the implementation of a collaborative process of assessment throughout the organization based on a support team with the task of facilitating the scale of assessment and support throughout the all process (AEIPS, 2005). Concurrently, participants also had opportunities for training in leadership and citizenship as a result of synergies of partnerships in two projects of this nature and that have integrated and contributed to the purposes of the ongoing evaluation of empowerment. That is, according to Fawcett, S.B., Paine-Andrews, A., Francisco, V.T., Schultz, J.A., Richter, K.P., Harris, K.J., Williams, E. L., Berkley, J. Y., Lopez, C.M., Fisher, J.L. (1996), we have appeal to the empowerment evaluation as a way of capacity building because it aims to legitimize community members' experiential knowledge, and empower community members.

Thus, for the first time it was discussed and developed the logical models and measures of outcomes for each of the areas for the entire organization, and the leadership program as well. However, the development and success of the program led to further review of the mission and current goals that will be described in future literature about AEIPS.

We followed Peterson & Zimmerman (2004) suggestions that a conceptual model of empowered organizations include three score components: i) intraorganizational, ii) interorganizational, and iii) extraorganizational to develop CEAM organizational goals and internal structure. The intraorganizational component of organizational empowerment includes characteristics that represent the internal structure and functioning of organizations which provides the infrastructure for members to engage in proactive behaviors. The interorganizational

includes the linkages between organizations and collaborations across organizations. The extraorganizational component of organizational empowerment includes actions by organizations to affect the larger environment.

These CEAM initial goals were, firstly, to increase the participation and influence of users with mental illness in the organization (OB.1) and, secondly, to obtain greater visibility and participation at community level (OB.2).

Regarding this first dimension of leadership (OB.1) it took place a systematic debate about the domains where users participation and involvement had a really good expression and areas where there was necessary to innovate and introduce the vision of people with mental illness. This way, it was considered that should be achieved some specific goals, such as:

- To increase the influence and visibility of the experience of people with mental illness in the organisation
- To maintain and improve the mutual help actions of between users
- To broaden the knowledge and information, mainly about the disease, the protection of fundamental rights, organisation and conflict resolution;
- Recovery opportunities and participation in the community, among others

For the second major goal, it was settled specific goals oriented (interorganizational and extraorganizational) actions in order to seed the foundations of people's with mental illness experience empowerment in the community. Community empowerment sends us to the social-political dimension and relates to the capacity of a community to respond to the collective problems (Rich, 1995). The four facets of empowering settings identified by Maton & Salem (1995) were also considered important in the development of our program: the presence of a system of values that inspires personal growth, the access to social roles, the existence of a sense of community that provides support and a committed leadership.

Regarding this dimension of leadership, the one where exists a strong deficit in our national context, there were analysed the empowerment strategies and steps that could unleash a sense of community, through formal and informal connections aiming the implementation of initial structures of community leadership and also to promote the changing of the traditional image of people with mental illness within the community in general. There were also identified some specific goals in this dimension (OB.2):

- To increase contact of people with mental illness with/in the community
- To provide information and training about the possibility of recovery from mental illness to the population in general / reduce the social stigma of mental illness
- To organise the representation of interests and priorities of people with mental illness locally and nationally

Currently, AEIPS's leadership program, is on a full scale of implementation and of progressive goals achievement (CEAM, 2006, 2007). Nevertheless, aiming to systematise and demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the program itself throughout these years of execution the group leaders, ought participate in an investigation plan whose guiding lines will be discussed and facilitated by the evaluation support team. However the impact evaluation should be analysed to the level of the empowerment processes (of different levels), sense of community and community participation.

Yet, we could present one of the bases of this preliminary work that refers to the leaders'

group vision of their expectations of the program's results and impact. This joint reflection work was based in three main dimensions, the individual, the organisational and communitarian (AEIPS, 2006, Breda& Ornelas, 2006). Regarding the individual dimension, the participants think that they achieved a more informed participation about the circumstances related to the illness itself and mainly a political vision of life in society. They also consider to having achieved a sense of personal fulfilment, valorisation and commitment and refer that they acquired more communication skills and widened their net of relationships.

The group's opinion about the impact of the leadership program on the organisation itself has to do mainly with the quality of the relationship between all users through the conveyance of information, shared responsibility and conflict resolution. The leaders group is also a way of user representation and advocacy in the organisation and in the community. In relation to the results identified in the community level, in this first stage, the program: i) allowed to share experiences with people of other organisations; ii) it was a way of people with mental illness being acknowledged in their citizenship by the community; iii) promoted awareness against discrimination of mental illness

I want to close this presentation affirming that with this empowerment program we expect to support the aims and wishes of people with mental illness for a better quality of life and presence in community.

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