



# POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH OF VICTIMS INFORMED BY THE TRUTH COMMISSION OF ECUADOR

**Carlos Reyes<sup>1</sup>**

**Gino Grondona-Opazo**

**Marcelo Rodríguez**

**Darío Páez**

*Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Ecuador*

---

## **ABSTRACT**

This article explores if the victims included in the Truth Commission of Ecuador (TCE, 2010) show Posttraumatic Growth (PTG), the conditions in which it occurs and the kind of events that are associated to it. 48 victims from five provinces in Ecuador were evaluated through the posttraumatic growth inventory. Results show that there are some differences on the level of PTG depending on the number of experiences, the type of violence suffered. Despite this fact, growth does not mean psychological adjustment. This article discusses the implications of such findings and the inconsistencies between PTG and the victims of political violence.

## **Keywords**

Victims of human rights; The Truth Commission of Ecuador Report; posttraumatic growth.

## **RESUMEN**

El presente texto explora si las víctimas que aparecen en el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad de Ecuador (CVE, 2010) perciben Crecimiento Postraumático (CPT), en qué condiciones ocurre y con qué eventos se asocia. Se evaluaron a 48 víctimas, a través del inventario de crecimiento postraumático, provenientes de cinco provincias de Ecuador. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto que hay diferencias en el nivel de CPT de acuerdo al número y tipo de vulneraciones presentadas, pero no necesariamente ese crecimiento sugiere un ajuste psicológico. Se discuten las implicaciones de estos hallazgos sobre las inconsistencias encontradas en la relación entre CPT y víctimas de violencia política.

## **Palabras clave**

Víctimas de derechos humanos; Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad Ecuador; crecimiento postraumático

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence about this article should be addressed to Carlos Reyes. Email: creyes@ups.edu.ec

## CRECIMIENTO POSTRAUMÁTICO EN VÍCTIMAS INFORMADAS POR LA COMISIÓN DE LA VERDAD ECUADOR

The Transitional Justice Process in Ecuador emerges as a response from the State to the severe human rights violations that took place during Leon Febres Cordero's Government between 1984 and 1988. Due to several organizations and victim committees pressure, Rafael Correa's Government created the Truth Commission of Ecuador (TCE) through presidential decree 305 on May the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. The first article of the decree proposed to investigate, reveal and avoid impunity around the facts that may constitute human rights violations that took place between 1984 and 1988 and some similar subsequent events on later presidential periods. The second article determines specific goals leading to the investigation process, declassifying confidential State files, recognizing the victims, building reparation policies, creating legal and institutional reforms, prevention mechanisms, determining civil, administrative, criminal responsibilities and punishment. In order to achieve these goals, the TCE started its activities in 2008 and presented its final report on 2010.

The violence period investigated and reported included the ranges between 1984 and 1988, and the period between 1989 and 2008. The cases were classified amongst six types of human rights violations: 1) Illegal derivation of liberty, 2) Extrajudicial execution, 3) Forced Disappearance, 4) Torture and mistreatment, 5) Violation of the right to life, and 6) Sexual Violence. The CVE registers a total of 118 cases that include 456 victims among these six types of violations. 831 violations were identified considering that more than one type of crime could be found to have been committed on only one victim. These violations were divided into "269 cases of deprivation of liberty, 365 cases of torture; 86 of sexual violence; 17 forced disappearances, 68 extrajudicial executions and 26 attempts against the right to life" (TCE, 2010, p. 433). Most of these crimes (68%) were committed during Febres Cordero's administration (1984-1988). About the alleged perpetrators, it has been found that "49.6% of them were active and passive officers and members of the Ecuadorian Police Department, 28.3% were active and passive officers and members of three wings of the Ecuadorian Army, 10% were government authorities, 5.4% were judicial officers and 5.9% were foreign State officers and authorities" (TCE, 2010, p. 434).

In the TCE's Final Report a recommendation section is included at the end referring to reparation; it includes legal and institutional reforms as well as other actions that may guarantee that this kind of crime does not happen again. Around this scenario the "Law for Victim's reparation and persecution of grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity occurred in Ecuador between October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1983 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008" was created and approved on December 2013. This law materializes the recommendations made in the Report and creates the Reparation Program through administrative procedures, aimed at whole non-material reparation on direct and indirect victims of human rights violations. This Program is managed by the Ecuadorian Ombudsman's Office and includes restitution measures, compensation, satisfaction and non-repetition guarantees.

Among all the aspects involving the responsibilities of the Office, established in article 9 of this law, the following are included: psychosocial and physic rehabilitation, assessment, representation and legal support, human rights education and dissemination of the Final TCE Report; the implementation of symbolic satisfaction measures and the guardianship of documental memories of human right violations.

Almost a year after the law was approved, on November 2014, the guidelines for regulating the procedures on whole non-material reparation were subscribed, and on February, 2015 the first case receptions and attention took place. The data obtained from the Ombudsman Office show that on September 2015, 309 cases of victims, recognized by de TCE, were given attention, from which 79.6% (246 cases) correspond to direct victims, and 20.4% (63 cases) to indirect ones. From all the cases, 82.5% (255 cases) ask for psychosocial intervention as part of their reparation process<sup>2</sup>. As we can see, 30 years have gone by between the years in which the violations took place and the implementations of a whole, nonmaterial reparation processes by Ecuadorian State. This fact has as central implication that the victims had to face the effect of such situations with only their own resources and capacities, before these events were documented and recognized by de TCE.

<sup>2</sup>This information was given by the "Directorate for Victims of Human Rights Violation and Protection against Impunity" of the Ombudsman Office.



Against this background, this paper's main goal is to explore what kind of responses to the impact of these infringements are shown by the direct victims recognized on the TCE Report (2010) and if such responses can be linked to some sort of recuperation. To do so, posttraumatic growth will be examined and studied on the victims.

### Posttraumatic growth on victims of political violence

One of the aspects that are stirring interest around the studies of trauma is the positive and adaptive response after experiencing a traumatic event (Vázquez, Pérez-Sales, & Ochoa, 2014). One of its most studied factors is Posttraumatic Growth (PTG), which has been identified as the positive cognitive and behavioral change after a traumatic event (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). These authors refer to five domains in which growth is evaluated: *New appreciation of life*, meaning that the person may have a different appreciation of life, making changes on priorities and goals; *new possibilities* that involve valuing new opportunities in life; *spiritual change* associated with spiritual growth and development; *Personal Strength* related with personal growth that involves learning about own capacities and reinforcing abilities; *improving relationships with others*, sensation of closeness and changing interpersonal relations.

For the purpose of this article, it is crucial to explain what PTG is about, following Zoellner and Maercker (2006), there are two ways of approaching growth: First, as an outcome variable, that means that PTG would be the ultimate step on the process of experiencing a traumatic event in which some negative responses are developed before gradual recovery responses appear. Second, growth is observed as a coping strategy, expressly, as a positive reevaluation of the traumatic experience. The last is equal to saying that PTG is presented as a means of forthcoming well-being. These two ideas are related to the findings observed on PTG that have been evaluated in varied areas. Studies have been focused on an individual/clinical field, such as cancer, depression, accidents, or in social spheres such as political violence (For further revision refer to meta-analysis PTG by Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006; Prati, & Pietrantonio, 2009).

Findings on violence research do not necessarily show coherence between one and another. On the one side, it is said that PTG is associated with mental health benefits, whether it is on genocide victims in Guatemala (Gasparre, Bosco, & Bellelli, 2010), Ruanda (Rimé, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Páez, 2011), Nazi Holocaust (Lurie-Beck, Liossis, & Gow, 2008), air attacks and bombings in Iraq, (Mahdi, Prihadi, & Hashim, 2014), or the Palestine-Israel conflict (Laufer, 2003). On the other, it has been discussed that PTG may be found on victims of political violence. (Vázquez, Hervás, & Pérez-Sales, 2008). This happens due to the fact that growth on direct victims of terrorism is reported to be less significant (Morland, Butler, & Leskin, 2008), or because some publications use exposed people rather than direct victims or in some other cases what has been informed about PTG is not precisely associated to well-being (Hall, Saltzman, Canetti, & Hobfoll, 2015), but to negative coping. That said, it is possible to identify two aspects of PTG, one linked to positive response and well-being and another that is related to delusional dimensions or negative effects around psychological adjustment (Hobfoll et al., 2006; Maercker & Zoellner, 2004; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Brown, 1988).

A PTG study carried out on 59 victims affected by the genocide in Guatemala ( $M_{\text{ptg}} = 49$ ,  $SD = 15.4$ ) through PTG inventory (Gasparre et al., 2010) shows that these victims were exposed to crimes such as armed robbery, death of family members, forced disappearances, home destruction, beating to death, homicide with machete, massive massacres and indiscriminate attacks. Results showed that 95% of the victims presented at least some kind of growth, identifying particularly dimensions such as spiritual growth ( $M = 4.3$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ) and a new appreciation of life ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = .89$ ), shown as significantly higher than other domains ( $p < .001$ ). These findings suggest that in more collective contexts –as Mayan culture in Guatemala– in which communitarian ways of coping with disaster are developed, a higher resistance and growth can be observed.

Summarizing, the present text is meant to add up to the insufficient literature that explores PTG on victims that appear on Truth Commissions Reports (Refer Paterson, 2011, in Northern Ireland, and the referred Gasparre et al., 2010, in Guatemala). In order to do so, the level of growth on victims that appear on the TCE's will be evaluated and, in case it is observed, query on which are the

most relevant dimensions. This, to establish if they correspond to psychological adjustment or, in contrast, they are not related to well-being.

## Method

### Participants

The samples are 49 participants, 38 men (77.6.3%) and 11 women (22.4%). The average age is 54.3 ( $SD = 8.5$ ). The places of residence of the victims are Guayas (51%), Pichincha (18.4%), Sucumbíos (12.2%), Azuay (14.3%), and Manabí (4.1%). 51% of the participants have some kind of job. About beliefs 59.2% consider that religion is a very important part of their lives in contrast to political tendencies, 53.5% consider themselves left-leaning, el 18.6% of center and 27.9% right-leaning.

The criteria for choosing the participant was initially according to the following aspects: being direct victims of State rights violations, being included in at least one of the six crimes contemplated in the TCE. From these criteria three groups were made: (a) victims with one violation, (b) victims with two violations and (c) victims with multiple human rights violations.

### Measures

The data was collected through a self-report instrument consisting on the following scales:

**Socio-demographic and personal information.** Aspects such as sex, age, address, job situation, religion, political belief and victim's forgiveness were asked.

**Violation types.** An item was included for the victims to express what kind of direct violations they or their families suffered based on the types established by the TCE. This considers six types; in this study four of them are considered<sup>3</sup>: illegal deprivation of liberty, torture and mistreatment, violation to the right to life and sexual violence.

**Abbreviated scale on social climate** (Páez et al., 1997). The social climate of the country was evaluated, whether it's positive (solidarity or confidence institutions) or negative (aggressive behavior or sadness among people). It is made up by four items presented in a Likert scale consisting of five points, from 0 (nothing) to 5 (a lot). It presents an appropriate reliability for the positive ( $\alpha = .67$ ) and the negative climate ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

**Social sharing of emotions** (Rimé, 2012). It evaluates frequency and the need to socially talk or inhibit themselves about the violations and traumatic experience. This scale is made up by ten items, six evaluate social sharing and four evaluate social inhibition of emotions in a Likert's scale consisting of four points, from 1 (nothing) to 4 (a lot). It presents an appropriate reliability for social sharing ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and inhibition ( $\alpha = .79$ ).

**Posttraumatic Growth Inventory** (PTGI; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The short version by Cann et al. (2010) was applied. It evaluates the changes experienced in five areas: appreciation of life, new possibilities, spiritual change, personal strength, and relating to others. It is made up by ten items, plus one item headed to spiritual change ("I have searched for faith and spiritual contact spaces"). Additionally, it is conformed by four items presented in a Likert scale of five points from 0 (No change) to 5 (significant change). The scale presents a high reliability with ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### Data analysis

The analysis was made through the statistical pack SPSS 21. First, the statistical descriptions of each item were calculated and the internal consistency of each scale was evaluated. After that, group comparisons through chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) test were made, average contrast ( $t$ ) and variance analysis, in a group of direct victims according to the level of exposure to violations of their relatives. Post-hoc comparisons were also made according to Bonferroni's corrections and the calculation of the effect amount was also made ( $f$ ), significance of 95% ( $p < .05$ ) was established in all cases.

### Procedure

A validation of the questionnaire was made for Ecuador through four expert judges that evaluated the contents as well as the correct writing of the questions. After that, coordinating actions with the Andean Human Rights Program of "Andina Simón Bolívar University" a contact was

<sup>3</sup> The other types have the victim's death as a result, they are extra judicial execution and forced disappearance.



established with the “Victims of crimes against humanity and grave humans Rights violations committee of Ecuador”. This committee made it possible to contact and have meetings with the victims that lived in the provinces mentioned before. The meetings took place in their homes or in group gatherings and other appropriate spaces.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive**

The violations presented by the victims were distributed as follows: 9.5% suffered from deprivation of liberty, 15.8% from violation of the right to life, 12.7% from torture or mistreatment, and 61.9% from a combination of all, including sexual violence. After that, the participants were divided according to the number of violations suffered, this allowed to find three groups: Group 1, those who suffered only one type o violation, 18.8% ( $n = 9$ ); Group 2, two violations, 33.3% ( $n = 16$ ), and group 3, more than two types of violations, 47.9% ( $n = 23$ ). Based on these three groups, a first data base analysis was made. No significant differences relating to age, sex, job activity or political belief were found, (all  $p < .05$ ). Except for the variable about religion,  $\chi^2 = 15.161$ ,  $p = .019$ . This suggests that, according to socio-demography, participants represent a very steady sample.

### **Differences between PTG and other variables according to the type of violation**

Results in this level are presented on Table 1. For observing the differences between individual PTG, a one-factor variance analysis was made. Significant differences on PTG were shown, [ $F(2, 42) = 3.750$ ,  $p = .031$ ], being the victims on group 2 the ones who present more growth ( $M_{\text{group}2} = 57.1$ ) in relation to group 1 ( $M_{\text{group}1} = 55.2$ ) and group 3 ( $M_{\text{group}3} = 41.7$ ) that report less PTG. In post-hoc comparisons, differences between groups 2 and 3 were detected ( $p = .041$ ). This suggested a curvaceous relation in the form of an inverted U between the violations and growth (see figure 1).

Table 1  
PTG, emotions, sharing and social climate according to the type of violation

Variables in study	Types of victims						F	Effect size (f)
	One violation (n = 9)		Two violations (n = 16)		Three o more violations (n = 23)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Positive Emotions	14.8	5.8	13.6	4.5	13.1	5.1	.39	.12
Negative Emotions	18	5.9	20.4	7.3	14.6	6.1	3.76*	.40
Universalism	7.3	3.7	8.5	2.6	9.5	3.5	1.48	.25
Positive social climate	5.4	1.7	5.1	1.9	5.8	2.2	.75	.06
Negative social climate	5.1	2.1	6.5	1.7	3.9	1.5	11.06****	.22
Social sharing	2.1	.73	2.3	.62	2.5	.79	.99	.02
Inhibitemotions	1.1	.32	1.8	.82	1.5	.54	3.46*	.04
Forgiveness	3.4	2.7	2.8	2.5	3.5	2.3	.32	
Individual PTG	55.2	20.9	57.1	12.4	41.7	21.2	3.75*	1.44
Appreciation of life	10	4.1	12.3	2.2	9.8	4.5	2.22	.22
New possibilities	10.4	3.9	11.7	2.7	7.3	4.6	6.01**	.39
Spiritual change	12.1	5.1	11.1	4.1	7.1	5.5	4.53*	.45
Personal strength	11.7	4.6	11.7	3.1	8.9	4.7	2.64†	.25
Relating to others	10.8	4.7	10.1	3.7	8.3	4.2	1.48	.25

Note. † = marginal, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

According to the dimension, differences were found on new possibilities of life [ $F(2, 47) = 6.012, p = .005$ ], being group 2 the one with the most PTG and group three with the least, a fact that was confirmed in further comparisons ( $p = .005$ ). Differences in spiritual growth were found [ $F(2, 47) = 4.536, p = .016$ ], being group 1 the one that registered the most PTG, showing a difference with group three 3 ( $p = .050$ ). A slight difference was also found on personal strength [ $F(2, 47) = 2.644, p = .082$ ]. The other two dimensions did not turn out to be significant ( $p > .05$ ).

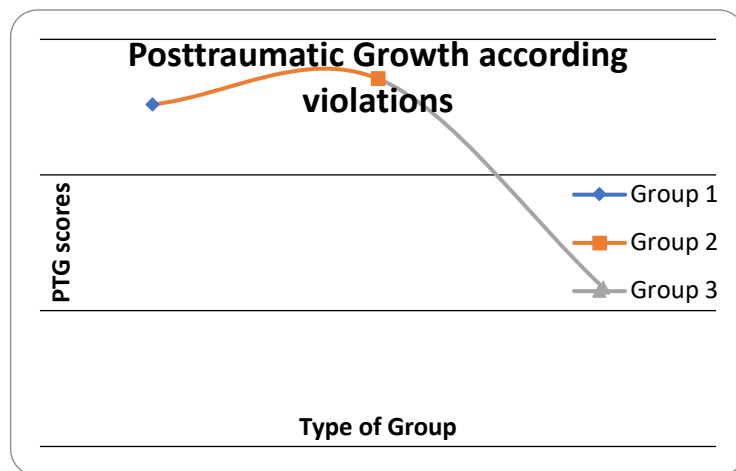


Figure 1. Curvilinear relationship between violations and PTG



In relation to the other variables that were studied, a significant difference was found in negative affectivity [ $F(2, 46) = 3.763, p = .031$ ], in which differences between groups 2 and 3 can be seen in following comparisons ( $p = .029$ ). Expressly, the difference was found related to “rage” [ $F(2, 47) = 3.285, p = .047$ ] and fear [ $F(2, 47) = 4.929, p = .012$ ]. There was also difference in perception about negative social climate [ $F(2, 47) = 11.063, p = .000$ ], between groups 2 and 3 ( $p = .000$ ); and on inhibiting emotions [ $F(2, 46) = 3.469, p = .040$ ], between 1 and 2 ( $p = .043$ ). Finally, a difference on forgiveness to the State was found [ $F(2, 43) = 3.223, p = .050$ ], without any differences in further comparisons. There were no other differences found on the other scales of the study.

As a complementary action, the participant sample was divided according to the type of crime that was perpetrated against them. Three groups were established at this point: a group with one crime perpetrated against them, a second group was made up by the people that were illegally deprived of their liberty and suffered torture and mistreatment, and a third one that suffered from three crimes, the two specified before and one related to violation of the right to life. The results suggest significant differences [ $F(2, 36) = 5.755, p = .007$ ], finding a higher PTG ( $M_{\text{two violations}} = 60.1$ ), in the three-crime group related to the other two groups. In contrast, a lower PTG was found in the group that presents the two crimes plus the one related to violation of the right of life ( $M_{\text{three violations}} = 36.6$ ). Finally, the group that presents one crime, any of the enlisted, shows an average between these three groups ( $M_{\text{one violation}} = 55.2$ ). Post-hoc comparisons confirm that there are significant differences between groups with two or three violations ( $p = .010$ ).

#### *Correlations between individual PTG and studied variables*

Finally, the correlations between individual posttraumatic growth and the studied variables are shown. About PTG, inverted relations with being a victim appeared, depending on the type of crime experienced [ $r = -.32, p = .027$ ], and a direct relation with political belief [ $r = .47, p = .001$ ], negative social climate [ $r = .31, p = .028$ ] and with inhibiting emotions [ $r = .29, p = .041$ ]. On individual PTG dimensions, relations between new appreciation of life and political belief were found [ $r = .31, p = .038$ ] and also with negative affectivity [ $r = .29, p = .044$ ]. New possibilities of life were related to religion levels [ $r = .35, p = .018$ ], political belief [ $r = .40, p = .007$ ] and negative social climate [ $r = .40, p = .004$ ]. Spiritual change showed to be related to the religion level [ $r = .33, p = .024$ ], political belief [ $r = .51, p = .000$ ], negative social climate [ $r = .34, p = .015$ ]. Personal strength showed to be related to political beliefs [ $r = .47, p = .001$ ] and inhibiting emotions [ $r = .28, p = .048$ ]. Finally, improving relationship with others showed to be related with political belief [ $r = .36, p = .016$ ] and positive social climate [ $r = .32, p = .024$ ].

### **Discussion**

The situation of victims that have suffered erosions of their human rights in the context of violence is a central issue for States and social sciences. One of the questions is how have these people faced the impacts of situations that, in some cases, happened more than thirty years ago. Psychology, specially, has suggested that people can strengthen themselves after going through a traumatic experience through the notion of posttraumatic growth. This paper explores such growth in victims from the Report by Commission of Truth of Ecuador.

The results have established that the victims that show more growth are the ones that have suffered two types of violation of their rights, especially illegal deprivation of liberty, torture and mistreatment, changes are produced at the spiritual level and new possibilities in life, which match with the findings about the genocide victims in Guatemala (Gasparre et al., 2010). On the contrary, lower growth is shown on victims that experienced one or more than two violations of their rights, this is consistent with studies that reveal that perception of growth occurs on intermediate levels of trauma as a curvaceous effect on an inverted U (Butler et al., 2009; Kunst, 2010). In contrast, it has been observed that the people that report higher PTG are those who have negative affectivity, emotional inhibition and negative social climate perception, than the people that have lower PTG. This suggests that the report on PTG does not necessarily mean well-being or mental health improvement, as it has been found on other studies about victims of political violence (Hall et al., 2015).

This kind of discrepancies indicates the presence of other variables that condition the perception of PTG. On the one hand, it can be observed that religion is related to a form of coping on victims that show a better growth and that confirms that acquiring some sort of religious belief is a previous step for the report of personal growth (Calhoun, Cann, Tedeschi, & McMillan, 2000; Shaw, Joseph, & Linley, 2005; Shultz, Tallman, & Altmaier, 2010).

On the other hand, victims that report lower growth are those that have negative affectivity, higher perception of positive social climate, social sharing an forgiveness, despite the fact that these findings do not represent statistical significance. In this case, personal growth is probably associated with other forms of previous reparation that must be provided by the Ecuadorian State (Author, 2015).

These findings prove that, on victims that have experienced crimes against humanity and appear in Commissions of Truth Reports, the possible PTG not only will be conditioned by their own coping mechanisms but by the kind of mechanisms that the State can provide.

At the moment, the findings in this study support the theory of two components proposed by Maercker & Zoellner (2004), in the sense that PTG, especially in victims that have suffered human rights violations and have not been repaired by the State, can express the temporary effects of positive or negative psychological adjustment. Finally, no relations were found between forgiveness and PTG, as some other studies show (Hafnidar, Chang, & Lin, 2012; Paterson, 2011), where forgiveness is an indicator of growth. This may be related with the lack of justice by the Ecuadorian State in most of the victims where it is quite clear that identifying the perpetrators of such crimes, mainly personnel associated with the police force, has not been sealed with judicial processes that may punish said people.

### **Limitations and future studies**

While one of the main contributions of this study is its exploratory disposition, since it is one of the first studies in Latin America that evaluates this phenomenon in victims that appear in the Commission of Truth Report; this also shows a series of limitations that are helpful to mention. One of the main limitations is that this study has a transversal measurement method therefore it doesn't observe processes that may allow to establish some causal attributions between the dimensional studies. Additional to this fact, even though the implementation of reparation measures is quite recent, the PTG is explored in victims that experienced violations 30 years ago with no State reparation programs what so ever, therefore the results in this study can barely be used for establishing a base line in this matter and it doesn't really show the effects of reparation on growth.

Finally, while the sample is significant for this study, even more if we consider that contacting the victims is not an easy task, not all the people that reported violation are included, some of the provinces taken in to consideration in this study are over represented. That is why future studies that may complete and deepen the information shown here are suggested in these specific areas:

1. Quantitative studies on psychological reparation that may cover from the creation of victim profiles (Considering type of violation, level of exposure, among others) to the evaluation of the impact of the programs that are currently being held.
2. Qualitative studies that may deepen in the subjective construction that surrounds the category of victim, as a potentiality and limitation for PTG, that may also study in detail the apparent contradictions between PTG and well-being or people adjustment, as studies have addressed coping with victims of political violence in Argentina (Arnosó, Arnoso, & Pérez-Sales, 2015) and the subjective construction of reparation by the very people that have been affected.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Committee of Victims of crimes against humanity and serious violations of human rights in Ecuador and the Andean Human Rights Program of the Simon Bolivar Andean University of Ecuador, which allowed contact with the victims and their families.

This work was supported by the Salesian Polytechnical University of Ecuador, with the grant to Project No. Research 6, "Impact of the Truth Commission of Ecuador in repair processes", implemented by the Group of Psychosocial Research Career psychology during 2013-2015.

This publication is dedicated to Professor Domingo Asún Salazar (1943-2015), in recognition for his valuable contributions to The Society and The Psychology Community of Chile and Latin America.





### References

- Arnosó, M., Arnosó, A., & Pérez-Sales, P. (2015). Argentina (1976-1983): impacto y afrontamiento psicosocial. [Argentina (1976-1983): impact and Psychosocial coping] *Universitas Psychologica*, 14(3), 15-24.
- Butler, L. D., Koopman, C., Azarow, J., Blasey, C.M., Magdalene, J.C., DiMiceli, S., Seagraves, D.A., Hastings, T.A., Chen, X., Garland, R.W., Kraemer, H.C., & Spiegel D. (2009) Psychosocial predictors of resilience after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 197, 266-273.
- Calhoun, L. G., Cann, A., Tedeschi, R.G., & McMillan, J. (2010) A correlational test of the relationships between posttraumatic growth, religion, and cognitive processing. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 13(3), 521-527.
- Cann, A., Calhoun, L.G., Tedeschi, R.G., Taku, K., Vishnevsky, T., Triplett, K.M., & Danhauer, S.C. (2010) A short form of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory". *Anxiety, Stress & Coping* 23(2), 127-137.
- Defensoría del Pueblo (2015). *Información sobre la Dirección de Víctimas de Violaciones a Derechos Humanos y Protección contra la Impunidad*. [Information on the Directorate of Victims of Violations of Human Rights and Protection against Impunity] Quito: Defensoría del Pueblo.
- Gasparre, A., Bosco, S., & Bellelli, G. (2010). Cognitive and social consequences of participation in social rites: Collective coping, social support, and post-traumatic growth in the victims of Guatemala genocide. *Revista de Psicología Social* 25(1), 35-46.
- Hafnidar, Chang, L., & Lin, H. (2012). Forgiveness as a Mediator for the Relationship between Spirituality and Posttraumatic Growth in Aceh Conflict Victims, Indonesia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 2(3), 237-241.
- Hall, B. J., Saltzman, L.Y., Canetti D., & Hobfoll, S.E. (2015). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between posttraumatic stress symptoms and posttraumatic growth in a cohort of Israeli Jews and Palestinians during ongoing violence. *PLoS ONE* 10(4), e0124782.
- Helgeson, V.S., Reynolds, K.A., & Tomich, P.L. (2006). A meta-analytic review of benefit finding and growth. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74(5), 797-816.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Canetti-Nisim, D., & Johnson, R.J. (2006). Exposure to terrorism, stress-related mental health symptoms, and defensive coping among Jews and Arabs in Israel. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74, 207-218.
- Informe Comisión Verdad de Ecuador. (2010) *Sin verdad no hay justicia*. [Without truth there is no justice] Quito: Ediecuatorial.
- Kunst, M. J. J. (2010). Peritraumatic distress, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, and posttraumatic growth in victims of violence. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23(4), 514-518.
- Laufer, A. (2003). Psychological growth in the aftermath of terrorist attacks Palestine-Israel. *Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, 10, 30-36.
- Lurie-Beck, J.K., Lioasis, P., & Gow, K. (2008). Relationships between psychopathological and demographic variables and posttraumatic growth among Holocaust survivors. *Traumatology*, 14(3), 28-39.
- Maercker, A., & Zoellner, T. (2004). The Janus face of self-perceived growth: toward a two-component model of posttraumatic growth. *Psychological Injury*, 15(1), 41-48.
- Mahdi, H.K., Prihadi, K., & Hashim, S. (2015). Posttraumatic Growth and Resilience after A Prolonged War: A Study in Baghdad, Iraq. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 3(3), 197-204.
- Morland, L.A., Butler, L.D., & Leskin, G.A. (2008). "Resilience and thriving in a Time of Terrorism". In S. Joseph and A.P. Linley (Eds.), *Trauma, Recovery and growth: positive psychology perspectives on post-traumatic stress*. (pp. 39-61). Hoboken, N. J.: Wiley & Sons.
- Páez, D., Ruiz, J.I., Gailly, O., Kornblit, A.L., Weisenfeld, E., & Vidal, C.M. (1997).

- Clima emocional: Su concepto y medición mediante una investigación transcultural [Emotional climate: Its concept and measurement through cross-cultural research] *Revista de Psicología Social*, 12(1), 79-98.
- Prati, G., & Pietrantonio, L. (2009). Optimism, social support, and coping strategies as factors contributing to posttraumatic growth. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 14(5), 364-388.
- Author. (2015).
- Rimé, B. (2012). *La compartición social de las emociones*. [The social sharing of emotions] Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, S.A.
- Rimé, B., Kanyangara, P., Yzerbit, V., & Páez, D. (2011). The impact of Gacaca tribunals in Rwanda: Psychosocial effects of participation in a truth and reconciliation process after a genocide. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41, 695-706.
- Schultz, J. M., Tallman, B.A., & Altmaier, E.M. (2010). Pathways to posttraumatic growth: The contributions of forgiveness and importance of religion and spirituality. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 2(2), 104-114.
- Shaw, A., Joseph, S., & Linley, A.P. (2005). Religion, spirituality, and posttraumatic growth: A systematic review. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 8(1), 1-11.
- Taylor, S. E. (1983). Adjustment to threatening events: A theory of cognitive adaptation. *American Psychologist*, 38(11), 1161-1173.
- Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: a social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(2), 193-210.
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L.G. (1996). The posttraumatic growth inventory: Measuring the positive legacy of trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 9, 455-471.
- Vázquez, C., Hervás, G., & Pérez-Sales, P. (2008). Chronic thought suppression as a vulnerability factor to post-traumatic symptoms: data from the Madrid March 11, 2004 terrorist attack. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 22, 1326-1336.
- Vázquez, C., & Páez, D. (2010). "Posttraumatic growth in Spain". In T. Weiss and R. Berger (Eds.), *Posttraumatic growth and culturally competent practice: Lesson learned from around the globe*. (pp. 97-112). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Vázquez, C., Pérez-Sales, P., & Ochoa, C. (2014). Posttraumatic growth: challenges from a cross-cultural viewpoint". In G.A. Fava and C. Ruini (Eds.), *Increasing Psychological Well-being in Clinical and Educational Settings*. (pp. 57-74). Springer Netherlands.
- Zoellner, T., & Maercker, A. (2006). Posttraumatic growth in clinical psychology. A critical review and introduction of a two component model. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 26(5), 626-653.

Received: 04/26/2017  
Accepted: 03/18/2019