COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERVENTION

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International and university cooperation is based, among others, on developing a psycho-social intervention referred to some methodological and epistemological approaches and to some ethical principles driving the community development.

The themes here proposed, therefore, are related to cooperation projects aimed at community development.

We are interested to present a reflection moving from cooperation projects aimed to the improvement of mental health, to the stimulation of citizens' participation aimed at improving the quality of life, defending human rights and strengthening the resilience at an individual, group and community level.

Experiences carried out will be here documented with the purpose to develop reflections on theoretical approaches and methodologies that guide the cooperation in this field, as well as on the ways each project has established the relationship between universities from different countries and between universities and governments, institutions, public and private organizations, NGOs, communities, local and international networks. Particular attention has been paid to the study of the forms of participatory action research, implemented within the framework of cooperation initiatives aimed at enhancing the role of local cultures and knowledge. The focus of the communications here presented is to highlight the impact of these forms of cooperation both on contexts of the global South and on developed countries affected by the consequences of economic crisis.

According to the picture that emerged it is possible to highlight both the different approaches between the cooperation projects in the field of psycho-social intervention and to show the presence of many common aspects; specifically, these experiences emphasize the importance of these forms of cooperation and the amplitude of the effects they may have both on the contexts in which they are carried out, as well on scientific research.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION: THE TEMPUS PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

Tempus is the European Union's programme that supports the modernisation of universities in the partner countries and contributes to the creation of an area of cooperation in the field of higher education between the EU and Partner Countries neighbouring the EU. This programme promotes voluntary convergence towards European policy developments in higher education, as it has been outlined by the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna Process. Main specific objectives of Tempus are: – to overcome inter-country fragmentation in the area of higher education and inter-institutional fragmentation in the countries themselves; – to enhance interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity; – to enhance the employability of university graduates; – to make the European Higher Education Area more visible and attractive to the world; – to enhance mutual understanding between peoples and cultures of the EU and the Partner Countries. Those aims are reported in the documents of Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities, which promotes the involvement of universities in the National Tempus program. This paper deals with one of our direct experience in Tempus program. In this work we propose some considerations on the cultural transformation that undergoes a scientific theory when it is transferred and applied in non-Western socio-cultural contexts. If the scientific disciplines have, among others, the function of promoting the wellbeing of community, there must be also an exchange and encounter between cultures, which would enable to overcome a Western-centric perspective. In this way the scientific disciplines can arise according to an emic approach. That does not mean to call into question decades of theories that are milestones of scientific knowledge, but foreshadows an adaptation of the theoretical models to the specific social, cultural and ethical background. In this way, even a university cooperation project – as is the Tempus programme – takes the form of a community development project.

The community development is both a process and a product, both a practice of intervention and an ethical guiding principle from which derives this practice of intervention; it refers to a programme of approaches, methods and techniques that combine external assistance with locally organized self-determination. It involves citizens as individuals and as groups, institutions and political leaders. The community development focuses on people's participation and initiative of the community as the primary tool for change [1].

The benefits of community development come through local people changing attitudes, mobilising existing skills, improving networks, thinking differently about problems, and using community assets in new ways. The community development process is rooted within the context of the physical and social environment of the community [2]. The peculiar feature of this approach is the active involvement of groups and individuals targeted by the intervention. These subjects are supported by professionals, but the role of the experts is, in some respects, marginal, as it is important that individuals/groups themselves determine their own transformative process. External facilitators and people resource work *with* community people, rather than working *for* them. They have a responsibility to challenge and suggest, without making or influencing common decision-making. According to this approach, therefore, participation and sharing are both guiding principles and goals to achieve [3]. The marginal role of the expert has also the function to avoid a sort of scientific-cultural hegemony: the power of the expert is reduced in favour of the power of the community [4]. Based on these characteristics, community development is located in the middle of two actions: social planning and social action. Social planning is an action controlled by professionals, according to a top-down approach; social action, in contrast, is based on self organization of the community according to a bottom-up process. Community development often requires the creation of networks, built through the work and support of the experts, who believe that direct involvement of the people to whom the intervention is targeted to is essential in planning, in improving empowerment and in bringing about significant changes in the community. The advantage of using this approach is that it is easier to meet the real needs of the community, since it is listened to when decisions are made and, at the same time, do not get lost in the vagueness of a superficial and undirected work. The key for community development is facilitating a community in applying the principles to guide a flexible series of actions that are appropriate for the situation of that specific community. The community development approach considers limiting the pre-packages interventions and argues how the community has in itself the opportunity and the capacity to propose innovative and effective solutions.

According to this approach, therefore, the expert is a connector resource and he/she is also the one who leads the

people or the community towards change. As we learn from one of the fathers of social psychology, Kurt Lewin, the process of change involves three steps: *unfreezing, changing, freezing*. The first stage involves the *unfreezing* of the status quo and, as many people will naturally resist any change, the goal during the unfreezing stage is to create an awareness of how the status quo is not convenient. The *changing* step is marked by the implementation of the change. It's the time that most people struggle with the new reality. It is a time marked by uncertainty and fear, making it the hardest step to overcome. During the changing step people begin to learn the new behaviours, processes and ways of thinking. Finally, the *freezing* stage is marked by the stabilization of the new state after the change. This step is especially important to ensure that people do not revert back to their old ways of thinking or doing prior to the implementation of the change. Efforts must be made to guarantee that the change is not rejected. An expert, having an external point of view, may help in addressing these steps, because he/she may help those involved in them to be aware of the limitations of the current situation and may promote the foreshadowing of alternative strategies. However, without the cooperation of the people directly involved in this process, the change would not be possible. These are the key elements of community development. Furthermore, the community development, as it has been defined, it is also based on an *emic* approach rather than of an *etic* one. Emic and etic refer to different method used by human scientists in attempting to understand human behaviours in societal context. As pointed out by Morris and colleagues [5], these two perspectives have equally long pedigrees in social sciences. The emic perspective follows in the tradition of psychological studies of folk believes, whose origins date to Wundt [6], and in cultural anthropologists' striving to understand culture from "the native's" point of view, as proposed by Malinowski [7]. The etic or outside perspective follows in the tradition of behaviourist psychology, see Skinner [8], and anthropological approaches that link cultural practices to external, antecedent factors, such as economic or ecological conditions, that may not be salient to cultural insiders, see Harris [9]. Specifically, the emic approach deals with the study of culture from an "internal" point of view, trying to overcome the dualism of nature/culture, positing a close interdependence between biological and cultural level. This approach requires to adopt the social actor's point of view, their beliefs and their values. Furthermore, since each culture has its own characteristics and constitutes a totality, the emic approach attempts to identify culture-specific aspects of concepts and behaviour, which cannot be comparable across all cultures. In contrast, etic approach provides an external point of view to the study of culture, and refers to a kind of universalistic vision that implicitly assumes the existence of the dichotomy nature/culture. The etic approach attempts to identify universal aspects of human behaviour and seeks to find universal processes that transcend cultural differences or to produce new theories that can be utilized across cultures [10], in other words, an etic account attempts to be culturally neutral.

Even though emic and etic present two different perspectives and the separation between these two approaches persists, currently a perspective that considers them to be complementary and attempts to integrate these two methods is arising [11]. This occurs in particular in the field of research dealing with the characteristics of human nature, as well as the form and the function of the social systems.

THE TEMPUS PROGRAM: A PARTICULAR CASE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The theme of community development in its various aspects, as well as the question of culture, plays a key role even in the frame of international cooperation. International cooperation is effective only if the experts involved take the role of facilitators who are able to activate resources and skills existing in the context. Otherwise, the risk is to transform a cooperation project in a colonization process.

Based on these premises, we propose to think at the issues highlighted as essential even in the case of international cooperation in the field of higher education. We refer to the TEMPUS programme. TEMPUS is the European Union's program that supports the modernisation of higher education and creates an area of co-operation in countries surrounding the EU. This programme promotes voluntary convergence towards European policy developments in higher education, as it has been outlined by the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna Process. Since 1990, the Tempus Programme has played a major role in supporting the development of higher education in the EU's neighbouring countries in North Africa and the Middle East, in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Central Asia with a total of 29 Partner Countries participating in the programme. Nowadays it has a key role to play in helping the modernisation of education institutions and systems and in creating an open space for enhanced cooperation with the EU. It is also instrumental in promoting not only bilateral cooperation between individual countries but also co-operation at regional level (see Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency's – EACE – documents). Tempus funds two types of actions: *Joint Projects* and *Structural Measures*. The *Joint Projects* are partnership projects between higher education institutions in the EU and partner countries. They can develop, modernise and disseminate new curricula, teaching methods or materials, as well as boosting quality assurance and management of higher education institutions. Aim of *Structural Measures* is to develop and reform higher education institutions and systems in partner countries; to enhance their quality and relevance, and to increase convergence with EU developments.

Specifically, our experience refers to the project *Tempus LMPSM – Licence Master Psychologie Sociale Migrants*. The general objectives of this project are to promote the social psychology for providing support and integration for migrants; to provide professional orientation of educational programmes in psychological colleges/universities in order to develop quantitative and qualitative help to migrants. These aims are defined by the absence of social psychologists able to help migrant groups at breakneck speed to make up the need in human resources, conditioned by the new social

policy of each of the four regions liable to strong migration (Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Siberia and The Far East of Russia).

Starting from the basic elements of the TEMPUS programme, there are some questions on which, in our opinion, it is worth pondering. What does it mean to finance the modernisation of the university? How to create an area of co-operation in higher education? How to achieve this cooperation? What skills should be transferred?

Perhaps, it may be easier to answer these questions when referring to technical-scientific training, rather than when it refers to scientific-humanistic one. Whereas the international scientific community has already defined how to better operate, in the case of university scientific-humanistic courses there are some questions that remain still open. In addition to ethical issues, which we referred above, there is an epistemological question: As the humanities express the universal laws and how the theories of reference of the humanities are culturally situated? This question specifically involves some disciplines, such as sociology and psychology, because, as stated Mazzara [12], the relationship between cultural dynamics and the psychological processes constitutes one of the fundamental themes of the humanities, and specifically one of the areas most qualifying which provides a disciplinary definition of social psychology. Specifically, we agree that for social psychology the cultural approach should not be considered as a possible theoretical option or one of the possible fields of application, but as a constitutive aspect of this discipline. As the aim of social psychology is to study the intersection between the psychological and the social needs, conceptualizing the mind as a socio-cultural product is probably the most effective way to overcome the antinomy between the individual and society.

Consistently we need to ask how to act within a project of international cooperation in the field of education. An aspect that should be taken into account is that it is a partnership of equals with theoretical knowledge to be transferred between colleagues. However, those colleagues live and work in different social and cultural contexts (countries of Western Europe *vs.* Former Soviet countries, *vs.* Maghreb countries, and so on) and cultural and social dimensions are crucial elements always to be taken into consideration, in order to the collaboration being effective. This kind of cooperation can be effective and useful only if those who have the task of disseminating specific skills and knowledge offer their expertise and make it available to those who are recipients of the intervention. This means that an ecological approach is needed to "export" theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This is especially important when social workers must be trained or when the Bachelor's degree programmes and/or Master's degree programmes must be created, as these social workers and these graduates will carry out interventions in *their* social contexts. This does not mean denying the objectives that the Tempus programme wants to achieve (to enhance the interdisciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity), but rather thinking in terms of community development as it has been defined above, trying to integrate the aims and working methods of the international scientific community with the aims, needs and the specific working methods of the local communities. In this way, the local communities would take the role of real partners.

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AFRICAN CINEMA AS INSTRUMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN INTER-ACADEMIC COOPERATION: A PROJECT IN NGOZI (BURUNDI)

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ABSTRACT

Since 2001, the University of Verona has been involved in an agreement with the University of Ngozi, North Burundi, foreseeing the participation of thirty-forty Verona University professors in teaching activities in the Nursing course - Institute Universitaire des Sciences de la Santé (IUSS). In addition to this, in 2008 the Italian partnership financed the building of a didactic center composed of classrooms, library, informatics rooms and laboratories. In 2012, the spatial availability of this didactic center and the socio-cultural needs expressed by the students, led to the idea of organizing an African cinema festival. The most relevant objectives of this event are to promote awareness of the rich African film production in a context where there are no cinemas or, where present, are very expensive and to start a multipurpose use of the center not only for the students but also for the whole territory. To reach these aims a network among Burundian filmmakers, the organizers of the Festival de Film et du Audiovisual du Burundi (FESTICAB), the students and the Rector of the University of Ngozi, the director of the IUSS, the organizers of the Festival del Cinema Africano of Verona and Belgian cinema experts, African students and professors of the University of Verona has been developed. The set of participants collaborates in verifying and sharing the available knowledge and the whole interaction process triggers changes in all members of the network and in their specific context. The open and shared methodological approach presents a particular value in the involvement of the Burundian students from the early stages of the films selection. This creates an important opportunity for dialogue among them on issues still difficult to deal with, because of the recent ethnic war and its consequences on communities and territory.

CONTEXT OF ACTION

This paper deals with a new project stemming from a long-term established cooperation program between the Universities of Verona (Italy) and Ngozi (Burundi). For its peculiarity and aims, the project presented here is independent of the already existing cooperation program and may be considered as a co-managed attempt to start a cultural process that could benefit both society and territory[1]. The general purpose consists in promoting the use of the didactic center in Ngozi as a resource for the local community through a festival of the African cinema[2].

Ngozi (population: 21,506 [1]) is the capital city of the homonymous province located in the North of Burundi, 140 km far from the capital Bujumbura. The province population in 2008 reached 661,310 inhabitants [1], 8.2% of the total Burundian population of 8,038,618 inhabitants [1][3]. The region of Ngozi is 5.6% of the total country area (25,950 km²). The territory is a tableland with mean altitude of 1,700 meters above sea level. The economy is based on agriculture, particularly extensive cultivation of both coffee and tea.

Ngozi and Burundi are in conditions of poverty and poor quality of life, partly due to a long-lasting strong political instability. After gaining the independence in 1962, the country experienced recurring ethnical conflicts. The recent history is marked by a military coup d'état (1993) leading to another ethnic war that ended in 2005 with the elections of a new President, later re-elected in 2010[4].

The country is in 178th place (out of 186) on the Human Development Index (HDI), meaning a very low human development rank [2]. It suffers particularly in the fields of health and education. The primary education is compulsory and free since 2008 and has made advances in the recent years [3].

The University of Ngozi was opened in 1999. It is composed of six Faculties (Agronomy, Economy and Law, Engineering, Informatics, Literature and Human Sciences, Medicine) and the Institute Universitaire des Sciences de la Santé (IUSS). Several courses started, although the problem was and still is the lack of professors. They usually are

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[1] A detailed picture on these themes is provided by E. Bignante, E. Dansero and C. Scarpocchi, *Geografia e Cooperazione allo Sviluppo. Temi e prospettive per un approccio territoriale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2008.

[2] The author of the present paper was involved from the beginning in the development of the project to pay attention to African territory and its cultural production – such as cinema - and to the relationship between space and local community, in a geographical perspective.

[3] The most recent estimate (July 2013) of total Burundian population is 10,888,321 (www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html).

[4] For an analysis of the interaction between Burundian institutions and ethnic conflict see: L. Ndikumana, Institutional Failure and Ethnic Conflicts in Burundi, *African Studies Review*, vol. 41, pp. 29-47, 1998.

non-Burundian and move among different universities to give their lessons, rendering the costs almost unbearable.

Moreover some courses remain without teachers and the quality of the whole didactic system is negatively affected. In 2001, the Rector of the University of Ngozi approached some European Medical Schools for a partnership in the realization of the Nursing course. The Verona Medical School answered positively and in 2003, following verification of the local conditions, an agreement was signed between the Universities of Ngozi and Verona. According to this agreement, each academic year, at scheduled time frames, approximately thirty to forty Verona professors visit the IUSS to give their courses and verify competences.

In 2008 a didactic center (Centre d'Etudes Medicales) was built, thanks to contributions of the Zanotto and Cariverona Foundations (Verona) in collaboration with the Italian partner. This didactic structure, provided with all necessary for attending lessons and learning, hosts the IUSS, which is entirely managed by Burundian people under the responsibility of the IUSS director. In the beginning, this center was not much frequented by the students except for the lessons. In the last two years their presence has increased a lot in the library and in the informatics room (the number of computers increased from 20 in 2009 to 70 in 2013) and now, students remain at the center until late in the evening (closing time is at 8 pm) and also during the weekends[5]. Meanwhile, they developed a need to use the center also for other purposes, not only for the study.

A context analysis led to the elaboration of a proposal on African cinema. There is an established practice, started in Fall 2011, to show a film every Friday, after the end of lessons, from 6 pm to 8 pm. A guy who collaborates in helping students in the informatics room organizes the "IUSS Friday cinema". The film selection is based on which DVD could be recovered at the moment, often very commercial ones. This event is also open to the town people and the audience is composed of both students and inhabitants. The need for a cinema is real for the following reasons: the only cinema in the country, the Ciné Caméo, is placed in the capital Bujumbura, in the Asiatic quarter, and screens all the latest blockbusters for 2,000 FBu (1 euro = 1,400 FBu)[6]. The film projections organized monthly by the Centre Culturel Français are proposed only in Bujumbura, too.

The situation of the cinema in Burundi (well known to be problematic in the whole Continent) is worse than that of other East African Community countries. For example Ruanda, which also faced an ethnic war, now has some cinemas both in the capital Kigali and in other towns like Butare and Gitarama. Moreover in Kigali a 3D multiplex cinema in a commercial center (Kigali City Tower) has been recently opened. Nevertheless, the ticket prices remain very high and unaffordable for the great part of the population.

The awareness of how cinema could be a cultural means, as well as much more, began to spread among Burundian society and institutions[7]. Cinema itself is a cultural wealth that should be endorsed by each country. However, in the rare cinemas of the African towns one could find mostly Western broadcastings and no local productions.

It can be noted that African cinema is often unavailable to Africans. African cinema production is very interesting as witnessed by several African cinema festivals occurring all over the world [4].

From 2009 Burundi as well has a cinematographic festival called Festival International du Cinema et de l'Audiovisuel du Burundi, FESTICAB, which is held in Bujumbura and headed by the film director Léonce Ngabo. The audience increased from 2,000 to approximately 20,000 spectators from the first to the last edition, respectively. During the FESTICAB, projections took place in centers such as the Centre Jeunes Kamenge, Institut Français du Burundi, Université du Burundi, Hotel Club du Lac Tanganyika, Cinema des Anges-Ruyigi, Alliance Française-Gitega and the Université de Ngozi. Here, five short and two full-length films were presented. The admittance was free of charge and the participation of the Ngozi population this year was very high (E. Gamberoni, personal communication), thus underlying the need felt by the whole citizenship for such initiatives. Among the activities related to the FESTICAB there is also the *cinéma mobile* that takes place in the surroundings of Bujumbura. However, the rest of the country lacks any of such initiatives.

A movie may contain several meanings and potentialities. It is a "life story [… *and a*] narration of an intense richness and cultural force" of the African continent [5]. In addition, the films are investigation fields from different points of view. A productive line of research addresses the relation between cinema and territory [6]. Movies were reported to be geographic documents, geographic agents and geographic narrations [7]. Being set in a territory, a film represents that place and highlights the relations between people and environment.

Finally, the meaning of territory is wider than that of landscape or setting, and finds its essence with the presence of the characters that exploit it, lived in it, use it and are continuously in contact/conflict with it [5-7]. The interesting topic of the geographic narration is that it does not only increase the knowledge of a territory, but helps in asking questions on the originality and uniqueness of the human presence, relations and actions in that geographic context [7].

Moreover, it is known that the use of films in education and training is now highly widespread [8-10] and it could promote therapeutic goals in psychotherapeutic treatments [11].

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[5] In the academic year 2012/2013 the Ngozi University students are almost 2,000 and 12% of them attend courses at the IUSS.

[6] It is very expensive considering that a local worker daily salary is about 1,700 FBu.

[7] See: http://africalia.be/coprodac/pays.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Considering the reasons given above, cinema could be involved as a positive force in the Burundian society that needs places and occasions for dialogue and exchange of opinions.

In this sense, the idea of organizing a festival of African cinema by the IUSS developed with the following specific aims: i) to increase the knowledge on the production of African cinema with relevance also on local Burundian activity, ii) to widen the functions of the didactic center not only as a place related to learning/studying/teaching but also as a socio-cultural place, iii) to give the students an opportunity to exchanging ideas and discussing themes considered still difficult to deal with in the current Burundian society, iv) to offer an opportunity of participating in a film festival to people not living in Bujumbura, thus rendering "central" what is peripheral.

The method used is participant-based and foresees the creation of a coordination network and the proposal of a films list (step 1), the selection of movies (step 2), the occurrence of the festival (step 3) and the results evaluation (step 4).

The films selection is one of the characterizing aspects of this project. In fact, the students identify a little group of them (the committee) with the task of assisting to all films listed, performing the choice and proposing the order of the movies to be presented at the festival. The discussion is centered on the following points: structure (figures of speech, use of the language), intrigue of the plot with questions/issues targeted, meaningful sequences, most interesting scene/character, significant messages and reasons for conveying them to all students.

Furthermore, this approach gives the special opportunity to the students of facing themes that are still awkward for the majority of the Burundian society. Peace and reconciliation are in fact compelling needs for the country, as underlined by the theme of the 5th edition (2013) of FESTICAB: *The Cinema at the Service of Peace and Development.*

There will also be a chance for some appointed students to guide the discussion during the festival and learn how to face a debate with a wide and heterogeneous audience having different ideas.

WHAT HAPPENED: STEPS 1 AND 2

The project has already started at the beginning of the academic year 2012/2013. The first steps of the pathway - developed until now - are here presented.

Step 1: creation of a coordination network and of a films list (September-December 2012)

At first, an interconnected network among various actors was created. It is composed by the *délégués*[8] of the students of Ngozi and some professors of Verona, the Rector of the University of Ngozi and the director of the IUSS, the African students of the School of Medicine that study in Verona, the Burundian and Belgian organizers of the FESTICAB and some Burundian film directors, in particular Léonce Ngabo, and the organizers of the Festival del Cinema Africano of Verona (fig. 1).
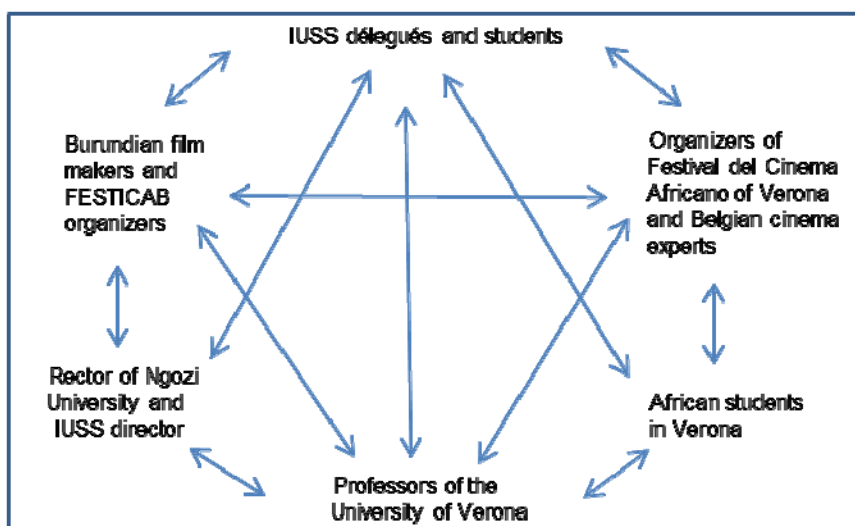

Fig. 1 - Network of the project's actors.

The peculiarity of this network is the strict interrelation and cooperation among the involved partners in each decision. Initially, a selection of possible films was discussed. Given the high production and the good quality of the

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[8] The spokesmen for each class.

Sub-Saharan African cinema, the network decided to address the festival to it. However, one limitation was the language. Since English is still not known widely, the assortment was limited to those films that either speak French or, at least, carry subtitles in French. Eleven titles were thus identified, based on the following features to ensure variety: different genres, availability of retrieval, works known as outstanding in the Sub-Saharan francophone filmography, various issues of the most important African directors. Then, cards were prepared to document the richness and uniqueness of each film. It was particularly important and most welcome that Léonce Ngabo assured to present his masterpiece *La Mère et l'Ange* (2008) on the first woman who admitted to be HIV-positive in Burundi.

The network decided about the general organization of the festival: an opening ceremony with the Rector and Léonce Ngabo, dance and drum students groups, two weeks for showing six different films in total, a show every other day, in the afternoon in the lecture room of the didactic center. Some experts of African cinema will present the films and their consequences on society and territory; the students committee members will introduce and explain the reasons for the selection of the movies. On Sunday, in the big lecture room of the University, the event will be open for the entire town population.

Step 2: selection of movies (February 2013)

The Verona professors that came to Ngozi in February 2013 to give their courses, jump-started the cinema project. The students selected the committee for choosing and scheduling five titles among the eleven proposed.[9]

They analyzed the films in the afternoon each day after the lessons for approximately two weeks. After each movie, they discussed its theme, style and significance. The last was the most important topic from a territorial, social and psychological point of view, because it gave them the opportunity to talk about their lives, their families and their country, still difficult themes to deal with in the Burundian society, particularly among young generations.

At the end, there was a final meeting to discuss the five films selected and decide the order of presentation. The titles chosen and the sequence proposed were: Le Ballon d'Or (C. Doukouré, 1994), Daratt (M. S. Haroun, 2006), Delwende (S. P. Yameogo, 2005), Bamako (A. Sissako, 2006), Africa Paradis (S. Amoussou, 2006).

The motivations expressed by the students committee were very interesting, reflecting the needs of young generations of the local society, as already mentioned.

This is the final declaration of the students committee: "Le Ballon d'Or is a movie of hope and social redemption, it tells how dreams could come true. So it is a good choice to start the festival. Moreover it is cheerful, joyful and involves the game of football so loved by many young Burundians. The second choice is Daratt. It is a hard one and offers the opportunity to talk about revenge, hate, forgiveness and reconciliation. This film is very important for our growth and gives us the possibility to express our ideas after the dark years of ethnic war. If we do not start to talk about these issues and to forgive, we can't afford to take on the destinies of our country with peacefulness and responsibility. The third selected film is Delwende that deals with witchcraft from two points of view: the role of the woman and the related prejudices on one hand, and the ignorance due to lack of knowledge on the other hand. Then we choose Bamako that develops the interesting question on the role and responsibility of the international organizations in Africa. To conclude the film festival we propose Africa Paradis, an imaginary reversal of Africa and Europe relationship, an interesting challenge either for Africans or for their attitude towards Europeans. Its message is positive regarding the possibilities for Burundian young people to build a better country".

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The project is still in progress and the festival is scheduled for February 2014 (steps 3 and 4).

Up to now, some important results have been obtained: i) all Burundian partners have become first players in the project; ii) the response and participation of the students, especially those taking part in the committee, was high. Notably, the moment of the selection of the films for the festival turned out to be one of the original aspects of the project: open discussions on movies, on the plot and on the relapse on their own life, on their family and on the town, allowed students to talk and take position, to express opinions on issues considered taboo in Burundian society. The choice of a film may be seen as the first act of responsibility that overcomes ethnic and ideological barriers and could be considered as a sort of "training" in the growth of an individual belonging to a community. In addition, this activity enhances the African cinema for Africans by Africans; iii) the didactic center, built to host educational and didactic activities, will widen its areas of action to become a place for multipurpose use that serves the community of Ngozi in addition to being a resource for the exclusive use of the students. The cultural new side of the didactic center could be the starting point for other activities together with local associations for the benefit of the population[10]. This project in fact represents an opportunity for establishing new connections between places and groups (the latter distinguished by

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[9] The committee is composed by eight students belonging to different classes, two of the first year, four of the second year, one of the third year and one of the fourth year. Some of them are the already assessed *délégués*.

[10] For example an interest was shown by a women association acting for the development of the conditions of youth and women, whose president is the director of the IUSS, Anne-Marie Boyayo.

age, gender, ethnic background etc.), in a society strongly marked by past conflicts. It may develop in the future beyond its core by opening interactions with other groups in Ngozi: associations, theatre companies, non-governmental organizations, structures bound to the missionary world or organizations acting in health and primary education fields.

The cooperation between Italian and Burundian Universities in this project is an undeniable chance to open and support the interaction among all the network students carrying multiple thoughts, feelings, needs and stories, mediated by their own background and by their possible migration experience. These aspects, regarding the main actors involved (i.e. the students), are also referred to all partners: the project is "the place" where ideas, stimuli and different opinions are shared. Thus, one of its peculiarities is the possibility of triggering changes in all members of the network and in their context.

NOMENCLATURE

3D	Three-dimensional
FBu	Franc burundais
FESTICAB	Festival International du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel du Burundi
HDI	Human Development Index
IUSS	Institute Universitaire des Sciences de la Santé

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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN SAINT MARTIN:
EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a participatory action-research carried out in Saint Martin CSA, a grass-root organization that operates around Nyahururu, Kenya in the field of social development. The research-method adopted is Appreciative Inquiry, a strength-based collaborative approach to organizational and societal change, which is used to explore the extent to which a participatory approach can promote empowerment in the community. Saint Martin is a grass-root organization that has embraced in full the participatory approach, as it clearly emerges from its motto "Only through community", which points to the fact that any decision taken by Saint Martin is to be agreed upon within the community since it is the community who will take care of its implementation. In fact, community-based development is about giving the ownership of a project to people in the community, and that can only be possible if the community has taken part to the decision-making process. Too often that is not the case due to a development discourse that leaves the local people at the margins of the development process on the assumption that there is nothing they can contribute to. Appreciative Inquiry steps in the debate by promoting a radical paradigm shift, whereby the focus of the analysis is on strengths, rather than weaknesses, and the idea is that by investigating the moments when an organization or a community has achieved its best and work on those moments of excellence to build a positive image for the future better results can be achieved. Such approach is considered necessary in development practice since it appears to be a good strategy to involve local communities, having them contributing with their knowledge and expertise in the decision-making process, this way accelerating the process of change that ultimately leads to empowerment in the community and the promotion of sustainable development.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research explores the potential for change of participatory approaches to development and investigates the extent to which they succeed in being means of emancipation and contribute effectively to empower people in the community. The generative question guiding the inquiry during the field research in Saint Martin was the following: *how can a group of people get the best out of communities by inviting people to flourish, take care of others and contribute to the promotion of a society where talents are appreciated and empowered?* It is evident the link between the research question and the vision of Saint Martin, which is part of the reason why it has been chosen to be the case-study of the research. This question seeks to contribute to the debate about participation in development, by finding out when and how participatory approaches are successful in empowering people in the community.

The paper suggests to identify the potential for change of participatory approaches to development through the analysis of a case-study, Saint Martin, and the contribution that appreciative inquiry can offer to accelerate change. It first presents Saint Martin, exploring the extent to which the organization is able to truly involve people in the community in its decision-making process and activate the talents and resources on the ground in order to build together strategies of action for change. Then it looks at Appreciative Inquiry as a possible strategy to accelerate the process of change in Saint Martin and favor the kind of attitude that is deemed necessary for a truly participatory approach to unfold in order to empower the community and deliver sustainable development.

SAINT MARTIN CSA

Saint Martin is a religious grass-root organization that engages people in the community in the elaboration of strategies of action to support vulnerable groups in the society. The organization is located in Nyahururu, a town two hundred kilometers north of Nairobi, while the majority of its activities takes place in the local communities in the surroundings. Saint Martin's target area, in fact, covers a vast territory spread over three Counties, namely Nyandarua, Laikipia and Baringo, that despite neighboring each other have different profiles in terms of social, economic, cultural, traditional and demographic realities. The population of the three Counties settled in the area in the 1960's from other parts of the country, thus being very heterogeneous, and diversity has largely been a source of conflict rather than of strength. At the moment Saint Martin is present on these territories with more than 1,300 volunteers at the community

level and about 100 volunteers at the management level; staff members are 85. Numbers give an immediate sense of the importance of volunteers in the organization, who are the ones who take the lead in initiating and implementing activities in the communities, and contribute through the decision-making process to bring the voice of the marginalized within the organization.

Over the years, Saint Martin has developed five community programs to address the major challenges emerging from vulnerable groups in the society. What is interesting to know about these programs is the approach developed by Saint Martin in order to carry out its activities in the community, which is radically different from the one of mainstream development agencies, and represents a peculiar characteristic of the organization. The programs deal with some of the basic needs of the area and are the following: Community Program for People with Disabilities, Community Program for Street and Needy Children, Community Program of Active Non Violence and Human Rights, Community Program of HIV/AIDS, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Community Program for Savings and Microcredit. The programs of the organization are not something that emerged all at one time, but are the result of the encounters between people in Saint Martin and the community.

Another important characteristic of Saint Martin is the departments, which are there to support the programs in carrying out their activities. There is, for instance, a Training and Facilitation Department that is in charge of all trainings within the organization, ensuring that the approach is well understood by staff members and supporting them as they go out in the community and meet people to elaborate strategies of action for change. The number of volunteers has grown over time, as the approach of the organization got diffused throughout the target area, and now counts on a vast network of people who are to be considered the backbone of Saint Martin. The organization as well developed gradually, and its structure is constantly rethought and rearranged in order to better fit with the mission of the organization, that is about ensuring integral human development for all through community's full involvement and care for vulnerable groups of people. Saint Martin's approach is perhaps the most interesting and innovative aspect of the organization, which opens to possibilities for change and offers many insights as to how to proceed in the search for better strategies of action. It seems interesting to present a story and start from there to explore the characteristics of its approach.

"John, Kuria and Kamau are three orphans whose mother died of AIDS. They were left behind in a one-roomed grass-thatched house, built by the grandparents, which was in a sorry state. Kuria, who had just joined secondary school when his mother died, dropped out soon after for lack of school fees. Every day became a struggle to make sure there was something to eat. Wambui, a Saint Martin volunteer from the area, learned about the perils of the family and took up the case. She asked the local administration to convene a community meeting to discuss the plight of the orphans. With the help of Saint Martin social worker, she talked in this meeting about the need for solidarity and she moved the community into action. As a result, a fund-raising was organized and different resources were donated in the form of food, clothes, building material and money. A decent house was built for the orphans and Kuria's fees balance in school was cleared. The community also provided a piece of land and labor, which was supplemented with seed and fertilizer through Saint Martin and this ensured that the orphans would not go without food. Finally, the volunteer approached the school administration asking them to consider Kuria for school bursaries and to give him manual jobs during school holidays to supplement his school fees. The orphans have now become the responsibility of the community and are well provided and cared for. They are no longer in a desperate condition, because they know they have neighbors who care" [1].

This story points out some characteristics of Saint Martin's approach, which is particularly interesting for the attitude it proposes towards change: it is a rather slow process, that is centered on the active participation of the community which is seen as the real agent of change, the one to sit and find the way out of the pressing issues on the ground. Saint Martin is there to accompany the community in this process, facilitating the active involvement and mobilization of people; it works on existing talents and resources to build capacity and develop the potential for change that is there but often times finds no expression.

ONLY THROUGH COMMUNITY

According to Saint Martin's approach, it is the members of the community the ones who take the lead in strategies of action for change. This represents the practical realization of the motto of the organization, *only through community*. Whatever the issue on the ground is, the way in which Saint Martin addresses it starts from an active engagement of the community; more on that, it is people in the community, most of the times community volunteers, that engage Saint Martin in issues and activities that are deemed necessary from their point of view. The identification of what is the pressing issue and what are the strategies to be put in place to address it comes from people in the community, with Saint Martin simply facilitating the process and nurturing the active engagement of people.

If it is the case of orphans of HIV/AIDS infected people, as in the case of the story briefly presented, first of all the very identification of the case comes from the community: there is already a degree of activation in bringing the issue to light and start evaluating the possible strategies of action. In situation like the one described Saint Martin stresses the need to address it as much as possible at the local level by involving everyone. The orphans are not the real focus of action for Saint Martin, which addresses primarily the other members of the community and works on them in order to

promote change by activating the resources on the ground. Solutions are always looked for in the community, and this represents a big difference from the mainstream understanding of development and social change.

The focus on the people in the community as the agents of change, directly engaged in the formulation of strategies of action, is premised on a strong belief that animates Saint Martin and puts it in close relationship with action research: it is the belief in the potentiality of people. Without a radical and profound conception of life grounded in the belief that people have the potential for change in themselves, which leads to question how to activate and unleash such potential, there can be no true and effective empowerment. Talents and resources are to be found first and foremost within the community: for people in Saint Martin this is a founding principle which entails the mobilization of local resources through the active engagement of all stakeholders to foster a slow, endogenous, thus sustainable process of change.

The story previously told is once again illuminating in pointing out how solutions must be looked for and can be found within the community: neighbors had the capacity to mobilize the necessary resources to give a future to those orphans who seemed to have little hope of survival. Building relationships of neighborhood, then, is something that no external donor can contribute for; as a matter of fact, what happens is that most of the time, by eradicating the problem and removing it from the community, outsiders are responsible of eroding those relationships of neighborhood. However, in this case it seems that an important aspect for the growth and development of these children is the very fact of having neighbors around who care and consider them part of the community, rather than apart from the community. The integral human development goes also through non-material aspects that an approach like Saint Martin's greatly considers, as opposed to others.

Another peculiar characteristic of Saint Martin's approach is well synthesized in the expression capacity-building, which represents the real essence of the organization and captures more than any other its mission. Saint Martin takes part to the process of change within local communities by identifying the potential strengths, talents and abilities on the ground and contributing to the development and growth of those strengths through trainings aimed at capacity-build people in the community. Trainings are implemented following the principles of adult education.

First of all, they are learner-centered: the starting point is the strengths, abilities and expertise of the learners, who are given full expression and become the point of departure to develop specific trainings based on the real needs of the group. Centering the activity on the personal experience of participants and begin by working on that has proved to be a much more effective strategy of learning. While traditional trainings are content-centered, having a one-direction information flow, participatory trainings emphasize a process of self-discovery, whereby the learner explores his/her own capacities matured through experience and develops abilities and skills to solve the issues that he/she is confronted with. The capacity-building process is completely centered on the learner, given the fact that in the end what really counts for a successful training is the learner's own motivation.

Saint Martin has adopted in full the participatory training method, realizing the potential for change that such approach gives compared to more traditional didactic methods. Its adoption represents a logical consequence derived from the assumption that people have within themselves the abilities, talents and resources to bring about change and it is working on those abilities that genuine processes of transformation can be put in place. These participatory trainings serve also as a way to establish a relationship with a group of people which can become the basis for didactic trainings, when they are needed. The point is that didactic and technical trainings cannot be the only way in which people are engaged, otherwise in the long-run they produce a gradual disempowerment of the community, which becomes more and more dependent on external assistance. What Saint Martin suggests is an attitude change concerning the kind of relationship to establish with people in the community. It is not denied the necessity to develop professional and technical skills, but these need to be located within a broader context where the central role is played by local communities. One way of doing it is by recognizing and appreciating the resources, expertise, abilities and talents that are present on the ground, and participatory trainings are an effective method to do so.

Furthermore Saint Martin's organizational structure is very interesting and innovative as well, demonstrating how participation is not only words on paper, but represents a concrete working practice. A real bottom-up approach needs to give the means and spaces for people to express and voice their concerns and desires, and take an active part within the decision-making process. Volunteers are in Saint Martin the backbone of the organization, the ones who take the lead in initiatives in the community, and therefore deserve to play an important role in the organization.

The decision-making process in Saint Martin sees a flow which moves from the community to the administration in a way that guarantees the active participation of people in the community. One communicative level is the one taking place between members of the community, community volunteers and staff from Saint Martin: these are the people who interact the most and know what are the challenges and pressing issues on the ground. It is among these people that the right attitude is necessary in order to make sure that the potentiality from the community emerges and is developed over time. Staff members have the important task of facilitating this process of self-discovery and growth, together with accompanying and nurturing transformation in the community.

Once such attitude is there, then it becomes easy to see how staff can act as the medium between the community and the organization to favor the information flow by which people come to collaborate to the decision-making process of Saint Martin. It seems necessary to highlight the fact that organizational modifications need always to be accompanied by an attitudinal predisposition, which guarantees that procedures effectively achieve results, so to avoid that become mere bureaucratic steps with no substance. This aspect is fully acknowledged by people working in Saint Martin, who know well the importance of continuous critical self-reflection as a way to keep track of where they are and how close they are to people in the community.

HOW TO ACCELERATE CHANGE DYNAMICS?

It is interesting to see how new strategies can be developed to promote the kind of attitude previously mentioned and accelerate the process of change in order to be more effective and deliver better results. In this light appreciative inquiry is presented as a possible strategy to adopt in Saint Martin in order to find new and better ways of engaging the community. Saint Martin is valuable in its attempt to work on attitude change and the development of self-critical reflection as a way to promote change within people, starting from the staff members and moving out to the community: that is the way to take seriously the call to address people in the community as the real agents of change and organize the whole action plan around this powerful premise. To this extent appreciative inquiry is proposed as an innovative evolution in the field of participatory approaches to development for the beneficial effects it can produce in an organization like Saint Martin.

Appreciative inquiry could accelerate change dynamics by acting on the positive core of the organization and develop from there better strategies of action for change that engage more deeply people in the community. Appreciative inquiry is, in fact, first and foremost an approach that aims at stimulating change within communities and organizations by working on the way people come to understand and act upon reality. It is not so much about collecting information, but it is rather a form of inquiry mainly focused on stimulating people to see things in a different perspective: it could be argued that the real goal of appreciative inquiry is attitude change, through which people are invited to realize the potential they have and use it proactively to build strategies of action for change. It is therefore evident the beneficial effect that appreciative inquiry might generate in an organization like Saint Martin, since it seems to have the tools to act on it and bring about the kind of change that is needed in so to contribute to realize in full the vision and mission of the organization.

One of the major reasons why appreciative inquiry seems to be an effective strategy for Saint Martin and community development is to be found in the answer it gives to the challenges presented by mainstream development practices. It is well known the fact that the development discourse is still embedded in the belief that external agents and professionals are the ones entitled to investigate reality, identify the needs and formulate action plans to meet those needs. External donors are the ones who finance the process, which is set up in a totally deficit-based approach: that is to say, the action plan starts from the identification of what the problems are in a given community and moves to the formulation of the strategies to put in place to tackle those problems.

The long-term effects of this approach to development appear to be far less positive than expected. Focusing on what is missing and perpetrating the idea that solutions come from abroad are two of the major reasons that led the development project as a whole to fail. It did produce some results, and the most evident seems to be the disempowerment of people and communities, which have been left in a state of dependency and lack of confidence in their own capabilities. The development discourse has been seen by critical authors such as post-colonial thinkers as the continuation of the colonial project through different means [2]. Colonial or not, the development project has surely diminished the capacity of local people to activate and address autonomously the issues they were confronted with, mainly as a consequence of the dependency syndrome generated through the extensive use of external assistance. It is in order to answer such an approach to development and social change that appreciative inquiry steps in suggesting a radical paradigm shift and a viable alternative strategy of action.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: TAKING A POSITIVE STANCE TO RESEARCH

Appreciative inquiry is one approach within the family of action research and is here analyzed for its capacity to foster processes of change. It is grounded in an innovative understanding of change dynamics, and the way of engaging people in processes of transformation is also worth been analyzed for its promising results. The peculiar characteristic of appreciative inquiry in its strategy for change management is the constant exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. The underlying assumption guiding appreciative inquiry is that by revealing and bringing to light that positive core of strengths which people tend to keep hidden, underutilized, then the potential for change is unleashed and positive energy is released for both personal and organizational transformation. When the positive core is set in motion, then people are empowered to create ascending spirals of co-operative action [3].

Appreciative inquiry is first of all a peculiar form of inquiry: its original message is 'an invitation to re-awaken a "spirit of inquiry" - a sense of wonder, curiosity and surprise - in our pursuits of knowledge creation about the social world' [4]. The entire cycle of knowledge production and more broadly change management is to be guided by a sincere curiosity and sense of wonder about the possibilities for change that are present in any group of people. The positive stance taken by appreciative inquiry is then implemented by working on these strengths as a way to foster change. Within the field of action research, appreciative inquiry is an approach that explores alternative possibilities for our shared and organized existence, and it does so by instilling in participants the desire to see things anew, from a different perspective, in ways that inspire thought and action in the world. It is an asset-based approach, grounded in the belief that people have within themselves the strengths to achieve empowering ways of being in the world, and the kind of process suggested is one that investigates and develops the best of what is in organizations in order to promote social change.

Appreciative inquiry is primarily an answer to the deficit-based approach and it is grounded on a very different conception of social change according to which "organizations move toward what they study" [5]. If a group of people starts focusing on all the lacks and deficiencies that impede concrete change to take place, it is very likely that those analyses of what lacks will severely influence the possibilities for change, and compromise the ability of the people involved to achieve any kind of improvement. When the focus is put on the positive core and on what gives strength to an organization, then the strategies for change will emerge much more easily and produce positive effects on the people involved.

Organizational and societal change is looked at by appreciative inquiry in a radical different way from dominant development discourse. Instead of having problems as the focus of analysis, people first discover what is working particularly well in their organization or community; instead of analyzing possible causes of problems, they envision what it might be like if "the best of what is" occurred more frequently [6]. The desired future is something to be co-constructed by participants on the base of what already exists. Appreciative inquiry challenges the common assumption of problem-solving approaches that organizations improve when identify and remove their problems, and argues in favor of an approach where improvement is the result of a focus on strengths, capacities and abilities. As Banaga put it, 'appreciative inquiry does not turn a blind eye on negative situations or deficit-oriented realities in organizations; it does not substitute a rosy and romantic picture for an objective and realistic one. It accepts these realities for what they are […] and intentionally shifts the focus of the inquiry and intervention to those realities that are sources of vitality' [7].

Appreciative inquiry represents within the broad spectrum of action research practices an attempt at "discovering, understanding and fostering innovations in social-organizational arrangements and processes" [8]. It is in line with social constructivism, and can be seen as a possible answer to Gergen's daring invitation [9] to bring back to life the "generative capacity" of social science research, which regards the ability to challenge the status quo and open up new possibilities for thought and action. Generative theorizing, according to Gergen, opens to the possibility for social transformation, by 'telling it as it might become' rather than 'telling it like it is' [10]. Appreciative inquiry shares with action research the combination of research and action, inquiry and intervention, whereby knowledge is generated and immediately tested for its transformative potential. What it adds to this notion of action and reflection is the creative element, according to which knowledge can empower those to strive for change by generating a theory that is closer to a vision of the desired future than a representation of the existing; and this with the ultimate goal of overcoming reality and nurturing social change. Appreciative inquiry is then defined for its transformative and emancipatory intent, in the constant search for ways to activate people and unleash the potential for change.

The core principles and assumptions of appreciative inquiry have been clearly influenced by social constructivism. Based on that theory, and research studies from other fields, Cooperrider and others developed the following five core principles for the practice of appreciative inquiry [11]:

- *Constructivist Principle*. Related to the notion that multiple realities exist based on perceptions and shared understandings, this principle suggests that what is known about an organization and the organization's actual destiny are interwoven.
- *Principle of Simultaneity*. Because reality is an evolving social construction, it is possible through inquiry to influence the reality an organization creates for itself. Inquiry and change are simultaneous and "inquiry is intervention". Thus, the nature of the inquiry itself is critically important where the very first questions we ask set the stage for what people discover and learn and the way they co-construct their future.
- *Poetic Principle*. Because reality is a human construction, an organization is like an open book in which its story is being coauthored continually by its members and those who interact with them. Consequently, members are free to choose which part of the story to study or inquire about its problems and needs, or its moments of creativity and joy, or both.
- *Anticipatory Principle*. This principle postulates that the image an organization has of its future guides the organization's current behavior. Thus, an organization's positive images of its future will anticipate, or lead to, positive actions.
- *Positive Principle*. This principle arose from extensive experience with Appreciative Inquiry. Early Appreciative Inquiry practitioners found that the more positive the questions they asked were, the more engaged and excited participants were and the more successful and longer lasting the change effort was. This is in large part because human beings and organizations want to turn toward positive images that give them energy and nourish happiness.

Based on these principles, eight assumptions form the foundation for appreciative inquiry's processes and methods [12]:

- In every society, organization, or group, something works.
- What we focus on becomes our reality.
- Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
- The act of asking questions to an organization or group influences the group in some way.

- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
- If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
- It is important to value differences.
- The language we use creates our reality.

These principles and assumptions underlie both the philosophy of appreciative inquiry and the ways in which it is conducted. At this point it is interesting to conclude the journey into appreciative inquiry by looking at how it is conducted in practice, and the most common model for doing it is the 4-D cycle, which refers to the four steps to go through: 1) discovery of the best of what is, 2) dream to imagine what could be, 3) design what will be, and 4) destiny, to enact change learning to become what we most hope for.

The discovery phase seeks to find and highlight the life-generative moments of an organization, when people felt most engaged and motivated, 'the best of what is' at any given situation. Those moments are analyzed in order to promote learning within the organization by sharing stories about times when and how people were able to give their best, what were the contributing factors that made that possible. It is during this phase that the sense of wonder and curiosity comes forth, and it is essential to instill in people an attitude to look at their own situation anew, and to develop a sort of positive thinking related to the past experiences that can guide for future actions.

The second phase entails the dream about what could be. The identification of the most positive past experiences inevitably leads to think about the future in a renewed way, and imagine new possibilities for the way ahead. One important element of appreciative inquiry is that in this phase the dream is rooted in the past experience, from which it takes the lead, and is not just wishful thinking about how people would like to see their future. The dream phase serves to practice that invitation to generative theorizing whereby a group of people imagines a desired future that tells how things could and should be.

The third phase is to design the future, and make the abstract formulation of the dream phase closer to the ground, by exemplifying the strategy to follow in order to achieve the goals set in the previous phase. In fact, once the desires and hopes have been articulated, it is necessary to find out what are the social and organizational adjustments that can help bringing the dream to life. It is a future built on dialogue among the parties, where the common mobilization to achieve the goals set in the dream phase are the premise for a future action plan.

The fourth and final phase, destiny, represents the way in which the action plan takes form in practice. It needs to be understood in the most innovative and creative way possible, where the only important element to keep in mind is the active engagement of people that struggle to move closer to the ideal: how to do it is not prescribed in any manual. The confidence in achieving the goals is given by the fact that they are grounded in past experience and moments of excellence. It is this important element of appreciative inquiry, which matches a visionary aspect with a very concrete basis that makes it a compelling and innovative strategy to bring about transformation by challenging the status quo and grounding change in viable strategies of action.

CONCLUSION: IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY AND THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

In the concluding remarks Saint Martin and appreciative inquiry are brought back together in order to address the extent to which appreciative inquiry can contribute to promote the kind of attitude that is deemed necessary to achieve sustainable development and social change. The contribution of appreciative inquiry to Saint Martin, and to participatory approaches to development, is to be seen primarily as a radical answer to what Elliott defines "the culture of cynicism" [13]. It is a different way of referring to the problem-oriented attitude towards reality that is so much overwhelming in the development discourse. Saint Martin is to a certain extent affected by this problem-oriented attitude, which impedes the unfolding of that alternative approach put forward in the vision and mission of the organization.

One could find many arguments to support the idea that every situation is surrounded by limits of any kind; when the context is that of a village in the periphery of an African country, and the people are affected by a disability or HIV infection, then it is also easier to put forward the limits and give reasons for hopelessness and despair. On a different ground, there is plenty of elements to show how structures of power are there to limit the potential for change at any given moment, by infringing in people's freedom to voice concerns and formulate plans for the future. If one asks to raise the positive in such a context, most of the times he or she is confronted with a reality that abound of problems and power constraints of any kind.

It is exactly there that appreciative inquiry steps in, suggesting an unconditional focus on the positive as the only possible way to promote social change and achieve sustainable development. It does so by challenging the prevailing culture of cynicism primarily because it brings about a destructive attitude that becomes self-feeding and self-justifying. Reporting the existence of structures of power that impede the expression and activation of marginalized groups as the reason why it is not possible to envision a process of change is a self-realizing prophecy: challenges and structures of power are not justified by their very existence and it is the purpose of appreciative inquiry, and whichever attempts at bringing about change, to challenge such ideas. If one stops at the existing as everything that is possible and denies the possibility for alternative ways of being in the world, then it is evident that realizing change is nothing more than

wishful thinking. Appreciative inquiry embraces in full the call of social constructivism for generative theory and the need to move beyond the existing for new and better ways of being in the world.

Similarly, the questions of impact and sustainability are convincingly addressed by the participatory approaches to development presented in this paper. It can be argued, in fact, that when people are effectively engaged in the construction of strategies of action for change, then the question of sustainability is immediately addressed by the very simple fact that people participate. Participation, in fact, can be seen as the answer to the question of sustainability, insofar as it is a true and effective form of participation. Saint Martin is to this extent an outstanding example of how an organization can engage a community in an endogenous process of change, by working on the resources and talents on the ground to bring about change and promote sustainable development. The question of impact can as well be addressed within the framework of a truly participatory approach: in fact, when people are the real agents of change, driving the process, then the question of impact becomes to a certain extent less relevant. If it is people that have decided over their own future, then the impact of their actions is everything that the community could have achieved, and if it is a lot or a little, that is all that could have been done at that given moment.

In conclusion, it is my strong belief that as long as organizations like Saint Martin will continue in the ongoing search for new and better strategies of being in the world, and accompany communities in this process by making use of practices such as action research and appreciative inquiry, then there is a lot to expect from participatory approaches to development as to the potential for change they can offer for empowerment and emancipation.

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Saint Martin CSA   Saint Martin Catholic Social Apostolate

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IDENTIDAD, MEMORIA Y DESARROLLO DE COMUNIDAD

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the problem of cooperation in the field of community psychology, focusing especially on the intervention in communities affected by the consequences of traumatic events. It starts from some reflections on the meaning of community intervention, focusing on critical approaches and in particular on Latin American contributions, which emphasize the need for an active role of the community in a process of participated action research. It is then introduced the theme of trauma and the paper highlights the differences between possible approaches to work on it: especially those that depend on the choice of relying on the idea of "resilience" rather than on that of "vulnerability" or the choice to intervene only on the individual trauma rather than face even their collective effects. Eventually the role of memory is taken into consideration; its reconstruction, through a narrative approach, is seen as a fundamental process for maintaining the identity and reconstructing the meaning of the personal as well as collective tragic experiences. Finally, some considerations are made on the conditions that make possible a work of this kind as part of a cooperation program involving external researchers, along with key members of the community.

INTRODUCCIÓN

Esta ponencia deriva de una experiencia de intervención en psicología comunitaria que estamos llevando a cabo desde hace algunos años con la Asociación "Psicologi nel Mondo - Torino" (Psicólogos en el Mundo), a través de un programa de colaboración entre la Universidad Politécnica de Turín y la Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña, en una comunidad rural de El Salvador, Santa Marta, especialmente afectada por las consecuencias de la guerra civil de 1980-1992. Este artículo, sin embargo, no se refiere directamente ala intervención que se está desarrollando en ese contexto específico, sino sugiere algunas consideraciones de caráctermás general, que también tengan en cuenta otras experiencias y reflexiones teóricas sobre el significado del trabajo del trauma de la guerra en los programas de cooperación, y sobre todo losque consideran la elaboración de la memoria y de los recuerdos – a nivel individual y colectivo – como una parte esencial de un proyecto de investigación y acción enfocado en el desarrollo comunitario.

Por lo tanto, el artículo comienza con un análisis de las posibles concepciones del trabajo psicológico de comunidad en el marco de la cooperación, con el fin de concentrarse luego en el tema del trauma y de sus consecuencias a nivel individual y colectivo. La intervención sobre el trauma implica la necesidad de abordar la reconstrucción de la memoria colectiva y sus vínculos con los recuerdos que reflejan las vivencias de cada persona. Esto se explica en la parte final del artículo, que también lleva a una reflexión sobre las condiciones en las que este trabajo se puede lograr, y destaca la necesidad de una atención constante a los procesos de transferencia y contratransferencia.

DESARROLLO DE COMUNIDAD Y PSICOLOGÍA

Como es bien conocido, la psicología comunitaria es un campo de estudio de origen relativamente reciente [1]; no obstante, es posible identificar diferentes direcciones, que se distinguen no sólo por la interpretación ofrecida por algunos conceptos de base, sino también por la función atribuida a la intervención psicológica. En este artículo vamos a poner especial atención a las interpretaciones críticas de la psicología comunitaria, y en especial a las que están más presentes en el ámbito de América Latina.

En los programas de investigación y las acciones que se inspiran en estas interpretaciones está destacado notablemente el hecho de que la comunidad no puede ser concebida como un mero lugar donde se lleva a cabo una serie de actividades sobre temas psicológicoso psicosociales, o como un área de influencia donde se puede localizar a los "beneficiarios" de una intervención. Por tanto, la comunidad no es sólo un marco genérico, o el objeto de un proyecto, sino es ante todo un verdadero sujeto de la intervención misma. "Esto supone una característica, la primera y primordial, la esencial de la psicología comunitaria: lo comunitario incluye el *rolactivo de la comunidad, su participación*. Y no sólo como invitada, o como espectadora aceptada o receptora de beneficios, sino como agente activo con voz, voto y veto" [2]. Esto no eclipsa el rol de los psicólogos, ni la distinción de su papeldel de otros sujetos,

ni tampocola importancia de la metodología y las técnicas de intervención que son típicas de la disciplina psicológica. La tarea de los expertos, sin embargo, es básicamente la de un catalizador de procesos, y se debe actuarmediante la estimulación de los recursos y la misma energía que la comunidad y a tiene y, cuando sea necesario, favoreciendo la adquisición de nuevos recursos y el desarrollo de nuevas habilidades, a través de un proceso que parte de la comunidad y cuyos efectos recaen sobre ella [3].

En el último cuarto del siglo pasado, en América Latinase han desarrollado tres diferentes escuelas de pensamiento en el contexto de la psicología social. Ellas sugieren visiones distinta sa cerca de qué hacer, cómo hacerlo y cómo pensaren el contexto de la psicología, a partir de los desafíos que enfrenta el continente en ese período de la historia y tratando de responder a los problemasque se refieren acada país. Según Montero [2], estas son la Psicología Social Comunitaria, la Psicología Social Crítica y la Psicología Socialde la Liberación. La principal fuente de inspiración de este último, Martín Baró, el jesuita español asesinado en 1989 por escuadrones de la muerte durante la guerra civil en El Salvador, sostiene que la psicología siempre hasidoclara acerca de la liberación personal, es decir, la necesidad de que las personas adquieran control sobre sus vidas y sean capaces de orientar su propia vida hacia los objetivos que se propongan como importantes, sin mecanismos inconscientes o experiencias conscientes que les impidan alcanzar sus metas existenciales y felicidad personal. Por el contrario, hasta ahora se ha expresado de una manera mucho menos clara, en "la intima relación entre desalienación personal y desalienación social, entre control individual y poder colectivo, entre liberación de cada persona y la liberación de su todo un pueblo. Más aún, con frecuencia la Psicología ha contribuido a oscurecer la relación entre enajenación personal y opresión social, como si la patología de las personas fuera algo ajeno a la historia y a la sociedad y como si el sentido de los trastornos comportamentales se agotara en el plan individual" [4] (p. 26). Entonces, la psicología de la liberación debe adoptar una nueva perspectiva y una nueva práctica. Desde la nueva perspectiva es necesario ponerse en el lugar de las personas con problemas más graves, por lo que no debe hacerse una psicología "para", sino una psicología "con" y "desde el punto de vista de" estas personas y de los grupos sociales a los cuales pertenecen. Obviamente, esto no significa necesariamente alejarse de las teorías y paradigmas anteriores, sino relativizarlos y revisarlos críticamente.

En nuestra opinión, estas referencias conceptuales pueden tener un papel fundamental en el trabajo comunitario en el marco de la cooperación universitaria, aunque, por supuesto, deben ser reinterpretadas cada vezteniendo encuenta las necesidades del contexto espacio-temporal y cultural en lo que se está trabajando. La cooperación universitaria, en particular, implica al mismo tiempo de comprometerse en la investigación y la acción, pero ni la una ni la otra pueden dar resultados positivos para el desarrollo de una comunidad si esta no está disponible para participar activamente en el proceso, favoreciendo no solo la movilización de su propia capacidad de obrar, sino también delos conocimientos que posee. Por otro lado, sino sucede esta hibridación entre el conocimiento a disposición de todas las partescooperantes, apenas la realización de un proyecto podrá contribuir de manera importante en eldesarrollo de la ciencia misma, por lo menos en un ámbito como la psicología de comunidad, en el cualla investigación no puede limitarse a la consideración de los contextos en los que se ejerce como campo de aplicación de teorías generales, sino que debe ser capaz de entender los en suespecificidad y contribuir a su transformación.
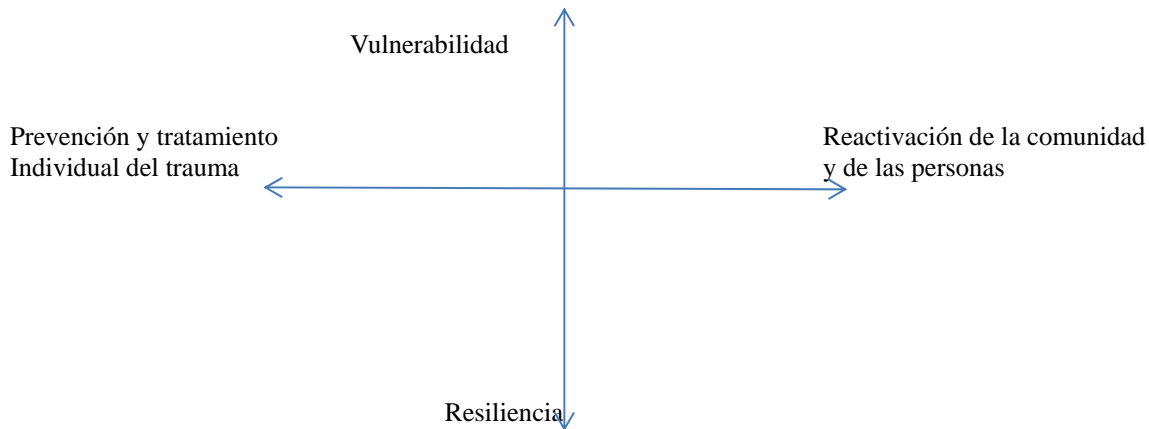

TRAUMA Y RESILIENCIA

En muchos aspectos, las consideraciones anteriores se hacen a ún más importantes cuando la cooperació involucra un área afectada pora contecimientos traumáticos que pueden tener consecuencias durante un largo período sobre el individuo y la comunidad misma, tales como desastres naturales, conflictos sociales, guerras, dictaduras violentas. Después de los eventos de esta naturaleza a menudo se activan, en contextos que han sido afectados, proyectos de cooperación internacional que, en muchos casos ,también incluyen la dimensión psico-social. Estos proyectos pueden ser activados en la fase de emergencia (por ejemplo, en campos de refugiados, de acuerdo con la lógica de las líneas definidas por el Comité Permanente entre Organismos IASC), o en una etapa posterior, a menudo en dirección a personas o grupos especialmente afectados por los acontecimientos. Más raramente operan después de mucho tiempo, es decir, en una etapa en la que el legado de los hechos (y el mismo trauma) puede ser transmitido a través de las generaciones, entrelazándose con varios factores que influyen en el desarrollo de la comunidad sin tener ninguna relación con aquellos eventos negativos.

Los proyectos en cuestión se distinguen, - así como en relación con la distancia temporal de los acontecimientos y por supuesto la naturaleza de éstos, el contexto socio-político, el contexto espacial y cultural en el quese llevaron a cabo - también por el enfoque que siguen. A este respecto, por razones de síntesis que imponen una fuerte esquematización de un marco de posibilidad es mucho más articulado, podríamos proponer una clasificación de los enfoques basada en un doble eje. El primer eje se refiere a la finalidad de la intervención y distingue las dirigidas únicamente a los sujetos individuales - cuya lógica esencial es la prevención en una etapa temprana o el posterior tratamiento del trauma - de las destinadas a la reactivación de las comunidades afectadas y, en su interior, de los sujetos más expuestos a un trauma. Un segundo eje se refiere a los enfoques conceptuales de la intervención y distingue los que ponen al centro la idea de "vulnerabilidad" de los que se basan en la de "resiliencia". En el primer caso, el proyecto sirve para cubrir el déficit de la comunidad, trabajando sólo hacia las personas más vulnerables; en el segundo caso, se supone que la comunidad cuenta con recursos para hacer frente a sus propios problemas: por lo tanto, es necesaria la identificación de estos recursos para fortalecerlos y activarlos.

En la intersección de los dos ejes se forman cuatro cuadrantes, que corresponden a diferentes modelos ideales de la intervención, es decir diferentes modos de referencia a la psicología de comunidad y de relación entre la cooperación y la comunidad afectada (ver fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – Modelos ideales de intervención en comunidades afectadas por eventos traumáticos.

Vulnerabilidad

Prevención y tratamiento
Individual del trauma

Reactivación de la comunidad
y de las personas

Resiliencia

El cuadrante en la parte superior izquierda se refiere a enfoques centrados únicamente en la determinación de los sujetos que se consideran particularmente vulnerables y en la aplicación a los mismos de los modelos de intervención para prevenir o tratar los síntomas relacionados con los efectos de un trauma (TEPT), tales como los incluidos en las clasificaciones recientemente reformuladas en el DSM V. En este enfoque, la dimensión comunitaria está ausente, mientras que la relación entre cooperantes y "beneficiarios" se inspira en la que prevalece en el campo bio-médico y no requiere otro que la aceptación de una terapia (por ejemplo, el método EMDR o los de inspiración conductista).

Enel cuadrante inferior izquierdoentra en juegola idea dela resiliencia,pero sólo en ladimensión individual. Laspersonasobjeto de la intervención, eneste caso, son vistos comosujetos activos, concaracterísticas que promueven latransformaciónadaptativa. Necesita basarseen estas características, para fortalecerlasy romperlosfactores de bloqueoque impidenque se expresen. También en estemodelo de intervención la relación entre la cooperacióny las partes interesadasse basa en la que se pone entre elmédico y el paciente; sin embargo centrar la atención enla identificación defactores de resiliencia, como la autoestima, la capacidad de adaptación, el sentido de la pertenencia, valores y creencias, no permite de separar claramente la dimensión individual de las relacional, comunitaria y socio-cultural.

En el cuadrante superior derecho la dimensión comunitaria se considera de manera explícita, pero la intervención sigue interesada principalmente en los sujetos (individuales o colectivos) con vulnerabilidad más fuerte-como las mujeres víctimas de violaciones sistemáticas, los huérfanos, los niños soldados, los discapacitados, los grupos minoritarios víctimas de violencia - y tiene el propósito de proporcionarles una poyo que mitigue el déficit. En cualquier caso, en este enfoque es imposible no tener en cuenta las reacciones activas del entorno social en el respeto de dichos sujetos o grupos (por ejemplo, la voluntad de superar las razones de estigmatización en contra de tipos particulares de víctimas) y, por lo tanto, la cooperación no puede hacer menos de relacionarse con la comunidad misma.

Por último, en el cuadrante inferior derecho el trabajo sobre las consecuencias de los acontecimientos potencialmente traumáticos está diseñado como una actividad de investigación y acción que se realizará en el marco de una relación conjuntaentre la comunidad y los voluntarios; pero esta condición no impide - sino que implica – una diferenciaciónen los papelesde las dos partes, así como la presencia de distintas funciones dentro dela misma comunidad. El objetivo es la elaboración del traumaa través del fortalecimiento de la capacidad de resiliencia y empoderamiento (individual, de grupo, colectivo), como parte de un proyecto global de desarrollo comunitario que, por otra parte, no excluye la posibilidad de centrarse más específicamente en los sujetos más desfavorecidos, fomentando su activación e inclusión en una red de relaciones comunitarias. También se excluye cualquier posible distinción entre "cooperantes" y "beneficiarios" por lo que se refiere a los resuldados del proyecto: estos se consideran de interés común, tanto en términos de crecimiento del conocimiento, como en la experimentación de líneas de acción.

MEMORIA COLECTIVA Y TRAUMA

En las páginas siguientes, vamos a discutir algunas cuestiones más específicas desde la perspectiva del último cuadrante. Esto es, de hecho, el enfoque que estamos tratando de seguir en la intervención de la psicología comunitaria que estamos haciendo en SantaMarta. Cabe señalar, sin embargo, que este enfoque requiere condiciones de arranque que no se puedeen contrar en cualquier contexto: necesita que exista un acuerdo con la comunidad - o por lo menos con algunos miembros importantes – para que el trabajo sobre el trauma pueda ser hecho de forma participativa. Sino se dan estas condiciones, independientemente de las opciones culturales de los cooperantes es posible que sea útil trabajar sobre el trauma de acuerdo a otras perspectivas.

En cualquier caso,cuando se actúa con una comunidad que sufre los efectos de un trauma, un aspecto esenciales el detrabajo sobre la memoria, tanto individual como colectiva. La memoria colectiva es un objeto de estudio interdisciplinario que involucra muchos campos de las ciencias sociales: en particular, la sociología, la psicología, los estudios culturalese históricos. Para proporcionar una definición concisa, se podría decir que se trata de un conocimiento compartido ampliamente - dentro de un grupo, una comunidad o una sociedad nacional entera - de sucesos pasados que no se han experimentado solo de manera individual, sino que también han sido reconstruido sa través de funciones de comunicación social [5]. Este procesamiento, así como el almacenamiento o el reprocesamiento posterior, se lleva a cabo a través de múltiples canales que pueden tener diferentes grados de institucionalización y formalización.

El desarrollo de una memoria colectiva ampliamente compartida y reflejada en los relatos de diferentes tipos (de los de la reconstrucción histórica hasta aquellos que se expresan en la vida cotidiana y en presentaciones fuera de la comunidad) tiene un papel esencial en el mantenimiento de una identidad comunitaria, así como para la elaboración de las memorias individuales de los trágicos acontecimientos que experimentaron los individuos o sus familias. En este sentido juega un papel importante para la salud mental de los individuos y de la comunidad en su conjunto. Sin embargo, la creación de una memoria colectiva implica una selección de los eventos que necesita recordar o también olvidar [6], así como su organización en una secuencia que les confiere unsentido[7].

Este proceso no está exento de elementos de tensión y conflicto, ni al interior de la comunidad misma, ni tampo coen relación con el contexto más amplio en quela comunidad está incluida. Esto depende del hecho de quela memoria colectiva no sólo da importancia y estructura al pasado, sino que también lo conecta a los problemas actuales; por lo tanto, además de un valor de identidad tiene inevitablemente también un valor social y político porque favorece la reproducción o, al contrario, la transformación de jerarquías y relaciones de poder entre los individuos o los grupos sociales.

Esto es particularmente cierto cuando se trata de la memoria de la guerra o la opresión de la dictadura, en todos los casos en que sea posible - a pesar de todas las complejidades y ambigüedades que siempre acompañan a cada evento como estos - establecer una distinción entre víctimasy responsables de los eventos. Por parte de las víctimas, la memoria y el reconocimiento del sufrimiento implica la capacidad de expresar la propia experiencia, cuya negaciónes una negación de la identidad personal y colectiva. Por parte de los autores de la violencia, el olvido (a menudo presentado como un requisito de la pacificación) es esencial con el fin de ocultar sus responsabilidades y mantener una posición de poder.

Pero incluso para las víctimas puede ser difícil de participar en la construcción de la memoria colectiva y, sobre todo, construir un puente, en la narración, entre su propia experiencia y la colectiva. De hecho, la experiencia traumática produce efectos de "sideración", de desestructuración psíquica y devastación de los puntos de referencia del sujeto, que implican la incapacidad para salir de la percepción de la imposibilidad de comunicarlo que se ha sufrido y dar un sentido a esos hechos de manera que puedan conectarse a la vida presente, y también la dificultad para salir de una memoria basada únicamente en la repetición obsesiva y retraumatizante de esos eventos. Y estos efectos se reflejan a nivel comunitario en la ruptura de los lazos relacionales entre sujetos y en la dificultad en el diseñar un posible futuro juntos. Además, tienden a convertir la experiencia en un doloroso secreto que hace difíciles las relaciones familiares y prolonga los efectos del trauma también hacia la próxima generación. A partir de las ideas de Freud, en el psicoanálisis han sido especialmente las investigaciones de Abraham y Toroksobre el duelo, la "cripta" y el "fantasma" [8] que han llamado la atención sobre la transmisión del trauma en la familia, especialmente en la relación entre padres e hijos. Las situaciones de la vida que no han podido ser procesadas siguen siendo una fuente de sufrimiento mental: en lugar de ser incorporadas por el mecanismo de la introyección y armoniosamente integradas en la personalidad, se enquistan en "criptas" psíquicas, que mantienen su propria existencia condenada a un secreto que también afecta la esfera de las relaciones afectivas más estrechas.

Por estarazón, en muchas experiencias de trabajo en contextos afectados por guerras y conflictos violentos se ha hecho un trabajo de apoyo psicosocial [9] [10], que muchas veces se enfoca enla reconstrucción de la memoria colectiva a través de la narración de las vivencias del sufrimiento. Como veremos, hay diferentes métodos para realizar esta tarea; en especial en las intervenciones destinadas a la reconstrucción de las relaciones comunitarias este trabajo se lleva a cabo en pequeños grupos, acompañados de uno o más psicólogos que faciliten la actividad de narración y ayuden a las personas a expresarse en formas que no dan lugara una reaparición del trauma.

EL PAPEL DE LA COOPERACIÓN

¿Bajo qué condiciones y conqué límites puede ser eficaz, en estas situaciones, un trabajo sobre la memoria desde la perspectiva de una intervención de la psicología comunitaria, llevado a cabo en un marco que moviliza a expertos de otros países? Una respuesta generala esta pregunta es difícil porque - a pesar de las similitudes - cada situación tiene una fuerte especificidad y también porque, en loque concierne a nosotros, nuestra experiencia se enfoca de manera directa sobre un solo contexto.

Sin embargo, se puede desarrollar aquí algunas reflexiones basadas en esta experiencia que, como se ha mencionado, se refiere a un apoyo para la elaboración de un trauma de la guerra civil, como parte de un trabajo comunitario que

también involucra a muchas otras áreas de intervención (por ejemplo, sobre las relaciones mamás-bebés, la condición de los niños con necesidades especiales, la inclusión en el ámbito escolar, la prevención de la violencia juvenil).

Un primer aspecto se refiere precisamente a esta pluralidad de áreas de trabajo: nos parece importante que la demanda de apoyo en los temas del trauma de la guerra se haya manifiestado en el contexto de una relación de cooperación con objetivos diferentes y complementarios, que pueden resumirse en la idea de undesarrollo de la comunidad, que incluya la dimensión del bienestar psicológico y de la salud mental. Una relaciónque ya ha creado lazos de confianza, la reflexión y la acción conjunta, sobre todo con algunos de los líderes de la comunidad y con los trabajadores más cercano sa los problemas de salud mental.

Nos parece significativo que por parte de estos líderes y trabajadores ha surgido por la primera vez la idea de realizarun trabajode grupo, basado en la narración y la escuchade sus vivencias durante la guerra; entonces con ellos empezamos los grupos haciendo uso de un método definido sobre la base de la literatura relevante, pero adaptado a las condiciones concretas del contexto. Ahora esta actividad se ha desarrollado con otros grupos y también incluye la participación activa de dos estudiantes salvadoreños de pregrado en psicología y una colaboración con el IDHUCA (Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas de San Salvador), que participan en la recolección de pruebas de crímenes de guerra, en vista de la reunión de un Tribunal de Justicia Restaurativa.

Una segunda cuestión se refiere a la necesidad de realizar un trabajo como este con una atención constante a la dinámica de la transferencia y, lo más importante, de la contratransferencia, es decir, las reacciones de los investigadores / cooperantes frente a la comunidad y las personas que forman parte de esta. De hecho, la dinámica de la contratransferencia no concierne sólo la relación entre analista y paciente, sino-como fue demostrado por Devereux [11] - abarcatodo el campo de las ciencias sociales. En el caso de la investigación – acción sobre los temas del trauma de guerra esta dinámica implica diferentes aspectos de las reacciones de los cooperantes frente a la comunidad, a saber: 1) los que dependen de la identidad de cada investigador singular y están vinculados a su personalidad y su historia, 2) los que se refierena la identidad colectiva de los investigadores, a los sistemas de referencia cultural y social de la cooperación, y 3) los que están relacionados con la teoríae ideología [12].

Cada uno de estos aspectos mereceser objeto de una reflexión constante por parte de los investigadores. En parte, esto se puede hacer a través de la misma discusión en el grupo de trabajo y de la relación con algunas de las figuras clave de la comunidad; en parte, también deber equerir la intervención de expertos que desempeñan un papel de supervisión, a ún mejor siestos expertos no sólo provienen del entorno cultural de los investigadores, sino también de las universidades más cercanas a la propia comunidad. El carácter de la cooperación interuniversitaria puede facilitar este tipo de relación.

Una tercera cuestión concierne el propósito y la metodología de los grupos de narración. En las experiencias llevadas a cabo a nivel internacional existen varios métodos: la elección de uno de ellos depende de las condiciones en que el trabajo de la narración se desarrolla, las opciones culturales de los investigadores y de los mismos modelos ideales de intervención que se ha discutido anteriormente. Por ejemplo, uno de los métodos que se utilizan con mayor frecuencia en los casos en quela intervención se centra únicamente en los sujetos individuales y propone para reducir rápidamente la presencia de los síntomas de estrés post-traumático, la "terapia de exposición narrativa" [13], u otros métodos que recaen en el contexto de los enfoques conductual-cognitivos. Otros trabajos se acercan al método de la terapia narrativa de M. White y D. Epston, de inspiración constructivista, que tiene como objetivo la restructuración de las construcciones de las personas sobre su experiencia para facilitarle otras más útiles [14]. También existen métodos de psicoterapia de grupo de orientación psicoanalítica. Esta metodología consiste en trabajar con grupos de personas con experiencias similares, lo que les permite reelaborar sus experiencias traumáticas, a partir no sólo de sus propias interpretaciones, sino también de las llevadas a cabo por otras personas del grupo [15]. También hay experiencias en las que el trabajo de narración en grupo es reaalizado por un equipo que incluye a expertos de diversas especialidades [16]. De todos modos, la psicoterapia de grupo ha demostrado ser eficaz en víctimas de trauma también porque uno de los principales efectoses que puede producir la reestructuración de las relaciones interpersonales, que han sido afectadas por el trauma.

Nuestro enfoque tiende a acercarse a este modo de actuar. Nuestro trabajo, de hecho, no sesitua en una situación de emergenciani es sólo enfocado en la rehabilitación sobre el daño psicológico que la violencia ha provocado en las personas. Se encuentra, más bien, desde una perspectiva psicosocial, que parte de una situación afectada por el trauma de la guerra para ayudar a superar los efectos que bloquean las relaciones interpersonales y comunitarias. El objetivo es involucrar a la comunidad en un proceso de crecimiento colectivo, en el que incluso cada persona pueda encontrar su propio papel activo.

CONCLUSIONES

Las reflexiones llevadas a cabo muestran que, en el caso de una intervención realizada con una distancia de los acontecimientos potenciales causantes de traumas, el trabajo del trauma no se puede separar de un compromiso más general para apoyar el desarrollo de la comunidad. Esto implica un programa de investigación y acción, donde es

esencial crear un estrecho vínculo entre investigadores / trabajadores de ayuda humanitaria y la propia comunidad, que de este modo viene a asumir un papel activo y no sólo el de destinatario de la intervención.

También significa que el propósito del proyecto es estimular los recursos a escala individual y comunitaria, para fomentar la dinámica de un fortalecimiento cada vez mayor de la resiliencia, en lugar de centrarse únicamente en el cuidado de los sujetos más vulnerables, considerándolos implícitamente como un "objetivo" separado del resto de la comunidad. El marco de la cooperación universitaria, con el establecimiento de relaciones de intercambio entre investigadores extranjeros, expertos locales y la comunidad misma, puede crear condiciones favorables para un proyecto de este tipo, siempre que exista una atención constante a la dinámica de la contratransferencia en toda su complejidad.

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COOPERATION, DISCOURS, CHANGEMENT: *BIAS* DANS LE DISCOURS ACADEMIQUE SUR LE CONFLIT

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ABSTRACT

L'article part du présupposé que les discours ont un pouvoir, puisqu'ils influencent l'action. Les discours définissent les limites du cadre d'explication d'une réalité. C'est ce que nous appelons le *frame*.
Tous les discours académiques ont un poids important sur la construction des *frames* ; ils les valident. Ces discours légitiment ainsi une certaine vision de la réalité.
L'article présente, en étude de cas, une analyse d'un texte académique. Il s'agit d'une description qualitative d'un projet de coopération entre Italie et Palestine visant l'empowerment des habilités des jeunes dans l'utilisation des TIC pour dénoncer les violations des Droits de l'Homme. L'analyse critique de ce texte fait émerger le *frame* du «balanced approach» comme filtre de représentation du projet. Ce *frame* biaise la description de la réalité et incite, par sa présence, à l'inaction sociale.
Cette étude de cas met en lumière tout le pouvoir des *frames* dans le discours académique.

INTRODUCTION THÉORIQUE

1. Le pouvoir du discours

Habituellement, nous entendons le pouvoir de la communication comme un contrôle sur ce que l'on peut dire ; c'est-à-dire sur la construction de l'agenda des médias : c'est d'abord une question d'accès au discours. Mais le pouvoir ne s'exerce pas seulement à travers la censure et le silence. Le pouvoir, nous enseigne Foucault, est producteur : «Le pouvoir s'exerce aussi comme construction du signifié à partir des discours, à travers lesquels les acteurs sociaux orientent leurs actions.» [1]. «Le pouvoir est l'habilité à interpréter la réalité et à faire en sorte que les autres acceptent ces interprétations.» [2].

Selon la théorie politique d'Habermas [3], ce n'est pas seulement la violence qui est à la base de la relation de pouvoir, mais plutôt la légitimation que le subordonné accorde au dominant. Cette légitimation « dépend surtout du consensus obtenu à travers la construction d'un signifié partagé » [1, p.36].

2. Les frames

Selon la théorie linguistique de Lakoff [4], ce signifié partagé constitue les *frames*; c'est-à-dire, le contexte de connaissances dans lequel l'individu peut placer les informations qu'il reçoit sur un fait. L'ensemble des *frames* constitue la cosmovision, c'est-à-dire la pensée de chacun pour «reconstruire» le monde [5].

Depuis les études de Goffman [6], les *frames* ont été considérés comme importants, dans la mesure où ils définissent des séries de métaphores pour guider l'interprétation de la réalité.

3. La stratégie du framing

Le pouvoir de changer la réalité est le pouvoir de contrôler les *frames*. Le *framing* est une activité stratégique visant à manipuler certaines communications afin d'imposer son point de vue à autrui. Le *framing* n'est pas une technique de manipulation coercitive, mais il limite les métaphores à disposition du sujet. En effet, l'individu n'agit pas de façon rationnelle, mais utilise ses préconstruits, ses attentes, ses perceptions sur l'identité, des mythes et stéréotypes, ses mémoires et ses croyances. Ainsi, manipuler le *frame* offre la base pour contrôler de façon indirecte le futur comportement. «Le *frame* donne du signifié aux opportunités, au réseau, au groupe et à ses membres. Il est donc une composante cruciale de l'action collective» [7, p. 9].

La conclusion de Castells [1, p.85] est que «les discours, dans nos sociétés, forment le mental à travers une technologie précise : le réseau de communication, qui organise la communication socialisée. Ainsi, la pogrammation des réseaux de communication est la source décisive des matériaux culturels».

4. Le discours académique

Le discours académique est le plus valide des matériaux culturels à disposition des individus pour construire ses *frames* et activer ses réseaux. Le discours académique suit des règles précises et bénéficie *a priori* d'un degré très élevé de légitimité dans la description de la réalité, grâce au consensus de prestige accordé à la méthode scientifique en

général. «La vérité est située dans la forme du discours scientifique et dans les institutions qui le produisent» [8]. Deleuze [9, p.59] affirme, quant à lui, que «la représentation n'existe plus, mais n'existe que l'action ; action théorique ou action pratique». A cela Foucault ajoute que « le rôle de l'intellectuel n'est pas de dire la vérité muette ; son devoir est plutôt de lutter contre toutes les formes de pouvoir là où l'intellectuel-même est objet et outil, c'est-à-dire dans la connaissance, la vérité, la conscience et dans le discours » [8, p.60].

5. Le discours construit des sujets

Le discours possède aussi le pouvoir de former les sujets qui parlent et qui écoutent : le discours in-forme le sujet. Cette dimension du discours explique pourquoi les individus considèrent qu'adopter un discours est une action existentielle et identitaire.

ETUDE DE CAS

Le titre de l'article que l'on examine ici est le suivant : «The global imaginary, new media and social political innovation in the periphery: the practical case of an Internet-based empowerment project in Palestine and Israel» de Roland Benedikter, Davide Ziveri, Revue Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies [2013, pp. 2 -15].

1. Le projet

L'article parle d'un projet d'échanges entre jeunes ayant reçu une formation aux usages des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) dans les media labs de Turin (Italie) et de At-Tuwani (Cisjordanie). Le projet a été financé grâce à un processus participatif dans une communauté de jeunes en province italienne de Bolzano. Le projet est un exemple de bonne pratique d'apprentissage de pair à pair et il fait partie du processus d'empowerment du comité local populaire de résistance non violente palestinienne. L'objectif du projet était de favoriser l'autoreprésentation des jeunes Palestiniens et d'observer et dénoncer les violations des Droits de l'Homme en Palestine. A partir de la description de cette expérience, l'article propose le concept de non-violence 2.0, c'est-à-dire un savoir non violent capable d'utiliser de façon tactique les TIC et d'agir sur les discours.

2. Les prémisses non-respectées

Les auteurs de l'article affirment que « ce qui est crucial pour un résultat positif des efforts des émancipations à l'âge de la globalisation médiatique, ce sont les faits sociopolitiques sur le terrain ». Cela vient dire que la description de l'image du contexte est très importante. Les éléments de la narration de la situation sur le terrain sont une partie des histoires qui se passent sur le terrain-même. Mais la narration influence également le contexte de ce sur quoi elle porte.

La non-violence, en tant que force sociale, peut fonctionner comme un «*reframing*» d'un problème, d'un conflit et de sa résolution (transformation), mais seulement si la narration se base sur la vérité.

En effet, la non-violence, dans son étymologie originelle («satyagraha», Gandhi) signifie «force de la vérité». Il ne s'agit pas d'une vérité *a priori*, mais d'une attitude parrèsiaste.

3. Le frame du « balanced approach »

Dans l'analyse de l'article, il apparaît un *frame* spécifique qui forme le cadre d'explication de la situation israélo-palestinienne au-dessus de la réalité. Le *frame* est tellement puissant qu'on le retrouve dans le discours académique. Le *frame* explique la réalité à la manière d'un script.

On peut appeler ce *frame*, celui du « balanced approach », dont les éléments caractéristiques sont les suivants :

- *La dynamique de la violence*

Plusieurs références dans le texte dessinent un scénario différent de la situation réelle. «La région où se déroule le projet est ravagée par la violence des deux factions : les colons Israéliens qui occupent une partie du territoire et les jeunes Palestiniens qui répondent avec des protestations violentes et des actes subversifs. […] Les observateurs internationaux ont documenté des attaques de la part de la communauté palestinienne vers les colons et, en réaction à cela, une contre-attaque des colons et, occasionnellement, des intimidations de la part de l'Armée israélienne».

Ces affirmations contredisent les rapports publics et officiels des observateurs internationaux du Corps civil de Paix pour l'Union européenne. En regard de la violence en ces régions spécifiques, les derniers actes violents de la partie palestinienne dataient de 1999. En 2001, les villageois ont créé le comité populaire de résistance nonviolente. Il s'agissait d'une décision communautaire visant à repousser la violence en tant qu'agression ou défense. Depuis lors, les observateurs internationaux ont relevé constamment les attaques des colons et ont observé qu'aucun acte violent n'y a été riposté de la part des Palestiniens.

Le *frame* du «balanced approach» qui émerge de ce texte refuse une catégorisation dichotomique, mais généralise excessivement la dynamique de la violence. Ce biais ne permet pas de mettre le focus sur ces contextes locaux qui représentent une différence significative par rapport à la tendance des autres zones géographiques. Ainsi, ce *frame* rend invisibles les expériences locales de non-violence.

- *La dénonciation de la violation des Droits de l'Homme à travers le Web*

L'article rapporte que « l'observation des violences à travers Internet permet aux citoyens de dénoncer les agressions des deux parties du front ». Cette description ne tient pas compte des différences en matière d'accès à Internet [10]. Le village des At-Tuwani n'a été que très récemment alimenté en électricité. Le retard n'a pas été causé par la situation de pauvreté et de sous-développement, mais par une décision politique de l'autorité militaire israélienne qui contrôle le territoire occupé (area C, selon les accords d'Oslo).

- *La participation ouverte*

Le *frame* du «balanced approach» ne décrit les expériences comme étant positives que si les deux communautés (israélienne et palestinienne) y participent. Cette méthodologie de transformation des conflits a été utilisée avec succès en Irlande du Nord. Malheureusement, ce n'est pas exactement ce qui se passe en ce cas. L'article dit que «le projet fait travailler les deux communautés dans une échange on line et off line. Les activités avec des groupes mixtes de jeunes leur permettent de connaître les deux narrations du conflit. Le projet essaie donc de construire des relations partenariales entre pairs». Cette affirmation est inexacte, car cette intéressante activité ne fait pas partie du projet, puisque la communauté de la colonie israélienne - proche du village palestinien d'At- Tuwani – se montre très fermée et a érigé plusieurs barrières (contrôle physique et armé, langue, idéologie), qui n'offrent aucune possibilité de rencontres. Les jeunes du village palestinien engagés dans le projet travaillent avec des associations pacifistes israéliennes. Cet aspect montre d'un côté que les rencontres sont possibles, mais également que les différences sont très marquées à l'intérieur de la société israélienne entre les colons et les citoyens Israéliens engagés pour la paix.

- *A l'origine du frame du «balanced approach» : le concept du politiquement correct*

L'origine de ce *frame* se trouve dans la culture Nord-américaine du «politically correct», c'est-à-dire une attitude visant à réduire la discrimination verbale dans la forme extérieure du discours. Cette attitude implique une équidistance, autrement dit, une relation à distances égales entre deux parties en conflit. C'est l'attitude de la prétendue «neutralité». Se placer loin des deux parties implique de ne pas reconnaître les victimes comme telles. Cela favorise la production de sensation de culpabilité chez les victimes et un véritable deuxième traumatisme. En revanche, dans la culture non-violente, il est plus fréquent de trouver le concept de proximité avec les deux parties, en reconnaissant toujours les responsabilités de chacune.

- *A l'origine du frame du «balanced approach» : la peur des valeurs sacrées*

Sur le conflit israélo-palestinien, au centre des médias de toute la planète, convergent plusieurs intérêts, mémoires et identités. Ainsi, il est considéré comme légitime d'expérimenter la peur des valeurs sacrées. La première de ces valeurs est la dignité humaine. Jamais dans l'histoire la dignité humaine n'aura autant été brisée que durant la Shoah. Le *frame* du «balanced approach» met en relation le respect pour le drame de l'holocauste avec l'impossibilité d'exprimer des opinions sur les politiques du Gouvernement israélien dans les territoires occupés.

- *Les avantages du frame du «balanced approach»*

Utiliser le filtre de ce frame amène des avantages grâce à l'économie cognitive. Les narrations dans ce frame réduisent la complexité et défendent l'individu de toute dissonance cognitive, motrice du changement.

Ce frame a aussi une valeur heuristique : il offre une explication de la violence selon la dynamique attaque – défense, expliquant ainsi la continuité de l'état de violence. De plus, si les rôles s'alternent, il est facile et permis de s'identifier alternativement aux deux acteurs du conflit. Cette double empathie nous amène à comprendre le conflit dans une dynamique action – réaction de majeur à mineur [11].

- *Les effets du frame du «balanced approach»*

En refusant la polarisation entre groupes et la radicalisation d'autrui, en refusant la figure de l'ennemi, du différent et du barbare, le *frame* du «balanced approach» risque quand même de déshumaniser les acteurs du conflit, qui deviennent alors esclaves de l'automatisme de la violence.

Ce *frame* du «balanced approach» est tellement basé sur les valeurs de la modération qu'il favorise une attitude passive, et donc l'inaction.

CONCLUSIONS

L'analyse critique du discours ne pose pas de question sur le degré de véridicité des interprétations de la réalité. La *question* qui émerge se pose quant à la typologie d'actions, et quant à la typologie de sujets créés par l'adoption d'un type particulier de *frame*. Quand le *frame* du «balanced approach» entre dans le discours académique, il y a un risque de ne pas pouvoir adéquatement présenter la complexité du contexte de chaque situation, d'empêcher les chercheurs de prêter attention aux cas particuliers et différents, de limiter la sérendipité.

Une action de coopération académique efficace doit tenir compte des histoires, des représentations, des discours et des *frames* sur les conflits et sur les régions qui souffrent de violence politique ou de catastrophes naturelles ou encore de sous-développement économique. La façon avec laquelle ces situations sont représentées à la Communauté internationale définit l'action de la Communauté internationale-même par rapport à la situation donnée. Autrement dit, agir sur les *frames* intentionnellement et stratégiquement change les représentations, et, par conséquent, les actions de la Communauté internationale.

Les *chercheurs* en Sciences Sociales ont le devoir d'expliciter les *frames* que l'on trouve dans les narrations qui circulent dans les réseaux. Nous, en tant qu'activistes, que chercheurs, que représentants politiques ou simples citoyens, sommes toujours consommateurs et producteurs de flux de discours. Donc, nous pouvons choisir de participer à la diffusion des *frames* qui promeuvent le changement social.

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