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The Editor welcomes the new Board of Consulting Editors and expresses her heartfelt thanks to the past Board and Associate Editors.

A Editora da Revista Interamericana de Psicologia dá as boas-vindas à sua nova Junta Editorial e agradece com encarecimento a contribuição da passada Junta e dos Editores/as Associados/as salientes.

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## *Homeless and Working Street Youth in Latin America: A Developmental Review<sup>1</sup>*

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### Abstract

In most Latin American countries, a substantial proportion of children grow up in circumstances of extreme deprivation and early independence. These include "street youth", youngsters who work and sometimes live on city streets in developing countries. Most street youth research has been conducted from an applied perspective and emphasizes service and policy needs. Little developmental research has been conducted with street youth, and the long-term impact of street life is largely unknown. This review synthesizes empirical findings on the developmentally-relevant experiences of sub-groups of street youth in Latin America. It includes research in four areas: social networks, daily survival, health status, and psychological well-being. Directions for future developmental research in each area are identified, and recommendations for practitioners and policy-makers are presented.

### Resumo

Na maioria dos países da América Latina, uma proporção substantiva de crianças e adolescentes se encontra em condições de extrema pobreza e independência prematura. Este grupo inclui "crianças de rua," jovens que trabalham e às vezes vivem nas ruas das cidades de países em desenvolvimento. A maioria das pesquisas sobre crianças de rua tem sido conduzida de uma perspectiva social e assistencial. Existe falta de trabalhos sobre o desenvolvimento de crianças de rua, e o impacto que esse tipo de vida pode causar a longo prazo é desconhecido. Este artigo resume dados empíricos sobre as experiências ligadas ao desenvolvimento de crianças de rua na América Latina. Pesquisas em quatro áreas foram consideradas: redes de apoio social, sobrevivência diária, estado de saúde, e bem-estar psicológico. Sugestões para futuras pesquisas em cada área foram identificadas, e sugestões para programas e políticas foram apresentadas.

**Key words:** Homeless; Street youth; Latin America

**Palabras clave:** Deambulantes; Jóvenes de la calle; América Latina

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In many Latin American cities, children as young as seven or eight can be found engaging in a variety of survival activities -- selling candy or newspapers, washing cars, shining shoes, entertaining passers-by, begging, scavenging, and stealing. Although these "street youth" have become a focus of attention in both the popular and academic press, they have been largely ignored by developmental researchers. Lack of a developmental perspective has resulted in a failure to consider the long-term impact of street life. In an attempt to begin remedying this gap, this review synthesizes what is known about the developmentally-relevant experiences of street youth, identifies directions for future developmental research, and makes recommendations for how psychologists can help address this social problem.

Estimates of the number of street youth worldwide range from several million to over one hundred million (UNICEF, 1989, 1993). The range in these estimates results in part from inadequate data and in part from definitional confusion (Hutz, Bandeira, Koller & Forster, 1995), as several sub-groups of street youth have been identified (Barker & Knaul, 1991; Lusk, 1989). The largest group (about 75% of street youth) consists of children "in" the street (working youth), who work at street-based jobs but maintain family ties and return home on a regular basis. Some investigators divide working youth into family-based street workers, who live at home full-time, and independent street workers, who reside on the street part-time to be close to their workplace (Lusk, 1992). About a quarter of street youth are children "of" the street (homeless youth), who spend all or most of their time on the street, seldom or never seeing their families and surviving as best they can. These youngsters have attracted the most media attention (Larmer, 1992). Recently, a third group of street youth has been recognized, consisting of children of homeless families; little is known about these youngsters (Lusk, 1992).

On a structural level, the primary cause of street youth in Latin America is poverty and the stress it imposes on families (Carrizosa & Poertner, 1992; Lusk, 1992; Peralta, 1992). Contributing factors include high birth rates, rural-to-urban migration, inadequate housing, economic stagnation, unequal distribution of income, and the absence of government assistance programs (Barker & Knaul, 1991; Branford & Kucinski, 1988). On an individual level, there are many pathways that lead children to the streets. In many cases,

children are exposed to the street environment gradually, initially accompanying parents or older siblings who engage in street work and then venturing out alone (Aptekar, 1988; Barker & Knaul, 1991). A subset of these children eventually leave home to live on the street full time (Aptekar, 1994; Lusk, 1989, 1992; Peralta, 1992). For some youngsters leaving home is a sudden event precipitated by parental death or another specific event whereas for others the process is more gradual, with youngsters fluctuating between living on the street and at home and gradually spending more time on the street (Felsman, 1989). More boys than girls are found on the streets; this is partly because impoverished girls are likely to remain in the home, caring for younger siblings, or are employed as domestic servants (Aptekar, 1994; Barker & Knaul, 1991) and partly because street girls are often labeled "prostitutes" and excluded from research on "street youth" (Barker & Knaul, 1991).

The magnitude of the street youth problem and the distressing plight of these youngsters has led to a service-oriented literature with an understandable focus on addressing youths' immediate needs. However, in order to develop appropriate social policies and intervention programs, we must look beyond the immediate situation of street youth and consider the long-term impact of street life. It is only by systematically examining the developmental experiences of impoverished youth, and assessing the risks and possible benefits of living or working on the street, that sound policies and interventions can be developed. As a first step in this process, this paper reviews the empirical literature on Latin American street youth to delineate what is currently known about the developmentally-relevant experiences of homeless and working street youth.

## METHOD

Published and unpublished materials were obtained by conducting literature searches of electronic psychological, medical, and social work databases (e.g., PsychLit; MedLine); checking the references of articles with a focus on street youth; requesting recent publications from researchers in the U.S. and Latin America who had previously published in this area; and corresponding with researchers and practitioners met while conducting field research. The literature search was conducted initially in 1995 and updated

Table 1  
 Summary of Empirical Studies of Street Youth in Latin America: Single Sample or Grouped Presentation of Data

Author/s	Location	Description of Sample			Population
		Size	% Gender	Age	
Aptekar (1988,1989a)	Cali, Colombia	56	100% male	7-16 Average 11.6 <sup>1</sup>	Street children in diagnostic center
Asociación Salud con Prevención	Bogotá, Colombia	30	60% male	14-25	Homeless children
Barker, 1991	5 countries	272	100% female	Ages unspecified	Street children
Felsman (1989)	Calí, Colombia	300	Unspecified	Under 16	Street children
		25	Unspecified	5-16	Homeless youth
Hutz, et al. (1995)	Porto Alegre, Brazil	97	69% male	9-16 Average: 12.3	Homeless children
Lebensztajn et al. (1986)	Sao Paulo, Brasil	143	74% male	9-17	Homeless children

<sup>1</sup> Indicates that age patterns are examined

Table 1 (Cont.)

## Summary of Empirical Studies of Street Youth in Latin America: Single Sample or Grouped Presentation of Data

Author/s	Location	Description of Sample			Population
		Size	% Gender	Age	
Myers (1989)	Asunción, Paraguay	199	88% male	8-16 Most 11-14	Street workers
	Lima, Perú	215	86% male	6-14	Street workers
	11 states in Brazil	1,096	98%	5-18	Working and non-working street
Oliviera (1990)	Cochabamba, Bolivia	967	88% male	4-18	Working (79%) and non-working (21%) street children
	Sao Paulo & Curitiba, Brasil	71	68% male	8-18 Average 13.9	Street children
Tyler et al. (1991)	Bogotá, Colombia	94	100% male	5-17 Average 13	Street children (32 in detention; 57 % living at home)

Table 2

Summary of Empirical Studies of Street Youth in Latin America: Comparisons of Subgroups of Youth

Author/s	Location	Description of Sample			Population
		Size	% Gender	Age	
Campos et al. (1994)	Belo Horizonte, Brasil	379	77% male	9-18 Average 14.1 <sup>1</sup>	Home and street-based youth
Lusk (1992)	Río de Janeiro, Brasil	103	76% male	Average 12.9	Family and independent street workers, children of street families, homeless children
Peralta (1992)	Cuidad Juárez, México	103	91% male	Average 12	Family and independent street workers, homeless children
	México City, México	50	83% male	Average 12	
Pinto et al. (1994)	Belo Horizonte, Brasil	394	71% male	10-18 Average 13.1	Home- and street-based youth
Porto et al. (1994)	Goiania, Brasil	496	93% male	9-20 Average 13	Home- and street-based youth
Raffaelli et al. (1993)	Belo Horizonte, Brasil <sup>2</sup>	379	77% male	9-18 Average 14.1	Home- and street-based youth Working and non-working youth
Rosa et al. (1992)	Recife, Brasil	160	Unspecified	9-18 Average 13.7	
Wright et al. (1993)	Tegucigalpa, Honduras	1,020	58% male	1-22 Average 11	Market and street children

<sup>1</sup> Indicates that age patterns are examined<sup>2</sup> Same sample as Campos et al. (1994)

in mid-1998, when this article was submitted for publication.

Comparison with other reviews (Aptekar 1994; Hecht, 1998) suggests that the search strategy yielded a comprehensive collection of the available literature.

In addition to theoretical and review articles, this review draws on nearly 20 empirical studies (some including multiple samples) conducted in Latin America. The sample population of each of these empirical studies is described in tables. Table 1 includes studies that involved one sub-group of youth or did not differentiate between homeless and working street youth and Table 2 presents studies with comparative data on sub-groups of youth. In these tables, the authors' labels for sub-types of youth were used rather than attempting to impose a standard classification scheme. The review included only studies with at least 25 respondents.

In reviewing these studies, a number of limitations were observed. First, because of theoretical, definitional and methodological differences in classifying respondents and assessing variables, it was often difficult to compare directly across studies. For example, some researchers described their population as "street children" but did not attempt to distinguish between street workers and homeless youth. Furthermore, differences were evident in methodology (e.g., some studies used structured interviews, others observations or in-depth interviews) and level of detail (e.g., some studies asked global questions about use of drugs and others asked about specific drugs), preventing direct comparisons of data obtained in different studies. A second limitation was that few researchers examined age or sub-group patterns, even when sample sizes would permit such comparisons. Third, virtually none of the published articles used statistical analyses when comparing sub-groups of youth. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, no longitudinal studies have been conducted, limiting what is known about long-term outcomes. Thus, this review should be regarded as an initial attempt to systematize a body of information and identify avenues for future research.

#### DEVELOPMENTALLY – RELEVANT EXPERIENCES OF STREET YOUTH

Researchers have examined a number of factors that influence the development of street children and adolescents, including social

networks, daily survival, health status, and psychological functioning and emotional well-being. These data are summarized below to reveal group patterns, and suggestions for further research in each topic area given.

### *Social Networks*

One of the most obvious characteristics of street youth is the apparent lack of parental figures in their lives. Contrary to media depictions of street youth as orphaned or abandoned, however, most have living parents. The proportion of homeless youth who report being orphans is around 5%-7% in most samples (Asociación Salud con Prevención, 1992; Felsman, 1989; Rosa, Borba & Ebrahim, 1992; Wright, Kaminsky & Wittig, 1993), compared to 2% of working youth (Wright et al., 1993). Although they are not "true" orphans, however, homeless youngsters are more likely to experience parental death or absence than working youth. For example, one Brazilian study found that only 37.5% of homeless youth, compared to 69% of working youth, had two living parents (Campos et al., 1994); a Mexican study revealed that 8% of homeless youth, compared to 36% of working youth, were from two-parent families (Peralta, 1992).

Perhaps more importantly from a developmental perspective, researchers consistently find that many homeless youth do not maintain ties with family members even if they are alive and potentially available. Only 7% of a Colombian sample was orphaned or abandoned, but almost two fifths (39%) did not maintain a relationship with their family (Felsman, 1989). A similar proportion (36%) of Brazilian street youth had no contact with their family (Hutz et al., 1995); in another Brazilian city, only 17.5% of homeless youngsters reported daily or weekly family contact (Campos et al., 1994). Further analyses of the Campos et al. (1994) data revealed that having relatives in the same city does not necessarily give youth someone to turn to in times of trouble. Over four fifths (83%) of 152 youth who always slept on the street had family members (i.e., parents, siblings, or extended family) in the same city; however, only one fifth of these youngsters reported daily or weekly contact; 65% reported occasional contact, and 15% never saw anyone from their family. Furthermore, many youth with family members in the same city had no one to help them: 49% said nobody would protect them, 37% said nobody would give



them a place to sleep, 24% said nobody would help them if they were hurt. Thus, having family members in the same city does not always provide homeless youth with a "safety net."

The importance of nonfamilial adults in the lives of poor children has been documented in research conducted in the U.S. (Werner & Smith, 1982), with teachers often representing the most significant nonfamilial adults. Comparative studies reveal that homeless youth are less likely to be attending school than their working peers (Peralta, 1992; Wright et al., 1993). For example, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, half of 13-to-15-year-old workers were in school, compared to 19% of homeless youth (Campos et al., 1994). Because they are less likely to attend school, homeless youth have less access to teachers as adult role models and sources of support.

Many scholars have noted that although street youth lack traditional adult sources of support, they compensate by forming peer groups (Aptekar, 1988; Barker & Knaul, 1991; Ennew, 1994; Felsman, 1989). Research does show that homeless youth are more likely than working youth to associate with peers on the street (Campos et al., 1994; Lusk, 1992; Peralta, 1992). However, the question of whether peer groups compensate for the lack of family or other traditional sources of support and protection has not been directly examined. Indirect indications of the ability of peers to provide adequate support and protection can be gleaned from existing studies. Colombian youth interviewed by Tyler et al. (1991) formed peer groups; however, nearly two fifths (38%) said that no one had ever loved them or that they did not know if anyone had ever loved them. Homeless Brazilian youngsters were less likely than working youth to say there was someone who would give them a place to sleep, protection, or help if they were injured or sick (Campos et al., 1994). Further analyses of these data compared homeless youngsters who said they belonged to a *turma* (peer group) with those who did not. Among the 152 youth who always slept on the street, the 63% who belonged to a *turma* were no more likely than those who did not belong to have someone to give them a place to sleep (42% vs. 48%), protection (54% vs. 57%) or help if hurt (32% vs. 26%). These data suggest that for a significant proportion of homeless youngsters, peers may not be adequate sources of emotional and physical support.

The long-term impact of growing up in peer networks has also not been systematically investigated, but evidence of negative

socialization exists. For example, observers note that peer relationships often become sexualized (Bond, Mazin & Jiminez, 1992; Ennew, 1994). One study of 247 sexually active Brazilian street youth (68% homeless and 32% working) revealed that 66% had engaged in sexual activity by the age of 12 and that 81% of boys and 54% of girls had their first sexual experience with a peer (Raffaelli et al., 1993). Sexual relationships with peers are an important source of affection and comfort for street youth (Ennew, 1994), but they may also be a source of punishment and dominance (Raffaelli et al., 1993). Another potentially negative outcome of peer socialization is that peer groups often provide a context where youth are introduced to drug use and theft (e.g., Campos et al., 1994). Thus, although peer groups represent a survival mechanism for youth, they may also represent a developmental context that has negative long-term consequences.

The question of how growing up without adult support and supervision affects youngsters merits the attention of developmental researchers who study socialization processes. Future research on the social networks of street youth could examine whether family, peer, and other social resources operate in a compensatory or overlapping manner to fulfill children's needs for affection and support; investigate why homeless youth do not make use of family members even when they are available and under what circumstances they are able to do so; and study the long-term outcomes of peer socialization.

### *Daily Survival*

Children and adolescents who work and/or live on the streets are striving to survive in an often hostile environment. In most Latin American countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations provide services to meet street youth's immediate needs (e.g., meals, shower and laundry facilities, sleeping space). However, given the number of youth on the street and the lack of long-term placements, many youngsters are largely responsible for their own survival. Again, comparisons of sub-groups of youth suggest important differences in everyday experiences.

Homeless youth are more likely than working youth to be involved in illegal activities, including theft and drug-dealing. For example, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 75% of homeless youth, compared to 15% of working youth, engaged in illegal activities

(Campos et al., 1994); in Rio de Janeiro, 60% of homeless youth, 45% of independent street workers, and 9% of family-based street workers, engaged in illegal activities (Lusk, 1992); in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 16% of homeless youngsters, compared to no independent street workers, reported illegal activities (Peralta, 1992). Older youngsters are more likely to engage in illegal activities than younger ones; in addition, when current age was controlled, youth engaging in illegal activities had been on the street significantly longer than those not involved in illegal activities (Campos et al., 1994).

Partly because of involvement in illegal activities, more homeless youth experience arrest and institutionalization than working youth. The proportion of homeless and working youth who reported ever being arrested was 48% vs. 0.6% in Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Wright et al., 1993) and 62% vs. 15% in Belo Horizonte, Brazil (Campos et al., 1994), with similar findings reported in Rio de Janeiro (Lusk, 1992). Institutional experiences (including detention in "child welfare agencies" and juvenile prisons) were reported by 80% of homeless and 41% of working youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil (Campos et al., 1994); in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 28% of homeless children, and 13% of independent street workers, had institutional experience (Peralta, 1992).

Being arrested and incarcerated exposes street youth to a variety of dangers, including torture and sexual abuse at the hands of police (Connolly, 1994). However, violence is so pervasive in the lives of street youth that arrest and incarceration are not the only sources of threat. On the streets, homeless and working youth are the target of violence from adult members of society as well as other youth (Aptekar, 1994; Childhope, 1991; Myers, 1989; Rosa et al., 1992). Over half of a Mexican sample reported "traumatic experiences" on the street, such as being beaten, mugged, or robbed (Peralta, 1992), and one fourth of a Colombian sample had been shot or stabbed (Tyler et al., 1991). Summarizing statistics from around the world, Connolly (1994) reported that the two main causes of death among street youth were trauma (usually resulting from violence) and accidents. After reviewing statistics on the killing of street youth in Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala, Aptekar (1994) concluded that "the children have reason to fear hostility" (p. 215). The number of homeless and working street youth killed each year is unknown, but the risk of death is exemplified in one study's finding that 18

months after being interviewed for case study purposes, six (5%) of a sample of 119 homeless street youth had died (Campos et al., 1994). No other survival statistics have been published; however, an experienced youth advocate reported that in Recife, Brazil, many girls who have been on the street more than ten years "... disappear. They are arrested, or they die. They die from venereal disease, they are sent to mental institutions, they die from abortion, or in childbirth, or they kill themselves" (Vasconcelos, 1991, p. 11).

It is clear that children and adolescents surviving on the streets face serious daily challenges. Systematic research on causes of death and fatality rates among sub-groups of street youth is urgently needed. Until the fundamental question of survival on the streets is addressed, psychologists will be unable to draw conclusions about the long-term impact of street life.

### *Health Status and Health-Risking Behavior*

Many researchers who come into contact with street youth note their apparent good health, and medical research suggests that homeless and working youth do not differ in weight (Pinto et al., 1994) or nutritional status (Wright et al., 1993). Outward similarities may be contradicted when physical examinations are performed or other health indicators assessed. One study of nearly 300 Brazilian children and adolescents revealed that more homeless than working youth had ectoparasites (37% vs. 21%) or scars (34% vs. 20%) and reported past hospitalizations (64% vs. 49%) (Pinto et al., 1994). Similar physical problems were found in homeless youth in Bogotá, Colombia (Asociación Salud con Prevención, 1992), Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Wright et al., 1993) and São Paulo, Brazil (Lebensztajn et al., 1986). Thus, youngsters may be at risk of medical problems as a result of being homeless.

Street youth may also engage in behaviors that have serious health consequences, including substance use. Studies consistently show that homeless youth are more likely to use alcohol and drugs than working youth. For example, 42.5% of homeless youth studied in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, reported using alcohol, compared to 4% of working youth (Wright et al., 1993). In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, more homeless than working youth reported lifetime alcohol use (87% vs. 66%) and current daily or weekly use (40% vs. 18%) (Campos et al., 1994). Even greater group differences are found in use of "street drugs," including inhalants

(e.g., shoemaker's glue, paint thinner), marijuana, barbiturates, amphetamines, and cocaine. In Wright et al.'s (1993) Honduran study, 57% of homeless youth, compared to 1% of working youth, sniffed glue. In Rio de Janeiro, 80% of homeless children and 61.5% of independent street workers, compared to 19% of family-based street workers, used street drugs (Lusk, 1992). Similar findings were reported by Campos et al. (1994), who also found that older youngsters were more likely to use alcohol and drugs. The convergence of research findings from various countries suggests that substance use represents a serious threat to the health of homeless youth.

Another source of risk for street youth is early involvement in sexual activity, often as the result of abuse or exploitation (Connolly, 1994; Eisenstein, 1993; International Center on Adolescent Fertility, 1991; Luna, 1991). Again, most studies find that homeless youth are at greater risk than working youth. The proportion of homeless and working youth reporting sexual activity was 44% vs. 5% in Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Wright et al., 1993); 83.5% vs. 45% in Belo Horizonte, Brazil (Campos et al., 1994); and 74% vs. 35% in Goiania, Brazil (Porto et al., 1994). As a result of sexual activity, youth are at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Among sexually active youngsters interviewed by Wright et al. (1993), 85% of homeless youth, compared to 40% of working youth, had been treated for STIs. Another study showed that the highest risk factor for hepatitis B, a marker for STIs, was living on the street as compared to at home (Porto et al., 1994). Although few studies have systematically examined the HIV status of different sub-groups of street youth, cases of HIV disease among these youngsters have been reported (Asociación Salud con Prevención, 1992; Bond, Maxin & Jiminez, 1992; Knaul & Barker, 1990; Luna, 1991; Pinto et al., 1994). Because HIV is transmitted sexually in the same way as other STIs, as the AIDS epidemic spreads throughout Latin America, HIV/AIDS will likely become an increasing threat to street youth (Luna & Rotheram-Borus, 1992; Raffaelli et al., 1993).

Sexual activity also puts young women at risk of premature pregnancy, childbearing, and abortion. One third (32%) of a sample of 272 impoverished young women from five Latin American countries had been pregnant (Barker, 1991). In a Brazilian sample of 54 sexually active street girls (most of them

homeless), 35% of 13-to-15-year-olds and 75% of 16-to-18-year-olds had been pregnant; in addition, 15% of the younger group and 41% of the older group reported at least one abortion (Raffaelli et al., 1993).

In sum, street youth are at risk of negative health consequences, and the accumulation of evidence leaves little doubt that homeless youngsters are at higher risk of these consequences than working youth. Given the multiple challenges youth confront on a daily basis, it is difficult to change behaviors that threaten long-term well-being but have short-term benefits, fulfilling survival needs and providing physical or psychological comfort (Bond et al., 1992; Connolly, 1994; Knaul & Barker, 1990). Research is needed to investigate factors that protect youth from engaging in health-risking behaviors and to identify alternative means of satisfying the multiple needs these behaviors fulfill.

### *Psychological Functioning and Emotional Well-being*

In light of what is known about the effects of chronic stress, exposure to violence and lack of social support on children, it may be surprising to hear observers of street youth comment on their apparent well-being (Aptekar, 1994; Felsman, 1989). In fact, few systematic investigations of the psychological status of street youth have been conducted. One Brazilian study revealed that street children, orphans, and middle class children all reported similar levels of depressive affect (DeSouza, Koller, Hutz & Forster, 1995), suggesting that street youth may not be worse off than children in other situations. However, there is evidence of psychological distress among homeless youth. For example, less than half (48%) of 56 Colombian homeless boys scored in the "healthy" range on the Bender-Gestalt Test (assessing neurological functioning), and only 27% showed "good mental health" on the Human Figure Drawing Test (assessing overall adjustment) (Aptekar, 1989a). Two fifths of 71 Brazilian homeless youth had attempted suicide and over a third reported insomnia or night terrors (Oliveira, 1990). Finally, descriptions of Brazilian street youth by one hospital-affiliated researcher include references to psychotic behavior and personality disturbances (Eisenstein, 1993).

There are indirect indications that many youngsters surviving on the street experience high levels of stress. One is the level of drug use among street youth, which has been identified as a way to

"escape from the harsh daily realities of family break-up, poverty, hunger and homelessness" (Childhope, 1990, p. 1; see also Campos et al., 1994). Another indication is that many youth fear violence on the streets; in one study, youth rated the street as more threatening in personal and physical terms than the home or institutions (Tyler et al., 1991). Finally, when asked what life changes they desired, over half (52%) of Brazilian street youth from two cities wanted to change to a more "acceptable" lifestyle, and over 90% "absolutely did not want to remain [street kids]" (Oliveira, Baizerman & Pellet, 1992, p. 168).

These scattered findings suggest that youth may suffer emotionally and psychologically as a result of being on the street. Little is known about age differences in psychological adjustment among street youth. One Colombian study revealed that older boys exhibited less maladjustment than younger ones, leading the author to conclude that "age and time on the streets seemed to mediate their problems" (Aptekar, 1989a, p. 435). Another interpretation of these findings is that street life takes its toll on the weak, leaving a subset of strong survivors. Given the current state of the literature, there is no way of knowing which of these interpretations is true.

## DISCUSSION

The goal of this review was to delineate what is known about the developmentally-relevant experiences of sub-groups of Latin American street youth. Despite the limitations of the empirical literature on street youth, this research synthesis suggests that youngsters living and working on the streets of large cities are at differential developmental risk. These findings have implications for research, treatment, and prevention efforts aimed at addressing the street youth situation.

Across a variety of studies, homeless youth report higher levels than working youth of illegal activity and arrest, experiences of violence, health problems, involvement in health-risking behavior including substance use and unprotected sexual activity, disturbances in psychological functioning, and fragmented social networks. These group patterns do not contradict anecdotal reports of remarkable displays of coping and positive adjustment to street life on the part of individual youth. It is undoubtedly true that some homeless youth adapt to street life and prefer being on the street to living at home (Aptekar, 1994; Felsman, 1989). However, it is

important to recognize that "a strategy of adaptation that has short-term benefits for survival may have long-term costs for an individual" (Masten, 1994, p. 19). Based on the available research, it appears that the costs of street life may be unacceptably high.

Recently, scholars have pointed out the need to focus on street youths' strengths rather than taking a deficit perspective. While it is true that homeless youth have many strengths that have not been adequately investigated (Ennew, 1994), currently available empirical data suggest that these youngsters are at heightened developmental risk. Moreover, what little information is available regarding age differences reveals that as youth grow older, they are more likely to be involved in behaviors that threaten their well-being. Research findings from different countries show that homeless youth may not cope adequately with street life, and examination of age patterns suggests that homeless youth are at increasing risk as they grow older. With age, youth are also more likely to be seen as threats; observers of street life point out that as street "children" become street "adolescents" they face decreasing tolerance from society (Aptekar, 1989b; Eisenstein, 1993; Felsman, 1989). The impact of developmental change is hinted at in research with older street youth. For example, in a recent ethnographic analysis, Diversi, Moraes and Morelli (1999) described how adolescents surviving on the streets of Campinas, Brazil, internalize negative images of street youth portrayed in the larger society, with implications for identity development and future behavior.

Unfortunately, the street youth literature is marked by the lack of a developmental perspective, limiting conclusions that can be drawn about the long-term impact of street life. Much of the research has focused on a narrow age range, and even when samples are diverse, age differences are not reported. Longitudinal research is needed to confirm the age-related patterns observed in cross-sectional research and to obtain a clearer picture of youngsters' developmental pathways. A one-time study of a sample of youth living on the street may suggest that members of the group are relatively healthy and well-adjusted, but following the same group across time may reveal a different picture. In a cross-sectional study, youth who are imprisoned, in the hospital, or "laying low" to avoid the police (events which are not uncommon in some populations of homeless youth) will be omitted from the



sample, as will be group members who are recently deceased. Furthermore, cross-sectional research cannot delineate the pathways individual youngsters follow, limiting what can be learned about factors that contribute to positive and negative adaptation to the street. This in turn hampers efforts to help individual children cope with street life, limiting the effectiveness of service providers and intervention programs. Therefore, one major recommendation based on this research synthesis is that future research with street youth should include a consideration of developmental issues, either by following youngsters over time or by examining age differences within a sample.

There is an urgent need for intervention programs to address the street youth phenomenon. However, because the street youth problem is rooted in structural factors that lie far outside individual children and their families of origin, a two-pronged approach is necessary. There is an immediate need for programs that help youth living or working on the street cope with daily life, as well as a long-term need for programs that prevent youth from being on the street to begin with. Interventions for impoverished working children, who make up the bulk of the street youth population, typically aim to help youth stay connected to society by providing after-school programs, community centers, and recreational programs (for a review, see Raffaelli, 1997). Homeless children need intensive, comprehensive care to substitute for the families who cannot or will not provide for them (Tyler et al, 1992); this care is often provided in the form of group homes or institutional settings (Carrizosa & Poertner, 1992; Lusk, 1989). Mental health professionals play a major role in programs aimed at helping youth living or working on the street. To be successful, programs must be based on solid models of behavior and behavior change as well as on research regarding factors that hinder or facilitate youngsters' successful adaptation. By joining forces, researchers and practitioners can increase the likelihood that intervention programs are successful.

Ultimately, however, structural changes will be necessary to improve the situation of street youth. It is clearly beyond the power of most researchers and practitioners to change the larger context within which street youth exist. However, one way to begin the process of change is to acknowledge and examine the contribution of political, social, and economic factors in research publications

and reports. As Hutz and Koller (1999) point out, "research conducted with street children is often used to design public policies and intervention programs (p. 68)" Thus, by including structural factors in their analytic models, researchers may begin to educate policy makers and program developers.

Recently, Earls and Carlson (1999) articulated a framework to guide research and practice with disenfranchised populations, including street youth. The framework includes three components: principles of human rights, a health promotion approach, and the need for multilevel causal analysis. Consistent with the tenets of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Limber & Flekkoy, 1996), the authors argue that street children are entitled "to the resources required to protect and promote their development" (Earls & Carlson, 1999; p. 72). The health promotion approach focuses on positive well-being rather than the absence of disease, and introduces the concept of quality of life as an indicator of health. Finally, when examining causes of the street youth phenomenon, these scholars articulate the need to consider multiple levels of influence, including family, neighborhood, economic, and social structures. By drawing on a comprehensive conceptual framework in their research and practice with street youth, psychologists can foster an awareness that street youth are a social as well as an individual phenomenon. By situating street youth within the larger contexts that shape their lives, psychologists can begin to promote social change to address the situation of street children and adolescents.

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# *Measuring the Experience, Expression and Control of Anger in Latin America: The Spanish Multi-Cultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Abstract**

The goal of this study was to develop a psychometric scale to assess the experience, expression and control of anger in Latin American countries. Items for the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI-SM) were adapted from the English State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI). In keeping with the STAXI conceptual definitions of state-anger, trait-anger, and anger expression and control, new items were also constructed to replace those containing English idiomatic expressions. The initial item pool was reviewed by 26 psychologists from 10 Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, and modified on the basis of their comments. The resulting set of 56 items was administered to 257 Spanish native speakers at the XXV Interamerican Congress of Psychology in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Responses to the items, factored in separate principal factors analyses for males and females with promax rotations, identified 8 factors comparable to those of the English STAXI: two state anger factors (feeling angry, feeling like expressing anger), two trait anger factors (angry temperament, angry reaction), and four anger expression and control factors: Anger-In, Anger-Out, Anger/Control-In, Anger/Control-Out. Based on the consistency of the dominant factor loadings for females and males, 44 items were selected for the experimental STAXI-SM, which consists of four 5-item scales for measuring the components of state and trait anger, and four 6-item scales for assessing anger expression and control. Alpha coefficients for these brief scales for females and males varied between .79 and .92.

## **Compendio**

El propósito de este estudio fue construir una escala psicométrica para la evaluación de la experiencia, expresión y control de la cólera en países de

América Latina. Adaptamos los reactivos del Inventario Multicultural de la Expresión de la Cólera Estado-Rasgo, de acuerdo a la versión original del inglés (STAXI). A base de las definiciones conceptuales de cólera-estado, cólera-rasgo, y de la expresión y control de la cólera del STAXI, elaboramos reactivos nuevos con el propósito de reemplazar las frases idiomáticas de la versión inglesa del STAXI. Veintiseis (26) psicólogos y psicólogas de 10 países de Latinoamérica revisaron el grupo inicial de reactivos en castellano. Hicimos modificaciones a base de los comentarios de estos/as colegas. Administramos los 56 reactivos que seleccionamos a una muestra de 257 participantes de habla castellana durante el XXV Congreso Interamericano de Psicología que se realizó en San Juan, Puerto Rico. Analizamos las respuestas a base del análisis factorial de componentes principales con rotaciones promax, tanto en hombres como en mujeres. Surgieron 8 factores similares a aquellos de la versión en inglés del STAXI: dos factores cólera-estado (sintiendo cólera y sintiendo deseos de expresar cólera), dos factores cólera-rasgo (temperamento y reacción), y cuatro factores de la expresión y control de cólera (cólera contenida, cólera manifiesta, control de la cólera contenida, y control de la cólera manifiesta). A base de la consistencia de las cargas factoriales dominantes en hombres y mujeres, seleccionamos 44 reactivos para conformar el STAXI-SM, el cual consiste de cuatro escalas de 5 reactivos cada uno para la medición de la cólera, estado-rasgo; además de cuatro escalas de 6 reactivos cada uno para la evaluación de la expresión y control de la cólera. Los coeficientes alpha de estas escalas variaron entre .79 y .92 en hombres y mujeres.

**Key Words:** Anger; Measurement; Adaptation; STAXI  
**Palabras claves:** Cólera; Medición; Adaptación; STAXI

**A**nger and hostility are recognized as critically important determinants of family violence and abuse, the most prevalent forms of aggression against women and young children in Latin America, which often result in physical injuries or even death. In addition, anger and hostility contribute to serious physical health problems, such as coronary heart disease (CHD), the leading cause of death among adults in the United States and other western countries (McCranie, Watkins, Brandsma, & Sisson, 1986; Moscoso, 1995; Spielberger & Moscoso, 1995). Anger and hostility also contribute to elevated blood pressure (Spielberger, Krasner, & Solomon, 1988) and hypertension (Johnson, 1989), and suppressed anger may contribute to cancer (Cooper & Faragher, 1993).

The identification of the Type-A Behavior Pattern (TABP) as a major risk factor for CHD (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Review Panel on Coronary Prone Behavior, 1981) has stimulated

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considerable interest in the measurement of anger because of growing evidence that anger and hostility are the lethal components of the TABP which contributes to cardiovascular disease (Dembrosky & Costa, 1987; Moscoso, 1989; Williams, 1989; Williams, et al., 1988, Williams, Barefoot & Shekelle, 1985). Measuring the experience and expression of anger requires clearly-defined conceptions of anger-related constructs, which distinguish between the situations or circumstances (stressors) that evoke angry feelings, the nature of anger as an emotional reaction, and how anger is provoked, expressed, and controlled. A coherent theoretical framework for distinguishing between anger, hostility and aggression as psychological concepts also requires taking the state-trait distinction into account.

The *State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory* (STAXI) was developed by Spielberger and his colleagues (Spielberger, 1980; Spielberger, Jacobs, Russell, & Crane, 1983; Spielberger, Johnson, Russell, Crane, Jacobs, & Worden, 1985; Spielberger, Krasner, & Solomon, 1988; Spielberger, Reheiser, & Sydeman, 1995) as a multidimensional measure for assessing the experience, expression and control of anger. The construction of the STAXI took place in four distinct stages. In the initial stage, the *State-Trait Anger Scale* (STAS) was constructed to assess two aspects of the experience of anger: the intensity of feelings of anger as a psychobiological emotional state, and individual differences in anger proneness as a personality disposition or trait (Spielberger, 1980; Spielberger, et al., 1983). The second stage in the development of the STAXI involved the construction of the *Anger Expression (AX) Scale*, which was stimulated by the recognized need to distinguish between the experience of anger and how angry feelings are expressed (Spielberger, et al., 1985). The third stage began with identifying anger control as an independent factor, which stimulated the development of a scale to assess efforts to control angry feelings (Spielberger, et al., 1988). In the fourth and final stage, scales were constructed to measure two major mechanisms for controlling anger, the control of anger out and reducing the intensity of suppressed anger (Spielberger, et al., 1995).

#### *Measuring State and Trait Anger*

The STAS State Anger (S-Anger) Scale measures the intensity of the experience of anger as an emotional state; the STAS Trait Anger

(T-Anger) Scale evaluates how often anger is generally experienced. In constructing the STAS, S-Anger was defined as ".an emotional state marked by subjective feelings that vary in intensity from mild annoyance or irritation to intense fury and rage, which is generally accompanied by muscular tension and arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1988, p. 1). The intensity of S-Anger may vary over time, as a function of perceived injustice, or of being attacked or treated unfairly by others.

Research on the factor structure of the STAS (Spielberger et al., 1983) has consistently identified two independent factors: state anger (S-Anger) and trait anger (T-Anger). Alpha coefficients for the 10-item S-Anger Scale were .90 or higher for both University students and navy recruits (Spielberger, 1988; Westberry, 1980), indicating a high degree of internal consistency and suggesting that the S-Anger scale measures a unitary emotional state. However, in studies of the factor structure of the 10-item STAS S-Anger Scale (van der Ploeg, 1988) and the 44-item STAXI, strong evidence suggesting that there are two S-Anger factors was found (Fuqua, Leonard, Masters, Smith, Campbell, & Fisher, 1991). These findings were corroborated in both, males and females, by Forgays, Forgays & Spielberger (1997). The content of the items with strong loadings on the second anger factor ("Feel like breaking things", "Feel like hitting someone") describe feelings of expressing anger in aggressive behavior. We should indicate that van der Ploeg's study was based entirely on the responses of male subjects, whereas Forgays et al. (1997) factored the responses of a large sample of university students, taking gender differences into account.

The STAS T-Anger Scale assesses individual differences in the disposition to perceive a wide range of situations as frustrating, and in the general tendency to experience angry feelings in such situations (Spielberger, et al., 1983). Factor analyses of the 10-item T-Anger Scale have consistently identified two substantially correlated factors: T-Anger/Temperament and T-Anger/Reaction (Forgays, et al., 1997; Spielberger, 1988). The STAS T-Anger/Temperament subscale assesses individual differences in the disposition to experience anger without provocation. In contrast, the T-Anger/Reaction subscale measures individual differences in the tendency to react with anger in situations that involve frustration, negative evaluations, or being treated unfairly (Spielberger, 1988). Alpha coefficients for the T-

Anger/Temperament scale vary from .84 to .89. Although the Alpha's for T- Anger/Reaction Scale are lower, ranging from .70 to .75, these values are quite satisfactory for a subscale comprised of only 4 items.

### *Measuring the Expression of Anger*

The second stage in the development of the STAXI was the construction of a scale to measure the direction of anger expression, the *Anger Expression (AX) Scale*. The instructions for responding to the AX Scale differ considerably from those used with the STAS T-Anger Scale and other trait measures. Rather than directing subjects to respond according to how they generally feel, they are instructed in responding to the AX Scale items to indicate how often they behave in a particular manner when they feel "angry or furious" (e.g., "I say nasty things"; "I boil inside, but I don't show it").

The AX Scale was originally designed and intended to be a unidimensional bipolar continuum of individual differences in how often anger was held-in or suppressed, or expressed toward other persons or objects in the environment. However, factor analyses indicated that the AX items were actually tapping two independent dimensions (Spielberger et al., 1985). The two orthogonal factors that were identified in these analyses were labeled Anger-In and Anger-Out. Scales comprised of the 8 items with the highest loadings on each of these factors were constructed to measure the underlying dimensions.

Essentially zero correlations were found between the AX/In and AX/Out scales for large samples of male and female high school and college students (Johnson, 1984; Pollans, 1983), providing further evidence that these scales assess two conceptually distinct and empirically independent dimensions. The internal consistency of the AX/In and AX/Out scales, as measured by alpha coefficients, ranged from .73 to .84, which is satisfactory for brief 8-item measures. The median item-remainder correlations for the AX/In and AX/Out items were .53 and .44 respectively.

### *Measuring the Control of Anger*

In the third stage of construction of the STAXI, an anger control scale was developed to assess individual differences in the frequencies that a person endeavors to control anger expression.

Three items from the original 20-item AX Scale (e.g., "control my temper"; "keep my cool"), which had moderate loadings on both the anger-in and anger-out factors in previous research (Spielberger et al., 1985), guided the construction of additional items for the anger-control item pool (e.g., "control my temper"; "keep my cool"). These items were administered to large samples of university students, along with the STAXI S-Anger, T-Anger, and AX Scale. Factor analyses of the items in the anger control pool identified, for both males and females, one very strong factor and several weak factors. Those items with the highest loadings on the strong factor for both sexes were selected for the AX Anger Control (AX/Con) Scale. To confirm that this anger control factor was relatively independent of the anger-in and anger-out factors previously identified, the items comprising the 8-item AX/Con scale, were factored together with the AX/In and AX/Out items in separate analyses for males and females. An anger control factor, consisting of all 8 AX/Con items, was the strongest factor to emerge in these analyses.

The fourth stage in the construction of the STAXI underscores the importance of distinguishing between two different mechanisms for controlling the expression of anger. The development of subscales to measure these two anger-control mechanisms was stimulated by psycholinguistic research that identified English metaphors for anger (Lakoff, 1987). In the content of Lakoff's analysis of anger metaphors, the intensity of anger as an emotional state may be considered analogous to the heat of a hot liquid in a container, where the body is the container and blood is the hot liquid. *Boiling inside* indicates a high level of intensity of suppressed anger; *blowing off steam* reflects the outward expression of angry feelings; *keeping the lid on* refers to controlling the outward expression of anger in aggressive behavior. Thus, Lakoff's anger metaphors suggest that there are two different mechanisms for controlling anger: keeping it bottled up and not letting it escape, and reducing the intensity of suppressed anger by cooling down inside.

Most of the items in the original AX/Con scale were concerned primarily with controlling anger out (e.g., "Control my temper"). To assess the control of anger-in, items were constructed in accordance the conception of reducing the intensity of suppressed anger by calming down or cooling off (Spielberger et al. 1995;

Sydemann, 1995). In separate factor analyses of large samples of male and female university students, using oblique rotation, two-factors were identified for both sexes. Loadings of individual items on the anger-in control factor were .54 or higher, with a median factor loading of .76. Item loadings on the anger-out control factor were also quite strong for both sexes, with a median loading of .65. These items with the strongest loadings on each of these anger control factors were selected to form the new AX/Con-In and AX/Con-Out scales. The content of most of the items comprising the AX/Con-In scale describe calming down, cooling off, or relaxing in an effort to reduce the intensity of suppressed anger. The AX/Con-Out scale consists of items related to inhibiting the outward expression of angry feelings.

In the past decade, the STAXI has been frequently used to assess anger in the United States (Spielberger et al., 1995), Europe (van der Ploeg, 1988), and South America with the Brazilian version in Portuguese (Spielberger & Biaggio, 1992). The STAXI provides brief, highly focused psychometric scales for assessing the experience, expression, and control of anger. This inventory was developed to assess the major components of anger in evaluations of clinical and non-clinical populations, and to provide a means of determining the contributions of various components of anger to medical conditions, such as hypertension, elevated blood pressure, coronary heart disease, and cancer. Recognizing the demonstrated utility of the STAXI and its extensive use in health psychology and behavioral medicine, the availability of a similar measure for Spanish speaking countries could possibly stimulate research on the role of anger and hostility in medical disorders and other social concerns such as domestic violence.

The major goal of this article is to report the construction and development of a Spanish adaptation of the STAXI for measuring the experience, expression and control of anger in culturally diverse populations in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking culture in the United States, taking gender into account. Gender differences were incorporated because they have long been recognized in previous studies regarding the expression of anger and hostility (Brody, 1985; Davidson & Hall, 1995; Forgays et al., 1997). The research form of the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI-SMC) was designed to assess the same dimensions of anger that are measured by the original STAXI

(Moscoso & Reheiser, 1996a, 1996b). This study reports findings that demonstrate the correspondence of the factor structure of the STAXI-SMC with the revised and expanded English-language form of the STAXI, namely STAXI-2. The psychometric properties of the experimental STAXI-SMC are also reported.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Participants in this study were 257 persons (179 females, 78 males) attending the 25th Interamerican Congress of Psychology held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were recruited in large conference meeting rooms at the Hilton Hotel in which participation in the "anger research study" was encouraged. Given the number of variables (56 items) in the study, a sample size of approximately 250 participants was necessary to satisfy the *subjects-to-variable (STV) ratio* and the *minimum of 100 observations rule* of thumb (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995; Gorsuch, 1983). The sample consisted of participants from the Caribbean (48%), South America (32%), Central America (16%), and Spain (4%). They ranged in age from 20 to 78 years (mdn age=36). All participants had completed training in psychology, or were currently enrolled as students in undergraduate or graduate psychology programs. Information about gender, nationality, age, and level of education was obtained from each respondent.

### *Construction of Items for the Spanish Multicultural-STAXI (STAXI-SM)*

Based on the conceptual framework developed by Spielberger (1988), 56 items were adapted or constructed for the Latin-American culture to measure the following dimensions of anger: State Anger consisting of three subscales; Trait Anger including subsets of items measuring Temperament and Reaction; and the Expression and control of Anger consisting of four subsets of items for measuring Anger-In, Anger-Out, Anger-In Control, and Anger-Out Control. Conceptually based and written specifically for the STAXI-SMC, these items were reviewed and commented by 26 prominent Latin American psychologists who suggested modifications and corrections to conform to the appropriate

linguistic expression of the items in their own countries. The criteria for selecting these judges was having the necessary knowledge and experience in measurement and adaptation of psychological test in their own countries. The vast majority of these collaborators are currently involved in academic work in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Salvador and Venezuela (Moscoso & Spielberger, 1997).

The number of items included in the STAXI-SMC to assess each of the following dimensions of anger were: S-Anger, 12 (Feeling Angry, 4; Feeling like Expressing Anger Verbally, 4; Feeling like Expressing Anger Physically, 4); T-Anger, 12 (Temperament, 6; Reaction, 6); Anger-In, 8; Anger Out, 8; Anger-In Control, 8; Anger-Out Control, 8. In responding to the S-Anger items, participants noted the intensity of their angry feelings on the following 4-point scale: (1) *not at all* (2) *somewhat*; (3) *moderately so*; (4) *very much so*. Responses to the T-Anger and Anger Expression Scales were rated on 4-point frequency scale: (1) *almost never*, (2) *sometimes*, (3) *often*, and (4) *almost always*.

### *Procedure*

The participants were approached in the Convention conference rooms at the Hilton Hotel, as well as outside of meeting time. The measure was administered in groups varying from 5 to 10 individuals over 40 different sessions, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. Information about the study was provided, and a written informed consent statement was obtained from all participants. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that all information would be strictly confidential. Respondents were given standardized oral and written instructions in Spanish. Each subject completed the demographic data information and the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. Following the completion of the STAXI-SMC, written comments from the participants were encouraged regarding the linguistic connotation of words that describe "angry feelings" in their own country. The comments of 67 participants on words that describe "angry feelings" such as "*ira*", "*coraje*", "*enojo*", "*furia*", "*rabia*", "*enfado*", "*cólera*" and "*molestia*" were presented and discussed in a symposium at the

Regional Congress of Psychology for Professionals in the Americas: Interfacing the Science and Practice of Psychology held in Mexico City (Moscoso & Spielberger, 1997).

## RESULTS

To determine whether the proposed dimensions of the STAXI-SMC were supported by factor analysis in the Latin American population, the 56 items were subjected to a principal components factor analyses with promax rotations, both for male and female respondents. Exploratory factor analyses rather than confirmatory factor analyses were carried out, because such analyses were judged to be more conservative (Gorsuch, 1988). Well defined State, Trait, and Anger-expression factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were found for both, female and males respondents.

The 56 State, Trait, and Anger-expression items were factored in separate analyses for males and females. Salient items were identified as possessing factors loadings equal to or greater than .35. These are represented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Results of the 2-factor solutions with promax rotation of the 12 S-Anger items show a first factor, "feeling angry", accounting for 73% of the variance for females only; while for males, the second factor, "feel like expressing anger", accounts for 70% of the variance. These two subscales present high loadings. The "feeling angry" subscale items range from .55 to .95 (median = .75) for males; and .64 to .77 (median = .71) for females. The "feel like expressing anger" subscale items vary from .49 to .99 (median = .74) for males; and .60 to .98 (median = .79) for females ( See Table 1 ).

Alpha coefficients and item-remainder correlations for the S-Anger items were computed separately for males and females. The alpha coefficients for this scale were .92 for males, and .92 for females, indicating a high degree of internal consistency ( See Table 4 ). The median item-remainder correlation was .91 for males, and .91 for females.

Results of the analysis of the 12 Trait Anger items yielded two distinct subsets of six items each, the Trait-Temperament and the Trait-Reaction. The former accounts for 58% of the variance for males, and 73% of the variance for females. These two subscales also present high loadings. The "trait-temperament" subscale items vary from .47 to .79 (median = .63) for males; and .37 to .79 (median = .58 ) for females. The "trait-reaction" items also present high loadings for both genders ( .47 or higher for females; median



Table 1  
 Factor Loadings of the State Items of the Spanish Multicultural Anger  
 Expression Inventory for Females ( N=179 ) and Males ( N=78 )

State Items	Feeling Angry		Feel like Expressing Anger	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
01. Me siento enojado	.77	.95		
02. Estoy colérico	.64	.89		
03. Me siento irritado	.64	.77		
10. Me dan ganas de gritar a alguien	.71	.55		.46
06. Me dan ganas de insultar a alguien	.75			.72
09. Me dan ganas de decir grocerías	.75			.64
11. Me dan ganas de maldecir	.68			.36
05. Me dan ganas de romper cosas		.99		.98
08. Me dan ganas de golpear a alguien			.82	.99
12. Tengo ganas de destruir algo			.86	.91
07. Me dan ganas de pegar a alguien			.60	.99
04. Estoy furioso		.51	.63	.49
Eigenvalues	6.42	1.89	1.11	6.86
Percentage of variance	73%	58%	16%	21%

= .60; and .37 or higher for males; median = .57 ). Table 2 shows eigenvalues, percentage of variances and factor loadings for individual items of the Trait subscales.

Alpha coefficients and item-remainder correlations for the T-Anger scale were performed separately for males and females. The alpha coefficients for this scale were .87 for females, and .83 for males, indicating a very high degree of internal consistency (See Table 4). The scale median item-remainder correlation was .83 for males, and .85 for females.

Alpha coefficients and item-remainder correlations for the T-Anger scale were performed separately for males and females. The alpha coefficients for this scale were .87 for females, and .83 for males, indicating a very high degree of internal consistency (See Table 4). The scale median item-remainder correlation was .83 for males, and .85 for females.

Factor analysis of the 32 Anger Expression items yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, for females and males,

using the same procedures and factor extraction criteria described above. The Anger-In/Control and Anger-Out/Control factors identified in these analyses are consistent with the factor analyses studies reported by Spielberger, Rehaiser, and Sydeman (1995). The first factor, Anger-In/Control accounts for 52% of the variance for males, and 43% of the variance for females. The median factor loadings for the "anger-in/control" subscale are .75 for males, and .79 for females; for the "anger-out/control" subset are .73 for males, and .72 for females; for the "anger-out" subscale are .60 for males, and .43 for females; and, for the "anger-in/control" subset are .56 for males, and .54 for females. Table 3 presents the eigenvalues and factor loadings on these subscales.

The alpha coefficients for the 32-item Anger Expression and Anger Control Scale ranged from .79 to .81 for females, and .81 to .83 for males. For the 8-item subscales comprising this measure, the alpha coefficients were reasonably high, which indicates that such items are clearly homogeneous in nature and measure a unitary construct. These coefficients, along with the State Anger and Trait Anger Scales coefficients, are presented in Table 4.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The main goal of this study was to report the construction and development of an instrument for measuring the experience, expression and control of anger in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking culture in United States. Another goal was, to evaluate the factor structure of the State, Trait, and Anger Expression Scales to determine the extent to which the structural properties of this measure corresponded with the conceptual constructs on which the STAXI scales and subscales were based.

The term "Latin America" is usually applied collectively to 20 of the independent republics of the New World. They include the 18 countries whose national language is Spanish; Brazil where Portuguese is spoken; and Haiti, where the national language is French. Occasionally the meaning of "Latin America" is extended to include more recently independent, English-speaking countries such as Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago, but the standard list of 20 nations remains the most widely accepted. It is critically important to recognize that Latin America's population represents exceptionally complex social and cultural diversity within the

Table 2

Factor Loadings of the Trait Items of the Spanish Multicultural Anger Expression Inventory for Females (N=179) and Males (N=78)

Trait Items	Temperament		Reaction	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
03. Soy una persona exaltada	.79	.79		
12. Tengo un humor colérico	.78	.72		
02. Tengo un carácter irritable	.77	.51		
06. Me enojo muy fácilmente	.73	.74		
01. Soy muy temperamental	.60	.47		
07. Pierdo las riendas	.37	.72		
10. Me siento furioso cuando hago buen trabajo...			.75	.77
05. Me enfado cuando hago algo bien y no es...			.68	.54
11. Me enfado cuando alguien arruina mis planes...			.62	.76
08. Me pone furioso que me critiquen delante de...			.56	.64
09. Me pone furioso cometer errores estúpidos...			.47	.54
04. Me enojo cuando me retraso por errores...		.37	(.34)	.37
Eigenvalues	4.53	3.88	1.01	1.41
Percentage of Variance	73%	58%	16%	21%

Table 3

Factor Loadings of the Anger Expression Items of the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. Females (N=179) and Males (N=78)

Anger Expression Items	AX/Con-In		AX/Con-Out		Anger-In		Anger-Out	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
24. Hago algo relajante...	.88	.92						
23. Trato de relajarme...	.85	.79						
22. Algo reconfortante...	.80	.89						
25. Reduzco mi rabia...	.79	.58		.38				
26. Trato de calmarme...	.75	.75						
27. Respiro profundo...	.70	.86						
21. Tranquilizo tan pronto...	.59	.57						
32. Mantengo el control...			.83	.65				
13. Puedo controlarme...			.75	.71				
06. Mantengo la calma...			.75	.66				
01. Controlo mi humor ...			.73	.81				
09. Controlo mi forma de...			.66	.77				
20. Controlo mis...			.61	.75				
16. Cosas desagradables...			.37					
15. Estoy mas enfadado...					.70	.59		
17. Me irrito mucho más...					.62	.61		
04. Contengo mi enojo...					.57	.45		
05. Me aparto de la gente...					.52	.45		
14. Secretamente soy...					.50	.53		
30. Hago comentarios...					.42			
11. Guardo rencores y...					.38	.66		.45

Table 3 (Cont.)

Factor Loadings of the Anger Expression Items of the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. Females (N=179) and Males (N=78)

Anger Expression Items	AX/Con-In		AX/Con-Out		Anger-In		Anger-Out	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
07. Muestro mi enojo a...							.80	.83
02. Expreso mi cólera...							.78	.79
19. Digo como me siento...							.60	.73
29. No expresar mi enojo.					.36			.60
08. Hiervo por dentro...					.48		.51	
03. Expreso mi furia...							.47	.37
12. Difícil mostrar enojo...							.41	.41
10. Discuto con los demás...							(.26)	.36
18. Pierdo los estribos...				.37			(.12)	.41
28. Controlo deseos expresar...		.53					.39	
31. Camino tranquilizarme.		.35						
Eigenvalues	7.55	9.79	3.68	2.80	1.28	1.43	2.34	2.39
Percentage of Variance	43%	52%	21%	15%	7%	8%	13%	13%

Table 4

Alpha Coefficients of the Spanish Multicultural State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory Measures for Females ( N=179 ) and Males ( N=78)

	Alpha Coefficients	
	Female Scores	Male Scores
State Anger	.92	.92
Trait Anger	.87	.83
Anger -Out	.81	.83
Anger-In	.80	.83
Anger Control/In	.79	.81
Anger Control/Out	.79	.82

region, where it can be argued that the differences in spoken language among these countries more than outweigh the similarities. Recognizing the utility of the STAXI and its extensive use in health psychology and behavioral medicine, the availability of a measure that assesses the experience, expression and control of anger, taking into consideration the diversity in Spanish language in Latin America, becomes a top priority. The STAXI-SMC intends to stimulate research on the role of anger and hostility in family violence and child abuse, and to facilitate understanding of the role these emotions play in medical disorders.

Results of the factor analyses to the 56 STAXI-SMC items confirmed the assumed structural properties of the inventory and provided empirical support for conceptualizing anger as a multidimensional construct. The S-Anger scale items clearly provide evidence of two distinctive factors: "Feeling Angry" and "Feeling Like Expressing Anger", while raising very interesting questions in regard to how Latin American men and women may differ in the experience and expression of anger. For females, "Feeling Angry" items account for 73% of the variance, while for males, this factor accounts for only 19% of the variance. "Feel Like Expressing Anger" items loaded on the second factor

accounting for 70% of the variance for males, and 13% of the variance for females.

Examining the factor loadings in Table 1, several points can be made. Item "*estoy furioso*" (#4) presents with double loadings for males and females, which may indicate that this item taps the physical expression of anger in addition to feeling angry. We can make the same observation on item #10 "*me dan ganas de gritar a alguien*" for males only. Items "*me dan ganas de insultar a alguien*" (# 6), "*me dan ganas de decir groserías*" (# 9), and "*me dan ganas de maldecir*" (# 11) clearly indicate the experience of anger (feeling angry) for females, while for males, these items have high loadings on the expression of anger (feel like expressing anger). This finding may suggest that the male respondents in this sample are more prone to the expression of their angry feelings as compared to female respondents.

In evaluating the factor loadings in Table 2, the findings provide excellent evidence of the structural validity of the Trait Anger Scale. Except for the item "*me enoja cuando me retraso por errores de otros*" (# 4), all the rest of the items had very high loadings on one factor, with relatively low loadings on the other. These results lend substantial credibility to the multidimensional framework of the anger construct represented by the T-Anger scale of the English version of the STAXI (Spielberger, 1988), and provide striking confirmation of the unique structure of the Angry temperament and Angry Reaction subscales.

Table 3 clearly reflects the same four-factor structure found on the Anger Expression Scale of the revised English version of the STAXI (STAXI-2), that includes the 2 new Anger-Control subscales (Spielberger et. al., 1995). Seven items on the AX/Con-In and 6 items on the AX/Con-Out had very high loadings on factor 1 and factor 2 respectively, which was essentially the same for both sexes, providing strong verification of the underlying factor structure for the AX/Con subscales. Furthermore, 6 items on the AX/Anger-In and 5 items on the AX/Anger-Out had high loadings on one factor, with marginally low loadings on the other.

Examining the Alpha coefficients in Table 4, it is important to point out that all the coefficients for the State, Trait, and Anger Expression and Control Scales are very high, which adds significant internal consistency and credibility to the STAXI-SMC. This is surprising given the factorial complexity of these scales.

In summary, the analyses reported in the present study substantially verified the factor structure of the English version of the STAXI-2 in a Latin American sample. The State Anger dimension was essentially confirmed, along with evidence that this scale is comprised of two distinctive components, "Feeling Angry" and "Feeling Like Expressing Anger". The Trait Anger dimension was also confirmed, reflecting evidence of the two clearly different factors, Trait Temperament and Trait Reaction. Finally, the Anger Expression Scale shows good evidence of the four factors previously found in the original English version.

Although the factor structures that emerged from this multicultural sample were remarkably similar, in essence, to the factor structures of the English version of the STAXI-2, these findings should be taken cautiously. This is a first step in measuring the experience, expression, and control of anger with Spanish-speaking populations; and this instrument should be considered exploratory, in nature, to provide a measure that is sensitive to cultures with significant differences in language in Latin America for the assessment of this core emotion.

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## *El Empowerment como Alternativa Teórica para la Psicología de Comunidad en América Latina*

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### Compendio

En este artículo presento una crítica a la noción de *empowerment* que ha desarrollado la Psicología de Comunidad, sobre todo en los Estados Unidos, a la luz de uno de los objetivos centrales de la disciplina, a saber, el cambio social. Inicio la discusión del *empowerment* como una alternativa teórica para América Latina, enfocando en las condiciones que lo facilitan, los niveles de investigación que deberían emerger de esa teoría, el papel que deberían desempeñar los/as agentes de cambio que se propongan impulsar esfuerzos dirigidos al *empowerment*, y las posibilidades de alcanzar este objetivo.

### Abstract

This article constitutes a critique to the empowerment notion developed by Community Psychology, particularly in the United States. The discussion is framed by one of the central objectives of the discipline, i.e. social change. It initiates the exploration of empowerment as a theoretical alternative for Latin America, focusing on the conditions that facilitate the process, the research levels that should emerge from this theory, the role that social agents who intend to promote empowerment efforts should play, and possibilities of reaching this objective.

**Palabras claves:** *Empowerment*; América Latina; Psicología de comunidad  
**Key words:** Empowerment; Latin América; Community psychology

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Es necesario iniciar este trabajo con dos advertencias. En primera instancia, utilizo el término *empowerment* como resultado de la dificultad para encontrar uno en castellano que recoja la esencia de lo que el término en inglés sugiere. En segundo lugar, al sugerirlo como alternativa teórica para América Latina parto de las similitudes que pueda haber en el quehacer de la Psicología de Comunidad en nuestros países, y de las similitudes que nuestros propios países puedan tener. Sin embargo, no pretendo proponer una teoría unificadora que ignore las diferentes realidades que se manifiestan en América Latina. Es decir, no intento proponer la teoría de la Psicología Comunitaria, ni siquiera la teoría de *empowerment*.

### Estado Actual del *Empowerment*

El *empowerment* ha venido a ser en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica lo que llaman en ese país un *buzz word*, o una palabra de moda. Es un término utilizado por personas en la política, activistas, personas conservadoras y liberales, psicólogos y psicólogas, en fin, por todo el mundo. La Psicología de Comunidad estadounidense adoptó el término, allá para mediados de los ochenta, y desde ese momento algunas personas han intentado convertirlo en el fenómeno de interés de la disciplina. Propongo que este es también una alternativa teórica para la Psicología de Comunidad en América Latina, incluyendo el Caribe.

Rappaport (1987) definió el *empowerment* como: "el control que ejercen los individuos sobre sus propias vidas, a la vez que participan democráticamente en la vida de su comunidad" (pág. 19). Esta noción de *empowerment* sugiere un aspecto individual que sólo es pertinente a la persona, y un aspecto de naturaleza social que requiere acciones concretas (e.j. participación en organizaciones, grupos, estructuras) por parte de esta persona, en interacción con su ambiente. Examinemos las elaboraciones que han ido surgiendo a partir de esta conceptualización.

### *Empowerment Individual vs. Empowerment Colectivo*

Los investigadores e investigadoras que parten de esta formulación, han concentrado su trabajo casi exclusivamente en el aspecto individual-psicológico del *empowerment*, ignorando su aspecto social. Es así que aunque han estudiado cómo ciertas organizaciones religiosas y comunitarias facilitan el *empowerment*,

se han limitado a analizar aquellas variables que competen al individuo y han olvidado el elemento comunitario, central a nuestra disciplina.

Otras conceptualizaciones reconocen lo que ha venido a llamarse el *empowerment* colectivo (Albee, 1986; Cowen, 1985; Serrano-García, 1984). Este se refiere al proceso mediante el cual las personas ganan control sobre sus vidas individual y colectivamente (Serrano-García, 1984; 1990). Esta vertiente reconoce y enfoca el contexto en el que se dan los esfuerzos por desarrollar el *empowerment*, y lo incorpora a la definición. Por ejemplo, Serrano-García (1984) subraya la importancia de los factores sociales y económicos y conceptualiza el *empowerment* como un proceso colectivo que debe desembocar en el desarrollo de una ideología alternativa y en la promoción del cambio social. Albee (1986), por su parte, impulsa una noción de *empowerment* colectivo dirigido a abolir la injusticia y la desigualdad.

#### *¿Proceso o Resultado?*

Es necesario señalar que las teorizaciones del *empowerment* ocurren dentro de un marco relacional, en el que se concibe al individuo siempre en interacción con su contexto. Es por esto que, las más de las veces, el *empowerment* ha sido descrito como un proceso, cuyo foco son las relaciones entre los individuos y los escenarios o microsistemas (como por ejemplo, la escuela, las organizaciones comunitarias, la iglesia) con los que interactúa (Gruber & Trickett, 1987; Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990a). Hago énfasis en que el foco es la relación; no las características particulares del individuo o del escenario. Otras personas lo han concebido como un fin o un resultado, casi siempre asociado a la obtención de poder (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Florin & Wandersman, 1990).

Esta diferenciación es importante pues, de concebirse como proceso, los resultados a los que aspira pueden variar (e.j., poder, autodeterminación individual, y prosperidad económica, entre otros), además de implicar un fenómeno dinámico, en constante cambio y transformación. La noción de *empowerment* como resultado sugiere, por el contrario, una 'entidad' estática o un 'bien' finito, sujeto a agotarse, resultando en la pérdida de dinamismo y de su naturaleza relacional.

Proceso

## HACIA UNA RECONCEPTUALIZACION DEL *EMPOWERMENT*

Propongo, entonces, una reconceptualización del *empowerment*. Defino el mismo como:

el proceso por el cual los individuos, grupos, organizaciones y comunidades desarrollan un sentido de control sobre sus vidas, que les permite actuar eficientemente en el ámbito público, permitiéndoles además, tener acceso a recursos, y promover cambios en sus contextos comunes.

De ahí que el *empowerment* conlleve tanto la percepción subjetiva como la exhibición de formas competentes y efectivas de interactuar con el ambiente. Estas interacciones efectivas, por una parte, implican la habilidad de negociar eficazmente con los diferentes escenarios con los que la persona entra en contacto para obtener de éstos una variedad mayor de recursos individuales y colectivos. Además, estas interacciones serán efectivas en la medida en que influyan y promuevan cambio en las relaciones entre estos escenarios y las personas que los integran, cuando dichas interacciones no promueven la igualdad y el desarrollo pleno de los seres humanos. Mi contención es que el *empowerment* no es un fenómeno exclusivamente cognoscitivo o perceptual, sino que también debe tener manifestaciones en el ámbito público. Por ejemplo, una persona estará *empowered*, no sólo por la mera convicción de que está en control de su vida; su conducta deberá reflejar que lo está. Esta es la dimensión conductual del *empowerment*.

Siendo un fenómeno relacional, cualquier teorización que se haga del mismo, requiere el examen de las transacciones que se dan entre las personas y los escenarios, más que el análisis de sus características estáticas (Altman & Rogoff, 1987). No se me escapa el hecho de que al tratar de examinar y describir este aspecto dinámico del fenómeno, le imprimo un cierto carácter de inmovilidad (como quien toma una fotografía de un salto con valla). El proceso de *empowerment* llevará eventualmente a la transformación de relaciones de poder opresivas e injustas por

aquellas personas que sufren sus consecuencias adversas. En este contexto, la noción de poder es también relacional; emerge como resultado de transacciones entre personas, entre personas y escenarios, o entre clases o sectores sociales--es decir, el poder es una relación en sí mismo. Poulantzas (1979) ha dicho que la noción de poder "designa el horizonte de acción ocupado por una clase dada en relación a las otras (pág. 146)." He aquí cómo no me refiero exclusivamente al poder como posesión, sino como relación (Martín Baró, 1984; Serrano-García & López, 1991), o espacios de acción.

Para los sectores populares, la transformación de las relaciones de poder implicaría la posibilidad de tener acceso a recursos tales como vivienda, educación, recreación, y una ecología saludable, entre otros, además de tener participación en la toma de decisiones concernientes a su desarrollo y administración. Estos recursos no deben entenderse como "bienes"--podrían implicar libertades, derechos, espacios de acción, entre otros. Puntualizo que no se trata del mero acceso a estos recursos, sino de su control y protección en favor del bienestar común. Claro, este proceso se da en relación constante (muchas veces conflictiva) con otras personas, comunidades, y otros niveles de organización social. Es un proceso principalmente político que requiere ir más allá de las acciones individuales -- siendo el problema uno colectivo, la solución debe ser también colectiva. "Como el *empowerment* requiere la superación de experiencias previas de separación y alienación, sólo puede expresarse a través de la comunión con otros individuos, en organizaciones o comunidades de personas sintiendo y actuando juntas"(Traducción de la autora; Crowfoot, Chesler & Boulet, 1983, pág. 253). Esta conceptualización, entonces, apela a niveles extraindividuales de análisis y acción, que son los niveles en los que la Psicología de Comunidad ha expresado interés primario: los niveles organizacionales y sistémicos de análisis (Seidman, 1988).

### *Empowerment y Cambio Social*

La noción de *empowerment* psicológico es hermana a las de *locus of control*, competencia, y auto-eficacia -- populares en la Psicología estadounidense. Todas se refieren a una persona eficaz que piensa que será exitosa al ejecutar un determinado comportamiento. Si bien es cierto que la Psicología de Comunidad

reconoce el nivel individual de análisis como uno legítimo dentro de la disciplina, al proponerse el *empowerment* como fenómeno de interés, habría que conceptualizarlo de forma que facilite uno de sus objetivos principales: la promoción del cambio social.

En este contexto, cambio social se refiere a la alteración de las relaciones y estructuras sociales y económicas existentes, transformándolas en relaciones no-opresivas, o lo que en Psicología de Comunidad se conoce como cambio de segundo orden; cambio que no se limita a innovaciones menores (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). Aunque el *empowerment* colectivo se acerca más que el *empowerment* individual a la promoción del cambio social, es necesario precisar **cómo** facilitaría este objetivo. Los esfuerzos para desarrollar *empowerment* pueden lograr que los individuos cambien, aumentando el control que perciben tener sobre sus vidas. Sin embargo, de no haber cambio en las relaciones y estructuras sociales y económicas que mantienen a amplios sectores de la sociedad marginados y con acceso limitado a recursos, entonces el cambio promovido ocurriría a nivel individual más que a nivel social o de sistemas.

De modo que de acuerdo con esta conceptualización, los esfuerzos para promover el *empowerment* no están completos y no son, por tanto, exitosos, si no facilitan el desarrollo de una ideología alternativa basada en la igualdad, y la justicia. Por ejemplo, al tratar de promover el *empowerment* entre las personas indígenas o campesinas en México o Ecuador, o entre las mujeres y la clase trabajadora en Puerto Rico o la República Dominicana, no es suficiente promover el cambio entre estos grupos colectivamente. Las relaciones imperantes de poder también deben cambiarse. Esto requerirá cambios en niveles múltiples--no sólo el nivel individual. Aún más, tiene que desarrollarse una ideología alternativa entre estos sectores--una ideología que no necesariamente los motive a tratar de integrarse a las relaciones existentes y a las estructuras sociales caracterizadas por la desigualdad y la opresión, sino a nuevas estructuras y relaciones que consideren a todos los seres humanos como iguales en términos de su acceso y relación con los recursos sociales.

Las ideologías no sólo se desarrollan a través de la educación, los medios de comunicación, y otros vehículos verbales (Marx & Engels, 1970). Como cualquier cuerpo de pensamiento, las ideologías se desarrollan principalmente a través de relaciones sociales,



económicas y políticas concretas entre individuos, o entre grupos en una sociedad en particular. De ahí que el desarrollo de una ideología alternativa se refiere a aquellas ideas, pensamientos reflexivos y construcciones sociales que surgen de la práctica cotidiana. Si, al reflexionar acerca de lo que hacen al involucrarse en cualquier actividad que promueve el *empowerment*, cualquiera de estos grupos llega a creer (como la ideología dominante intenta que crean) que "estamos luchando por llegar a ser mejores miembros de la clase media", su ideología será una de integración. Alternativamente, si la conciencia que desarrollan al examinar su participación en este tipo de actividad es una dirigida a cambiar las relaciones en las que están involucrados/as, para hacerlas más equitativas, entonces, tanto las estructuras sociales como las personas podrían comenzar a cambiar. Es así como la ideología se expresa mejor como una relación dialéctica entre acciones y cogniciones. Laclau y Mouffe (1985) han argumentado que a través de la reflexión sobre sus propios procesos, que quienes participan en movimientos sociales podrían desarrollar conciencia acerca de sus necesidades, lo que ya representa un momento de libertad. Este sería un proceso de constante retroalimentación entre la reflexión y la acción colectiva en la que están involucrado/as. Es sólo a través de sus propios intentos concretos que los sectores populares subordinados podrán hegemonizar este proceso -- es imposible que ocurra exclusivamente a través de esfuerzos intelectuales o puramente académicos.

Es necesario reconocer, por lo menos en América Latina, una corriente hacia la "desideologización" (Montero, 1991). Montero ha planteado que la concientización de los sectores populares lleva a la desideologización, esto es: "la construcción y reconstrucción de una conciencia integral, no-fraccionada, mediante la cual se produzca una comprensión del mundo en que se vive y de las circunstancias de vida, en lo que tiene de totalidad (pág. 12)". El proceso de desideologización presupone que las ideologías, en sí mismas, falsean las relaciones sociales. Lo propuesto hasta aquí es una articulación alternativa de las relaciones sociales y del papel que el proceso de *empowerment* podría jugar en el desarrollo de ésta. Entonces la noción de ideología sigue siendo útil para explicar el fenómeno, y la meta, según la concibo, no sería erradicar las ideologías sino transformarlas, alterar la hegemonía, en beneficio de las capas populares.

ve  
Montero

Al referirme al cambio en relaciones sociales, no me refiero exclusivamente a las relaciones de producción. También deberán cambiar las relaciones de opresión basadas en género, raza, etnicidad u orientación sexual. Esto implica que no existe una fórmula única para el *empowerment* -- diferentes grupos podrían alcanzar el *empowerment* a través de medios y procesos diferentes. Lo que podría ser común a todos es su lucha por la igualdad (mientras se reafirma la diversidad) y la justicia. Es así como no hay que plantearse la necesidad de una estrategia universal para el *empowerment*.

No es difícil anticipar que los esfuerzos hacia el *empowerment* colectivo podrían ser cuestionados o cooptados por los sectores individualistas/conservadores de la sociedad y aún por sectores liberales que promueven el reconocimiento de las diferencias individuales. Ciertamente, los sectores conservadores han estado desarrollando su propio discurso de *empowerment*. Jack Kemp, funcionario del ex-presidente de los Estados Unidos, George Bush, constituye un ejemplo de esta tendencia cuando hablaba del *empowerment* de los pobres en ese país, significando la posesión privada de bienes, en armonía con el "sueño americano" (Kemp, 1990).

El desarrollo del *empowerment* no niega el pluralismo -- al contrario: es la diversidad la que hay que promover a través de la acción colectiva. Hubiera sido imposible defender los derechos de tantos sectores marginados a través del mundo sobre bases individuales exclusivamente. Algunas personas podrían señalar que el clima social de los '80 y los '90 es tal que los antagonismos sociales tradicionales no se manifiestan de forma tan dramática como en los '60. Frente a este argumento baste recordar cómo en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica la brecha entre personas ricas y pobres es cada vez mayor; cómo en Puerto Rico 70% de la población vive aún por debajo del nivel de pobreza; cómo en Brasil, Perú o Ecuador, la justicia social sigue siendo meta, y no realidad; cómo la ecología de nuestros países se altera en beneficio de los países industrializados en perjuicio de nuestras generaciones presentes y futuras. Partiendo del anunciado compromiso de la Psicología de Comunidad con el cambio social es que entiendo que somos nosotros/as, y no quienes representan el *status quo* quienes debemos hegemonizar los esfuerzos de promoción del *empowerment*.

## UNA TEORIA DE EMPOWERMENT Y CAMBIO SOCIAL

Una teoría de *empowerment* debería proveer alguna dirección en términos de las intervenciones que serían consistentes con las metas y valores de la disciplina. Dicha teoría debería abordar asuntos tales como los siguientes: ¿Cómo se desarrolla el *empowerment*? ¿Cuáles son las condiciones que lo facilitan? ¿Cómo puede garantizarse la intervención en niveles múltiples?

*¿Cómo se Desarrolla el Empowerment?*

Berger y Nehaus (1977), Kieffer (1984) y Zimmerman (1990b) han iniciado en los Estados Unidos la tarea de precisar cómo se desarrolla el *empowerment*. En el trabajo de estos investigadores la **participación** constituye un elemento clave. Berger y Nehaus (1977) han sugerido que las personas llegan a estar *empowered* en la medida en que participan en lo que ellos llaman estructuras mediadoras (e.j. la familia, la iglesia, el vecindario y las organizaciones voluntarias). Estas estructuras ofrecen a las personas que participan en ellas, estabilidad y modos significativos de relacionarse con instituciones burocráticas más distantes que administran "amplios sectores de la sociedad, tales como en el ámbito de la educación y las profesiones organizadas" (pág. 2). De acuerdo con ellos, el proceso de *empowerment* se desarrolla: (1) en conexión con otras personas; (2) a través de conductas proactivas (i.e., involucrándose y trabajando en dichas organizaciones); y (3) a través de la conexión que estas estructuras desarrollan con ciertas instituciones de la vida pública.

Notación  
de  
Participar

Kieffer plantea que el *empowerment* es un proceso de desarrollo que evoluciona en etapas en las que la persona logra destrezas, relaciones, cogniciones o comportamientos que la mueven hacia un estado de competencia partícipe. Este estado se caracteriza por:

1) el desarrollo de un auto-concepto positivo; 2) la construcción de un entendimiento crítico del ambiente político y social; y 3) el cultivo de recursos para la acción social y política.

Zimmerman (1990b) entiende que la participación en este tipo de organización permite que la persona obtenga control real sobre situaciones que influyen su vida y la de los/as demás. A través de la participación, de acuerdo con Zimmerman, las personas desarrollan destrezas de manejo de tiempo, de organización; aprenden a identificar proveedores/as de recursos y/o servicios, a

trabajar con otras personas para alcanzar metas afines, e inician el proceso de entender los factores que inciden en la toma de decisiones.

Estos esfuerzos constituyen importantes y consistentes aproximaciones al fenómeno de *empowerment*. Los autores mencionados coinciden en que es un proceso a desarrollar en el mundo "real", a través de conexiones múltiples con otras personas, más que a través de un proceso exclusivamente individual dirigido al cambio personal/psicológico. Sin embargo, todavía existe una limitación central en estas aproximaciones: todas se refieren a ganancias individuales, sin atender la necesidad de adelantar metas colectivas.

Otra pregunta que surge cuando investigamos el papel de la participación en el desarrollo del *empowerment* es: ¿tienden a participar más las personas que ya están *empowered*, o es a través de la participación que las personas logran desarrollarlo? No existe investigación longitudinal en esta área, así que no podemos hablar de relaciones causales.

Chavis y Wandersman (1990) abordaron esta pregunta en su investigación sobre organizaciones vecinales. Encontraron que a través de sus transacciones con organizaciones de cuadra, las personas participantes desarrollaron un sentido de comunidad que "contribuye a un sentido de *empowerment* individual y grupal que ayuda a sus vecinos/as a actuar colectivamente para satisfacer sus necesidades compartidas" (pág. 73). Sin embargo, Chavis y Wandersman (1990) nos alertan al hecho de que, si nos ubicamos en un continuo temporal, la relación entre estas variables es "bidireccional y transaccional" (pág. 61). Es así como, una vez las personas se involucran en actividades colectivas, las percepciones del ambiente y de ellas mismas se ven afectadas también en modos que estimulan la participación.

Esta es una pregunta que requiere mayor exploración. Coincido en que la relación es bidireccional (o dialéctica), como lo es la relación entre la teoría y la práctica; entre acción y reflexión.

#### *Condiciones que Facilitan el Empowerment*

Chavis, Stucky y Wandersman (1983) han sugerido la posibilidad de construir coaliciones entre los/as científicos y no-científicos, para "construir una base de apoyo para la investigación psicológica mientras beneficiamos a la comunidad" (pág. 433). Yo creo que

tales coaliciones deberían darse también en proyectos de acción colaborativa en los que grupos y comunidades usen el conocimiento acumulado por la psicología para actuar colectivamente sobre sus contextos. Chavis et al. (1983) advierten: "Puede que surjan conflictos, pero éstos no son necesariamente conflictos entre la ciencia y la no-ciencia, sino entre valores alternativos, prioridades, y modos de resolver problemas" (pág. 425).

Propongo una distinción entre **colaboraciones** para facilitar el *empowerment* (que incluyen esfuerzos de investigación y de acción) e **intervenciones** que facilitarían el *empowerment*. Las "intervenciones" sugieren un rol dominante de una parte sobre otra (como cuando un país imperialista interviene o invade a otro). Las colaboraciones para facilitar el *empowerment* serán aquellas en las que un grupo u organización comunitaria trabaja con psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad no sólo en la resolución de sus problemas, sino también en la transformación de las transacciones con escenarios y estructuras. Los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad deberán usar su conocimiento y destrezas para promover entre la gente con la que trabajan la conciencia de que, para que el *empowerment* redunde en efectos permanentes y verdaderos en la naturaleza de sus vidas y las relaciones sociales en las que se involucran, es necesario desarrollar una ideología alternativa y generar modos alternos de interactuar con este contexto. Tradicionalmente los psicólogos y psicólogas han abrazado un paradigma de integración -- los esfuerzos de *empowerment* deberían contribuir a avanzar un paradigma de cambio. Un paradigma de integración (Germani, 1973) describe movilizaciones "a través de los canales político-institucionales existentes... sancionados por el régimen en el poder, y en las cuales el marco de legalidad del régimen está implícita o explícitamente aceptado" (pág. 21). Por lo tanto, el Estado terminará aceptando este paradigma y también hegemonizándolo. Un paradigma de cambio, como he sugerido anteriormente, implicaría que el *empowerment* sería instrumental en cambiar las estructuras y las relaciones que han desembocado en la marginalización de grandes e importantes sectores de la sociedad.

El surgimiento y desarrollo de los movimientos sociales infunde esperanzas y arroja luz sobre el alcance, la importancia y el potencial de participación de los sectores populares. En las últimas

Paradigma  
de cambio  
vs.  
paradigma  
de integrac'

dos décadas han proliferado los movimientos sociales alrededor del mundo, y América Latina resulta ser un ejemplo estupendo de esta tendencia. Movimientos iniciados para la consecución de metas, las más de las veces específicas y transitorias, han ido evolucionando en movimientos cada vez más amplios en términos de objetivos, composición, y estrategias (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Montero, 1991; Rosenau, 1992). En Puerto Rico, por ejemplo, los movimientos feministas, ambientalistas, y a favor de la educación popular han ido aglutinando sectores cada vez más diversos de la población (Miranda, de León, Franco, & Quiñones, 1991; Reyes-Del Valle, 1991). Miranda y sus colaboradoras han resumido algunos de los logros de dichos movimientos en Puerto Rico: "privilegian los recursos naturales, contribuyen al rescate de la agricultura, han elaborado propuestas de desarrollo social y económico, de cultura alternativa, y nuevas socialidades" (pág. 7). Aunque no existe un cuerpo de investigación amplio sobre estos movimientos, sí sabemos que la participación en éstos representa una alternativa de resistencia frente al Estado, que constituyen un vehículo para el desarrollo personal y colectivo, y que paulatinamente contribuyen a desarrollar una ideología alterna a la dominante.

### *Investigación y Acción a Niveles Múltiples*

Profesionales de la psicología clínica y la consejería, entre otras profesiones de ayuda, han estado hace tiempo embarcados/as en investigación y acción (principalmente terapéutica) que podría tener consecuencias de *empowerment* a nivel individual y psicológico. Los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad, entonces, deberíamos identificar y concentrar en aquellos niveles de investigación y acción que podrían más bien adelantar las estrategias de *empowerment* colectivo que beneficiarían a comunidades, grupos étnicos, y sectores minoritarios. (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Heller, 1989). Esto podría implicar la necesidad de revisar áreas sustantivas de investigación y acción de la disciplina. La investigación sobre el proceso de *empowerment* podría examinar asuntos como: ¿Qué factores influyen en la decisión de las personas a involucrarse en el proceso? ¿Cómo se armonizan los intereses personales e individuales con las metas colectivas? ¿Cómo se vinculan las organizaciones que facilitan el *empowerment* a la sociedad civil

para tener algún impacto en niveles más amplios de relaciones sociales? ¿Cómo se amplifica el potencial de transformación de una organización para aumentar su poder y diversificar sus metas iniciales?

Existen algunos aspectos metodológicos que necesitan estudio con mayor profundidad: ¿Cómo se evalúa el aspecto colectivo del *empowerment*? El análisis de datos agregados sobre *empowerment* psicológico no es suficiente; debemos examinar los patrones de relación con los escenarios y microsistemas también. La discusión de Seidman (1988) sobre regularidades sociales podría proveer guías en esta dirección. Una vez el *empowerment* se conceptualiza dentro de un contexto de cambio social, es necesario examinar cómo podrían cambiar las estructuras y sistemas que constituyen blancos de los esfuerzos de *empowerment*.

Otro de los argumentos a favor de la inserción proactiva de los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad en los esfuerzos de facilitar el *empowerment* surge del hecho de que el cambio social es uno de los objetivos principales de la disciplina. Como he dicho antes, los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad involucrados en colaboraciones de *empowerment* deberían también incorporar el cambio social como una prioridad en su trabajo. Una vez los esfuerzos de investigación comiencen a demostrar que ciertas acciones colectivas pueden facilitar el *empowerment*, es necesario traducir éstos en acción. Este no es ni puede ser proyecto de una persona.

objetivo  
Cambio  
Social  
↓

### *El Papel de los Agentes de Cambio*

Heller (1989) ha sugerido que el *empowerment* no es un bien que los/as profesionales pueden distribuir u ofrecer. Las personas deben pasar por el proceso para poder alcanzar sus consecuencias. ¿Cuál es, entonces, el rol potencial de los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad en este proceso?

Suponemos que la psicología de comunidad es una disciplina de acción. Teóricamente, quienes la practicamos, estamos comprometidos y comprometidas con el cambio social; nuestro rol ha sido consistentemente construido como uno proactivo. ¿Significa ésto que los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad deben iniciar o provocar el proceso de *empowerment*, o deberíamos sentarnos a esperar que ocurra? ¿Cuáles son los límites a nuestra inserción en el proceso, de tal manera que nuestras intervenciones no sugieran

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que estamos "dándole" *empowerment* a la gente, sino que la gente está construyendo y/o desarrollando el *empowerment*? Yo creo que los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad deberían involucrarse activamente en trabajos que, de alguna manera, faciliten el proceso de *empowerment* en vez de esperar a que ocurra.

Esta inserción no es nueva en América Latina (Freire, 1971; Martín Baró, 1983; Miranda, et. al., 1991; Serrano-García & Vargas, 1992), aún cuando no se ha dado dentro del ámbito de la Psicología de Comunidad. Por ejemplo, psicólogas de comunidad han colaborado con movimientos comunitarios en Puerto Rico realizando simultáneamente investigación para detectar sus niveles de desarrollo y ofreciendo talleres sobre organización comunitaria para grupos ambientalistas.

### ¿EXISTEN POSIBILIDADES PARA EL DESARROLLO DE UNA TEORÍA DE *EMPOWERMENT*?

La noción de *empowerment* que favorezco es una que facilita el cambio social a favor de las personas y/o grupos oprimidos, en lugar de una que promueve el control individual sobre la vida de cada cual, sin importar lo que ocurra en el resto de la sociedad. Creo que esta es una metáfora difícil de desarrollar en medio del clima conservador de los '90; en medio de la desesperanza post-moderna. La noción de que la cultura dominante tiene influencia sobre las teorías y conceptualizaciones que se convierten en fenómeno de interés de una particular disciplina (¿ciencia?) no es nueva. Como toda construcción social, una teoría de *empowerment* reflejará el espíritu de las fuerzas dominantes en la sociedad, que en muchos casos puede ser igual al de quienes generan teoría en la comunidad científica.

Trickett, Watts y Birman (1991) han expresado preocupaciones similares en relación al valor de la diversidad cultural que ha declarado suscribir la psicología de comunidad, planteando una pregunta crucial: ¿Será que los paradigmas dominantes del *empowerment* sirven a los intereses latentes del movimiento conservador y el *status quo*? Coincido con Mednick (1989) en que el énfasis actual en el cambio personal, aleja el trabajo intelectual y la acción del examen de aspectos que pueden ayudar a entender las bases sociales de la desigualdad y el poder.

Creo, entonces, que el futuro de esta construcción que hemos



estado llamando *empowerment* dentro de la psicología comunitaria, estará determinado por la interacción entre las fuerzas sociopolíticas dominantes, y el compromiso que los psicólogos y psicólogas de comunidad tengamos con el cambio social, la igualdad, y la justicia. Como un proceso para alcanzar cambio individual su futuro está garantizado; como un proceso para encender y promover los valores centrales de la disciplina--su futuro está por verse y depende de nosotros y nosotras.

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## *Zonas Circunscritas e Ocupação do Espaço por Crianças Pequenas em Creche<sup>1</sup>*

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### Resumo

Comparou-se o papel das variáveis circunscrição e superfície de apoio para a ocupação de zonas circunscritas (ZC – área delimitada pelo menos em três lados por barreiras) e analisou-se a relação entre o número crescente de ZC<sub>s</sub> e a distribuição espacial de crianças de 2-3 anos de uma creche universitária brasileira. Os dados foram coletados por três câmeras de videoteipe em três fases: I-estantes com superfície de apoio delimitando uma ZC e duas áreas sem circunscrição; II-2 ZC<sub>s</sub>, com e sem superfície de apoio; III-3 ZC<sub>s</sub>, duas anteriores e cabana. A análise das localizações das crianças a cada minuto evidenciou uma ocupação preferencial da ZC com apoio. Com o aumento do número de ZC<sub>s</sub>, houve um decréscimo significativo na ocupação da zona do adulto e maior ocupação das ZC<sub>s</sub>.

### Abstract

This study compared the role of circumscription and of surface of support on the use of circumscribed zones (CZ – area limited on at least three sides by barriers) and analyzed the spatial distribution of 2 to 3 year-old children from a Brazilian university day care center when the number of CZ<sub>s</sub> was increased. Data were collected using three automatic video cameras in three phases: I-shelves with surface of support limiting one CZ and two areas without circumscription; II-2 CZ<sub>s</sub>, one with and another without surface of support; III-3 CZ<sub>s</sub>, two of the preceding phase and a cardboard doll house. The minute by minute analysis of the children positions showed a preferential use of the CZ with surface of support. With the increase in the number of CZ<sub>s</sub> there was a significant decrease in the adult's zone use and an increase in CZ<sub>s</sub> use.

**Key words:** Environmental Psychology; Ecological approach; Spatial organization / day care center

**Palavras-chave:** Psicologia Ambiental; Abordagem ecológica; Organização do espaço / creche

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A importância da perspectiva ecológica, um dos domínios da Psicologia Ambiental, no estudo do desenvolvimento humano, tem sido apontada como necessária, sugerindo-se uma maior integração entre Psicologia do Desenvolvimento e a Psicologia Ambiental (e. g., Campos-de-Carvalho, 1993; Moore, 1987; Wohlwill, 1980; Wohlwill & Heft, 1987). Embora a Psicologia Ambiental priorize os aspectos físicos do ambiente e suas relações com o comportamento humano, ainda persiste na Psicologia o que Stokols (1990, p. 641) denomina de uma perspectiva reducionista, pela qual "ambientes físicos exercem influência mínima ou negligenciável sobre o comportamento, saúde e bem-estar de seus usuários".

Nossa visão de desenvolvimento, baseada numa perspectiva sistêmica, enfatiza a relação bidirecional entre pessoa-ambiente (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983; Campos-de-Carvalho, 1993; Moore, 1987; Stokols, 1978, 1990; Valsiner, 1987; Valsiner & Benigni, 1986; Wohlwill & Heft, 1987). Por um lado, a criança participa ativamente de seu desenvolvimento através de suas relações com o ambiente físico e social, e neste especialmente pelas suas interações com adultos e demais crianças, inserida em um contexto sócio-histórico específico. A criança explora, descobre e inicia ações em seu ambiente; seleciona parceiros, objetos e áreas para suas atividades, mudando o ambiente através de seus comportamentos. Por outro lado, os comportamentos infantis são influenciados pelo ambiente, físico e social, fornecido pelos adultos de acordo com seus objetivos pessoais, construídos com base em suas expectativas culturais relativas aos comportamentos e desenvolvimento infantis.

A perspectiva de que as interações entre crianças são tão importantes quanto as interações adulto-criança para o desenvolvimento infantil, suscita questões sobre como os ambientes poderiam favorecer ou dificultar a ocorrência de interações, principalmente entre crianças pequenas em ambientes coletivos, tais como em creches. De acordo com nossa concepção, a creche – instituição que vem sendo cada vez mais utilizada – constitui um contexto de desenvolvimento de crianças pequenas, onde um adulto cuida simultaneamente de várias crianças, sendo que os parceiros mais disponíveis para interação são outras crianças, geralmente coetâneos.

Embora haja estudos demonstrando a importância de aspectos

físicos do ambiente, tal como o papel dos objetos (e. g., Eckerman & Stein, 1982; Mueller & Lucas, 1975; Stambak & Verba, 1986), poucas pesquisas têm documentado a influência nos comportamentos infantis de espaços abertos e fechados, relativos à ausência ou presença de barreiras na área de atividades, particularmente em creches (e. g., Legendre, 1983, 1987, 1989; Legendre & Fontaine, 1991; Moore, 1987).

O arranjo espacial é uma das variáveis do ambiente físico, que diz respeito à maneira como móveis e equipamentos existentes em um local estão posicionados entre si. Legendre (1983, 1987, 1989; Legendre & Fontaine, 1991) tem demonstrado o papel de suporte do arranjo espacial para ocorrência de interações entre crianças de 2-3 anos em creches francesas, especialmente do *arranjo semi-aberto*, caracterizado pela presença de zonas circunscritas. Zonas circunscritas são áreas delimitadas pelo menos em três lados por barreiras formadas por mobiliários, parede, desnível do solo, entre outros. A característica primordial destas zonas é a sua circunscrição ou fechamento, independentemente do tipo de material colocado para as crianças utilizarem, o que, então, as diferenciam dos chamados cantos ou áreas de atividades. Neste arranjo, as crianças ocupam preferencialmente as zonas circunscritas, nas quais ocorrem interações afiliativas freqüentes entre elas; suas aproximações do adulto, embora menos freqüentes, tendem a evocar mais respostas deste em comparação aos outros dois tipos de arranjos, descritos a seguir. No *arranjo aberto* há ausência de zonas circunscritas, geralmente havendo um espaço central vazio. As interações entre crianças são raras, as quais tendem a permanecer em volta do adulto, porém ocorrendo pouca interação com o mesmo. No *arranjo fechado* há a presença de barreiras físicas, por exemplo um móvel alto, dividindo o local em duas ou mais áreas, impedindo uma visão total do local. As crianças tendem a permanecer em volta do adulto, evitando áreas onde a visão do mesmo não é possível; há ocorrência de poucas interações entre crianças.

Cabe ressaltar a importância do tipo de material a ser utilizado na montagem das zonas circunscritas, devendo ser baixos o suficiente para permitir um fácil contato visual das crianças com o adulto. Este é um aspecto primordial para crianças de 2-3 anos, faixa etária por nós estudada, devido aos comportamentos de apego, cujo padrão, descrito por vários autores em amostras de diferentes

culturas, indica que crianças naquela idade exibem fortes comportamentos de apego, não somente para a mãe, mas também para outras figuras, tal como a educadora da creche (Rossetti Ferreira, 1984). Como a busca de proximidade física e/ou visual com a figura de apego é freqüente, conseqüentemente as crianças tendem a não permanecer em áreas fora do contato visual com o adulto. Geralmente isso é observado no arranjo fechado, onde as crianças evitam permanecer em áreas, inclusive em uma zona circunscrita, onde não é possível ver as educadoras, como mostrado por Legendre (1983, 1987, 1989; Legendre & Fontaine, 1991).

Embora seja bastante reconhecida a importância para o ser humano da interação social, a necessidade em limitar a interação social – privacidade – tem sido apontada mais recentemente, especialmente após a emergência da Psicologia Ambiental (David & Weinstein, 1987; Stokols, 1978). A busca por privacidade tem sido analisada em diversos contextos, como no lar (e. g., Wachs & Camli, 1991; Wohlwill & Heft, 1987), na escola (e. g. Rivlin & Weinstein, 1984), em creches (e. g. Trancik & Evans, 1995), escritórios e empresas (Sundstrom, 1987), entre outros.

Ambientes institucionais geralmente preservam pouco a privacidade (Wolfe & Rivlin, 1987) e por isso, tem sido indicada a necessidade de espaços privados; por exemplo em creches, no sentido de fornecer oportunidade para expressão e exploração de sentimentos, como os de raiva, angústia e frustração, longe do olhar dos outros; ou fornecer proteção contra o excesso de estimulação, tal como barulho, movimentação e ritmo rápido de atividades de grupo, funcionando como um descanso para a retomada das atividades (e.g. Olds, 1987; Trancik & Evans, 1995). Ademais, estes espaços não precisam ser totalmente fechados, o que inclusive pode torná-los indesejáveis visto a impossibilidade de observar o que ocorre no grupo (Weinstein, 1987), principalmente para crianças com idade inferior a 3 anos, devido aos comportamentos de apego.

Neste sentido, a presença de zonas circunscritas em um arranjo espacial semi-aberto, pode contribuir para a busca de privacidade, especialmente como um refúgio para o excesso de estimulação decorrente das atividades em grupo. Além disso, atividades desenvolvidas nestas zonas têm probabilidade menor de serem interrompidas, seja pelas demais crianças ou pela educadora, do que em áreas não circunscritas, especialmente no interior de



arranjos espaciais abertos (Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira, 1993). Desta maneira, estar em uma zona circunscrita contribuiria para a criança focalizar sua atenção na atividade e comportamento do(s) parceiro(s), condição necessária para a ocorrência de interações mais longas entre coetâneos, especialmente abaixo de 3 anos (Camaioni, 1980).

O contexto pouco estruturado de creches brasileiras que atendem população de baixa renda – tal como número grande de crianças pequenas (por exemplo, 10 a 35 crianças entre 18 a 36 meses) sob a supervisão de um só adulto; escassez de mobiliário, objetos e equipamentos; ausência de zonas circunscritas – não favorece a ocorrência de interações, seja entre criança-adulto e, especialmente, entre crianças menores de três anos, período no qual as habilidades verbais e sociais estão se desenvolvendo.

Nossos estudos direcionam-se para a contribuição do arranjo espacial propiciando oportunidades de interações de coetâneos, entre si e com o adulto. A metodologia por nós utilizada refere-se ao que Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) denomina de experimento ecológico. Esta metodologia, inserida em uma perspectiva ecológica (Campos-de-Carvalho, 1993), propõe a realização de manipulações sistemáticas de uma única variável, a ser investigada, mantendo-se os demais componentes ambientais presentes, ou seja, aquelas manipulações ocorrem no interior do sistema ecológico, preservando-se assim o sistema de interdependência entre os componentes ambientais.

O estudo de Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira (1993) evidenciou uma relação entre arranjo espacial e uso da área de atividades livres por crianças entre 2-3 anos de duas creches brasileiras que atendem famílias de baixa renda. A coleta de dados, utilizando duas câmeras fotográficas com funcionamento automático e conjunto a cada 30 segundos, foi realizada em três fases: *Fase I* - arranjo aberto: espaço usual, amplo e vazio; *Fase II* - arranjo aberto: introdução de pequenas estantes de madeira na periferia da área; *Fase III* - arranjo semi-aberto: montagem de duas zonas circunscritas. A análise da distribuição espacial das crianças mostrou: (1) reorganização da ocupação do espaço a cada fase; (2) ocupação preferencial de áreas mais estruturadas a cada fase; (3) maior concentração de crianças em volta da monitora em arranjos com menor estruturação espacial; afora esta tendência, as crianças se deslocaram frequentemente pela sala.

Estes resultados suscitaram novas questões sobre a formação de agrupamentos infantis, investigadas em estudos posteriores (Campos-de-Carvalho, Meneghini & Mingorance, 1996; Meneghini & Campos-de-Carvalho, 1997; Padovani & Campos-de-Carvalho, 1997). Tais estudos contribuíram para a compreensão da interdependência entre o arranjo espacial e o papel estruturador da educadora no contato entre crianças pequenas, apontando o arranjo espacial como um dos elementos mediadores da interação de crianças pequenas.

Além disso, a evidência de ocupação preferencial da área em volta das estantes e dentro das zonas circunscritas, em duas fases sucessivas do estudo de Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira (1993), levantou questões sobre se a preferência pelas zonas circunscritas seria devido à sua circunscrição (Fase III) ou à superfície de apoio das estantes, presentes nas Fases II e III.

Esta questão foi investigada no presente trabalho, examinando o papel de suporte das variáveis circunscrição e superfície de apoio, para a ocupação das zonas circunscritas por crianças pequenas. Um segundo objetivo deste trabalho foi analisar a distribuição espacial das crianças com o acréscimo gradual no número de zonas circunscritas, no decorrer das fases.

O estudo foi conduzido com um grupo de crianças entre 2-3 anos de uma creche universitária brasileira. Através da metodologia da experimentação ecológica, o estudo constou de três fases: I - presença de pequenas estantes de madeira com superfície de apoio colocadas contra uma parede e formando uma zona circunscrita; II - duas zonas circunscritas, com e sem superfície de apoio; III - três zonas circunscritas.

## MÉTODO

### *Participantes*

Participaram deste trabalho 14 crianças (seis meninas e oito meninos) e duas educadoras da creche do Campus da Universidade de São Paulo, em Ribeirão Preto, uma rica região agrícola do Estado de São Paulo, Brasil. As crianças faziam parte de um grupo da creche, subdividido em dois, cada um composto por sete crianças e uma educadora, os quais desenvolviam várias atividades tanto em conjunto como independentemente. No início do estudo a

idade média das crianças era de 27 meses (22-31 meses), as quais já estavam familiarizadas com as educadoras e entre si, frequentando a creche há dois anos, com exceção de uma criança que havia ingressado há um ano.

Esta creche atende filhos de funcionários, alunos e docentes, de 3 meses a 6 anos e 11 meses. É considerada uma creche modelo devido ao alto padrão de qualidade no atendimento oferecido, tal como: preocupação com as condições favoráveis ao desenvolvimento global das crianças; boas instalações físicas, em termos de espaços internos e externos, com ampla área verde, sendo os equipamentos, materiais, mobiliários e decorações adequados às crianças; profissionais treinados e supervisionados regularmente, tendo as educadoras uma rotina diária de 6 horas; razão adulto-criança adequada (por exemplo, um adulto para sete crianças na turma de 2-3 anos); preocupação com a integração creche-família; preocupação com as necessidades dos profissionais; programação educacional adequada às necessidades infantis, desde a organização do espaço físico até a elaboração e execução de atividades diversas.

### *Local e Situação*

A coleta de dados foi realizada em uma sala de 35 m<sup>2</sup>, no período da manhã, em horário habitual para ocorrência de atividades livres. Nesta sala havia um armário de madeira, permanentemente fechado e encostado numa parede. Os materiais, pertencentes à creche e de utilização diária, eram colocados no centro da sala antes do início de cada sessão, consistindo de brinquedos semi-novos, como bolas, carrinhos, brinquedos de encaixe, livrinhos de pano, almofadas, y revistas.

### *Equipamentos e Coleta de Dados*

Os dados foram coletados por três câmeras de videoteipe com funcionamento simultâneo sem a presença do operador, ligadas segundos antes da entrada das crianças na sala. Estas câmeras eram fixadas em suportes de madeira presos no alto de três paredes, de tal forma que cada uma registrava uma área da sala, abrangendo quase todo o local, permanecendo fora dos focos uma área de aproximadamente 2m<sup>2</sup>.

Para a estruturação do espaço foram utilizadas oito estantes de madeira com superfície de apoio (1.00 X 0.30 X 0.50 m), quatro

divisórias de madeira, tipo grade (1.00 X 0.02 X 0.50 m) e um caixote de papelão resistente e colorido (0.92 X 0.80 X 0.76 m), habitualmente utilizado pelas crianças como cabana, pois possuía aberturas nas quatro laterais caracterizando janelas e portas.

### *Procedimento*

O estudo constou de três fases, cada uma com uma estruturação espacial específica, porém caracterizando sempre um arranjo espacial semi-aberto. As sessões duravam em média 30 minutos (de 25 a 45 minutos), mas para a análise foram utilizados cerca de 27 minutos, pois os primeiros minutos foram desconsiderados para permitir a entrada na sala de pelo menos metade do grupo. O início e término da sessão ficavam sob controle e decisão das educadoras.

#### *Fase I: Zonas espaciais com e sem circunscrição*

Utilizando-se quatro estantes de madeira com superfície de apoio (30 cm de largura), montou-se uma zona circunscrita delimitada em quatro lados, havendo uma pequena abertura para passagem das crianças. Dois lados eram constituídos pela quina de duas paredes e os outros dois pelas estantes, duas em cada lado. Com estantes semelhantes foram montadas duas outras zonas espaciais, sem circunscrição, cada uma delas formada por duas estantes encostadas linearmente contra a parede. Portanto, a característica superfície de apoio esteve presente em todas as zonas espaciais, havendo variação quanto à circunscrição. Além das três zonas espaciais, foi considerada a área em torno de um metro ao redor do local de permanência das duas educadoras, denominada zona do adulto; neste local foi colocado um colchonete para as educadoras se sentarem (vide a estruturação espacial na Figura 1.1, parte de Resultados).

Foi dado um período de oito dias úteis de familiarização do grupo ao novo arranjo espacial da sala. Após, realizou-se cinco sessões de coleta de dados em duas semanas consecutivas.

Foi proposto às educadoras que, sempre que possível, permanecessem na zona do adulto, mas que, se necessário, uma delas poderia sair momentaneamente da sala, ficando o grupo com uma educadora, o que já era habitual na creche. Foram necessárias instruções às educadoras para que atendessem as solicitações das crianças, porém não direcionassem suas atividades, pois durante a primeira sessão elas propuseram e participaram de atividades.

Também foi solicitado que o grupo de crianças utilizasse diariamente o local estruturado com as estantes, para a ocorrência de atividades livres. Todas estas instruções foram mantidas nas fases subsequentes.

### *Fase II: Zonas circunscritas com e sem superfície de apoio*

A zona circunscrita da Fase I permaneceu na sala e foi montada outra zona circunscrita com quatro divisórias de madeira, que não forneciam superfície de apoio (2 cm de largura). Esta área era fechada em quatro lados, dois pelas divisórias e os demais pelo encontro de duas paredes, com uma pequena abertura para passagem das crianças. Desta maneira, a variável circunscrição foi mantida constante, havendo modificação da variável superfície de apoio. A zona do adulto foi deslocada para outra área da sala, havendo a colocação de duas almofadas em substituição ao colchonete (vide a estruturação espacial na Figura 1.II, parte de Resultados).

Após um período de cinco dias úteis de familiarização do grupo a esta estruturação do espaço, foram realizadas cinco sessões de coleta de dados em duas semanas consecutivas.

### *Fase III: Introdução da cabana*

Foi mantida a mesma estruturação espacial da fase anterior, havendo a introdução de uma cabaninha de papelão resistente, formando uma terceira zona circunscrita (vide Figura 1.III, na parte de Resultados), possuindo aberturas nas quatro laterais caracterizando janelas e portas, de tal modo que, quando dentro, a criança visualizava o exterior, condição para um arranjo espacial semi-aberto.

Devido ao posicionamento das filmadoras, a cabana foi colocada entre a zona do adulto e a zona circunscrita com apoio; contudo, por ser leve, era facilmente deslocada pelas crianças para outras áreas da sala.

Desde que o grupo já estava familiarizado com o tipo de configuração espacial e também com a cabana, foi desnecessário um período de familiarização. Foram realizadas quatro sessões em uma semana.

### *Tratamento de dados*

O procedimento utilizado para o levantamento das posições

espaciais das crianças e das educadoras na sala, teve por base a técnica de mapeamento comportamental. Esta técnica vem sendo muito utilizada, especialmente na Psicologia Ambiental, para situar comportamentos específicos dentro de um ambiente, registrando sistematicamente localizações e atividades dos usuários, permitindo verificar em que extensão indivíduos diferentes usam o mesmo espaço de modos diferentes (Elali, 1997; Ledingham & Chappus, 1986; Legendre, 1987; Proshansky, Ittelson & Rivlin, 1970; Sommer & Sommer, 1997). Entretanto, convém apontar que neste trabalho registrávamos exclusivamente as posições espaciais.

Para auxiliar na identificação da localização das crianças no monitor de TV, foi utilizada uma planta quadriculada da sala, desenhada numa folha de papel, onde cada quadrado correspondia a 1 m<sup>2</sup> de área, sendo identificado por sua abscissa e ordenada, marcadas por letras e números, respectivamente. A cada minuto congelava-se a imagem e localizava-se uma criança por vez na tela do monitor; sua localização era transposta para a planta quadriculada e, com base nesta, anotava-se a posição da mesma (por exemplo, no quadrado F4). Esta amostragem de tempo com intervalos de 1 minuto foi escolhida com base no estudo de Ormos, Rubiano & Rossetti Ferreira (1993), no qual comparou-se dados obtidos com amostragens de 15, 30 e 60 segundos. A constatação de padrões semelhantes de distribuição espacial de crianças de 2-3 anos nos três intervalos, possibilita o uso da amostragem de tempo de 1 minuto para a análise de frequência da localização espacial de crianças, sem perda da acuracidade da observação e com economia do tempo de análise, o que é recomendável do ponto de vista da parcimônia científica.

Com o auxílio da planta quadriculada também foi possível delimitar áreas específicas da sala, sendo que o levantamento das posições espaciais foi realizado para cada área separadamente. Desta maneira, obteve-se a localização espacial de todas as crianças no decorrer das sessões, analisando-se assim as áreas preferidas e preteridas pelo grupo de crianças em cada etapa.

Para uma comparação inter-fases da ocupação da zona do adulto e da zona circunscrita com apoio, únicas áreas presentes nas três etapas, utilizou-se a análise de variância da prova de Friedman. Na comparação da ocupação da zona circunscrita sem apoio, presente nas Etapas II e III, utilizou-se a prova de Wilcoxon.

Figura 1

Distribuição Espacial das Crianças nas Três Fases do Estudo,  
Utilizando a Planta da Sala Quadriculada de Metro em Metro



## RESULTADOS

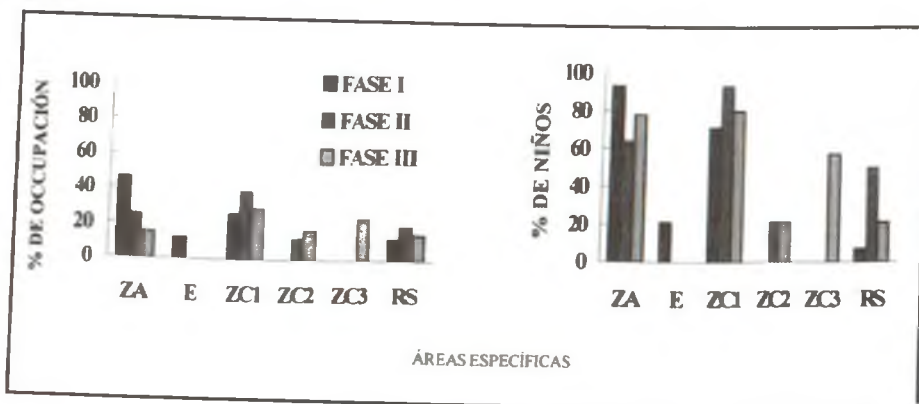
Os dados são apresentados para o conjunto das sessões de cada fase, porém as mesmas tendências foram observadas na maioria delas.

A Figura 1 mostra a distribuição espacial das crianças nas três fases do estudo, utilizando a planta da sala quadriculada de metro em metro.

Na Fase I (Figura 1.I), as crianças ocuparam principalmente a área denominada zona do adulto, correspondendo ao quadrado onde a(s) educadora(s) se encontra(m) e os oito quadrados adjacentes. As demais áreas da sala foram pouco ocupadas, sendo que em cada quadrado observou-se uma ocupação inferior a 6%. Na Fase II, Figura 1.II, as áreas mais ocupadas foram a zona circunscrita com apoio (especialmente a área ao redor das estantes) e a zona do adulto; a zona circunscrita sem apoio foi pouco

Figura 2

Porcentagem de Ocupação (à esquerda) e de Crianças com Ocupação Mínima de 20% (à direita) em Áreas Específicas. ZA, Zona do Adulto; E, duas Zonas Espaciais sem Circunscrição; ZC1, ZC2 e ZC3, Zona Circunscrita com Apoio, sem Apoio e Cabana, Respectivamente; RS, Resto da Sala



utilizada pelas crianças. Na Fase III (Figura 1.III), os quadrados mais ocupados foram os da zona circunscrita com apoio e cabana, sendo a zona circunscrita sem apoio pouco ocupada.

Comparando-se o padrão de ocupação da sala nas três fases, nota-se que a zona do adulto foi mais ocupada pelo grupo de crianças na primeira etapa. Na etapa seguinte, o grupo mostrou maior dispersão pela sala, com deslocamentos freqüentes, indicada pela baixa ocupação de vários quadrados; esta dispersão diminuiu na última etapa.

A Figura 2 mostra a porcentagem de ocupação de áreas específicas da sala pelo grupo de crianças e a porcentagem de crianças que apresentaram pelo menos 20% de ocupação de cada área, em cada uma das fases. Este critério foi escolhido como indicativo de uma permanência mínima na área, já utilizado em estudo anterior (Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira, 1993).

Verifica-se pela Figura 2 que, na Fase I, a zona do adulto foi a área com maior freqüência de ocupação e por praticamente por todo o grupo - 13 das 14 crianças permaneceram mais de 20% das sessões naquela área. O decréscimo gradual de ocupação da zona do adulto até a Fase III é significativo ( $\chi^2 = 19$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) e comparações múltiplas entre as etapas indicaram uma ocupação significativamente mais elevada da zona do adulto na Fase I (R1-



R2 = 13,  $p < 0.05$ ; R1-R3 = 23,  $p < 0.001$ ).

A zona circunscrita com apoio (ZC1) foi a segunda área mais ocupada na Fase I, com grande parte do grupo atingindo o critério mínimo de permanência (10 crianças). As zonas espaciais sem circunscrição, constituídas pelas estantes com superfície de apoio (E), foram as áreas menos ocupadas e somente por três crianças.

Na Fase II, observa-se pela Figura 2 que a zona circunscrita com apoio (ZC1) foi a área mais ocupada e por quase todo o grupo (13 crianças atingiram o critério mínimo de ocupação). A zona circunscrita sem apoio (ZC2) foi pouco ocupada e apenas três crianças atingiram o critério de permanência mínima. Na área correspondente ao resto da sala (RS), a maior porcentagem de ocupação (20%) e de permanência do grupo (7 crianças) nesta fase que nas demais, confirma a maior dispersão das crianças nesta fase.

Embora a zona circunscrita com apoio (ZC1) tenha sido mais ocupada (cerca de 10%) na segunda fase que nas demais, não se encontrou diferença significativa entre as etapas quanto ao seu uso ( $\chi^2 = 4.43$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Já a zona circunscrita sem apoio (ZC2) foi pouco utilizada tanto na Fase II como na III, não havendo diferença significativa entre as etapas ( $T = 34$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Na Fase III (Figura 2), a área mais ocupada foi a zona circunscrita com apoio (ZC1) e por um número maior de crianças com permanência mínima (11 crianças). A cabana (CA) foi a segunda área mais ocupada, com uma pequena diferença (5%), sendo que 8 das 14 crianças atingiram o critério de permanência mínima. As demais áreas foram pouco utilizadas, com poucas crianças atingindo o critério mínimo de permanência.

## DISCUSSÃO

O fato da zona do adulto, na primeira etapa, ter sido a área mais ocupada, inclusive com porcentagem significativamente mais elevada que nas fases subsequentes, diverge da literatura que aponta, em um arranjo espacial semi-aberto, ocupação preferencial da zona circunscrita, por crianças de 2-3 anos (Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira, 1993; Legendre, 1986, 1989; Legendre & Fontaine, 1991).

Algumas considerações podem ser feitas com relação a este resultado, dentre elas a própria estruturação do ambiente físico habitual nesta creche. As salas da creche usualmente utilizadas pelas crianças, anteriormente ao presente estudo, eram bem

estruturadas, caracterizando-se por um arranjo espacial semi-aberto com presença de zonas circunscritas, formadas tanto por mobiliários como por equipamentos, por exemplo, grandes caixotes de madeira. Assim, apesar da existência de uma zona circunscrita na Fase I, houve um empobrecimento em relação à estruturação espacial habitual das salas da creche. Estas considerações sugerem a importância de um ambiente ricamente estruturado com zonas circunscritas, para que as crianças não busquem constante e somente a atenção do adulto.

Outro fator que pode ter contribuído para a alta ocupação da zona do adulto na etapa inicial, foi a colocação de um colchonete nesta zona, caso as educadoras quisessem se sentar. É importante salientar que era usual a presença de colchonetes na sala, para uso das crianças em suas atividades, anteriormente à coleta de dados do presente estudo. Entretanto, inadvertidamente, esta área constituiu-se na única área mais ampla da sala com superfície macia, além da presença de duas ou três pequenas almofadas (colocadas no centro da sala, juntamente com os brinquedos, antes do início das sessões). Observou-se que mesmo quando as educadoras estavam em outro local da sala, por exemplo atendendo alguma criança, as crianças permaneciam sentadas ou deitadas no colchonete, demonstrando sua preferência por ele.

Ademais, a presença contínua das duas educadoras pode ter favorecido a ocupação da área em torno das mesmas. Como já salientado, este grupo de crianças era subdividido em dois, cada um tendo uma educadora, os quais desenvolviam várias atividades tanto em conjunto como independentemente. Apesar dos dois subgrupos de crianças ficarem juntos em diversas atividades, não era habitual a permanência conjunta e por muito tempo das duas educadoras, ou seja, nestes momentos era usual uma das educadoras se afastar por algum tempo do grupo, ficando este com uma delas somente. Esta foi a razão da instrução dada no início do trabalho, sobre a possibilidade de saídas momentâneas de uma delas, desde que a outra permanecesse no local, pois tal situação já fazia parte do sistema ecológico, anteriormente à coleta de dados do presente estudo.

Levando em conta os aspectos da perspectiva ecológica – bidirecionalidade da relação homem-ambiente e a interdependência entre as variáveis de um ambiente na produção de um fenômeno (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Campos-de-Carvalho, 1993; Stokols,

1978) – pode-se dizer que todos os fatores apontados atuaram interdependentemente na ocupação do espaço pelas crianças, na primeira fase deste estudo.

Antes do início da segunda fase, algumas providências foram tomadas com a finalidade de preservar o sistema ecológico, de acordo com a metodologia da experimentação ecológica por nós utilizada. Esta metodologia (Bonfenbrenner, 1977, 1979) propõe a realização de manipulações sistemáticas de uma única variável, mantendo-se os demais componentes ambientais presentes, para preservar a interdependência entre variáveis físicas e sociais. Subjacente a esta proposição, está o pressuposto de que, dentro do possível, não se deve alterar as demais condições ambientais existentes no sistema ecológico.

Tendo em vista estas considerações, a partir da Fase II, o colchonete foi substituído por duas pequenas almofadas, caso as educadoras quisessem se sentar. Se isto não ocorresse, por seu tamanho pequeno e pouco peso, poderiam ser carregadas pelas crianças para outras áreas de sua preferência – realmente esta ocorrência foi freqüente nas duas fases finais do estudo. Além disso, reafirmou-se às educadoras a possibilidade da saída temporária e momentânea de uma delas, desde que a outra permanecesse no local; porém, o tempo médio de permanência de somente uma delas na sala não se alterou muito nas fases subsequentes em comparação à fase inicial – em geral, as saídas momentâneas de qualquer uma delas somavam em média 5 minutos, considerando a sessão toda, em quaisquer das três fases.

Observou-se um decréscimo significativo na ocupação da zona do adulto da primeira para as demais fases. Em nossa opinião, isto se deveu à substituição do colchonete por almofadas, além das modificações experimentais na estruturação espacial levando a um acréscimo no número de zonas circunscritas.

Em relação ao primeiro objetivo deste estudo, papel de suporte da circunscrição e da superfície de apoio para a ocupação das zonas circunscritas, resultados relevantes foram obtidos na primeira e segunda fases.

Na Fase I observou-se uma preferência do grupo pela zona circunscrita em detrimento das áreas espaciais sem circunscrição, sendo todas estas zonas espaciais formadas por estantes baixas com a mesma superfície de apoio, demonstrando assim a relevância da variável circunscrição.

A ocorrência desta preferência provavelmente relaciona-se a aspectos já apontados neste trabalho. O fechamento de uma área em pelo menos três lados, sem impedir a visualização do resto da sala, facilitaria a continuidade das atividades infantis por reduzir a probabilidade de serem interrompidas, seja pelas outras crianças ou mesmo pela educadora, o que é freqüente em áreas não circunscritas. Ademais, ocupar tal zona circunscrita, provavelmente oferecia muito mais à criança a sensação de proteção e privacidade, do que outras áreas não circunscritas, como as estantes encostadas na parede na etapa inicial deste estudo; a zona circunscrita pode ter funcionado como um espaço privado, não totalmente fechado. Na primeira fase deste estudo, podemos dizer que era a única área espacial que fornecia esta sensação de privacidade, servindo como um refúgio para o excesso de estimulação decorrente das atividades em grupo, contribuindo também para a criança focalizar sua atenção na atividade e comportamento do(s) parceiro(s), condição necessária para a ocorrência de interações mais longas entre coetâneos, especialmente abaixo de 3 anos.

Entretanto, em termos de planejamento do espaço para um grupo de crianças, em relação à privacidade, além da presença de zonas circunscritas constituídas por móveis baixos, tais como as estantes do presente estudo, seria aconselhável a presença de espaços privados utilizando outros materiais – tais como cortinas transparentes ou de tiras; caixotes de madeira ou cabaninhas, desde que contenham aberturas permitindo a visualização do resto do ambiente; cabaninhas podem ser criadas aproveitando o espaço embaixo de uma mesa e colocando por cima um pano que caia para os lados, contendo aberturas tipo porta e janela. Ademais, como recomendado por vários autores (e. g., Olds, 1987; Trancik & Evans, 1995), é importante que um ambiente coletivo de educação infantil possa oferecer diferentes tipos de espaço privado que permitam diferentes graus de interação social, definidos como individual (oportunidade para estar completamente só), intermediário (subgrupo com poucas crianças, por exemplo, de duas a quatro) ou semi-público (subgrupo com número maior de crianças).

Na segunda fase deste estudo, na qual a variável manipulada foi a superfície de apoio, houve clara preferência pela zona circunscrita com superfície de apoio, sendo que a área circunscrita sem apoio foi muito pouco utilizada pelas crianças, inclusive em comparação

às demais áreas. Esta preferência pela zona circunscrita com apoio liga-se, em nossa opinião, ao fato de possibilitarem atividades as quais, na cultura ocidental, ocorrem cotidianamente em superfícies delimitadas, com as quais a criança está em contato desde seu nascimento.

As estantes serviram de apoio para o próprio corpo – como sentar, deitar, subir e pular para o chão – e apoio para objetos, tais como bonecas, potinhos, toquinhos, carrinhos, levando-as ao desenvolvimento de atividades (brincar de casinha, fazer comida, empurrar carrinhos, etc.) que ocorrem rotineiramente na cultura ocidental sobre superfícies delimitadas. Estas atividades, já observadas em estudos anteriores (Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira, 1993; Rubiano & Rossetti Ferreira, 1995), não eram possíveis de ocorrerem na zona circunscrita com grades, visto a ausência da superfície de apoio.

Segundo Carvalho (1992), um conhecimento já compartilhado por um grupo de crianças, auxilia no estabelecimento e manutenção de interações entre as mesmas, especialmente entre crianças menores de 3 anos, quando então a habilidade verbal não está totalmente desenvolvida. O estabelecimento de uma rotina de ações em torno de um objeto favorece o desenvolvimento de atividades compartilhadas, constituindo-se em um sistema transitório de comunicação entre crianças pequenas (Legendre, 1989). Assim, a superfície de apoio da zona circunscrita, por trazer um significado comum ao grupo, facilitaria o envolvimento das crianças em atividades conjuntas, levando ao compartilhamento não só de ações, mas também de intenções, expectativas de ações e significados.

Em síntese, o planejamento experimental do presente estudo, utilizando a estratégia do experimento ecológico (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), permitiu evidenciar o papel de suporte da superfície de apoio associada à circunscrição, para a ocupação do espaço pelas crianças. Cabe apontar que na Fase I do presente estudo, a parte posterior das estantes das áreas sem circunscrição não pode ser utilizada pelas crianças, pois as estantes estavam encostadas na parede e presas ao chão. Enquanto que no estudo de Campos-de-Carvalho & Rossetti Ferreira (1993), na fase onde as estantes não circunscriviam uma zona, as crianças podiam utilizar toda a área em volta das estantes, sendo estas as áreas mais ocupadas. Entretanto, o planejamento experimental do presente estudo,

devido à superfície total da sala, exigiu a colocação das estantes encostadas nas paredes e fixas ao chão, durante a Fase I. Pode-se, assim, levantar a hipótese de que talvez houvesse uma mudança nos resultados desta fase, se fosse permitido ao grupo também o uso da parte posterior das estantes que não circunscreviam uma zona; contudo seria necessário um novo estudo viabilizando tal planejamento. De qualquer modo, os dados obtidos nas duas primeiras fases do presente estudo evidenciam clara preferência pela zona circunscrita com apoio.

Para verificar o segundo objetivo deste trabalho, relação entre distribuição espacial e número de áreas circunscritas, comparou-se a ocupação do espaço pelas crianças nas três etapas, nas quais ocorreu um aumento gradual no número de zonas circunscritas, de uma para três zonas.

Na Fase III, etapa com o maior número de zonas circunscritas, houve ocupação preferencial das mesmas, sendo a zona do adulto a área menos ocupada. Dentre as três áreas circunscritas, a zona circunscrita com apoio e a cabana foram as áreas mais utilizadas pelas crianças, com ocupação praticamente semelhante, levemente superior na primeira área e por um maior número de crianças atingindo o critério mínimo de permanência.

Além da circunscrição, a utilização da cabana pode ter sido facilitada pela familiarização prévia do grupo com a mesma, pelo fato de ser bastante colorida, bem como por permitir seu deslocamento pela sala, inclusive tendo sido usada, algumas vezes, com a abertura inferior para cima, isto é, virada de ponta-cabeça pelas próprias crianças. Provavelmente as crianças, ou algumas delas, já compartilhavam atividades comuns tendo a cabana como suporte, ou seja, já poderiam ter estabelecido uma rotina pré-verbal em relação às brincadeiras e atividades desenvolvidas na cabana, anteriormente ao presente estudo.

Convém salientar que a cabana possuía aberturas nas quatro laterais, de tal modo que, quando dentro, a criança podia visualizar o exterior, inclusive as educadoras, caracterizando então uma zona circunscrita em um arranjo espacial semi-aberto. Porém, a zona circunscrita com apoio permitia uma visualização do exterior com mais facilidade, visto as estantes serem baixas e vazadas na parte posterior; talvez esta seja uma das possíveis explicações para seu uso levemente superior ao da cabaninha.

Comparando-se as fases entre si, nota-se na Fase III uma menor

dispersão das crianças pela sala e um decréscimo significativo na ocupação da zona do adulto, da primeira para a terceira fase. A zona circunscrita com apoio foi bastante ocupada nas três etapas; já a zona circunscrita sem apoio foi pouco utilizada nas duas fases em que esteve presente, porém na Fase III sua ocupação foi levemente superior à ocupação da zona do adulto. Provavelmente a presença de três zonas circunscritas aumentou a oportunidade de ocorrência de interações entre as crianças, reduzindo a busca pela proximidade e atenção do adulto.

Assim como Legendre (1983, 1987, 1989; Legendre & Fontaine, 1991), temos observado em nossos estudos que as atividades desenvolvidas nas zonas circunscritas são mais duradouras e estruturadas do que em outras áreas. Rubiano e Rossetti Ferreira (1995) apontam que nestas zonas há maior ocorrência de atividades de faz-de-conta e que o envolvimento em temas lúdicos favorece seqüências mais longas de interação. Atualmente, em um estudo subsequente, utilizando a mesma coleta de dados do presente estudo, estamos analisando as interações e atividades que ocorrem em cada uma das áreas da sala, em cada fase.

Em resumo, o presente estudo contribui para evidenciar a importância da estruturação espacial no contato de crianças pequenas, tanto entre si como com a educadora – um *arranjo semi-aberto*, especialmente com número maior de zonas circunscritas, sendo pelo menos uma delas formada por elementos com superfície de apoio, propicia maior oportunidade de contato entre as crianças. Através de manipulações pouco custosas financeiramente, o adulto, ao estruturar o espaço para promover interações entre crianças, torna-se mais disponível para estabelecer contato com uma criança que tenha necessidade de uma atenção especial, ou desenvolver atividades com um subgrupo menor de crianças. Desta maneira, o educador estará favorecendo a ocorrência de interações da criança com ele e com as demais crianças, contribuindo para a melhoria da qualidade do atendimento de crianças pequenas em creches e pré-escolas. Convém salientar, entretanto, que a organização espacial de um ambiente deve também contemplar outras áreas que não sejam zonas circunscritas, oferecendo por exemplo, um lugar confortável e macio para descanso e/ou leitura, com almofadas e tapetes, espaço mais privado que permita estar só, etc. (Campos-de-Carvalho & Rubiano, 1996; para uma revisão, vide Weinstein & David, 1987).

Para finalizar gostaríamos de, sucintamente, destacar alguns aspectos relevantes para o desenvolvimento infantil, apontados por David e Weinstein (1987), especialmente considerando ambientes infantis coletivos, os quais deveriam estar presentes no planejamento desses ambientes: (1) promoção de identidade pessoal – a personalização de espaços e objetos auxilia as crianças a desenvolverem sua individualidade; (2) desenvolvimento de competência – deve-se permitir às crianças terem controle e domínio na execução de atividades diárias, sem a assistência constante do educador, tais como tomar água, acender e apagar luzes, pegar roupas e toalhas, acesso fácil a prateleiras ou estantes com materiais, etc.; acrescentamos aqui a competência para execução de atividades lúdicas com coetâneos; (3) oportunidade para que movimentos corporais, especialmente os de grande amplitude, sejam executados com segurança; (4) estimulação dos sentidos, através de variações moderadas de estimulação ambiental, em termos de cores, formas, sons, sabores, aromas de flores e de alimentos, texturas, etc.; (5) sensação de segurança e confiança – o ambiente deve ser percebido como confortável e seguro, convidando à exploração; (6) oportunidade para contato social e privacidade.

O arranjo espacial é uma das variáveis, dentre outras do contexto ambiental, que contribui para o alcance de vários destes objetivos, devendo ser considerado no planejamento de ambientes coletivos para crianças pequenas.

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## *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Leadership and Management: Introduction*

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**L**eadership has been a topic of interest to students of human behavior since time immemorial. Thus, for psychologists and other scholars focused on behavior in organizations, this has also been a focal area and has led to a great deal of theory and research. However, much less attention has been paid to understanding leadership from a cross-cultural and international perspective. In this regard, we need to know more about culturally-based variations in perceptions and expressions of effective leadership, and about how these interact with other variables. Recent reviews by Dorfman (1996), Peterson and Hunt (1997), and House, Wright, and Aditya (1997) have provided greater clarity on these topics. These reviews and other recent work report on a number of large-scale international studies of leadership geared toward providing greater insight on leadership that is sensitive to culture and its implications.

This Special Section contributes to this agenda by bringing together two articles that originated in 1997 as part of a symposium presented at the XVI Interamerican Congress of Psychology in São Paulo. Peter B. Smith, Mark F. Peterson, and their co-authors thoroughly revised and integrated their symposium papers to result in the present article. Based on data from many Latin American countries, Smith, Peterson, D'Amorim, Dávila, Gamas, Malvezzi, and Saiz provide insight into how the meaning of leadership can vary both cross-nationally as a function of culture and within a nation based on institutional variables. Reading between the lines, the work of this multinational team also provides a model for future collaboration among psychologists in the Americas to which readers of this journal should be particularly attentive.

In the second article, Delbert M. Nebeker provides a thoughtful assessment of the implications of cultural variation for the design of reward systems in organizations. His review and its conclusions remind us that it does not make much sense to transplant such reward systems from one cultural setting to another without a meticulous appraisal of the likely ways in which cultural values will affect the outcomes.

Together, the two articles provide new insight into the interaction of leadership and management with cultural variables.

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# *Leadership in Latin American Organizations: An Event Management Perspective*

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## Abstract

Earlier characterizations of Latin American cultures are compared with data regarding the ways in which middle managers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela describe their work methods. The data derive from questionnaire surveys in which managers indicate their sources of guidance for handling a series of day-to-day work events. Profiles from the different nations varied, but one notable theme in most samples was relatively low reliance on guidance from one's superiors. This finding is contrasted with Hofstede's (1980) characterization of Latin American samples as high in collectivism and power distance. Explanations in terms of concepts such as *jeitinho* and *simpatía* are

discussed. A further study is then presented which compares demographic variables associated with variation in ways of handling events within Mexico and the United States. In this case differences between country profiles were greater than differences between the types of organization in which respondents worked.

### Compendio

En este trabajo comparamos caracterizaciones previas de la cultura latinoamericana con datos sobre la forma en que gerentes de nivel medio en Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, México y Venezuela describen sus métodos de trabajo. Los datos surgen de un cuestionario en el cual los/as gerentes indicaron las fuentes de dirección o consejo que utilizan para manejar una serie de eventos cotidianos. Los perfiles de las diferentes naciones variaron pero un tema notable en la mayoría de las muestras, fue que los/as gerentes no contaban mucho con la dirección de sus superiores. Contrastamos este resultado con la caracterización de muestras latinoamericanas que hace Hofstede (1980) al indicar que son altas en colectivismo y en la distancia generada por el poder. Explicamos estas diferencias mediante el uso de conceptos como el *jeitinho* y la simpatía. Continuamos con un estudio en el cual comparamos las variables demográficas asociadas a variaciones en el manejo de sucesos en México y los Estados Unidos. En este caso, las diferencias entre los perfiles nacionales fueron mayores que las diferencias entre los tipos de organizaciones en las cuales trabajaban las personas participantes del estudio.

**Key words:** Leadership; Latin American organizations; Event management  
**Palabras clave:** Liderato; Organizaciones latinoamericanas; Gerencia por eventos

**D**o leaders make decisions? Much management theory is built on the foundation that this is central to what they do. Managers are portrayed as identifying problems, thinking them through with due diligence, and then resolving them by announcing that they will commit resources to solving problems in specified ways.

But is that what leaders really do? Our position is that making decisions is at most only part of what leaders do, and that the meaning of announcing a decision also varies quite a bit around the world (Smith & Peterson, 1988). For example, in some parts of the world, announcing a choice implies that a great deal of action has

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already been taken and that implementation is well under way. In other parts of the world, a decision largely indicates the **intentions** or **wishes** of the individual who announces it. The way that leaders in the United States and Latin America make decisions could thus have a rather different meaning, if the purpose of announcing a decision differs between the two regions. In our view, the universal underlying core of leadership is that all managers have to interpret what they find happening around them and then try to influence the meanings that others give to events. However, as we shall show, this can occur in quite different ways, depending on the nature of organizational and national cultural norms.

### WHAT AFFECTS THE SOURCE OF GUIDANCE THAT LEADERS USE?

Our focus is on how managers influence the meanings given to the events occurring around them. A first step in understanding this process is to examine the sources of meaning that managers draw from to interpret events. We have reason to expect certain similarities between countries, because leaders will be influenced in part by universal characteristics of people and of organizations. However, the differences that we all recognize between typical business practice in the United States and Latin America and which also occur between different industries indicate that leaders' use of various sources will also be affected by customary local practice.

#### *Psychology and Human Universals*

Psychological theory reminds us that there are some basic characteristics of people. For example, we all have perceptual filters that affect the things we notice, and cognitive structures that help us to organize and interpret them. Attribution theory and models of social learning remind us that all people give meaning to what they notice through their interactions with other people. Individuals are never entirely isolated. Even when alone, we consider reflectively what the opinions of other people around us might be. As part of this process of looking and thinking, we engage in actions directed toward gathering information as well as actions that use information to achieve various purposes.

#### *Functional Requirements of Organizations*

Functional theories of organization identify the problems that

organizations need to handle. While particular functional theories have been challenged in various ways, they still serve to remind us that there are some basic characteristics of organizations just as there are some universal characteristics of people. Specialization is necessary in large organizations. The overlapping interests of organization members in contributing to one another's performance while pursuing their own purposes means that coordination complements specialization.

### *Limits on Universals*

Despite these general aspects of persons and organizations, we should not presume too heavily on the presence of universals. Ethnopsychology (Díaz Guerrero, 1993) reminds us that even the best concepts and measures developed within one society need to be borrowed cautiously and modified or supplemented through local analysis. Even to the extent that there are universals in what human beings need and in very basic characteristics of how we all behave, individual and collective variability is also tremendously significant. Katz and Kahn (1978) used the concept of *equifinality* to express the idea that any given personal or organizational function can be fulfilled or problem solved in multiple ways.

For example, it has been argued that even the basic way that individuals organize information differs between cultures that use a phonetic alphabet and those that rely on characters to depict meanings (Misumi & Peterson, 1990). For organizations, the idea that the ways of leading and managing which developed since the industrial revolution are most effective at all locations has been seriously challenged. Since many of these practices developed first in Western Europe, they are likely to be combined with the idiosyncrasies of pre-industrial Western European culture. Alternative models of organizing that developed out of Japan's unique cultural history and became globally prominent in recent decades have shown differing approaches to be equally successful. Recent experience with highly innovative management approaches used in some of the very successful electronics companies also suggests that even within a given society, there can be alternative approaches that fit particular industries best. Any two countries could develop quite different but equally effective ways of handling universal organization problems.

This paper presents two types of analysis arising out of the

general framework presented above. Firstly, we examine contrasts between descriptions of leadership in North America and Latin America, drawing particularly on the ways in which Latin American leadership has been portrayed by past researchers and writers. We then present data testing the similarities and differences of the sources of guidance used by leaders currently working in organizations in six Latin American nations. In a subsequent section, we examine how much variability there is between leadership in different types of organizations and organization functions, drawing on our samples from Mexico and the United States.

### PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP

Most research into the processes of leadership has been conducted in North America. This research has given us a somewhat clearer picture of the behavioral styles that leaders may adopt, and which of these styles might be more effective. However, we need to examine the cultural context in which these results have been obtained. Leaders in North America operate within an environment which Hofstede (1980) and others have shown to be predominantly characterized by individualistic values. Hofstede also found that in nations where individualistic values prevailed, lower scores were obtained on the measure he named as Power Distance. This dimension embodies an acceptance that powerful people require deference, but the full implications of high Power Distance for workplace relationships between hierarchical levels is still in need of analysis.

Leaders and those with whom they work in cultures that are individualist and low on Power Distance are likely to see their relationship with one another as contractual and potentially temporary. In consequence leaders, and to some extent their subordinates also, can end their relationship with one another by such means as promotion, transfer, labor turnover, firing or job rotation. These possibilities serve to define the limits of leadership within the North American context. Most theories of leadership developed in North America emphasize the need for leaders to choose between a variety of behavioral styles in order to assure optimal response from subordinates, contingent upon the different environmental circumstances in which they are operating at any

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one time. In the earlier stages of leadership research, the principal choice was seen as lying between an autocratic or task-focused style of leadership and a participative or relationship-oriented style (Yukl, 1994). More recently, the increasingly rapid rate of change in organizational environments has also led to advocacy of transformational or charismatic styles of leadership (Bass, 1990).

Discussions of required patterns of leadership in other areas of the world have frequently drawn upon Hofstede's (1980) finding that the values endorsed in these regions lay greater emphasis upon collectivism and less emphasis on individualism. Jaeger and Kanungo (1990), for instance, suggest that management techniques devised in North America will not be effective within cultural contexts where relationships are based upon more collectivist values. If my relation with my superior is difficult to terminate, either because of family linkages or because there are few opportunities to move to another job, I am less likely to vary my behavior in response to differing leader styles and more likely to keep in mind the need to preserve a harmonious long-term relationship with him or her.

### *The Latin American Context*

Most observers of Latin America would agree that the countries in the region are at once similar and varied. The shared heritage of colonization provides some commonality. This heritage is often understood by those outside the region as implying not only some linguistic similarity, but also typical prolonged experiences with elite landowning groups, the strong influence of the Catholic church, and periods of government dictatorship. However, a combination of influences from indigenous populations, climatic and topographic characteristics, post-liberation development, recent immigration patterns, and local responses to industrialization have produced considerable variability that outside observers of Latin American personal and organizational relationships are inclined to miss (Sheahan, 1987).

The English language literature about the effects of culture on management in the region has been substantially affected by the similarity of results from the 13 Latin American countries sampled by Hofstede (1980) and extended by Ronen and Shenkar's (1985) identification of a Latin American 'cluster' of 12 nations within Hofstede's data, from which only Brazil was differentiated. These

influential studies have encouraged some writers to consider Latin America as a single entity. Theorists from outside the region have certainly imputed more similarity to psychological characteristics and social relationships in the region than insiders recognize as appropriate.

Modernization theories espoused by North American writers in the years after World War II also assumed the homogeneity of Latin America. The advantages of industrialization, the argument went, would require Latin American countries to converge with Europe and the United States toward a common form of political, economic, and social system. This model was most fully developed by Harbison and Myers (1959), who included as examples several Latin American countries, and endorsed in Lipset and Scolari's (1967) analysis of Latin American elites. The line of argument asserted that particularism, political authoritarianism, and organizational centralization characterized Latin American countries. Just as the Protestant ethic had underpinned European economic development, so the more anti-entrepreneurial, Catholic cultures of Latin America would need to give way to forms of universalism, democracy, and decentralization (Cochran & Reina, 1962; Davis, 1968, 1971).

Bass (1990) review of international research on leadership follows a similar theme. He notes the typical influence of "Roman" law, formulated by an elite rather than arising from the populace in general, centralization in all forms, a predominance of status over competence, and a rigid intolerance for ambiguity. Heller (1969) indicated that boards of directors tend to function inefficiently and ineffectively throughout the region. Faucheux, Amado and Laurent (1982) cautioned that the difficulties of centralized decision-making, bureaucracy, state intervention, and a continuing concern over class struggle make importation of European or North American styles of management risky at best. These analyses all emphasize the homogeneity of Latin America, describing characteristics of people and management patterns that impede industrialization and progress, and indicating the special efforts that managers would need to make to overcome these problems.

Greater attention to more specific detail is evident in more recent analyses. Uniqueness in the historical evolution of each nation and important differences in the structure of the primary economy of agriculture are now understood to have affected the particular

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responses of different Latin American countries to industrial technology (Evans & Stephens, 1988). Clearly different patterns of development are recognized that are seen as not necessarily headed toward a common form of society driven by a generic Latin response to technological imperatives (Sheahan, 1987). Differences among Latin American managements are also coming to be recognized. At points where he deals with more recent studies, Bass (1990) recognizes wide variability within the region. For example, Argentina and Chile show the influence of greater recent European immigration more than do some of the countries bordering on the Caribbean. When describing the nature of this variability, however, these differences among countries are often framed as variations on a theme. Bass, for example, concludes, "Paternalism, featuring the autocratic patron and compliant followers, takes a variety of forms in Latin America" (p. 790). Furthermore, none of the studies cited above was built upon an explicitly formulated theory of culture and cultural difference. Many were based on rather small samples and thus also risked drawing unrepresentative conclusions. The potential for rectifying these weaknesses is provided by closer scrutiny of Hofstede's (1980; 1991) well-known study.

### *Hofstede and Latin America*

Hofstede's study was based upon surveys of the values of IBM employees conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As noted earlier, it included results from 13 Latin American nations, and is therefore still the most extensive source of what is distinctive about the values of Latin American work employees. It is certainly true that in relation to the 53 nations and regions sampled in Hofstede's overall study, 11 of the 13 Latin American nations score above the median rank on both Power Distance, and Collectivism. Twelve of the 13 also score above the median rank on Uncertainty Avoidance. There is a wider spread on Hofstede's final dimension, Masculinity-Femininity. One way to summarize the apparent linkage between Latin American collectivism and power distance might be in terms of Triandis (1995) recent distinction between what he calls Vertical Collectivism and Horizontal Collectivism. The Hofstede data imply that Vertical Collectivism is the predominant pattern of values in Latin America.

However, it is equally of interest to note the ways in which

Hofstede's scores do vary in relation to geographic location. The predominance of high Power Distance and high Collectivism declines rather consistently as one travels south, with two exceptions. Costa Rica was found to be much lower on Power Distance and Mexico was lower on Collectivism than one might expect from the scores of neighboring nations. If correlations are computed between Hofstede's scores and the latitude of the major population center within each of the 13 nations that he sampled, the results are as follows: Collectivism,  $r = 0.69$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; Power Distance,  $r = 0.45$ , ns; Uncertainty Avoidance,  $r = -0.08$ , ns; Masculinity,  $r = 0.24$ , ns. In computing these correlations, the latitude of the capital city was used, except for Brazil, where the latitude of São Paulo/ Rio de Janeiro was used. This analysis confirms that Collectivism scores decline as one goes south. The fact that the correlation for Power Distance fails to achieve an equal level of significance is no doubt attributable to the very low Power Distance score obtained by Hofstede from Costa Rica. The lack of correlation with Uncertainty Avoidance underlines his finding that Uncertainty Avoidance scores are consistently high across the region.

Most of Hofstede's data were not directly concerned with the process of leadership. They were also collected many years ago, and drawn from employees of a single U.S.-owned organization. Nonetheless one can predict that if the values he identified have persisted, then leader behaviors in the region would reflect strong endorsement of Power Distance, Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance. In particular, one could expect that a nation's Power Distance score would predict how leaders would behave. Hofstede's Power Distance score was based upon averaged responses to three specific questions: (1) subordinates' perception that employees were afraid to disagree with the boss; (2) subordinates' perception that the boss was either autocratic or persuasive/paternalistic; and (3) subordinates' preference that the boss does not use a consultative style of decision-making. The implication is rather clear from the phrasing of these three questions that Latin Americans saw their leaders as more controlling and directive than did those in some of the other regions of the world.

More recently, Schwartz (1994) has conducted comparative surveys of the values of schoolteachers and students in over 60

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nations, including six in Latin America. Although he has so far only published Latin American results for schoolteachers from Brazil and Mexico, the figures from these nations are of some interest. They do not show the strong endorsement of Hierarchy and Collectivism that Hofstede's results would lead one to expect. Endorsement of a value Schwartz defines as "Mastery" (which emphasizes achievement) was rather higher, especially in Mexico. Salazar (1993) drew upon the values identified by Schwartz in analyzing the published findings of 81 studies conducted in Latin American countries. He concluded that the values most endorsed were "Benevolence" (which Salazar interprets as "pro-social motivation") and "Autonomy." When Salazar examined the date at which the studies that he surveyed were published, he also found a trend toward declining autonomy values and increasing endorsement of achievement values.

One further recent study that is relevant to our inquiry is the "Globe" study of leadership in more than 60 nations (House, Wright, & Aditya, 1997). Preliminary results from this project suggest that a relatively similar set of leader requirements are desired in many parts of the world, including Brazil (Dela Coleta & Dela Coleta, 1997) and Colombia (Ogliastri, 1997). However Globe researchers have not made a distinction between the fact that participation is more strongly endorsed than hierarchy in most parts of the world, and the fact that there are also variations in the extent of endorsement of hierarchy (and of participation) between nations. This explains why their results are in conflict with those of researchers who identify differences rather than similarities between samples from different nations.

### STUDY 1: CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Our own data provide a new opportunity to evaluate the relative impact of forces toward similarity and variability on leadership processes within some Latin American nations. In recent years, a large-scale international project has been conducted, based upon Smith and Peterson's (1988) formulation of leadership, the theoretical basis of which was discussed at the beginning of this paper.



### *Participants*

Our research thus differs from earlier studies in that it focuses on what managers say actually happens as decisions are made, instead of on values endorsed by organization members or others in society at large. So, rather than attempting to assess whether Power Distance implies that subordinates defer to authority, or whether they band together to circumvent authority under a facade of deference, we ask leaders the extent to which they are guided by their superiors. Similarly, rather than ask about Collectivism, we asked respondents which parties they relied on for guidance.

The questionnaire was originally constructed in English, in consultation with colleagues from a number of other parts of the world, and then translated into numerous languages including Portuguese and Spanish, with checks on accuracy of translation through independent back-translations. The way our measures are structured allows us to take into account a possible characteristic of translations that can otherwise be missed. Some scholars have reasonably argued that adjectives in different languages, such as "strongly agree" in English and "gran acuerdo" in Spanish, differ slightly in nuance. Such differences can make it difficult to compare average scores on survey measures that have been translated. In order to limit the effects of this problem, our data were standardized across items for each respondent. This means that the extent to which one relies on one source of meaning, say one's own judgment, is rescored relative to all other sources. This practice reduces any differences that might occur between countries simply as a result of the nuances of adjectives.

### *Instruments and Procedures*

Middle managers in organizations were asked to indicate the range of sources of guidance on which they relied in handling relatively routine work events. Eight 'events' were identified which were thought likely to occur within the work of most managers in most types of organization. These events were:

- Appointment of a new subordinate
- Handling good work by a subordinate
- Handling poor work by a subordinate
- Replacing equipment or machinery
- Obtaining needed resources and materials from other departments

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- Differing opinions within one's department
- Introducing new work procedures
- Evaluating new work procedures

For each event, respondents were asked to rate how much they relied upon each one of eight possible sources of guidance in handling that event. The eight sources of guidance were:

- One's own prior experience and training
- One's superior
- One's colleagues
- Specialists
- Subordinates
- Formal rules and procedures
- Informal rules as to 'how we usually do things around here'
- Beliefs which are widespread within one's nation as to what is right.

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A target of at least 100 managers was sought within each of 46 nations. Each nation's sample contained middle managers from a range of enterprises, including those in public and private ownership. They were drawn from a wide range of organizational functions. Data collection procedures varied between countries, but respondents were most often recruited while participating in training programs. Responses were obtained from 300 Mexicans, of whom 74% were male and whose average age was 33.4 years. Of these, 118 were from Mexico City and 182 from Anahuac, in Northern Mexico. The 116 respondents in Brazil were 56% male and of average age 38.8 years. Eighty-four of these were from Brasilia and 32 from São Paulo. Ninety-six responses were obtained in Colombia. These were all from Bogotá, with 70% male and average age 39.1 years. The sample of 109 Argentinean managers was from the area of Buenos Aires. Due to a misunderstanding, many of them failed to provide demographic information. The 20 who did provide information were 94% male and of average age 40.3 years. The 110 Chilean respondents were drawn from four cities, with 88% male and average age 41.4 years. The remaining nations sampled comprised 21 from Europe, 14 from Asia and four from Africa, plus Australia and the United States.

### *Results*

Through the use of Cronbach's alpha we found that there was

substantial consistency across events within each nation in the sources of guidance most frequently employed. The values of alpha for the eight ways of handling events varied between .72 and .95 in Brazil, between .72 and .92 in Mexico, between .67 and .87 in Colombia, between .70 and .92 in Argentina, and between .70 and .89 in Chile. Means across all eight events for reliance on each source of influence were therefore computed. Analysis of covariance was then used to estimate and eliminate variance due to demographic differences between the samples. Six covariates were used, namely age, gender, organization size, organization ownership, type of organization and the department type within which respondents worked.

Within the overall sample we found that managers in most of the 46 nations reported relying most strongly on their own experience and training, on formal rules and procedures, and on their superiors (Smith & Peterson, 1995). Sources of guidance that were least frequently used were specialists and widespread beliefs. This was also true for the present sample of Latin American nations. However the degree of emphasis placed on each of these guidance sources varied, and by examining this variation we can get the clearest picture of what is distinctive about each profile. Degree of reliance on each source of guidance was rank ordered across nations, and it is these rank orderings which provided the material for consideration here. We examined at this point only the results from the five Latin American nations. The US data are also included in Table 1, since they are relevant to Study 2, reported below. Thus, the scores for the remaining 40 nations in the study provided a baseline against which to compare those from Latin America.

Table 1 shows the ranks for each of the Latin American samples indicating reliance on each way of handling events. The figures reveal that the most consistent trends across the region were moderate to high reliance on co-workers and on widespread beliefs. However, there were marked variations in the relative frequency of relying on some of the other sources of guidance. In Mexico, there was particularly strong reported reliance on formal rules, on specialists and on widespread beliefs. In Brazil, specialists, and both formal and unwritten rules were emphasized. In Colombia, there was stronger reliance on widespread beliefs, subordinates, co-workers and specialists. In Argentina, key sources were co-

Table 1

Ranks<sup>1</sup> for Sources of Guidance in Latin American Samples

Guidance Source	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	USA
Formal Rules and Procedures	42	19	22	31	9	19
Unwritten Rules	16	20	7	33	23	28
Specialists	26	6	36	10	7	40
Subordinates	14	23	39	10	34	12
Co-workers	6	26	5	15	26	23
Superior	38	41	18	45	27	15
Own Experience and Training	18	23	24	20	42	24
Beliefs Which are Widespread in My Country as to What is Right	17	26	11	14	12	23

<sup>1</sup> 1 is the highest rank; 46 is the lowest

workers, subordinates, unwritten rules, widespread beliefs and one's own experience. In Chile, unwritten rules, co-workers, widespread beliefs and superiors were emphasized. Further comparisons of the subsamples within the Mexican and Brazilian data also showed some regional variations, but we shall concentrate first on the overall pattern. Relatively strong reliance on co-workers and on widespread beliefs as to what is right is consistent with earlier characterizations of the region as more collectively oriented than individualistic. However, the most striking aspect of these findings concerns reliance on superiors: in four of the Latin American samples reported reliance on one's superior was low, and in Brazil, Colombia and Argentina it is very low, relative to other countries. The Chilean data provide the single contrast to this pattern.

### *Discussion*

Two goals of this investigation were to achieve a better

understanding of leadership behavior in Latin America than can be gained from studies of values, and to identify more clearly the variability within the region. We first discussed the results for guidance from superiors, since they provide a key point of interest in our results. As Hofstede's results suggested that Latin American organizations are based around high Power Distance, and most other writers have until recently accepted this characterization as valid, what do the present results mean? How could it be the case that (drawing on Hofstede's questions) superiors are autocratic and subordinates afraid to disagree with the boss, and yet subordinate managers in all samples except Chile state that they are less guided by their superiors than are those in many other nations?

We can first note that the implications of seeing leaders as controlling and directive are not as evident as it might seem at first glance. Researchers from many nations have noted that being controlling and directive is by no means always associated with effective influence. A system of coercion and control can also sometimes lead to complex individual and collective manipulations by subordinates designed to circumvent pressure from above. While one might expect such stratagems to be particularly frequent within coercively run organizations in low Power Distance cultures, there is no reason to presume their total absence from high Power Distance cultures. However, endorsement of Hofstede's measures of Power Distance does imply some degree of acceptance of hierarchy.

A second possibility is that most Latin American nations are no longer as hierarchical as they were at the time that Hofstede's data were collected. The results cited above from the studies by Schwartz (1994) and Salazar (1993) are certainly consistent with the view there has been some change in values over the past 30 years. However, there are no firm data on the magnitude of such changes. We can perhaps also discount known differences between Hofstede's samples and the present ones, since the sampling within the present study varied from one nation to another, but nonetheless showed relatively consistent results in relation to reliance on superiors.

If we assume then that there is some continuing validity in each of these sets of findings, this can provide a starting point for discussion of the nature of superior-subordinate influence processes in contemporary Latin America. This discussion must

start from the characterization of Latin American cultures as personalistic as well as bureaucratic. Amado and Vinagre Brasil (1991) characterize the bureaucratic *estabelecimento* within Brazilian society. They draw on the work of Laurent (1983), who showed that, compared to responses from European managers, Brazilian managers felt their roles were too precisely defined, that hierarchy was important in defining authority and that managers should have precise answers to their subordinates' questions. However, Amado and Vinagre Brasil then propose that although Brazilian organizations are indeed circumscribed by a large number of bureaucratic rules, Brazilian managers frequently circumvent them, though their use of *jeitinho*, or little ways of finding solutions to apparently impossible circumstances. Faced with rules which may be mutually incompatible or which may limit their opportunities for problem solving, they become ingenious or adroit. The function of *jeitinho* is to enable managers and others to meet their obligations to others in a cultural context within which these personal obligations will often be felt more important than commitment to formal organizational requirements. The intensity with which personal obligations are felt is likely to be stronger in a collectivist culture than in individualist cultures. Consequently, we can see the emphasis upon Brazilian *jeitinho* as an emphasis upon being resourceful in meeting one's personal obligations, whether this be to one's peers or to one's immediate boss. It is of course the case that the formal rules that characterize organizations are created either by one's superiors, or by external agencies such as government. Thus the relatively high reliance of Brazilian managers upon formal rules shown in Table 1 can be seen as an indirect acceptance of influence from higher authority, as can reliance on the requirements of technical specialists. However, the moderately high reliance on unwritten rules, co-workers, and subordinates in preference to one's superior is more likely an expression of collectivist values.

If this analysis can go some way toward accounting for the Brazilian results, are similar analyses applicable to the results from the Spanish-speaking samples? The Mexican results resemble those from Brazil in showing strong reported reliance on formal rules and specialists. This pattern again indicates a strongly bureaucratic culture. However, in this case, unwritten rules and co-workers are the next most strongly endorsed sources of guidance. This suggests

that, to the extent that informal processes similar to *jeitinho* are operative in Mexico, peers rather than subordinates provide the necessary networks for managers to achieve their goals.

In contrast, the results from Colombia and Argentina show rather more reported reliance upon widespread beliefs as to what is right, while the Brazilian and Mexican emphasis upon formal rules is absent. In Colombia and Argentina, there is stronger emphasis upon reliance on peers, subordinates and widespread beliefs. The suggestion here is less of a conflict between formal and informal procedures, and more toward a consensual view that traditional ways of management stemming from strong personal links with both peers and subordinates are effective.

Finally, the Chilean data do not fit the pattern under discussion as well. Local circumstances or the rather different pattern of immigration to Chile and Argentina compared to nations further north might contribute to an explanation, but the contrast between the results for Chile and Argentina is particularly hard to explain. Fernandes, Carlson, Stepina and Nicholson (1997) have recently reported that their sample of Chilean managers were more individualistic than expected on the basis of Hofstede's scores. However, their data were analyzed in ways which did not adequately take account of possible cultural differences in response biases. Triandis et al. (1993) also found Chilean students to be individualistic. However, our data do not show Chilean managers as relying extensively upon their own experience. They report moderately strong reliance on their superiors and low reliance on subordinates.

A number of researchers have attempted to identify widespread or traditional beliefs in Hispanic cultures (Díaz Guerrero, 1993; Triandis, 1994). For instance, Triandis, Marín, Lisansky and Betancourt (1984) focused upon personalism and *simpatía* as a cultural script, among Latinos/as in the United States. They noted that their samples endorsed values such as loyalty, dignity, friendliness, politeness and respect more than did non-Hispanics. Díaz Guerrero's (1993) ethnopsychological studies identified traditional Mexican values including affiliative obedience, *machismo*, family honor and fear of authority. Ardila (1996) reports similar results from Colombia. These results emphasize a blend of respect for hierarchy with warm peer relations, particularly within the family. The question to be addressed is whether these

delineations of traditional values can contribute to an understanding of the present results. It appears that they can. If subordinates' orientation towards their superiors is one of respect and deference, they will be reluctant to disagree with or query their superior's instructions. They will also wish to impress their superior by their resourcefulness, and may not wish to suggest weakness by asking for clarification or assistance from their superiors. Given this lack of assistance from superiors, they will necessarily rely upon other sources of guidance within their collective milieu. This can include peers, subordinates, informal organizational norms and widespread beliefs as to what is right. It is also likely to require the types of ingenuity identified by the Brazilian concept of *jeitinho*.

One example of such ingenuity is described by Trompenaars (1993). He reports an instance of unofficial evasion of company rules within the Venezuelan subsidiary of a multinational company. A head office requirement that those appointed to a higher level must hold specified qualifications was circumvented when local management selected those whom they thought best for promotion and then reported fictitious qualifications to the head office. There is also some evidence from other studies of the continuing strength of peer relations in Latin American organizations. For instance, Alpander and Carter (1991) reported stronger endorsement of belongingness needs by professionals and supervisors in Mexico and Colombia working for a multinational pharmaceutical firm than was found in six other non-Latin American nations.

Much more direct evidence and more extensive sampling is required before one could reach firm conclusions. However, what evidence is available provides some support for the view that the low reported reliance on their superiors by many Latin American middle managers does reflect their actual behavior. They will certainly give deference and respect to their superiors, and may well be in frequent direct contact with them. However, where rules or direct instructions conflict with the requirements of personalism, they will often find indirect ways of resolving their difficulties. There is some evidence that related practices are widespread in other Latin cultures, such as Spain (Aram & Walochik, 1996) and Italy. Indeed, such behaviors are by no means unknown in cultures said to be low on Power Distance. However, it remains likely that they are particularly crucial to a full understanding of superior-



subordinate relations in Latin America. The contrasting results from Chile indicate that this type of personalistic relation between superiors and subordinates may have been replaced by a level of more direct reliance on superiors similar to that found in the present sample from the United States.

## STUDY 2: VARIATIONS IN LEADERSHIP WITHIN AND BETWEEN NATIONS

We have shown that there are both similarities and differences between the sources of guidance that leaders in different Latin American nations most use. We now use two of the largest samples that are available to us to examine the extent to which the sources of guidance used by leaders also vary in systematic ways that are determined by the more specific institutional contexts in which they operate.

Institutionalization can occur over time in the particular locations where organizations operate. Organizations within a particular nation share a common dependence on the same government and regulatory system. This dependence and the requirement to maintain legitimacy by complying with government requirements impose pressures on how leaders will give meaning to events around them. A consensus on how to lead may thus emerge within a nation among the managers who hold responsibility, even though they work in quite different industries. Institutional forces also occur at the level of each industry. Industry leaders are watched quite carefully by others in the same industry.

In addition to these universal and institutionalized aspects of leadership, every organization also achieves some of its identity by developing and maintaining a unique organization culture. Furthermore, every leader recognizes that he or she is unique. To focus on the more universal and institutionalized aspects need not imply a lack of recognition for these more distinctive local aspects of the leadership process.

### *Method*

We now present and test a series of specific analyses concerning the impact of nation, organization ownership, organization type, organization size, and department type on the results from the United States and Mexico. The questionnaire used and the methods of data collection were the same as for the first study. The data were

analyzed using two-way analysis of variance. Analysis of variance compares means. In each case, the means compared are based on the extent to which respondents indicated using each source of meaning, standardized across sources. For example, the use of rules was scored relative to the use of the seven other sources of guidance noted above. In each case, one of the two predictors was country (Mexico and the United States). The discussion of results below begins with the expected effects of country (Mexico compared to the United States). The remainder of the discussion of results deals with the second predictor in each two-way ANOVA: (1) organization ownership, (2) organization type, (3) organization size, or (4) department type. The results for each of these four predictors will be described in that order. Details about the categories used for each of these predictors are noted below where the particular predictor is discussed. The analyses will be reported by providing F and significance statistics for statistically significant effects. Non-significant results will not be discussed.

## *Results*

### *National differences: Mexico and the United States*

That business is conducted somewhat differently in the United States and Mexico is apparent to all who work in *maquiladoras* or in other settings bringing business people together from these two countries. Specifying exactly how these institutionalized ways of thinking and acting differ is a greater challenge. These differences have been described in various ways. As noted above, Hofstede (1980) found the United States more prone to individualism and low power distance. Mexican business practices have been described as placing high emphasis on loyalty to friends ("particularism"), whereas U.S. practices place greater emphasis on equality under a common law ("universalism") (Zurcher, 1968). The strong Mexican reliance on rules reported in Study 1 is consistent with earlier studies emphasizing strong central control in Mexican business (Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Dorfman, Howell, Hibino, Lee, Tate & Bautista, 1997; Farmer & Richman, 1965; Harbron, 1965; Lauterbach, 1963).

The historical evolution of institutions such as government and church in these two countries partly accounts for these differences (Peterson & Hunt, 1997). The United States was colonized by

Great Britain and initially settled particularly by northern Europeans. Mexico was colonized principally by Spaniards. A key element in northern European culture during the colonial period was rejection of the Catholic Church. Among those emigrating to the United States were many who identified with Protestant religious groups that were suspicious of government involvement in church affairs. In contrast, during the colonial period Spanish culture authorities maintained a complementary relationship between the Catholic Church, economic leaders, and government. Individualism and a de-emphasis on authority became institutionalized in the United States constitution and in many aspects of accepted practice. A collective identity with the national church and associated cooperative institutions and respect for an integrated church/economic/government hierarchy became more accepted in Mexico. The industrialization of the late 18th and 19th centuries and the organizational forms and practices that accompanied it thus affected these two pre-industrial societies differently. Cultural contrasts still evident suggest that these differences in pre-industrial heritage continue to differentially affect leaders' use of their own experience, superiors, colleagues and other sources of guidance.

Institutions, though, can change. Many aspects of production in Mexico, as in other emerging market economies, have been affected by quite substantial change (Sklair, 1993). One example is the view widely held in the economically developing world that export of raw materials combined with import substitution needs to be replaced by export-led growth. A related viewpoint is that traditional approaches to doing business need to be supplanted, if not by practices imported from outside, then by newly invented practices from within. The increased cross-border contact stimulated by NAFTA and the associated increase in *maquiladora* investments provides one such basis for change. Hence, while our expectations are based on existing literature, recent developments may make earlier results inapplicable to present conditions.

We anticipated that in Mexico there would be higher reliance on superiors and on formal rules and lower reliance on co-workers than in the United States. Our results did show a main effect reflecting more use of rules in Mexico than in the U.S., but only when we controlled for type of company ownership ( $F = 5.72$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Unlike what we expected, we also found marginally

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more reliance on superiors in the United States than in Mexico, after controlling for department type ( $F = 3.74$ ,  $p = .054$ ). In general, the main effects of differences between these two countries in sources of meaning were not as strong as might be expected from most management or culture literatures.

### *Ownership*

Ownership separates industries according to their links to powerful outside parties. Organizations controlled by outside parties may be subjected to coercive pressures to maintain uniform practices to other organizations with the same owners. Governments often require state-employed managers to follow detailed rules and to document their activities carefully. Multinational corporations may encourage a combination of reliance on many sources: rules to conform to corporate requirements, local managers to handle local situations. Privately-owned organizations may provide the greatest opportunity for strong owner-managers or powerful senior domestic managers to exert influence. The ownership predictor in our analyses had three categories: government owned, multinational, privately owned.

We expected and found that managers in government-owned organizations would report the most extensive use of rules of these three ownership types ( $F = 11.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ). We also expected and found that these same managers would rely the least on coworkers ( $F = 3.71$ ,  $p = .025$ ). We expected and found that managers of privately-owned organizations would rely the most strongly on guidance from superiors ( $F = 7.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *Organization Type*

Theorists in the United States have tried to define the particular ways of managing that are appropriate for specific kinds of organization (Mintzberg, 1979). These theories propose that organizations facing environments and technologies with similar degrees of complexity or uncertainty tend to devise similar ways of using rules or hierarchy to coordinate work. Theories of this type would suggest that despite differences among countries, the universal requirements of organizational efficiency would result in similar styles of leadership in similar industries. More specifically, the sources of guidance that are found useful should follow from the basic nature of an organization's production processes

(Woodward, 1980). In automated manufacturing, machines replace rules, but the remaining rules can be especially critical since machine-based production places limits on some aspects of production flexibility. A power plant is hard to close down. In non-automated manufacturing, heavy reliance on rules to control repetitive work would be expected. In service industries, we would expect consultation with a boss to be a necessary supplement to reliance on rules in order to accommodate unusual client requirements. The organization task predictor in our analyses had three categories: manufacturing, process production and service.

We expected that rules would be used moderately in automated manufacturing and extensively in non-automated manufacturing, while superiors would be used relatively heavily in service organizations. The results did not show the effects we expected for organization task type. Instead, we found co-workers to be used moderately more in service organizations than in the other two types of manufacturing ( $F = 3.14, p = .044$ ). We also found an interaction of use of coworkers with nationality ( $F = 3.52, p = .030$ ) indicating that co-workers were used less in Mexico for automated manufacturing than in organizations with other kinds of tasks, while co-workers were used less in the United States for non-automated manufacturing than they were in organizations with other tasks.

### *Organization Size*

Some theorists have proposed that an organization's size affects the way that it is managed (Mintzberg, 1979). This reasoning is based on the presumed requirement of large organizations to manage interdependence by carefully prescribing and controlling members in order to promote predictability and quality. Our indicator of size had three levels: less than 100 employees, 100 to 1,000 employees, and more than 1,000 employees. We expected that managers in smaller organizations would report relying less on rules and more on powerful superiors than would managers of larger organizations. A significant interaction of size by country ( $F = 4.28, p = .014$ ) indicated that rules were used more in large than in smaller organizations in Mexico, but not in the United States. We found no differences in use of supervisors depending on organization size.

*Department Type*

The nature of work differs substantially between, for instance, production, sales, personnel, or research and development. Both training and practical experience may lead managers within a particular organization function to rely on the same sources of guidance as others within the same function. Our department type predictor had five categories: production departments, service departments, finance and accounting departments, general management, and other.

The literature suggested that in departments associated with internal control, functional necessity would promote reliance on rules and collaboration with fellow professionals. In manufacturing production departments and in service delivery departments, one would expect a heavy reliance on rules with adjustments made and exceptions handled by superiors. In general management, one would expect collaboration with co-workers and consultation with bosses. However, the results showed generally little support for these expected relationships. We did find a significant interaction between country and department for use of rules ( $F = 2.57, p = .038$ ). This interaction suggests that in Mexico, rules are used more by general managers and less in production than in other departments.

*Discussion*

Looking across the eight sources of meaning that we studied, the most consistent effects are those of nation and of organization ownership. The effects of organization size, organization task and department task showed complex patterns of interaction with nation that require further investigation. Practices typical of a particular size, organization type or department may well be either functionally desirable, or broadly institutionalized, but our results did not support this view, at least with respect to variations between the United States and Mexico. Of course, the fact that a management practice works well in one place does not necessarily mean it will work well elsewhere. Further data will be required to test whether the complex interactions found here are related to how effective each style of leadership was, within its local context. The significant results for organization ownership suggest that there may be more consistent functional constraints, such that rules are

very often used extensively in government-controlled organizations.

Although the second study was conducted to determine the effect of variability in leadership within each nation, the most striking results of the study were again obtained at the level of national differences. The relationships we expected based on prior studies of leadership in the United States and Mexico were only occasionally and weakly supported. Given the results of study I, this is no longer surprising. Our Mexican respondents reported very much less reliance on superiors than we had predicted as well as strong reliance on formal rules. As we noted earlier, superiors were often influential in the formulation of rules, but nonetheless the pattern of superior-subordinate relations that we found is substantially different from that which could be predicted from earlier studies.

### CONCLUSION

In these investigations we have sought to provide some clarification of both common themes and regional variations in leadership within Latin American organizations. Our results suggest that characterizations of Latin American leadership as high in Power Distance fail to describe adequately the ways in which superiors and subordinates relate to one another. Greater use of more indigenous conceptions may help to provide a more adequate analysis. We have also found substantial variations within the region in the sources of guidance that are most strongly used by leaders. Further exploration of this diversity can help to provide a firmer basis for exploration of local organizational cultures.

The outcome of our second study has implications for our larger project, involving many other countries. The results support our practice of controlling statistically for organization characteristics when assessing the effects of practices institutionalized in particular countries as to how managers give meaning to work events. We need to examine interactions between country and organization characteristics more closely and to determine variations in the styles of leadership that are found to be effective in particular contexts. The success of countries that are moving toward industrialization, changes in business practice in countries moving toward post-industrial societies, and innovations in industrializing countries all indicate that we have a great deal more to learn about alternative ways of organizing.

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# *Designing Organizational Reward Systems: A Cultural Perspective*

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## **Abstract**

All organizations have some form of reward system. Some of these reward systems, such as pay, consume a large (if not the largest) portion of a business or government organization's financial resources. One of the most important functions of organizational leaders in all cultures is to design and implement the reward systems that motivate organizational members: (a) to affiliate with the organization; and then (b) to perform their respective roles competently. This paper considers what we do and do not know about how cultural differences can affect the way organizations design and implement their reward systems.

## **Compendio**

Todas las organizaciones tienen algún sistema de recompensa. Algunos de estos sistemas, como la remuneración, consumen una gran porción (si no la mayor) de los recursos financieros de la organización gubernamental o comercial. Una de las funciones más importantes del liderazgo organizacional de todas las culturas es diseñar e implantar los sistemas de recompensas que motivarán a los/as miembros de la organización: (a) a afiliarse con la organización y luego (b) a ejecutar sus respectivos roles competentemente. Este trabajo discute lo que sabemos y lo que no sabemos de cómo las diferencias culturales afectan el diseño e implantación organizacional sus sistemas de recompensa.

**Key words: Organizational rewards; Culture; Leadership**

**Palabras claves: Recompensas organizacionales; Cultura; Liderato**

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Leaders fulfill many different functions in an organization or group. One of the most important of these functions is rewarding organizational members (House, 1971; House & Mitchell, 1974). Whether explicitly or implicitly all organizations have some form of reward system. Some of these reward systems, such as pay, consume a large (if not the largest) portion of a business or government organization's financial resources.

At the most general level, the intended purpose of these reward systems is to motivate organizational members to affiliate with the organization ("joining") and then to perform their respective roles competently ("performing"). At this general level of analysis there is little to distinguish organizations in one culture from those in another. In all cultures, "joining" and "performing" appear to be necessary for organizations to survive and succeed. Whether or not organizations in different cultures are, or should be, similar in the details of the reward systems that encourage these behaviors, however, is another matter.

#### CULTURE IN UNDERSTANDING REWARD SYSTEMS

Leaders and managers (both as an important source of rewards and as designers of reward systems) have been influenced in their practices by what motivation "experts" or science proclaims as the correct way to reward and motivate individuals in organizations. Over the years management approaches to rewards have changed as a result of different assumptions about what is most effective. The psychological study of reward systems has traditionally been intertwined with motivation research and has been dominated by scientists in the United States. As a result it has been both "culture blind" and "culture bound" (Berry, 1996). That is, culture has been largely ignored as an influence on work motivation and behavior. To the degree that these models are inappropriate for a specific culture, they will not only be less productive than expected, but they may also be counter-productive. Arguing from a broader perspective, Berry (1996) suggests that if we are to break free from our limited views of behavior we must begin to understand what can be termed *universals*. He argues we must move away from an absolutist orientation (where all phenomena are assumed to be basically the same in all cultures) and also away from a relativistic orientation (where behavior is understood only in the context of the

culture) to what he calls *universalism*. Here it is assumed that basic attributes can be found that are common to all humans. Further, universalism assumes that culture influences the development and display of these common attributes. Universalism approaches the study of psychological phenomena from a "derived etic" orientation (Berry, 1996). The discovery of universals occurs as: (a) differences in cultures are understood; (b) psychological knowledge gained in different cultures is transported, tested and explored in other cultures so new discoveries can be made; and finally (c) culturally relevant knowledge is integrated across cultures to develop *universals*. To a limited extent, these processes have begun in our understanding of work motivation. The next step is to move this approach into the design of reward systems.

### Content and Process Theories of Work Motivation

One generally accepted principle of psychological knowledge is that humans are "wanting" creatures. That is, people have needs and much of their behavior occurs as they pursue these needs. Scientists propose theories of work motivation and behavior to help guide research and practice. One useful way to categorize motivation theories is in terms of *content* and *process* theories. Content theories are concerned with what energizes behavior. What are the "wants" that people pursue? What outcomes experienced on the job do workers prefer? Process theories are less concerned with what the "wants" are and more with *how* the "wants" connect to specific behaviors and therefore trigger human action. I will discuss the cultural relevance of these two types of theories below.

#### *Content Theories*

The most obvious interface between theories of human needs and reward systems is in determining what events or conditions have the capacity to satisfy human needs. These events or conditions are often called outcomes and when they can be used to reduce a need or are perceived as satisfying one, they are called rewards. For example, if a person has a need for affiliation the set of events or outcomes that is likely to satisfy this affiliative need may include various forms of social contact and approval. The reverse of this is also true: if these forms of social contact and approval are judged satisfying, we infer that there is a need for affiliation and again we

call these outcomes rewards. Content theories are concerned with identifying human needs as well as outcomes satisfying these needs.

The most prominent content theory is Maslow's need hierarchy (1943). Maslow would be generally considered an absolutist. He did not specify what or how exceptions to his hierarchy could operate. As with most theories of that time, cultural differences were not considered. His view implied that all people in all cultures had five basic categories of needs. He theorized that these categories are arranged in a hierarchy so that the more basic needs must be largely satisfied before needs higher in the hierarchy will become active. Other prominent content theories are ERG theory (Alderfer, 1972) and Murray's manifest needs theory (1938) from which McClelland's (1951; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953) Need in Achievement (N Ach), Need for Power, and Need in Affection work evolved.

The idea that all the needs of individuals in all cultures can be placed in such a simple structure as Maslow's, Murray's or Alderfer's has appeal but little empirical support. It has been difficult to find support for Maslow's theory in one culture, much less across several cultures (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). These early theorists gave no formal acknowledgment of how culture might alter the understanding of their findings. Therefore, it is not clear which cultures place higher value on different needs. Consequently, reward systems designed from traditional approaches are unable to specify how they should be matched to the culture. McClelland did explore how different cultures differed on one need (i.e., N Ach) (McClelland, et al., 1953). He did not consider, however, how different cultures defined needs, the relative importance of different needs, and the value of rewards in meeting these needs.

The groundbreaking work of Hofstede (1980; 1991) compared as many as 60 countries on their cultural values and beliefs. This monumental work demonstrated the limitations of previous efforts to develop universal need theories. Hofstede showed that cultures differed on five value dimensions: (a) Collectivism-Individualism; (b) Power Distance; (c) Uncertainty Avoidance; (d) Masculinity; and (e) Future Time Orientation. His work and others building upon it have demonstrated that a set of new concepts about values and needs must be considered in understanding work motivation and in the design of any organizational reward system. The evidence is

clear that human needs are more varied and pliable than Maslow suggested. Erez (1997) suggests that the dimensions of Collectivism-Individualism and Power Distance have great relevance for understanding differences in values (and by extension, rewards) that affect work motivation among cultures.

Recent work by Ronen (1994) indicates that needs may have some cultural universals. Using the importance of outcomes as a surrogate for need strength, Ronen found with Small Space Analysis that there may be some cultural universals in defining need categories. Ronen collapsed the needs identified by Maslow into two orthogonal dimensions:(a) individualism-collectivism and (b) materialism-humanism (nonmaterial). When these two dimensions are dichotomized to produce four need categories, they have some preliminary cross-cultural support. While it appears that there may be some consistency across some cultures in how outcomes or needs are conceptually grouped into these categories there is also abundant evidence that people in different cultures vary substantially in the value or desirability they place on these categories. For example, it is generally recognized that people in the United States place more value on individualistic outcomes (individual recognition) than do people in Asian cultures (Erez, 1994; Triandis, 1994). These differences are not the result of how well the different cultures are able to satisfy a set of "universal" needs (as might be theorized from Maslow's need hierarchy). Some needs appear to be culture specific and are learned as people are socialized into that culture.

Despite the conceptual gains in identifying need categories, they are so general and vague (e.g., Individual-Nonmaterial, Collective-Material) that they offer very little help in designing reward systems that are matched to workers in a given culture. For example, all cultures use pay systems. In Ronen's taxonomy of need categories for the U. K., German, and French samples, pay or earnings is part of the *Individual-Material* category. However, for the Japanese and Chinese samples, pay is in the *Collective-Material* category.

Similar outcomes or events are interpreted differently depending on culture. In any culture it is likely that a given reward has a particular cultural interpretation. To illustrate, consider the controversy over whether extrinsic rewards diminish intrinsic motives (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research in this area has led to the

recognition that the same reward can have different effects depending on the meaning given to its use. For example, Staw (1976) has suggested that monetary payment is seen as an appropriate consequence of behavior in one context (e.g., work settings) but is considered manipulative and inappropriate in another (e.g., solving puzzles in psychology experiments). What this suggests is that the value of a reward varies depending upon the context in which it is given. To manage rewards effectively then, it is necessary to know the particular form of a reward and its cultural and contextual interpretation. The value dimensions of Collectivism-Individualism and Power Distance have been shown to give us a more complex picture of motivation-related values. First, it is apparent that these dimensions focus primarily on relationships among in-group members (Triandis, 1995). It is the relationship of individuals to their recognized in-group that defines how they may be categorized in this two-dimensional space.

Triandis (1995) argues that collectivists see themselves first as parts or aspects of their in-groups. They have goals that overlap with their in-groups and these shared goals have priority over personal goals. Collectivists' social behavior is heavily influenced by norms and perceived duties and obligations. It is their social relationships that are of greatest importance to them and will tend to be preserved, even if individual costs exceed social benefits. Individualists, as viewed by Triandis (1995), see themselves as autonomous from groups. They have personal goals that may or may not overlap with the goals of their in-groups. Personal goals have priority over group goals. Individualists' social behavior is best predicted from attitudes, internal processes, and contracts. For individualists, relationships are secondary. A relationship often will be dropped when costs exceed benefits.

A second and perhaps more interesting evolution in the construct of individualism also comes from the work of Triandis and his colleagues (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, 1995). By considering the Power Distance of the culture simultaneously with Collectivism-Individualism, they show that the collectivists and individualists are better understood when considered from either a Vertical or Horizontal perspective. This means that those who are more collectivist can be further divided into Vertical Collectivists and Horizontal Collectivists. Furthermore, individualists can also be divided into Vertical



Table 1

Distinctions among Vertical and Horizontal Forms of Collectivism and Individualism

	Collectivism	Individualism
Vertical	Self is Interdependent with In-group Self is Different from Others in In-group Communal Sharing of Resources Distributed by Need and by Rank Low Equality among Individuals Low Freedom for Individuals Service and Sacrifice for In-group Doing One's Duty and Behaving as Expected (e.g. Chinese)	Self is independent Self is Different from Others in In-group Resources and Rewards Distributed by Contributions and Rank Low Equality among Individuals High Freedom for Individuals Self-reliance  Effort to be Unique (e.g. Middle-class Americans)
Horizontal	Self is Interdependent with In-groups Self is Same as Others in In-groups Communal Sharing of Resources Distributed by Need Equally  Equality among Group Members Low Freedom for Individuals Oneness with In-group Social Cohesiveness (e.g. Israeli kibbutzniks)	Self is Independent Self is Same as Others in In-group  Resources and Rewards Distributed by Contributions Equality Equality among Group Members High Freedom for Individuals Self-reliance Reluctance to be Unique (e.g. Swedish)

Individualists and Horizontal Individualists. Based upon the work of several authors (Erez, 1997; Singelis, et al., 1995; Triandis, 1995) the distinctions among these categories are shown in Table 1.

A comprehensive taxonomy of human needs in different cultures would be valuable; however, at present we are far short of this knowledge. The chief practical benefit to leaders and managers of a system for categorizing human needs appears to be as a heuristic in designing reward systems. For this purpose, current content theories are of little value. However, based on our knowledge of cultural differences and commonly used rewards available to leaders and managers, we can consider a number of rewards from a cultural perspective. A useful way to differentiate among these rewards is by the source that controls them. Rewards can be delivered by at least four sources. These are: (a) the organization, (b) the work itself, (c) the social network, and (d) the self.

#### *Organizationally Controlled Rewards*

Formal mechanisms in organizations control a number of potential rewards. Important among these are pay, recognition, and advancement.

**Pay.** The most prevalent reward offered in organizations is pay. Pay has the potential to satisfy many different needs. It can be exchanged for goods and services that meet physical or security needs and it can be a form of recognition that meets social and ego needs. Consequently, the cultural considerations in designing pay systems can be significant. Some work suggests that in collectivist cultures pay systems that emphasize individual performance contributions will be preferred less and be less effective than ones that emphasize group contributions (Erez, 1994; Leung & Bond, 1984; Leung & Park, 1986). Therefore, pay systems that differentiate less between individuals while rewarding group performance are more likely to be successful. "Profit sharing", "gain sharing" and other forms of pay that are based on team, group, or team performance will be more effective than individual incentive systems. With group-based systems all members of the group receive a share of the reward based on the group's performance. Typically, in these systems, individual performance does not determine the amount of the individual reward.

More subtle differences in reward distribution may depend upon whether or not the culture is Vertical or Horizontal. In Horizontal-

Collectivist cultures, large differences in compensation based upon group member rank and authority as well as performance should be seen as less appropriate. However, in Vertical-Collectivist cultures, while distribution of pay based on performance should be seen as less appropriate, pay distributed based on group member rank or authority should be more acceptable. In Vertical-Individualistic cultures distribution of financial rewards based on either performance or by rank and authority will be seen as more acceptable. Horizontal-Individualistic cultures are likely to accept pay distribution based on performance more readily than that which is based on rank or authority.

**Recognition.** Recognition is another common form of reward distributed by organizations. Again, workers with collectivist values will respond differently than those with individualistic values. Recognition that singles out individuals may be effective in individualistic cultures but anathema in collectivist cultures. Recognition for the in-group will be more effective in collectivist cultures. Performance appraisals are one common form of organizationally-controlled recognition. In individualistic cultures, individual performance appraisals will be more accepted and desired. In collectivist cultures group-based appraisals are more likely to be acceptable. Again the Vertical and Horizontal differentiation among collectivist and individualistic cultures will produce similar variances to those found with pay.

**Advancement.** Advancement, especially promotion, is usually an individual event. However, promotion can emphasize individual contributions or group considerations. For example, a seniority-based system of advancement is more likely to be consistent with collectivist values than a system where individuals compete for the few promotions available. In Horizontal cultures acceptable distinctions among individuals by rank and authority should be minimized while among Vertical cultures greater rank and authority differences should be more acceptable.

### *Work Controlled Rewards*

The work itself often controls some rewards available to workers. The regular performance of job duties can be rewarding in and of itself.

**Autonomy and Challenge.** When an individual works at a job with high levels of autonomy and/or challenge, the results can be

culture specific. For individuals with collectivist values, autonomy and/or challenge may be unwelcome unless the work is organized to emphasize team responsibility and interdependence. This is especially likely in cultures that are also high in uncertainty avoidance.

**Managers.** Even in collectivist cultures those individuals who are in management positions tend to be more individualistic than most workers (Erez, 1994). Consequently, the work organization for higher-level management positions should place more responsibility on individuals than at lower levels in the organization. Furthermore, Vertical-Collectivist cultures accept authority well so taller hierarchical structures and high salary differentials should be accepted better.

#### *Socially Controlled Rewards*

Informal systems of delivering rewards also exist in all organizations. These include approval and disapproval administered by coworkers as well as supervisors. Because they are informal, they are more difficult to control by the leader or manager. In collectivist cultures, these socially controlled rewards are more likely to play a major role in influencing behavior. Further, in Vertical-Collectivist cultures, those in positions of authority are more likely to be able to influence social sanctions.

#### *Self Controlled Rewards*

The final source of rewards is the individual workers themselves. In all cultures workers will evaluate whether or not their behavior is laudable or not. If workers are pleased with their own behavior, they will be able to reward themselves with a sense of accomplishment. The standards used for this self-reward are developed in the socialization process. Socialization occurs in the culture generally and in the organization specifically. Therefore, leaders and management again have only limited influence over this process. The use of other rewards controlled by the organization and its leaders can help shape these self-administered rewards. Individuals in high power distance and high uncertain avoidance as well as vertical cultures may be more likely to model their self-evaluations on those of authority figures in the organization.

As mentioned above, process theories focus on behavioral choice. The most prominent process theories are expectancy theory and its derivatives (Riedel, Nebeker, & Cooper, 1988; Vroom 1964), social cognition theory (Bandura, 1997) and goal theory (Locke & Latham, 1990). These approaches theorize how behavior is connected or attached to the fulfillment of individual needs and or goals. These approaches share much in common, although they have different theoretical roots. Another prominent process approach to understanding how behavior is generated is reinforcement theory (Hammer, 1977). A simplistic view of these theories is that individuals set behavioral goals or choose behaviors over alternatives when they believe they are more capable of performing a behavior successfully and when they expect the behavior will fulfill their needs more than other alternatives.

Because these theories focus on the process of motivation and allow culturally relevant substitutes in what their needs are, they are more likely to be universal theories. In contrast to content theories, process theories have performed well in cross-cultural research. It appears that while the effects of content are culture specific, processes are more universal (Triandis, 1994). Consequently, the cross-cultural methods for designing reward systems look similar for all cultures.

For a reward system to have its intended effect, two process issues must be managed effectively. First, the rewards offered must be properly linked to desired behaviors. If a link is weak, delayed, or inconsistent the results are likely to be less effective. In the cases where the desired behavior is competent performance, the behavior must be linked consistently to the type of reward offered. For example if a group-based pay system (e.g., gain sharing, profit sharing [Lawler, 1990]) is being developed, the desired behavior must be group performance rather than individual performance. When group performance is linked to a group reward the link is properly made.

The second condition that must be present is that workers have a high expectation that they are able to perform at the level desired (Bandura, 1997). If workers do not believe they are capable of reaching a valued behavior they will not respond to the rewards offered. Therefore, the choice of target performance becomes a

critical issue in the success of reward systems. Contrary to the results of some goal setting research, moderately difficult standards or goals are better than highly difficult ones. In gain sharing systems the historical average is the standard typically used to determine whether or not a reward is earned. When workers know they have routinely reached the target performance levels in the past, they will likely believe they can continue to do so. Other ways to help organizational members have the confidence and self-efficacy that they can reach the desired performance levels include training, modeling, and persuasion (Bandura, 1997).

In all cultures, if a reward system applied to a work group is to be effective, group members must share common beliefs about the links between behavior and outcomes. Understanding how these beliefs are established, maintained, and changed is important in both national and organizational cultures. It is the in-group culture that often teaches what the links are between behavior and culturally valued outcomes. In collectivist cultures the perception of self is interdependent with the in-group and individuals accept more social control of their behavior than in individualistic cultures. Therefore, for individuals to have strong expectancies and instrumentalities consistent with the purposes of the reward system, strong group norms must exist endorsing those beliefs. In Horizontal-Collectivist cultures these norms must be developed through communal communication that results in a shared reality or consensus. In Vertical-Collectivist cultures the in-group must share the beliefs as well, but high-ranking members in the in-group lead group opinion and heavily influence group beliefs.

In designing reward systems, no matter what the culture, there are advantages to having employees involved in many aspects of the design (Lawler, 1986). In some cultures, however, it is probably even more critical than in others. For example, widespread group involvement in planning and establishing the design of the reward system may be more critical to Horizontal-Collectivist cultures than any other. Group involvement should also be valuable in Vertical-Collectivist cultures, but in these situations it is more important to have high ranking in-group members participate in the design process rather than broad participation from all group members. In individualistic cultures the perception of self is independent. As a result, individuals in an individualistic culture will be more comfortable if they feel free to choose whether or not

to participate in any formal reward system implemented by an organization or work group. This freedom to participate will be more important than the involvement in designing the reward system. This should be especially true in Vertical-Individualistic cultures where individuals will be more accepting of management-developed systems and assigned goals. In Horizontal-Individualistic cultures individuals should value more the opportunity to participate in setting individual goals.

### *Implementation Processes*

One final area of consideration in the design of organizational reward systems is worth mentioning. This is the process used to develop and implement the reward system itself. Culture can play an important role in determining the more effective method. For example, in Latin America, where power distance is high, participation has not been as successful as in cultures where power distance is low (Triandis, 1994, p. 108). Consequently, the recommendations made about the value of employee involvement are likely to be culture specific.

### SUMMARY

We are just beginning to understand the differences between cultures that are important in determining the effectiveness of reward systems. As we gain more culture specific and culture universal knowledge about human behavior, we can expect that our ability to design effective, productive, and satisfying workplaces will increase. The principles espoused here have been based primarily on differences in national culture. However, it is also clear that most national cultures are truly multicultural. Many different ethnic, national origin, religious, and political groups make up most societies. As a result, these principles are applicable within multicultural societies and among different organizational units within the same society. No matter what nation an organization operates in, it makes sense to consider what the cultural values are of its organizational members before designing and implementing any organizational reward system.

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## *Dependencia Funcional en la Vejez: Una Profecía que se Autocumple<sup>1</sup>*

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### Compendio

Siguiendo el modelo propuesto por Little (1988), en este estudio pretendí explorar empíricamente la importancia que tienen los estereotipos negativos de la vejez sobre el bienestar de las personas mayores. En la mayor parte de la literatura sobre el tema se refleja el hecho de que las imágenes que mantiene la sociedad sobre las personas mayores son fundamentalmente negativas y se encuentran relacionadas a atribuciones de enfermedad, fragilidad y dependencia. Partiendo de la idea de que estas imágenes pueden estar afectando a las personas mayores y su autonomía funcional, o su capacidad para llevar a cabo sus actividades cotidianas, evalué en una muestra de 45 parejas cuidador/a-familiar mayor cuidado, las imágenes que los/as cuidadores presentan sobre la persona mayor a la que cuidan y los niveles de autonomía funcional, autoeficacia y bienestar subjetivo de la persona mayor cuidada. Los análisis de regresión muestran como las imágenes de dependencia que mantienen los/as cuidadores sobre sus familiares explican una mayor proporción de varianza del nivel de autonomía de éstos/as que variables de tipo orgánico (padecimiento de enfermedades crónicas o estado mental de la persona mayor). Por su parte, la autoeficacia de la persona mayor se explica exclusivamente por una menor atribución de características de dependencia por parte del familiar que le presta cuidado. Finalmente el bienestar subjetivo de la persona mayor se explica, también exclusivamente, por su nivel de autoeficacia. A partir de estos resultados concluí que, en muchas ocasiones, los mitos negativos sobre la vejez funcionan como profecías que se autocumplen al crear una realidad en la que se ven confirmados y que, por lo tanto, cualquier intervención para potenciar la autonomía y el bienestar de las personas mayores debe tener en cuenta la existencia de estos factores psicosociales.

### Abstract

This study follows Little's (1988) model, to explore the impact of negative stereotypes of older persons on their well-being. Previous writings on the subject reflect current society's negative views of old people, which are in turn linked to perceptions of their fragility and dependence. I believe these images could affect

their functional autonomy or their capacity to carry out daily activities. Thus, I evaluated 45 couples of aged persons and their caretakers regarding the caretakers image of the person they care for and the latter's functional autonomy, self-efficacy and subjective well-being. Regression analysis demonstrated that images of dependence held by caretakers explain more of covariance related to the level of autonomy than other organic variables such as cronic illness or mental state of the old person. On the other hand, the old person's self-efficacy is explained exclusively by a weak attribution of dependence by his/her caretaker. Finally, the subjective well-being of the old person is exclusively explained by his/her perceived self-efficacy. Considering these results, I concluded that, on many occasions, negative myths regarding old age work as self-fulfilling prophecies by creating a reality which confirms them. Thus, any intervention which intends to increase old persons' autonomy and well-being must take these psychosocial factors into account.

**Palabras clave:** Dependencia funcional; Autoeficacia; Vejez  
**Key words:** Functional dependence; Self-efficacy; Old age

"A menudo la profecía es la causa  
principal del acontecimiento profetizado"  
Thomas Hobbes, Behemoth

El fenómeno de la profecía que se autocumple ha llamado siempre la atención de personas pensantes de la ciencia. El *efecto Pigmalion* (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), la "muerte vudú" (Cannon, 1942) y el efecto autocumplidor de los diagnósticos psiquiátricos (Rosenhan, 1995), son algunos de los ejemplos clásicos del interés que este tema suscita entre psicólogos y psicólogas. Este interés ha tomado nuevos rumbos con el desarrollo teórico, que los esfuerzos de la Psicología Social ha permitido, sobre las actitudes, los prejuicios y las representaciones sociales (Hewstone, Stroebe, Codol & Stephenson, 1993). Uno de los grupos de población que más sutil y frecuentemente se convierte en víctima de actitudes negativas y de sus efectos es la población mayor.

Los gerontólogos y gerontólogas han acuñado el término

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"edadismo" para referirse al concepto peyorativo de alguien basado en su avanzada edad cronológica (Butler & Lewis, 1982). Como otros "ismos" esto implica una visión tóxica y despectiva sobre un grupo social, que en este caso consiste en considerar a las personas mayores como diferentes a las demás en aspectos como sus opiniones, afectos, y necesidades. La vejez es consecuencia de un proceso biológico pero es también una construcción cultural (Beauvoir, 1970). Una persona es vieja, como en cualquier otro rol y estatus social, cuando las demás personas así la consideran (Bazo, 1990). En el proceso dialéctico de la interacción social, las demás personas, a través de sus conductas, son el espejo en el que uno/a mismo se ve reflejado. Las reacciones de las demás personas hacia otra le muestran la imagen que presenta, constriñéndola a adoptar los comportamientos que sabe que esperan de ella (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 1992). La categoría de vejez, en este sentido, está llena de falsas creencias y contradicciones, por lo que el proceso de envejecer puede convertirse fácilmente en una serie de profecías que se autocumplen y, con frecuencia, las personas mayores se convierten en víctimas de las ideas preconcebidas, o estereotipos, sobre como se supone que deben actuar o reaccionar (Brown, 1996).

Teniendo en cuenta el amplio cuerpo de investigación que confirma la existencia de estereotipos sobre las personas mayores, fundamentalmente negativos, las cuestiones que adquieren mayor relevancia actualmente son las relacionadas con el grado y el modo en que los estereotipos pueden estar elicitando actitudes hacia las personas mayores (Hummert, Garstka, Shaner & Strahm, 1994; 1995). Este tema ha sido enfocado desde dos perspectivas diferentes pero complementarias. El primer enfoque, de corte sociológico y con importantes implicaciones políticas y económicas, utiliza el concepto de grupo marginal para definir la situación de las personas mayores en nuestra sociedad (Bazo, 1990). Según Vizcaíno (1987), esta conceptualización se basa en la idea de que las personas mayores sufren un proceso de desintegración social que implica una falta de participación, tanto activa como pasiva, en los beneficios y servicios que la sociedad ofrece a sus miembros en general.

Dentro de un enfoque más psicológico, se ha trabajado sobre los estereotipos y las imágenes sociales de la vejez utilizando métodos diversos: el análisis del discurso hablado (Fry, 1980) y escrito

(Abel, 1995); las entrevistas de tipo encuesta (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 1992); los cuestionarios (Cicirelli, 1990); y las tareas de laboratorio (Bouchard, Bourhis & Knops, 1991); entre otros. Entre las conclusiones más importantes que se derivan de estos estudios se encuentran las siguientes:

1. La percepción social de las personas mayores consiste en una imagen básicamente negativa (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 1992).
2. La probabilidad de que los estereotipos negativos eliciten actitudes negativas es mayor que la de que los estereotipos positivos eliciten actitudes positivas, especialmente cuando son aplicados a las personas de mayor edad (Hummert, Garska, Shaner & Strahm, 1995).
3. Las actitudes de quienes cuidan a las personas mayores resultan ser el mejor predictor de las conductas paternalistas y de sobreprotección en el cuidado de sus familiares mayores (Cicirelli, 1990).
4. Los/as profesionales de la salud tienen dificultades para reconocer la presencia de procesos patológicos en las personas mayores ya que asocian de forma natural la edad con la fragilidad y la debilidad. Esto implica que frecuentemente no se tratan enfermedades que podrían curarse mediante la adecuada atención médica (Brown, 1996).
5. Las actitudes de quienes integran una comunidad hacia las personas mayores se encuentra estrechamente relacionada con la imagen que socialmente se mantiene de ellas, y esta imagen se encuentra estrechamente relacionada, a su vez, con el estatus que las personas mayores disfrutaban en dicha comunidad (Fry, 1988). En este sentido, aquellas culturas que mantienen valores tradicionales y donde los/as miembros de más edad desempeñan funciones rituales, de transmisión de conocimientos o de formación, valoran y tratan más positivamente a las personas mayores que las culturas nómadas, donde éstas se consideran una carga, o las tecnológicas, donde las personas mayores no poseen el control de los recursos ni de los conocimientos (Keith, 1992). Por ejemplo, entre los Herero de Botswana y Namibia es costumbre que las mujeres mayores se encarguen de la crianza de los niños y niñas que ya tienen

edad para aprender a realizar tareas cotidianas, manteniendo así su estatus en el grupo (Hashimoto & Kendig, 1992), mientras que entre los Inuit es costumbre que las personas mayores se abandonen a su muerte cuando ellos/as mismos consideran que ya no son "útiles" a la unidad social (Brown, 1996).

En sus escritos sobre los aspectos psicológicos del trabajo con personas mayores, Little (1988) sugiere que el edadismo se mantiene porque las falsas creencias que socialmente imperan sobre la vejez no sólo influyen en el modo como se trata a las personas mayores, sino también en el modo en que ellas se comportan. El modelo de esta autora contempla el proceso de interacción entre, por un lado, los estereotipos y expectativas negativas sobre la vejez y, por el otro, la discapacidad para las actividades de la vida diaria. Con esta propuesta pretende superar algunas limitaciones de los modelos tradicionales (e.g. biológicos, conductuales, etc.) sobre la dependencia funcional en la vejez, pues considera no sólo un proceso básico de influencia de las cogniciones sobre las conductas manifiestas, sino también las interrelaciones existentes entre variables mediadoras y factores implicados. Así, el modelo de Little considera que el proceso interactivo que se establece entre las personas mayores y quienes les cuidan es el siguiente:

1. Unas bajas expectativas del cuidador o cuidadora en relación a la capacidad de la persona mayor para emitir una conducta u obtener un resultado.
2. Este tipo de cogniciones lleva al cuidador o cuidadora a sobreproteger a la persona mayor.
3. La sobreprotección priva a la persona mayor de oportunidades de realizar la conducta y por tanto de practicarla.
4. Hay una disminución de las capacidades y un incremento de la dependencia a través de dos procesos paralelos e interdependientes: la falta de práctica y la pérdida de hábitos, por una parte, y la percepción de que las demás personas le consideran inútil, por la otra.
5. Las expectativas previas se cumplen.

Teniendo en cuenta que la salud de las personas mayores debe ser descrita, más que en términos de procesos mórbidos, en términos de autonomía personal o capacidad para funcionar de forma

independiente en las interacciones básicas con el medio (OMS, 1990), y que la mayoría de las personas mayores reciben ayuda o apoyo de parte de sus familiares más cercanos/as (quienes en la literatura gerontológica suelen recibir el nombre de "cuidadores/as informales"; Rodríguez, 1995), conviene explorar si las relaciones entre estereotipos y capacidad funcional postuladas por Little (1988) y mediadas por las conductas de sobreprotección, reciben apoyo empírico suficiente para considerarlas como otro fenómeno más de la profecía que se autocumple.

## OBJETIVOS

Diseñé este trabajo de investigación para explorar las posibles relaciones entre las imágenes que los cuidadores/as informales tienen de su familiar mayor y la autonomía funcional de este/a último. Esta aproximación empírica la hice desde un método correlacional. Existieron dos razones fundamentales para ello. La primera fue que se trataba de un estudio exploratorio donde, aunque las hipótesis estaban definidas, no había el respaldo de un cuerpo empírico que orientara sobre la importancia diferenciada de las variables implicadas, ni sobre la dirección de sus relaciones. La segunda razón, estrechamente relacionada con la anterior, era la imposibilidad de controlar todas las variables intervinientes: las limitaciones teóricas desaconsejan la manipulación de variables cuya importancia explicativa no está delimitada; las limitaciones humanas y técnicas del presente trabajo la imposibilitaban.

## MÉTODO

### *Muestra*

Participaron voluntariamente 107 personas, residentes en zona urbana, que se dividieron en dos muestras relacionadas, la de "cuidadores/as" o personas que habitualmente se encargan de ayudar a una persona mayor en la realización de sus actividades cotidianas, y la de "receptores/as" o personas mayores que habitualmente reciben algún tipo de ayuda para realizar sus actividades cotidianas. La muestra de cuidadores/as fue integrada por 62 participantes, 58 mujeres y 4 hombres, con una edad media de 54.5 años y una dispersión de 23 a 87 años. Pude evaluar a 45 de las personas mayores a las que cuidaban, 39 mujeres y 6 hombres, con una edad media de 82.6 y una dispersión de 63 a 100 años (Véase Tabla 1).



*Variables e Instrumentos.*

Las variables de estudio fueron las siguientes: (a) imágenes de los cuidadores/as sobre las personas mayores como grupo y sobre su familiar mayor como individuo; (b) autonomía funcional de la persona mayor cuidada, definida como la capacidad para ejecutar actividades de la vida diaria informada por el/la cuidador y por la persona receptora de cuidados; (c) salud física de la persona mayor cuidada, definida como el número de enfermedades crónicas padecidas; (d) estado mental o funcionamiento cognitivo de la persona mayor cuidada ; y, finalmente, (e) las percepciones de autoeficacia y bienestar subjetivo de la persona mayor cuidada. A lo largo de nuestro estudio cada variable fue considerada, en algunos casos, como variable criterio y, en otros, como variable predictora, ya que la hipótesis de Little (1988) establece un proceso de retroalimentación continuo en el que todos los factores intervinientes presentan interdependencia entre sí.

Tabla 1

Características de la Muestra

Variable	Dispersión	Media	Sd
Edad de los receptores/as	63-100	82.6	7.7
Edad de los cuidadores/as	23-87	54.5	12.4
Variable	Niveles	Porcentaje	
Sexo de los receptores/as	Mujer	86.60%	
	Hombre	13.40%	
Sexo de los cuidadores/as	Mujer	93.50%	
	Hombre	6.50%	

Adapté todos los instrumentos para utilizarlos en una entrevista personal con la persona evaluada. Sus garantías psicométricas, confirmadas en estudios previos, eran adecuadas y fueron visto confirmadas por mis propios análisis de consistencia interna y fiabilidad interjueces.

Una **entrevista** inicial de carácter estructurado sirvió como primer contacto para obtener información relativa a las variables

sociodemográficas, a los índices de salud y a las características del cuidado. Además, administré la **Escala de Satisfacción de Filadelfia** (Lawton, 1972 ; adaptación de Montorio, 1990), con el objetivo de evaluar el "estado de ánimo", considerado un concepto multidimensional del bienestar psicológico, de las personas mayores cuidadas; la **Escala de Autoeficacia** (Sherer & Adams, 1983), desarrollada para evaluar las expectativas sobre la capacidad personal para iniciar y persistir en la resolución de tareas; y el **Mini-Examen Cognoscitivo** (MEC; Lobo, Ezquerro, Burgada, Sala & Seva, 1979), elaborado para la cuantificación objetiva del rendimiento cognoscitivo.

Finalmente, utilicé dos instrumentos diseñados específicamente para el presente trabajo. Por una parte, construí el **Índice Global de las Actividades de la Vida Diaria (GAVD)**, con el fin de obtener una puntuación única sobre la independencia funcional del individuo. Este consta de 16 ítems y tres escalas de respuesta: frecuencia, tipo de ayuda y capacidad atribuida. El GAVD está compuesto por los 6 ítems del Índice de Independencia en Actividades de la Vida Diaria (Katz, Fird, Moskowitz, Jackson, & Jaffe, 1963) y los 8 ítems de la Escala de Actividades Instrumentales de la Vida Diaria (Lawton & Brody, 1969), más dos ítems añadidos que consisten en dos actividades descritas como básicas por diversos autores/as (Baztán, González & Del Ser, 1994): asearse y peinarse.

Por su parte, la **Tarea de Asociación de Atributos** tiene como objeto evaluar las imágenes que los cuidadores/as presentan sobre las personas mayores. Consideré que un procedimiento adecuado para ello era utilizar una técnica de asociación de atributos debido a su flexibilidad para obtener información potencialmente relevante, a la posibilidad de obtener los dos índices que me interesaban a partir del mismo instrumento (imágenes del grupo de mayores e imágenes de la persona mayor cuidada) y a la necesidad de reducir la alta deshabilidad social que suelen mostrar los cuestionarios y las entrevistas estructuradas.

Las técnicas de asociación se basan en la hipótesis de Osgood, Suci y Tannenbaum (1957), que consideran que la posición de un concepto en un campo semántico puede ser medida por su distancia respecto a los conceptos que le rodean. Una de estas técnicas, la de "juicios de similaridad" o de "escalamiento", consiste en pedirle a la persona participante que agrupe según un determinado criterio,

propio o dado por quien evalua, una serie de elementos, conceptos o términos. A partir de los agrupamientos realizados por las personas participantes se obtiene una matriz de semejanza que representa el conjunto de los juicios de la muestra evaluada y puede analizarse estadísticamente mediante una técnica de escalamiento multidimensional como el ALSCAL (SPSS, 1988). A través del escalamiento multidimensional de los datos se obtiene el grado de semejanza entre los elementos en términos de distancias, de forma que aquellos elementos que fueron agrupados juntos más frecuentemente aparecen próximos entre sí, mientras que los que fueron agrupados juntos por un menor número de participantes aparecen con una mayor distancia entre sí.

Para la obtención de los elementos que iba a utilizar posteriormente en la tarea de asociación, diseñé un cuestionario para elicitación de atributos representativos de los estereotipos sociales sobre las personas mayores. Este lo administré a 100 personas, 50 hombres y 50 mujeres de edades entre los 19 y los 63 años ( $x=39.7$ ;  $Sd=8.2$ ). De la muestra de adjetivos obtenidos tomé en consideración aquellos mencionados al menos por el 20% de las personas, y utilizando un diccionario de sinónimos (Espasa-Calpe, 1994) así como el criterio de tres jueces independientes, reduje la muestra a 30 adjetivos, 15 de ellos con valencia positiva y 15 con valencia negativa.

Para la obtención de la matriz de similaridades entre los adjetivos utilicé 30 tarjetas en las que aparecía escrito cada uno de ellos. Le solicité a 95 participantes, 75 mujeres y 20 hombres con edades entre los 18 y los 82 años ( $x=52.4$ ;  $Sd=12.1$ ), que hicieran conjuntos de tarjetas que estuvieran relacionadas entre sí, explicitando que tanto el número de conjuntos como el criterio de clasificación dependían de su decisión. Una vez obtenida la matriz de semejanza entre los adjetivos procedí a su análisis mediante el Paquete Estadístico para las Ciencias Sociales (SPSS/PC), en entorno *Windows*. Las dimensiones y agrupamientos que obtuve a partir del ALSCAL efectuado aparecen en la sección de resultados.

Para la Tarea de Asociación de Atributos utilicé las mismas tarjetas pero con las instrucciones modificadas, ya que al cuidador o cuidadora le pedí que seleccionara aquellos adjetivos que podría utilizar para describir a una persona mayor en general. Posteriormente le solicité describiera, a la persona mayor a la que cuidaba.

*Procedimiento*

Para la obtención de la muestra contacté a cuatro centros de salud donde facilitaron el nombre y el teléfono de personas adscritas al centro y encargadas del cuidado de algún/a familiar mayor. Solicité la colaboración de estas personas por teléfono y acordé una cita en el propio centro de salud. En cada evaluación, realizada por dos personas, un entrevistador/a y una observador/a, recabaron la información referente a las variables de estudio. Administraron los cuestionarios en un orden prefijado y la duración de las entrevistas osciló entre una hora y hora y media. Una vez acabada la entrevista, le agradecían a la persona su participación y le preguntaban sobre la posibilidad de entrevistar a la persona mayor que recibía el cuidado. En los casos de respuestas afirmativas esta entrevista la realizamos en el domicilio de la persona mayor.

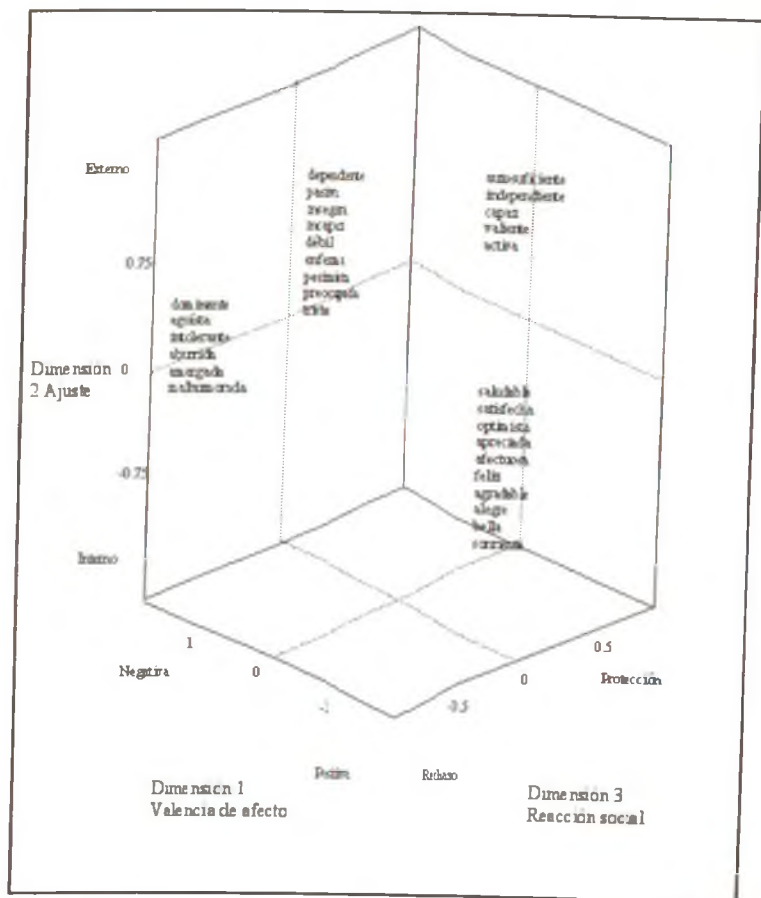
Para el análisis de los datos utilicé el Paquete Estadístico para las Ciencias Sociales (SPSS/PC), en entorno *Windows*.

## RESULTADOS

Tras los pertinentes análisis descriptivos de las variables de estudio, procedí a realizar un **escalamiento multidimensional**, con objeto de obtener las dimensiones relativas a la Tarea de Asociación de Atributos, utilizando las respuestas de la muestra de las 95 personas participantes que componían la muestra de población "no cuidadora" ( $\bar{x}=39.7$ ;  $Sd=8.2$ ). Presenté los resultados del ALSCAL (SPSS, 1988) utilizando una solución tridimensional. Esta solución fue superior a la de dos dimensiones al ofrecer una menor puntuación de estrés o tensión entre las dimensiones (.069 vs. .091) y unas dimensiones más fácilmente interpretables.

La solución de tres dimensiones aparece reflejada en la Figura 1. En este modelo cada atributo tiene tres coordenadas, saturando así en cada uno de los tres ejes, interpretados como las dimensiones de "afecto" (positivo vs. negativo), "ajuste" (externo vs. interno) y "reacción social" (protección vs. rechazo). De esta forma, los atributos pueden agruparse a partir de las comunalidades entre sus saturaciones, obteniéndose cuatro agrupamientos, que confirmados por la representación gráfica del modelo tridimensional, interpreté como: *bienestar afectivo*, *bienestar funcional*, *afecto negativo rechazable* y *afecto negativo aceptable*. A partir de aquí pude realizar una extrapolación a la muestra de cuidadores/as, según el

Figura 1

Solución en Tres Dimensiones del Escalamiento Multidimensional

número de tarjetas elegidas que pertenecieran a cada uno de los grupos, tanto para describir a las personas mayores como a su familiar mayor.

Una vez obtenidas las ocho puntuaciones de la Tarea de Asociación de Atributos para cada cuidador o cuidadora, calculé la correlación, mediante el coeficiente de correlación de Pearson, entre las atribuciones hechas al grupo de personas mayores y al familiar mayor. Además, contrasté la existencia de diferencias entre las medias de las puntuaciones relativas al grupo de personas mayores y al familiar mayor mediante la prueba t de Student para muestras apareadas. Como puede observarse en la Tabla 2, los

Tabla 2

Diferencia de Medias entre las Atribuciones Hechas por el Cuidador o Cuidadora a las Personas en General y a la Persona Cuidada en Particular.

Atribuciones	Acerca de	Media	Sd	Dif.	t	$r_{xy}$
Bienestar funcional	Personas mayores	2.4	1.8			
	Familiar	1.9	1.8	0.5	1.39	0.01
Bienestar afectivo	Personas mayores	5.9	3.1			
	Familiar	5.5	2.8	0.4	0.72	.31*
Afecto negativo rechazable	Personas mayores	3.1	2.1			
	Familiar	1.9	1.8	1.2	3.94**	.33**
Afecto negativo aceptable	Personas mayores	5.8	2.5			
	Familiar	4.6	2.6	1.2	3.60**	.46**

análisis de correlación entre las atribuciones de características a las personas mayores en general y a quien recibe el cuidado, mostraron coeficientes estadísticamente significativos en las puntuaciones relativas a la atribución de características de bienestar afectivo, afecto negativo aceptable y afecto negativo rechazable ( $r_{xy}=.31$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $r_{xy}=.46$ ,  $p<.000$ ;  $r_{xy}=.33$ ,  $p<.01$ ) respectivamente, pero no a las de bienestar funcional. Además, aparecieron diferencias significativas en las atribuciones relativas a las personas mayores en general y al familiar en los índices de afecto negativo aceptable ( $t=3.60$ ;  $p<.001$ ) y de afecto negativo rechazable ( $t=3.94$ ;  $p<.000$ ).

Con el fin de comprobar las relaciones establecidas por el modelo de Little (1998), el último bloque de análisis consistió en una serie de análisis de regresión múltiple de pasos sucesivos, cuyos resultados aparecen reflejados en la Tabla 3. Al intentar explicar la varianza de las puntuaciones relativas al familiar mayor en la Tarea de Asociación de Atributos, observé que el *afecto negativo aceptable* atribuido al familiar se explica, en el 25% de su varianza, por el *afecto negativo aceptable* atribuido a las personas mayores como grupo ( $F=9.47$ ;  $p<.01$ ), y que el *bienestar funcional* atribuido al familiar también se explica, en el 19% de su varianza, por el *afecto negativo aceptable* atribuido a las personas mayores como

grupo ( $F=7.09$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Las otras dos puntuaciones (*bienestar afectivo* y *afecto negativo rechazable*) se explican por variables relativas a la relación entre quien cuidaba y la persona mayor cuidada.

Por su parte, las variables que explicaron una proporción significativa de la varianza del Índice Global de Actividades de la Vida Diaria fueron, en primer lugar, el *bienestar funcional* atribuido a su familiar mayor; en segundo, el estado mental de quien recibía los cuidados según su puntuación en el Mini-Examen Cognoscitivo (MEC); y, en tercer lugar, el número de enfermedades crónicas padecidas. Estas tres variables explican el 60% de la varianza del Índice Global ( $F=14.10$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Mientras que las variables que explicaron una proporción significativa de la varianza del Índice Global de Actividades de la Vida Diaria según el receptor/a fueron, en primer lugar, el bienestar funcional atribuido por el cuidador a su familiar mayor y, en segundo lugar, el estado mental del receptor según su puntuación en el Mini-Examen Cognoscitivo (MEC). Estas dos variables explican el 50% de la varianza ( $F=13.79$ ;  $p<.01$ )

Las variables que explicaron una proporción significativa de la varianza de la capacidad atribuida por el cuidador o cuidadora a su familiar mayor fueron el *bienestar funcional* atribuido a su familiar mayor, el estado mental, según el Mini-Examen Cognoscitivo (MEC) y la edad del receptor/a de cuidados. Estas tres variables explicaron el 59% de la varianza del Índice de Capacidad Atribuida según la persona que prestaba los cuidados ( $F=13.52$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Por su parte, las variables que explicaron una proporción significativa de la varianza de la capacidad que el receptor/a de ayuda atribuyó a sí mismo son el bienestar funcional que le fue atribuido por quien le cuidaba y su estado mental según el Mini-Examen Cognoscitivo (MEC). Estas dos variables explicaron el 45% de la varianza del Índice de Capacidad Atribuida según quien recibió el cuidado ( $F=12.25$ ;  $p<.01$ ).

La variable de autoeficacia sólo fue explicada, de forma significativa por el *afecto negativo aceptable* atribuido por el cuidador o cuidadora a su familiar mayor ( $r^2=.33$ ;  $F=12.57$ ;  $p<.01$ ). A su vez, la puntuación en la Escala de Satisfacción de Filadelfia, tomada como índice del grado de "bienestar psicológico", sólo fue explicada en una proporción significativa por la variable autoeficacia ( $r^2=.24$ ;  $F=6.88$ ;  $p<.05$ ).

Tabla 3  
Análisis de Regresión Múltiple

Variable Dependiente	Beta	t	r <sup>2</sup> ajustada	F
<b>Variabes Predictoras</b>				
<b>Bienestar funcional atribuido al familiar</b>				
Afecto negativo aceptable atribuido a las personas mayores	0.47	2.66**	0.19	7.09**
<b>Afecto negativo aceptable atribuido al familiar</b>				
Afecto negativo aceptable atribuido a las personas mayores	0.52	3.08*	0.25	9.47**
<b>Índice Global de las Actividades de la Vida Diaria (según el/la cuidador)</b>				
Bienestar funcional	0.46	3.63**		
Estado mental (MEC)	0.43	3.10**		
Estado físico (nº de enfermedades crónicas)	-0.30	-2.18**	0.60	14.10**
<b>Capacidad del receptor/a de cuidados atribuida por su cuidador/a</b>				
Bienestar funcional	0.48	3.70**		
Estado mental (MEC)	0.37	2.70*		
Edad	-0.32	-2.32*	0.59	13.53**
<b>Índice Global de las Actividades de la Vida Diaria (según el receptor)</b>				
Bienestar funcional	0.53	3.78**		
Estado mental (MEC)	0.43	3.06**	0.50	13.79**
<b>Capacidad autoatribuida por la persona mayor</b>				
Bienestar funcional atribuido por su cuidador/a	0.62	4.40**		
Estado mental (MEC)	0.31	2.22*	0.45	12.25**
<b>Autoeficacia percibida por el/la receptor/a de cuidados</b>				
Afecto negativo aceptable	-0.60	-3.55**	0.33	12.57**
<b>Satisfacción vital del receptor/a de cuidados</b>				
Autoeficacia	0.53	2.62*	0.24	6.88*



Respecto a las variables sociodemográficas, los datos fueron similares a los de otros estudios (e.g. INSERSO, 1995) en cuanto a la composición por género, con gran predominancia de las mujeres en ambas muestras; el bajo nivel educativo, especialmente el de las personas mayores; la convivencia permanente del cuidador o cuidadora y la persona receptora de cuidados; y el promedio de enfermedades crónicas que padecen las personas mayores.

A partir de los resultados podemos considerar que la Tarea de Asociación de Atributos resultó ser un instrumento útil y con poder predictivo para evaluar las diferencias entre las imágenes que quienes los/as cuidan tienen de las personas mayores en general y de sus familiares en particular, así como para comparar estas imágenes. Es interesante señalar que las dimensiones del instrumento coincidieron en gran medida con las dimensiones tradicionales de "evaluación" (Russel, 1989), "afiliación" (Atkinson, Heyns & Veroff, 1954) y "poder" (Winter, 1973), sobre las que se ha trabajado en el campo de la emoción y la motivación.

En general, existió una relación significativa entre los estereotipos sociales que mantienen los cuidadores y cuidadoras y las características que le atribuyen a su familiar mayor. La correlación más elevada fue la de las atribuciones de *afecto negativo aceptable* ( $r^2=.46$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Es decir, cuando los cuidadores o cuidadoras consideraban que las personas mayores estaban enfermas, débiles e incapaces de valerse por sí mismas, frecuentemente pensaban en los mismos términos respecto a la persona mayor a la que cuidaban. Aunque menores, también existieron correlaciones significativas entre las características de *afecto negativo rechazable* (e.g. egoísta, malhumorada, aburrida) atribuidas a las personas mayores como grupo y al familiar como individuo ( $r^2=.33$ ;  $p<.05$ ), y entre las de *bienestar afectivo* (e.g. satisfecha, sonriente, feliz, etc.) utilizadas en la descripción de las personas mayores y en las del familiar que recibía los cuidados ( $r^2=.31$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Por el contrario, el *bienestar funcional* atribuido en ambas condiciones (mayores como grupo y familiar mayor como individuo) presentó un coeficiente de correlación prácticamente nulo, es decir, no hubo relación alguna entre las creencias del cuidador/a respecto a si las personas mayores eran autónomas y capaces de valerse por sí mismas, y sus creencias

respecto a la autonomía y capacidad de la persona mayor a la que cuidaban. Probablemente, de los cuatro tipos de atribuciones que podían realizar los cuidadores y cuidadoras, el de *bienestar funcional* sea el más objetivable lo que explicaría esta ausencia de correlación. En definitiva, las características que más a menudo parecen atribuirse simultáneamente al grupo de mayores y al individuo mayor, incluyeron las que se refieren a enfermedad, incapacidad y dependencia.

También resultaron interesantes los resultados de la diferencia de medias entre los cuatro grupos de atribuciones a las personas mayores y al familiar que recibía cuidados. Si bien no encontré diferencias significativas entre el número de atributos de *bienestar funcional* y de *bienestar afectivo* seleccionados en cada condición, que describían a una persona mayor en general y familiar en particular, sí existieron en la utilización de los atributos de *afecto negativo rechazable* y en los de *afecto negativo aceptable* ( $t=3.94$ ;  $p<.01$ ;  $t=3.60$ ;  $p<.01$ ; respectivamente). Se puede entender, entonces, que para la descripción del grupo de personas mayores los cuidadores o cuidadoras utilizaron más adjetivos negativos que para la descripción de su familiar mayor, pero un mismo número de adjetivos positivos. En definitiva, existe una relación entre la visión de las personas mayores como grupo y del familiar mayor como individuo aunque, por lo general, la visión que el cuidador o cuidadora manifestó acerca del grupo de mayores tendió a ser más negativa que la referida a su familiar. Estos resultados concuerdan con los obtenidos en la tercera generación de estudios sobre estereotipos de la vejez, que utilizando una metodología más sofisticada que los trabajos pioneros, muestran que la gente puede exhibir una actitud desfavorable hacia grupos de edad en general pero no hacia una persona mayor en particular (Connor, Walsh, Litzelman, & Alvarez, 1978; Drenstedt, 1981; Locke-Connor, & Walsh, 1980).

El principal objetivo de este estudio era explorar las relaciones entre las variables sociales, cognitivas y comportamentales reflejadas en el modelo de Little (1988). Considero que existe continua retroalimentación entre los estereotipos sociales sobre las personas mayores, las atribuciones de incapacidad y las conductas de sobreprotección por parte de los cuidadores y cuidadoras, y el incremento en las conductas de dependencia concomitante a un descenso en los niveles de autoeficacia percibida de las personas mayores.

Las ecuaciones de regresión múltiple obtenidas me permiten afirmar que:

1. La visión que los cuidadores y cuidadoras tenían de su familiar mayor como una persona autosuficiente y activa o como una persona enferma y dependiente, tienen como principal predictor la atribución de características de afecto negativo tolerable a las personas mayores en general. Así, el hecho de caracterizar a las personas mayores como enfermas, débiles, incapaces, pasivas, o dependientes, explicó parcialmente la caracterización del familiar mayor por parte de su cuidador/a en términos semejantes ( $r^2=.25$ ), mientras que la edad, estado mental o salud física de quien recibe los cuidados no se constituyeron como variables predictoras de esta imagen. De la misma forma, el hecho de utilizar pocos adjetivos pertenecientes al agrupamiento de afecto negativo tolerable explicó, también en mayor medida que la edad, estado mental o salud física de la persona cuidada, la descripción de ésta por parte del cuidador o cuidadora en términos de independencia, actividad y capacidad ( $r^2=.19$ ).

Estos resultados concuerdan claramente con la idea de que los estereotipos más numerosos y mejor establecidos sobre la vejez están relacionados con una visión negativa de "fragilidad", "enfermedad" y "dependencia", por encima de otras imágenes sociales sobre las personas mayores, por ejemplo como aburridas y amargadas ("el viejo gruñón") o como afectuosas y apreciadas ("el perfecto abuelo"). Este hecho aparece confirmado en numerosos estudios de los estereotipos sobre la vejez (e.g. Bazo, 1990; Hummert, Gartska, Shaner, & Strahm, 1995; Koop, 1984; Vizcaíno, 1987).

2. La independencia funcional, medida a través del Índice Global de las Actividades de la Vida Diaria (GAVD), es explicable a partir de variables de naturaleza orgánica, psicológica y social. En lo que respecta a la información facilitada por el cuidador o cuidadora, las actividades de la vida diaria (e.g. comer, asearse, cocinar,) se explicaron a través de la atribución de características de *bienestar funcional* (independencia) por parte del cuidador/a a su familiar, así como por el estado mental y edad de la misma (el 60% del total de su varianza). Por lo que se refiere a la información facilitada por la persona que recibe los cuidados, estas actividades de la vida

diaria eran explicables por las características de *bienestar funcional* que su cuidador/a les atribuía, así como por el estado mental de quien recibía el cuidado (el 50% de su varianza).

3. Un aspecto importante del método utilizado fue el intento de valorar no sólo la ejecución de las actividades de la vida diaria, sino también su competencia para llevarlas a cabo. Ante la imposibilidad de obtener un índice objetivo que discriminara los niveles de competencia y actuación, opté por evaluar las percepciones que cuidadores/as y receptores/as de ayuda tenían sobre la capacidad de estos/as últimos para realizar por sí tareas en las que normalmente recibían ayuda. El hecho de recabar este tipo de información resultó útil para explorar factores no orgánicos intervinientes en la dependencia funcional. Tras los análisis de regresión efectuados, pude observar que la capacidad e incapacidad atribuida a la persona mayor por su cuidador/a se explicaba por tres variables: la atribución de características de *bienestar funcional* al familiar, el estado mental y su edad ( $r^2=.59$  para ambas). Dos variables explicaban las autoatribuciones que las personas cuidadas hacen sobre su propia capacidad e incapacidad: las características de *bienestar funcional* que le atribuía su cuidador/a y su estado mental ( $r^2=.45$  para ambas).

Estos resultados deben interpretarse atendiendo a dos cuestiones. Primero, en la dependencia funcional se encuentran implicados factores orgánicos inmodificables como el padecimiento de enfermedades crónicas y el deterioro cognitivo del individuo, y factores psicosociales susceptibles de modificación como las atribuciones de características personales por parte del cuidador o cuidadora a la persona receptora de cuidados. Segundo, la edad de la persona mayor se encontró relacionada con las atribuciones de capacidad hechas por sus cuidadores/as, pero no con las autoatribuciones de quienes recibían el cuidado, es decir, que las atribuciones de los cuidadores/as se basaban en variables internas y estables en mayor medida que las autoatribuciones de los/as receptores. Esta interpretación es cónsona con los hallazgos de Banzinger y Dreventesdt (1982) sobre la atribución, por parte de la población general, del fracaso de las personas mayores a la edad y no a factores tales como la mala suerte, la falta de esfuerzo o de habilidades, que se utilizan para la explicar el fracaso de las

personas jóvenes.

4. Por su parte, la autoeficacia de quien recibe el cuidado se explicó exclusivamente por la atribución de características de afecto negativo aceptable (e.g. enferma, pasiva, incapaz,) que realizaba su cuidador/a (33% de la varianza) y no por variables como la edad, el padecimiento de enfermedades crónicas o la independencia funcional de la persona para manejar su vida diaria. La satisfacción de quien recibía los cuidados se explicó exclusivamente por su nivel manifiesto de autoeficacia (24% de la varianza) y, nuevamente, no por variables tales como la edad, el padecimiento de enfermedades crónicas, la capacidad funcional en las actividades de la vida diaria o la calidad percibida de su relación con el cuidador o cuidadora.

Interpreté estos resultados, a través de las teorías encuadradas en el modelo cognitivo de la dependencia funcional. Los conceptos de autoeficacia (Bandura, 1986), control percibido (Piper & Langer, 1987) y etiquetado social (Kuypers & Bengtson, 1990), presentan una doble función moduladora en este sentido, ya que se relacionan por una parte con factores psicosociales externos al individuo (atribución de capacidad, ofertas ambientales, infraestimulación,) y, por otra, con factores conductuales propios del individuo (cogniciones, ansiedad, ejecución de conductas,). Estos conceptos se encuentran recogidos en el marco de "apoyo-eficacia" (Antonucci & Jackson, 1990), modelo teórico sobre la interacción entre las variables relacionadas con el apoyo social que recibe un individuo y su nivel de autoeficacia, y al que se ajustan muchos de mis resultados.

Como conclusión principal, puedo afirmar que los datos apoyan parcialmente el modelo de Little (1988), en cuanto a la existencia de una relación entre las atribuciones del cuidador/a sobre su familiar mayor y el nivel de autonomía personal de este/a último. La superioridad de éste enfoque para explicar el fenómeno de la profecía que se autocumple en relación a los estereotipos negativos sobre la vejez, en comparación con otros modelos está en su capacidad para integrar los dos factores conductuales fundamentales que intervienen en la dependencia funcional de las personas mayores. Uno de estos factores está relacionado con un ambiente sobreprotector, ya que al no existir oportunidades ambientales para que el individuo desarrolle sus recursos, la infrutilización de los mismos conlleva la pérdida de competencia

(Lawton, 1989). El segundo de estos factores tiene en cuenta las complejas relaciones existentes entre el control percibido y la autoeficacia del individuo con las expectativas del entorno respecto a su capacidad de eficacia y control (Kuypers & Begtson, 1990). Ambos factores y sus respectivas vías de retroalimentación se reflejan en los resultados de este estudio.

Estoy consciente de las limitaciones que impone el método correlacional, el reducido tamaño de la muestra y la ausencia de un procedimiento observacional para evaluar la capacidad funcional del individuo. En el futuro, las investigaciones que se desarrollen en la línea de discriminar y explicar los distintos factores implicados en la dependencia funcional de las personas mayores, deberán tener en cuenta la necesidad de un análisis más preciso de las variables que han demostrado estar relacionadas en alguna medida con la autonomía funcional y su pérdida, así como afrontar la necesidad de utilizar un método experimental para establecer relaciones causales.

Para concluir, la siguiente cita de Baltes y Reichert (1992) sirve muy bien como objeto de reflexión: "ya que la vejez es particularmente sensible a las condiciones ambientales, el tipo y la forma de envejecer característicos en una sociedad se convierte en un interesante criterio de juicio sobre la calidad de dicha sociedad" (pág. 252).

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## DEPENDENCIA FUNCIONAL EN LA VEJEZ

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# *El Lenguaje como Mediador del Pensamiento en Niños/as y Adolescentes Deprimidos y no Deprimidos<sup>1</sup>*

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## Compendio

Recientemente se ha planteado la necesidad de desarrollar una perspectiva preventiva para lidiar con la alta incidencia de depresión en la población estadounidense. En este trabajo señalamos que para trabajar con la prevención de la depresión hay que trabajar con las herramientas de construcción del pensamiento. El lenguaje es precisamente una de esas herramientas. En investigaciones previas se ha encontrado que el lenguaje está altamente relacionado con el pensamiento y el pensamiento a su vez, está relacionado con los estados de ánimo. Por tanto, podemos esperar que exista una relación entre el lenguaje y los estados de ánimo, como la depresión. En este trabajo realizamos un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo del lenguaje de niños/as y adolescentes sin sintomatología depresiva, con sintomatología depresiva, y de una muestra clínica de adolescentes con depresión. Analizamos sus respuestas escritas a la pregunta abierta que incluimos en la versión en español del CDI-Kovacs (Rosselló, Guisasaola, Ralat, Martínez & Nieves, 1991). No encontramos diferencias en la cantidad de cláusulas que escribieron las personas de los diferentes grupos. Encontramos diferencias significativas entre los grupos en el contenido de las cláusulas que escribieron y en la presencia de pensamientos negativos.

## Abstract

The need for the development of a preventive perspective to deal with high levels of depression among the population, has been presented recently. In this research we point to the need of working with tools for the construction of thoughts so as to prevent depression. Language is one of these tools. Previous research has shown that language is highly related to thought, and thought is related to moods.

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Thus a relationship between language and moods, such as depression should be expected. We analyzed childrens' and youths' language both quantitatively and qualitatively. The sample included non-depressed and depressed children and youth as well as a clinical sample of depressed youth. We analyzed their responses to an open-ended question of the Spanish version of the CDI-Kovacs (Rosselló, Guirasola, Ralat, Martínez and Nieves, 1991). and found no differences in the amount of responses provided by participants in the groups. Significant differences were found in the content of their answers and in the presence of negative thoughts.

**Palabras clave:** Lenguaje; Niños/as y jóvenes; Depresión  
**Key words:** Language; Children and youth; Depression

El propósito de este trabajo fue explorar el papel que desempeña el lenguaje, como sistema de signos, en la construcción del pensamiento de niños/as y adolescentes deprimidos/as y no deprimidos/as. Partimos de la perspectiva de que el lenguaje es parte integral de la construcción del pensamiento y éste a su vez de los estados de ánimo. Esta proposición tiene sus cimientos en dos modelos teóricos: el Modelo Cognoscitivo de Depresión (Beck, Rush, Shaw & Emery, 1979) y la Teoría Histórico-Social sobre el desarrollo de las funciones mentales superiores (Vygotski, 1987).

### Modelo Cognoscitivo de la Depresión

El Modelo Cognoscitivo de la Depresión en Adultos/as (Beck, et al., 1979) señala que la conducta y el afecto de las personas están altamente determinados por la forma en que está estructurado mental y lingüísticamente su mundo. De acuerdo a este modelo la estructura cognoscitiva de las personas afecta su proceso de codificación, almacenaje y recuperación de información. En el caso de las personas deprimidas, éstas tienen esquemas con sesgos negativos que les hacen filtrar selectivamente la información positiva y exagerar la información negativa. Esto a su vez provoca errores cognoscitivos que resultan en una imagen negativa de si mismas, del ambiente que les rodea y del futuro (Beck et al., 1979). Este modelo parte de tres postulados básicos: la tríada cognoscitiva,

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los esquemas y los errores de pensamiento.

La tríada cognoscitiva consta de tres patrones que la persona utiliza para relacionarse consigo misma, con su experiencia y con su futuro de una forma ideosincrática. En los estados depresivos la persona tiene una percepción negativa de sí misma. Se visualiza como inadecuada, enferma o con algún defecto por lo que se considera indeseable y sin valía. El segundo patrón de la tríada consiste en la tendencia de la persona a interpretar sus experiencias negativamente. Ve su entorno en forma derrotista, fracasada y carente. El tercer componente de la tríada consiste en una visión negativa del futuro. Esta persona anticipa que su sufrimiento continuará infinitamente, se siente desvalida y sin esperanzas (Beck et al., 1979).

Los esquemas en el Modelo Cognoscitivo de la Depresión representan la forma de organizar el pensamiento. Estos esquemas explican cómo y por qué se mantienen las actitudes negativas aún cuando predominen los estímulos positivos. Durante el estado depresivo estos esquemas están distorcionados en relación a la realidad y en condiciones severas la organización mental es autónoma, e independiente de estímulos externos (Beck et al., 1979). Los errores de pensamiento representan formas distorsionadas o incorrectas de procesar información. Los errores estriban en aceptar como válidos los conceptos negativos de sí misma y de su entorno. La persona deprimida generaliza la experiencia de forma extrema y categórica. En consecuencia percibe su experiencia como una de total deprivación y derrota, se siente no merecedora de la vida y se categoriza como perdedora.

En estudios recientes sobre la depresión en personas adultas se indica que los pensamientos influyen en los estados de ánimo. Burns (1992) señala que en el momento en que se tiene un pensamiento sobre algo y se cree en él este genera una respuesta emocional. En el caso de las personas deprimidas los disturbios emocionales son provocados por los pensamientos fundamentados en distorsiones de la realidad o por errores de pensamiento.

### **Modelo de Terapia Cognoscitiva-Conductual**

Existen varios modelos terapéuticos para trabajar con la depresión. Uno de los modelos de intervención más efectivos ha sido la Terapia Cognoscitiva. Un ejemplo de este estilo de terapia lo encontramos en el Modelo de Terapia Cognoscitiva-Conductual

desarrollado por Muñoz y Miranda (1986). Los propósitos principales de la terapia son: (a) disminuir los sentimientos de depresión, (b) acortar el tiempo que las personas pasan sintiéndose deprimidas y (c) aprender nuevas formas de prevenir la depresión mientras desarrollan un sentido de control sobre lo que les pasa. Esta terapia centra su atención en hacer que la persona descubra cómo los errores de pensamiento afectan y provocan un estado de ánimo depresivo. Este modelo parte de la interrelación entre los pensamientos, las acciones y los sentimientos. Propone que para trabajar con los sentimientos de depresión es importante identificar los pensamientos y acciones que influyen en el estado de ánimo, para así aprender a mantener un mejor control sobre los sentimientos. Las técnicas desarrolladas para la Terapia Cognoscitiva-Conductual incluyen un auto-monitoreo de las distorsiones cognoscitivas y una reestructuración del pensamiento a través de un análisis lógico (Jarret, 1990).

Múltiples autores y autoras han documentado la presencia de síntomas de depresión en niños/as y adolescentes (Bird, et al., 1988; Kovacs, 1989). En estas poblaciones se han identificado las siguientes conductas asociadas a la depresión: pobre ejecución académica, problemas en sus relaciones con pares, problemas de comportamiento y, en casos severos, suicidio (Worchel, Nolan & Willson, 1987). Existe un consenso casi universal de que el/la niño/a y adolescente que padece de depresión suele mostrar una serie de síntomas llamados directos tales como: tristeza, auto-imagen negativa, irritabilidad, tendencia al llanto, insatisfacción, desinterés, sentimientos de culpa y de rechazo por parte de los/as demás, preocupaciones mórbidas y fatigabilidad, entre otras (Birlson, 1981). Se han encontrado diferencias por edad en el perfil de síntomas relacionados a la depresión. Entre los niños y niñas los síntomas más comunes son: problemas en la toma de decisiones, auto-concepto negativo, peleas con pares y problemas con relaciones interpersonales. Para los/as adolescentes los síntomas más comunes son: baja autoestima, desatención en las tareas escolares y pérdida de apetito (Nieves, Rosselló & Guisasaola, 1993; Weissman & Klerman, 1977; Worchel, et al., 1987).

El Modelo de Terapia Cognoscitiva-Conductual ha tenido éxito en disminuir los síntomas de depresión y en acortar el tiempo que las personas pasan deprimidas, más no ha sido prolífico en el

desarrollo de modelos de preventivos para la depresión. Una posible explicación podría ser que el enfoque terapéutico como tal, es uno de intervención y no de prevención. Esto hace pertinente entonces, evaluar otros marcos teóricos desde los cuales sea posible conceptualizar y desarrollar modelos de prevención aplicables a la depresión, puesto que existe preocupación por el aumento en la incidencia de la depresión en los Estados Unidos en los últimos años (Muñoz & Ying, 1993).

### **Teoría Histórico-Social**

En la Teoría Histórico-Social Vygotski (1987) presenta un enfoque cultural sobre el desarrollo de las funciones mentales superiores. Postula que todas las funciones psíquicas superiores son procesos mediatizados y que los medios básicos que dominan y dirigen estos procesos son los signos. Uno de sus señalamientos principales fue presentar la función mediadora del lenguaje como signo en la conducta humana.

Vygotski estudió la posibilidad de la regulación de la conducta propia y la de los/as demás a través de los signos, que equivalen a los significados de las palabras. Analizó las funciones y el papel del significado de las palabras en el curso del pensamiento con la intención de ver cómo funcionan los significados en el proceso viviente del pensamiento verbal. Las ideas del modelo Vygotskiano han sido estudiadas empíricamente en los trabajos sobre la regulación verbal de las acciones, constituida por el proceso de reconstrucción del pensamiento y dirección de las acciones (Ramírez, 1987).

Para Vygotski el pensamiento no se expresa simplemente en palabras, sino que existe a través de ellas. Para poder abordar el pensamiento, Vygotski y sus colegas trabajaron con las palabras empleando el análisis de unidades. El término "unidades" se refiere a la parte que conserva todas las propiedades básicas del total la cual no puede dividirse sin perder sus propiedades. Para establecer la función mediadora del lenguaje como signo en la conducta humana, Vygotski partió de la perspectiva de que el lenguaje es un sistema de signos. Señaló que este sistema de signos no es determinante ya que en la evolución histórica del lenguaje los significados de las palabras sufren un proceso de transformación. Un cambio en el significado de la palabra equivale a un cambio en la relación entre pensamiento y palabra. Esta variación no sólo

cambia el contenido de la palabra, sino que cambia también el modo en que se generaliza y se refleja la realidad a través de ella (Siguán, 1987). Por consiguiente, el nexo entre la palabra (o un significado) y el pensamiento no es constante (Vygotski, 1987). La idea central de estos argumentos es que la relación entre palabra y pensamiento no es un hecho, sino un proceso, un continuo ir y venir del pensamiento a la palabra y de la palabra al pensamiento. En este proceso de ir y venir la palabra sufre cambios que pueden considerarse como desarrollos en el sentido funcional; un cambio de nombre significa un cambio de atributos característicos.

La postura vygotskiana de que el pensamiento se realiza en la palabra, implica remitirse al habla interna como instrumento esencial de mediación del pensamiento. En esta proposición de la teoría el lenguaje es la base sobre la que las personas construyen los pensamientos. Este planteamiento sirve de base para este trabajo .

El presente trabajo tuvo el propósito de estudiar la relación entre lenguaje y pensamientos, especialmente con los pensamientos negativos que pueden conducir a una depresión. Si los niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva presentan un lenguaje matizado de pensamientos negativos al comparársele con los participantes sin sintomatología, habría evidencia de la función del lenguaje como herramienta del pensamiento y por consiguiente de su utilidad para reconstruir el mismo. De esta forma, el lenguaje no sólo sería la herramienta, propiamente hablando, sobre la que se trabajaría para producir una modificación en el pensamiento de personas con depresión, sino que también podría utilizarse con participantes que presenten sintomatología depresiva para evitar una futura depresión y más aún para prevenir la sintomatología depresiva en poblaciones de alto riesgo. Pretendíamos obtener además, información cualitativa sobre las cosas que entristecen a niños/as y adolescentes deprimidos/as y no deprimidos/as.

## METODO

### *Participantes*

Participaron en esta investigación 157 niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva y 39 adolescentes de una muestra clínica para un total de 196 participantes. Seleccionamos a 157 participantes de entre una muestra de 503 estudiantes de dos escuelas públicas y dos privadas del área de San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Estos/as estaban entre las edades de 7 a 17 años y participaron por disponibilidad de una investigación sobre incidencia y tratamiento de la depresión en niños/as y adolescentes puertorriqueños (Rosselló, Guisasaola, Ralat, Martínez & Nieves, 1991).

Los criterios de elegibilidad incluyeron estar entre las edades de 7 a 17 años, tener autorización firmada de su padre, madre o guardián para participar en la investigación, y haber completado el Inventario de Depresión en Niños (CDI-Kovacs, 1983). Luego ubicamos a las personas participantes, de acuerdo al índice obtenido en el CDI, en el grupo con sintomatología depresiva (puntuación de 19 o más) o en el grupo sin sintomatología depresiva (puntuación de 11 o menos. Para ser incluido/a también debía haber respondido a la pregunta abierta "¿qué cosas te ponen triste?" que aparecía al final del Inventario. De los/as 503 estudiantes de la muestra total, 83 estudiantes con sintomatología y 74 sin sintomatología depresiva cumplieron con todos los requisitos.

Dividimos la muestra de 157 estudiantes en dos grupos: un grupo de 83 estudiantes con sintomatología depresiva: 45 niños/as (24 niñas y 21 niños) y 38 adolescentes (26 mujeres y 12 varones) y un segundo grupo de 74 estudiantes sin sintomatología depresiva: 30 niños/as (11 niñas y 19 niños) y 44 adolescentes (29 mujeres y 15 varones).

Constituimos un tercer grupo de 39 adolescentes (23 mujeres y 16 varones) con diagnóstico de depresión. Seleccionamos los/as participantes de la muestra clínica de entre una muestra de 48 participantes que formaban parte de otra investigación sobre modelos de intervención y terapia para adolescentes con depresión (Rosselló, 1993). En el caso de esta muestra clínica los criterios de elegibilidad fueron tener un diagnóstico clínico de depresión según el DSM III-R (ApA, 1987) estar entre las edades de 12 a 18 años, ser parte de la investigación sobre modelos de intervención y terapia para adolescentes con depresión, tener autorización escrita para participar en la investigación, haber completado el Inventario de Depresión en Niños (CDI-Kovacs, 1983) como parte del cernimiento clínico y haber respondido a la pregunta abierta "¿qué cosas te ponen triste?" que aparecía al final del Inventario.

### *Instrumentos*

Creamos la **Planilla de Categorías Temáticas** para efectuar el

análisis de contenido del lenguaje escrito de los/as participantes. Esta planilla sirvió para cumplir dos funciones: (a) categorizar por tema las respuestas de los/as participantes en relación a las cosas que los/as ponían tristes, y (b) contabilizar la frecuencia con la que fueron señaladas las cosas que ponían tristes a los/as participantes. Además, en la planilla anotamos el grupo de edad del participante (niño/a: 7-11 años o adolescente: 12-18 años), su puntuación en el CDI e identificamos si tenía o no sintomatología depresiva.

En la planilla anotamos el número total de cláusulas escritas y el total de cláusulas importantes identificadas por el estudiantado. Al hablar de cláusulas nos referimos a un conjunto de palabras que formando sentido cabal, encierra una sola proposición. Las cláusulas importantes eran aquellas que enunciaban el/los eventos que producen o pueden producir tristeza a los/as participantes. Para analizar el texto escrito empleamos un sistema de división por cláusulas. Esto nos permitió agrupar por temas todas sus respuestas generando las siguientes categorías: 1) relaciones interpersonales, 2) regaños y castigos, 3) desempeño académico, 4) ofensas y burlas, 5) rechazo, 6) soledad, 7) relaciones sentimentales, 8) problemas familiares, 9) falta de poder, 10) exigencias personales, 11) pensamientos negativos, 12) preocupación por otros/as, 13) problemas mundiales, 14) muerte, 15) enfermedad, 16) pérdida, 17) nada y 18) otras.

**El Inventario de Depresión en Niños** (Kovacs, 1983) conocido por sus siglas en inglés CDI (*Children Depression Inventory*), es una escala de auto-informe de síntomas depresivos desarrollada para niños/as y adolescentes entre las edades de 6 a 17 años. Esta escala se compone de 27 reactivos que presentan tres alternativas cada uno. Cada alternativa tiene un valor asignado de 0, 1 o 2. Las puntuaciones en este inventario fluctúan entre 0 y 54 puntos. El criterio utilizado para una sintomatología severa de depresión es una puntuación de 19 o más. Una puntuación entre 12 y 18 equivale a una sintomatología moderada, mientras que una puntuación de 11 o menos representa ausencia de sintomatología.

Un grupo de investigadoras puertorriqueñas tradujo el Inventario de Depresión en Niños (CDI) (Rosselló, Guisasola, Ralat, Martínez & Nieves, 1991). Los puntos de corte de la versión en inglés se mantuvieron iguales para la versión traducida del instrumento. Rosselló y sus colegas (1991) realizaron pruebas de validez concurrente y confiabilidad para la versión en español del

instrumento y encontraron un coeficiente alfa de .95 y una confiabilidad de .80. Le añadieron al final a la versión en español una pregunta abierta que lee como sigue: "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?"

### *Procedimiento*

Para realizar el análisis del lenguaje de niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva utilizamos los datos de los/as estudiantes que participaron de una investigación sobre incidencia y tratamiento de la depresión en niños/as y adolescentes puertorriqueños llevada a cabo desde 1990 (Rosselló, et al., 1991). Para el análisis del lenguaje de niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva trabajamos específicamente con las respuestas que ofrecieron las participantes a la pregunta abierta, que aparece al final del Inventario de Depresión en Niños, que lee como sigue: "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?" Verificamos los 503 inventarios que forman parte del banco de datos de la investigación y seleccionamos aquellos de participantes que cumplieron con todos los criterios de elegibilidad.

### *Análisis*

Utilizamos un diseño de dos grupos, un grupo de niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva (n=83) y otro grupo de niños/as y adolescentes sin sintomatología depresiva (n=74). Posteriormente comparamos el grupo de adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva (n=38) con el grupo de adolescentes con diagnóstico de depresión (n=39). Completamos una planilla de categorías para cada participante. En la planilla identificamos los textos correspondientes a las categorías que señalaron los/as estudiantes y también la frecuencia con la cual las mencionaron.

Realizamos varias pruebas t. Realizamos una prueba t para observar si existían diferencias entre la cantidad del lenguaje manejado por los/as participantes con y sin sintomatología depresiva y otra para observar diferencias entre la edad y la cantidad del lenguaje manejado por los/as participantes de ambos grupos. Luego realizamos una prueba t para observar si existían diferencias entre la cantidad de pensamientos negativos manifestados por los/as participantes con y sin sintomatología depresiva, e hicimos otro análisis para observar diferencias entre niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva en relación a

la cantidad de pensamientos negativos. Realizamos pruebas *t* también para observar diferencias entre los/as adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva y los adolescentes de la muestra clínica en relación a la cantidad de lenguaje manejado y a la manifestación de pensamientos negativos.

Posteriormente realizamos un análisis cualitativo de las respuestas ofrecidas por los/as participantes a la pregunta abierta: "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?" mediante un análisis de contenido y creamos categorías para ubicar sus respuestas por tema. Además, realizamos análisis de frecuencia por categoría para observar la frecuencia con la cual mencionaron las categorías en los grupos con y sin sintomatología depresiva; y para observar las frecuencias de las categorías entre los grupos de niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva.

## RESULTADOS

Analizamos las respuestas escritas que ofrecieron los/as 196 estudiantes a la pregunta abierta "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?" Identificamos un total de 645 cláusulas importantes: 220 cláusulas en el grupo sin sintomatología, 293 de los/as participantes con sintomatología y 132 cláusulas de los/as adolescentes de la muestra clínica. Presentamos la distribución por categorías de las 513 cláusulas importantes producidas por los/as niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva en la Tabla 1.

No encontramos diferencias significativas entre los grupos de niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva en cuanto a la cantidad de cláusulas producidas para señalar las cosas que los/as ponen tristes ( $t=1.71$ ,  $p>.09$ ). Tampoco encontramos diferencias en la cantidad de cláusulas producidas entre los/as adolescentes con sintomatología y los/as adolescentes de la muestra clínica ( $t=1.92$ ,  $p>.06$ ).

Observamos diferencias significativas entre niños/as y adolescentes en relación a la cantidad de cláusulas que escribieron al responder a la pregunta "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?" ( $t=-3.99$ ,  $p<.001$ ). En el grupo con sintomatología depresiva los/as niños/as produjeron un total de 113 cláusulas y los/as adolescentes un total de 180 cláusulas. Por su parte, los/as niños/as sin sintomatología depresiva construyeron 83 cláusulas mientras que los/as adolescentes produjeron un total de 137 cláusulas. Nótese que la cantidad de cláusulas producidas por los/as adolescentes es mayor

Tabla 1

Frecuencia y Porcentaje de las Categorías Señaladas por un Grupo de Niños/as y Adolescentes con y sin Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Con sintomatología depresiva (n=83)		Sin sintomatología depresiva (n=74)	
	Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Frecuencia	Porcentaje
Problemas familiares	41	14%	17	8%
Pensamientos negativos	35	12%	4	2%
Desempeño académico	30	10%	13	6%
Relaciones interpersonales	21	7%	13	6%
Problemas mundiales	20	7%	11	5%
Ofensas y burlas	17	6%	16	7%
Muerte	17	6%	20	9%
Rechazo	14	5%	6	3%
Soledad	13	4%	10	5%
Relaciones sentimentales	13	4%	12	6%
Regaños y castigos	12	4%	13	6%
Falta de poder	10	3%	10	5%
Preocupación por otros/as	10	3%	23	11%
Enfermedad	9	3%	8	4%
Exigencias personales	7	2%	14	6%
Pérdida	6	2%	7	3%
Nada	2	1%	5	2%
Otros	16	6%	18	8%
Total	293	100%	220	100%

a la producida por los/as niños independientemente de la presencia o ausencia de sintomatología depresiva.

Realizamos el análisis cualitativo de las respuestas ofrecidas a la pregunta "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?" para describir las fuentes de tristeza que identificaron los/as niños y adolescentes. Las cinco categorías mencionadas con mayor frecuencia por los/as participantes con sintomatología depresiva fueron: problemas familiares (14%), pensamientos negativos (13%), desempeño académico (10%), relaciones interpersonales (7%), y problemas mundiales (7%). Por otro lado, las cinco categorías señaladas con mayor frecuencia por los/as participantes sin sintomatología depresiva fueron: preocupación por otros/as (11%), muerte (9%), problemas familiares (8%), ofensas y burlas (7%), y exigencias personales (6%). En las Tablas 3 y 4 nos vemos ejemplos de las respuestas ubicadas en las cinco categorías mencionadas con mayor frecuencia por los/as participantes con y sin sintomatología depresiva respectivamente.

En la Tabla 2 podemos observar, distribuidas en categorías, las 132 cláusulas producidas por los/as adolescentes de la muestra clínica. Al observar la distribución de categorías por edad y la

Tabla 2

Frecuencia y Porcentaje de la Distribución de Cláusulas por Categorías en una Muestra Clínica de Adolescentes con Depresión (n=39)

Categorías	Frecuencia	Porcentaje
Pensamientos negativos	23	17%
Problemas familiares	19	14%
Ofensas y burlas	15	11%
Rechazo	10	8%
Relaciones interpersonales	9	7%
Relaciones sentimentales	8	6%
Preocupación por otros	7	5%
Soledad	6	5%
Falta de poder	5	4%
Pérdida	3	2%
Regaños y castigos	3	2%
Exigencias personales	3	2%
Desempeño académico	3	2%
Muerte	2	2%
Nada	1	1%
Otros	15	11%
Total	132	100%

presencia o ausencia de sintomatología encontramos que las categorías con mayor frecuencia entre los niños y niñas con sintomatología fueron: desempeño académico (12%), muerte (9%), problemas mundiales (8%), ofensas y burlas (8%), relaciones interpersonales (7%) y pensamientos negativos (7%). La sumatoria de estas frecuencias representa el 51% del total de cláusulas emitidas por este grupo de estudiantes. En la Tabla 5 podemos observar ejemplos de las respuestas ofrecidas por los niños y niñas con sintomatología depresiva a la pregunta abierta: "¿Qué cosas te ponen triste?"

Tabla 3

Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más Señaladas por el Grupo de Niños/as y Adolescentes con Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Respuestas
Problemas familiares	"no tener mucha comunicación a veces con mi mamá" "que mis padres estén peleando" "el hecho de que mis papás se hayan divorciado" "mi papá es muy agresivo conmigo, a veces me prohíbe mucho" "el que mi mamá tenga un compañero"
Relaciones interpersonales	"cuando estoy en desacuerdo con mi amiga" "que no compartan" "cuando me doy cuenta de que mis amigos han sido hipócritas" "cuando mis amigos me hacen sentir mal frente a un público" "cuando un amigo te dice algo y después no lo hace"
Problemas Mundiales	"que hallan tantos robos, asaltos y criminalidad" "la polución en el mundo" "matanza y soledad en el mundo" "la pobreza, hambre y miseria en Latinoamérica" "la injusticia que se ve en el mundo"

Tabla 4  
Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más Señaladas por el Grupo de Niños/as y Adolescentes sin Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Respuestas
Preocupación por otros/as	"si alguien que yo quiero está triste" "cuando veo abuso en niños pequeños" "cuando le pasa algo a algún familiar" "si un amigo tiene un problema y no lo puedo ayudar" "cuando sé que alguien usa drogas"
Muerte	"cuando mi abuelo se murió" "la muerte de amigos" "cuando las cosas no tienen solución como la muerte" "ver gente muerta" "cuando se muere un familiar"
Problemas familiares	"si hay problemas en mi familia" "que mi mamá y mi papá se hayan divorciado" "peleas tontas con mis papás" "que me molesta mi hermana" "que mi papá trabaja mucho y está fuera de la casa mucho tiempo"
Ofensas y burlas	"cuando me cogen de boba" "las bromas pesadas" "que me digan gorda pamplona" "que me insulten" "que me relajen"
Exigencias Personales	"que algo que planeé con el grupo salga mal" "si tengo problemas con mi entrenamiento" "no hacer bien mi trabajo" "fallarle a mi mamá" "cuando no gano un juego de supermintendo"



Tabla 5  
Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más  
Señaladas por el Grupo de Niños y Niñas con Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Respuestas
Desempeño académico	"vengo a la escuela porque me obligan" "sacar mala nota" "las tareas" "los maestros"
Muerte	"pensando que un día se va a morir mi abuela" "si se muere alguien" "cuando un familiar se muere" "ver gente muerta"
Problemas mundiales	"el que hay muchos crímenes" "los niños pobres" "la guerra" "el robo"
Ofensas y burlas	"que me insulten como flaca" "que me digan sobrenombres" "algunas cosas que personas me dicen" "que no me respeten"
Pensamientos negativos	"los que eran amigos míos me andan diciendo cosas sobre que soy gordo y me siento mal veces he pensado en matarme por eso, pero no me atrevo " "pienso que ya no soy importante para ella" "me pongo triste porque pueden pasar cosas que me pongan triste o no sé"

Tabla 6  
Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más  
Señaladas por el Grupo de Niños y Niñas sin Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Respuestas
Ofensas y burlas	"que me digan malas palabras" "las bromas pesadas" "que me insulten" "cuando me insultan de ser chiquito y flaco"
Regaños y castigos	"cuando mi papá o mi mamá me regañan" "cuando no me dejan salir a un sitio que se que me lo merezco" "cuando me castigan" "cuando me da"
Preocupación por otros/as	"cuando algún compañero sufre o le pasa algo" "que las personas se caigan" "los niños maltratados" "cuando veo a alguien llorando"
Problemas mundiales	"que maten a la gente y los ancianos" "la pobreza y miseria" "el que hallan tantos robos y crímenes" "El golfo Pérsico y la guerra"
Muerte	"cuando pienso en seres queridos que se han muerto" "cuando un familiar o amigo muere" "muerte de animales queridos" "cuando se muere alguien"

**Tabla 7**  
**Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más Señaladas por el Grupo de Adolescentes sin Sintomatología Depresiva**

Categoría	Respuestas
Preocupación por otros	"ver a los ancianos en las calles solos" "que un amigo tenga problemas" "cuando le sucede algo malo a algún familiar" "los niños maltratados"
Muerte	"cuando las cosas no tienen solución como la muerte de un familiar" "cuando se muere alguien que yo conozco" "cuando un amigo muere"
Desempeño escolar	"cuando estoy en desacuerdo con mis notas" "malas notas " "cuando me comparan con alguien por las notas" "cuando el maestro no falta el día del examen"
Relaciones sentimentales	"peleas con mi novio" "desilusiones amorosas" "el no tener novio" "cuando Paula no me mira, ni me habla"
Exigencias personales	"no hacer bien mi trabajo" "la responsabilidad de organizar actividades para la clase " "me molesto cuando algo no me sale bien" "fallarle a mi mamá"

Tabla 8

Ejemplos de las Respuestas Ubicadas en las Cinco Categorías más Señaladas por el Grupo de Adolescentes con Sintomatología Depresiva

Categoría	Respuestas
Problemas familiares	"que mis padres no comprendan ni compartan cosas de mi edad conmigo" "que mis padres me comparen con otros muchachos de mi edad" "la mala situación de mi casa por el alcoholismo de mi papá" "pelear con mi mamá y abuelita"
Pensamientos negativos	"que mi vida no tiene entusiasmo" "me molesta mi apariencia física" "tengo una habilidad terrible para de una forma u otra entristecerme" "que pienso en suicidio y no me molesta la idea"
Desempeño académico	"lo que me angustia es el correr de las responsabilidades académicas" "no sacar buenas notas en exámenes y clases" "a veces quiero mejorar en la escuela y después de intentarlo no logro hacerlo" "estar en esta escuela"
Relaciones sentimentales	"peleas con mi novio" "que — no me quiera" "que jueguen con mis sentimientos" "inseguridades que uno tiene con la persona que uno está o sale"
Relaciones interpersonales	"cuando me doy cuenta de que mis amigas han sido hipócritas" "discusiones y problemas entre amigos " "caerle mal a la gente" "que tengan doble cara para mí"

Los niños/as sin sintomatología señalaron con más frecuencia las categorías de: ofensas y burlas (16%), regaños y castigos (12%), preocupación por otros/as (10%), problemas mundiales (7%) y muerte 7%. Entre estas categorías se agrupó el 52% de las respuestas de los niños/as sin sintomatología depresiva en relación a las cosas que los/as ponen tristes. En la Tabla 6 presentamos ejemplos de las cosas que ponen tristes a los niños y niñas sin sintomatología depresiva.

Los/as adolescentes sin sintomatología hablaron con más

Tabla 9

Frecuencia y Porcentaje de las Cinco Categorías más Señaladas por un Grupo de Adolescentes de Una Muestra Clínica

Categoría	Frecuencia	Porcentaje <sup>1</sup>
Pensamientos negativos	19	14%
Problemas familiares		
Ofensas y burlas	15	11%
Rechazo	10	8%
Relaciones interpersonales	9	7%

frecuencia de: preocupaciones por otros/as (11%), muerte (10%), desempeño académico (10%), relaciones sentimentales (9%), problemas familiares (9%), y exigencias personales (9%). Entre las seis categorías más mencionadas por los/as adolescentes sin sintomatología se agrupó el 58% de todas las cláusulas producidas por estos/as estudiantes.

Los/as adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva mencionaron con mayor frecuencia problemas familiares (19%), pensamientos negativos (15%), desempeño académico (9%), relaciones interpersonales (7%) y relaciones sentimentales (7%). Al observar los porcentajes de estas categorías pudimos constatar que en estas cinco categorías estaba el 57 por ciento de todas las cláusulas producidas por los/as adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva. En la Tabla 8 incluimos algunos ejemplos de las respuestas ubicadas en las categorías de mayor frecuencia entre los/as adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva.

<sup>1</sup> Los porcentajes para las categorías de los/as adolescentes de la muestra clínica se obtuvieron a base de 132 que representa el número total de cláusulas producidas por los/as participantes de ese grupo.

Los/as adolescentes de la muestra clínica se refirieron con más frecuencia a las categorías de: pensamientos negativos, problemas familiares, ofensas y burlas, rechazo y relaciones interpersonales en este orden. Estos datos aparecen en la Tabla 7.

En este grupo apareció la categoría Rechazo entre las cinco categorías más mencionadas. Algunos ejemplos de las respuestas que ubicamos bajo esta categoría fueron: "que la gente me rechace", "que me saquen del grupo", "como soy no me aceptan", "cuando un amigo no quiere estar conmigo".

Encontramos una diferencia significativa en relación a la cantidad de pensamientos negativos manifestados en el lenguaje de los/as participantes con sintomatología y sin sintomatología depresiva ( $t = 3.67, p > .000$ ). Observamos una cantidad mayor de pensamientos negativos en el grupo de niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva. Realizamos análisis para verificar diferencias por edad en relación a la cantidad de pensamientos negativos en el lenguaje de los/as participantes con sintomatología. No hubo diferencias estadísticamente significativas en relación a la cantidad de pensamientos negativos entre niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología depresiva ( $t = 2.28, p > .026$ ).

## DISCUSION

Las diferencias que encontramos en cuanto al lenguaje de los/as participantes con y sin sintomatología depresiva están relacionadas al tipo de cláusula que enunciaron y no a la cantidad de cláusulas que produjeron. Los/as adolescentes de los distintos grupos produjeron un número similar de cláusulas. Por tanto, todos/as fueron tan comunicativos como sus pares sin sintomatología.

En cuanto a la cantidad de cláusulas encontramos que los/as adolescentes produjeron un número mayor de cláusulas que los niños/as independientemente de la presencia o ausencia de sintomatología depresiva. Estos datos son cónsonos con los modelos de desarrollo del lenguaje en los que se señala que el lenguaje va desarrollándose a la par con el desarrollo físico y cognoscitivo del individuo (Nannis, 1988). Estos resultados indican que el criterio de edad fue más determinante que la presencia o ausencia de sintomatología en relación a la cantidad de lenguaje utilizado por los/as participantes. Estos hallazgos sugieren también, que la presencia o ausencia de sintomatología depresiva no afectó la cantidad de lenguaje manejado por los/as

participantes. Las diferencias entre estos grupos no fueron cuantitativas, sino cualitativas.

Al analizar las diferencias más importantes en cuanto al contenido de las cláusulas notamos que los/as participantes con sintomatología depresiva señalaron consistentemente situaciones de dificultad centradas en su propia persona (pensamientos negativos, desempeño académico) y dificultades en el trato con otras y de otras personas para con ellos/as (problemas familiares y relaciones interpersonales). Este hallazgo concuerda con lo informado en la investigación de Worchel, et al. (1987). Observamos también, que los/as participantes con sintomatología no enunciaron con regularidad cláusulas que identificaran los problemas de otras personas. Este hallazgo sugiere que las personas con depresión o sintomatología depresiva, inmersas en sus pensamientos, se aíslan y no están concientes del dolor ajeno. De este modo pueden pensar que a nadie le pasa lo que a ellas. Esta actitud facilita el aglomeramiento de pensamientos negativos lo cual contribuye, a su vez, a un estado de ánimo depresivo.

Los/as participantes sin sintomatología señalaron frecuentemente sentir tristeza por los problemas que aquejan a otras personas. Además, mencionaron que los/as entristecen las ofensas y burlas recibidas, así como no haber podido cumplir con las exigencias personales. Este dato puede interpretarse como un indicador de un sentido de dirección propia y de metas necesarias para mantener una autoestima saludable. Es importante reseñar que este tipo de cláusula tuvo una frecuencia muy baja entre los/as participantes con sintomatología.

También observamos en los resultados que las categorías de rechazo y soledad, que han sido tradicionalmente relacionadas con la depresión, aumentaron en frecuencia en el lenguaje de los/as participantes según aumentó su sintomatología depresiva. De una posición 13 y 16 entre los/as participantes sin sintomatología estas categorías pasaron a una octava y novena posición entre los/as niños y adolescentes con sintomatología y luego a una cuarta y octava la muestra clínica. También hubo un aumento en la cantidad de pensamientos negativos en el lenguaje de los/as participantes según presentan mayor sintomatología depresiva.

Uno de los hallazgos más importantes es el de la presencia estadísticamente mayor de pensamientos negativos en el lenguaje de niños/as y adolescentes con sintomatología, así como en el

lenguaje de los adolescentes de la muestra clínica, en comparación con el de sus contrapartes sin sintomatología. Estos datos nos permitieron corroborar el fenómeno que plantea el Modelo Cognoscitivo de la Depresión (Beck et al., 1979) para adultos/as en relación a la existencia de una estructura cognoscitiva particular en las personas deprimidas. A esta estructura se le responsabiliza por filtrar los pensamientos positivos y exagerar los pensamientos negativos. En esta premisa se fundamentan Beck et al. (1979), para señalar que si la estructura mental y lingüística de las personas se caracteriza por pensamientos negativos sería consecuente pensar que su estado de ánimo, influenciado por este tipo de pensamiento, será uno negativo y pesimista. Este tipo de pensamiento se ha relacionado fuertemente con una imagen negativa de sí mismos/as, del ambiente y del futuro, que suele estar presente en las personas deprimidas (Muñoz & Miranda, 1986).

Podemos concluir que encontramos diferencias en relación a la cantidad de verbalizaciones sólo para el criterio de edad. Al comparar los grupos de niños/as y adolescentes con y sin sintomatología depresiva la diferencia no estuvo en la cantidad de cláusulas que dijeron, sino en lo que expresaron. Estos hallazgos del análisis del lenguaje (el cual consideramos como herramienta de expresión del pensamiento), sugieren que hay diferencias en la estructura del pensamiento de las poblaciones con y sin sintomatología depresiva. Podríamos señalar que el lenguaje, refiriéndonos a la unidad significativa, no tan sólo es el medio para expresar lo que se siente, sino que es la herramienta para pensar lo que la persona siente. Indiscutiblemente el lenguaje está altamente vinculado al proceso del pensamiento.

Vygotski indicaba que un cambio en el significado de la palabra equivaldría a un cambio en la relación entre pensamiento y palabra. Esta variación no sólo cambia el contenido de la palabra, sino también, el modo en que se generaliza y se refleja la realidad a través de la misma (Siguán, 1987). Este planteamiento sugiere que si el lenguaje se utiliza como herramienta de construcción del pensamiento, y podría utilizarse para deconstruir y reconstruir el pensamiento. Esto permitiría a su vez, modificar el pensamiento. Si la depresión puede disminuirse y hasta eliminarse a través de la modificación del pensamiento, ésta podría también prevenirse si la persona se concientiza de que el lenguaje, más específicamente las palabras, son enunciados impregnados de propiedades; son el signo



que representa una idea. Por lo tanto, las palabras que se utilizan para nombrar o describir algo son importantes, ya que por definición, le atribuyen propiedades a la situación o evento descrito.

Para dirigir esfuerzos hacia la prevención utilizando el lenguaje como herramienta hay que desarrollar estudios sobre el valor del lenguaje positivo. También se debe fomentar la flexibilidad léxica dirigida a facilitar la creatividad y el cambio ya que la relación entre estos factores puede enriquecer el pensamiento.

Como aportación de este trabajo sugerimos facilitarle a padres, madres y maestros/as las herramientas para identificar pensamientos negativos que puedan trabajar con sus hijos/as o estudiantes de forma cotidiana, mientras fomentan un lenguaje más positivo. La idea es sustituir el lenguaje negativo, que muchas veces resulta ser limitante y estigmatizador, por uno dinámico y creativo. Debemos trabajar con los niños/as y adolescentes para que comprendan la importancia del lenguaje que utilizan para conocer, describirse y describir su mundo, pues a la vez se describen y se conciben dentro de esos parámetros. Debemos fomentar la empatía, romper el aislamiento y facilitar que se expongan a la otra cara de la moneda. El lenguaje es un medio para representar y/o construir otras significaciones de la misma moneda.

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## ***Juventud y SIDA: Una Visión Psicosocial***

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El trabajo sobre el tema de las juventudes y el SIDA es central para comprender el curso de la epidemia y elaborar estrategias que nos permitan ser más eficaces en nuestros intentos por promover que las personas se protejan del contagio de este síndrome que nos acompaña hace casi 20 años. Es por esta, y otras razones, que la investigación juega un papel fundamental en la construcción del conocimiento, de manera que nos permite ampliar nuestras visiones de los temas que abordamos. Al mismo tiempo nos permite reflexionar en la marcha sobre preguntas de investigación tanto como de los resultados que de ellas derivamos.

El libro *Juventud y SIDA: Una visión psicosocial* es un libro que recopila diversas investigaciones realizadas en México, cuya población principal fueron estudiantes de la Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM). También incluyen una muestra de trabajadores y trabajadoras de diversas Secretarías del Estado y estudiantes de preparatoria. Los autores y autoras del libro discuten aspectos que van desde la etiología del SIDA hasta la propuesta de utilizar la teoría de acción razonada como vehículo para provocar cambios en las conductas de las personas y "explicar y predecir la transmisión del SIDA".

La organización del libro es muy sistemática. Presenta diferentes estudios en cada uno de los capítulos describiendo su método, instrumentos, resultados y discusión de los mismos. Esta organización varía sólo en los capítulos 1 y 9, los cuales dedican a

la presentación de la etiología y epidemiología del VIH/SIDA y al papel de la motivación como desencadenadora de conductas de prevención o de riesgo en las personas. En los capítulos 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 y 8 describen y discuten aspectos relacionados a los conocimientos, actitudes y creencias relacionadas a las prácticas sexuales, creencias sobre el origen del SIDA, actitudes hacia la muerte, la percepción de riesgo, el temor al contagio y el uso del condón masculino y la personalidad, valores y patrones sexuales. En los capítulos 9 y 10 destacan el componente motivacional y su relación con los hábitos, actitudes y presiones sociales, mientras que en el capítulo 11 presentan la combinación de los modelos de autoeficacia, acción razonada y el de fases de acción con la intención de poner a prueba un modelo integral predictivo para el uso del condón masculino.

En las investigaciones presentadas utilizan la técnica del cuestionario (con una combinación de preguntas abiertas, cerradas y escalas Likert) como instrumento para recopilar la información que comparten con el lector o lectora. Utilizan análisis estadísticos para generar los resultados, los cuales discuten brevemente. A ratos, el libro da la impresión de ser un informe técnico de las investigaciones más que un análisis profundo de la relación entre la juventud y el SIDA desde una perspectiva psicosocial. Los autores y autoras no trabajan ni definen la noción de juventud aunque implícitamente queda definida por renglones de edad. Aunque el título del libro hace referencia a la juventud, sus investigaciones son fundamentalmente con estudiantes, lo que deja fuera a las personas jóvenes que no participan en los sistemas educativos tradicionales (un sector amplio de la juventud). Sus conclusiones hacen referencia sólo a jóvenes estudiantes y no a la juventud mexicana en general.

Los análisis confirman la complejidad de las experiencias de las personas. Los mismos reflejan que nuestros comportamientos están integrados por una variedad de circunstancias, motivaciones, procesos, razones, sentimientos, creencias, conocimientos y valores que es muy difícil integrar en una sola investigación. Por ejemplo, examinemos algunos de los resultados relacionados a la personalidad, valores y patrones sexuales. Los autores y autoras señalan en el Cap. 8 que las personas que aceptan el uso del condón porque su pareja se lo pide, calificaban más alto en una escala de confrontación como pasivas-abnegadas, mientras esas mismas

personas calificaban, a su vez, como hedonistas-eróticas. En principio estos dos "rasgos de la personalidad", pueden considerarse opuestos, ya que una persona que considere que tiene valores hedonistas comúnmente se vincula con una persona que toma riesgos, es desinhibida e impulsiva. Esto puede apuntar en dos direcciones: por un lado a la complejidad del concepto de personalidad, y por el otro, a la necesidad de refinar las campañas de promoción de salud una vez comprendamos mejor la dinámica al interior de las personas, sus valores y sus prácticas sexuales.

Otro de los hallazgos que resalta el libro son las diferencias valorativas entre las personas que han tenido relaciones sexuales de penetración y las que no. En general, las personas que no han tenido relaciones sexuales muestran una actitud más negativa hacia la sexualidad, la muerte y el SIDA. Tener en cuenta estas diferencias es clave si se quieren realizar campañas de prevención que no sólo estén dirigidas a las personas que están activas sexualmente, sino a las personas que aún no lo están y que muestran actitudes y creencias que pueden ser obstáculos para que se protejan una vez inicien relaciones sexuales. En la actualidad, las escasas campañas de prevención no contemplan ese proceso de transición de personas que en cualquier momento tendrán experiencias sexuales y cuyas actitudes y creencias no facilitarán que se protejan.

El capítulo final del libro termina con una posición clara y bien definida de lo que es el hilo conductor de estas investigaciones con relación al papel de la psicología y la epidemia del SIDA. "La predicción de conductas es una de las tareas más importantes dentro del campo de la Psicología, especialmente cuando se hace referencia a la promoción y conservación de la salud" (pág. 163). Sabemos que la predicción como función de las ciencias se cuestiona cada vez más, debido a la complejidad de variables que entran en juego en la formación de aquello que decidimos estudiar. Sin embargo, aunque la predicción no se logre, son los procesos intermedios (el proceso propio de la investigación y la producción de conocimientos) los que provocan nuevas reflexiones y nuevas preguntas a profundizar. Estas preguntas y reflexiones van desde los objetivos de cada estudio hasta los métodos y técnicas que utilizamos.

Entre algunas de las recomendaciones que ofrecen los autores y autoras, a lo largo del libro, en cuanto a la Psicología Social, están: (1) la importancia de esta disciplina profundice en el estudio de

áreas como la de las creencias de las personas acerca de la sexualidad desde un acercamiento multidisciplinario, al tiempo que tome posiciones políticas con relación al tema de la sexualidad ante ciertos grupos de presión que han minado los esfuerzos para que se hable de este tema abiertamente y (2) la necesidad de crear políticas educativas que permitan la creación de programas de educación sexual y educación para la salud en las etapas de educación básica, tanto en el estudiantado como en la población en general. En cuanto a las campañas de prevención y las intervenciones mencionan, (1) tomar en cuenta lo ofensivo, atractivo y efectivo del condón en las campañas diseñadas para su uso; (2) la importancia de que en otros estudios se tomen en cuenta variables motivacionales, emocionales, atribucionales, así como de personalidad, para poder desarrollar programas educativos más efectivos e integrales que tengan como base factores psicosociales que sean predictores de conductas preventivas; (3) que se realicen intervenciones multifásicas que incluyan distintos medios y mensajes estratificados por las características de la población y (4) enfatizar que parte de la problemática relacionada con el diseño de programas de intervención radica en que la mayoría de las intervenciones no consideran datos empíricos o modelos teóricos que especifiquen claramente cómo es que las personas determinan su intención o conducta sexual.

Finalmente, la lectura de este libro está dirigida a personas que dominan las técnicas de investigación y el diseño estadístico, dada la manera en que están presentados los datos y el poco espacio destinado a la discusión. Sin embargo, tanto el diseño de las investigaciones como la discusión pueden producir en el lector o lectora importantes reflexiones sobre el diseño de las investigaciones como aspectos a considerar en las campañas que pretendan promover que las personas se protejan del VIH/SIDA.

## INSTRUCCIONES A LOS AUTORES Y AUTORAS

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Los manuscritos aceptados caen dentro de tres categorías:

**Artículos** (no más de 20 páginas incluyendo referencias, tablas y diagramas) que pueden incluir informes sobre estudios empíricos tanto cualitativos como cuantitativos, desarrollos teóricos, revisiones integrativas o críticas de la literatura y contribuciones metodológicas.

**Informes breves** (no más de 10 páginas, incluyendo referencias, tablas y diagramas) que pueden incluir experiencias profesionales novedosas, asuntos de política y adiestramiento relacionados con la profesión, o datos obtenidos en estudios preliminares, y

**Reseñas de libros** (usualmente por invitación) No pueden exceder 5 páginas y debe considerar los méritos del libro y su aportación a la psicología de las Américas.

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En cuanto a redacción la RIP fomenta el uso de un lenguaje inclusivo por género, raza, edad, origen nacional, orientación sexual, impedimento y otras características sociodemográficas.

La Editora sugiere el uso del término 'participantes' en sustitución del términos 'sujetos' de la investigación. Además, requiere se especifique en los artículos el procedimiento utilizado para obtener consentimiento informado de las personas participantes. La descripción de las características socio-demográficas de las personas participantes debe ser lo más explícita posible.

La Editora invita a los autores y autoras a redactar sus artículos utilizando la primera persona singular, excepto en casos de dos o más autores o autoras. De esta manera se reduce la ambigüedad de las opiniones personales y se evade el uso excesivo del "nosotros".

La Editora sugiere que los autores y autoras utilicen preferentemente la voz activa en tiempo presente.

En la medida de lo posible deben evitar el uso de regionalismos o tecnicismos.

### Presentación y Trámite

En cuanto a presentación, el autor o autora debe enviar cuatro copias de los manuscritos en papel tamaño carta (22 x 28 cms) a doble espacio y por una sola cara a la Editora (Irma Serrano-García, P.O. Box 23174 UPR Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00931-3174) y una versión electrónica en disquete 3 1/2". Esta debe estar en Word o Word Perfect para IBM o Macintosh.

Acusaremos la recepción de un artículo de inmediato e informaremos al autor o autora sobre el estado del mismo en un plazo de 6 meses. Para facilitar este trámite el autor o autora debe proveernos su dirección postal (tanto para correo regular como expreso), su número de teléfono y de fásimil y su correo electrónico.

Si un trabajo es aceptado para publicación, los derechos de impresión y de reproducción por cualquier forma y medio son del

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Las opiniones y valoraciones expresadas por los autores y autoras en los artículos son de su responsabilidad exclusiva y no comprometen la opinión y política científica de la RIP ni de la SIP.

Si el artículo requiere revisión el autor o autora lo recibirá con las indicaciones pertinentes y se le devolverá el disquete que envió. Una vez aceptado para publicación con las revisiones finales incorporadas, el autor o autora enviará una copia final en disquete 3 1/2". Esa copia debe contener exactamente la misma versión que sometió en papel. El disquete debe identificar el autor o autora principal, el título del artículo, la programación electrónica utilizada y la fecha. El autor o autora no podrá revisar galeras.

Después de la publicación el autor o autora principal recibirá 5 separatas gratis además de una adicional por cada co-autor o co-autora si los hubiese. Puede ordenar separatas adicionales, si lo desea, a un costo de \$2.00 cada una.



## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

### Categories of manuscripts

Accepted manuscripts fall into three categories:

**Articles** (no more than 20 pages including references, tables and diagrams) which can include research reports of qualitative or quantitative data, theoretical developments, integrative and critical literature reviews and methodological contributions.

**Brief Reports** (no more than 10 pages including references, tables and diagrams) which may include innovative professional experiences, policy issues, training, or data from preliminary or pilot studies, and

**Book reviews** (usually by invitation) No more than 5 pages. Should consider the book's merits and its contributions to psychology in the Americas.

The Journal will also publish articles which have received the Student Research Prize of the SIP (both at the undergraduate and graduate levels) and presentations of Interamerican Prize awardees. It will also publish Special Issues and Special Sections. Guidelines for these should be requested from the Editor and were published in Volume 33 #1.

### Editorial process and decision making

Manuscripts cannot be submitted to any other professional or academic journal simultaneously with the RIP. They must not have been published partially or in their entirety in any other publication.

Each manuscript will be submitted anonymously to three members of the Editorial Board. The author/s must make every effort to eliminate clues or suggestions from the manuscript that may identify them. Editorial board members will make suggestions regarding publication to

the Editor. The Editor will be responsible for final decisions regarding publication and will communicate them to the authors, with whatever changes need to be made, if any.

### Editorial style

The RIP will strictly follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (4th Edition, 1994).

1. Each article must include two abstracts (125 words) one in the language in which the article is written and another in one of the four official languages of SIP (Spanish, English, Portuguese, French).
2. The title page must include a footnote containing information about how the reader may communicate with the author/s. This information, as well as the author/s' name should not appear in any other page of the manuscript.
3. The use of footnotes is not encouraged.
4. All sources cited in the manuscript should be included in the reference list and vice-versa.
5. The title page should include 3-5 key words that will allow the article to be indexed in data bases.

### Writing style

The RIP encourages the use of inclusive language in terms of gender, race, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability and other sociodemographic characteristics.

The Editor suggests the use of the term 'research participants' instead of 'research subjects'. The procedures that were used to obtain informed consent from participants should be described. Their sociodemographic characteristics

should be presented as explicitly as possible.

The Editor invites manuscripts in first person singular except in the case of two or more authors. In this manner ambiguity regarding personal opinions is diminished and the excessive use of "we" is eliminated.

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Regional and technical terms should be avoided.

#### **Process for submissions**

The author/s should send their manuscript in US letter size paper (22 x 28 cms) double-spaced and on one typeface to the Editor (Irma Serrano-García, P.O. Box 23174 UPR Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00931-3174). The author should also include an electronic version with his/her first submission. The electronic version must be in Word or Word Perfect for either Macintosh or IBM compatible hardware.

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Once a manuscript has been accepted for publication, and all final revisions have been included,

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After the manuscript is published the author will receive complimentary reprints, and on additional one for each co-author, if there are any. S/he can order additional reprints at a cost of \$2.00 each.

## INSTRUCTIONS POUR LES AUTEURS

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Les manuscrits acceptés sont classés dans trois catégories:

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**Rapports brefs** (pas plus de 10 pages comprenant des références, des tables et des diagrammes) qui peuvent inclure des expériences professionnelles inédites, des affaires de politique et d'entraînement liées à la profession, ou des données obtenues dans des études préliminaires, et

**Comptes Rendus de livres** (usuellement par invitation) Ils ne peuvent pas excéder 5 pages et ils doivent considérer les mérites du livre et sa contribution à la psychologie des Amériques.

Outre cela, la RIP publiera les travaux qui se sont distingués avec le Prix Étudiantin d'Investigation de la SIP (tant de pré que de post-grade) et les Prix Interaméricains. Elle publiera aussi les éditions ou les sections spéciales. Vous pouvez solliciter à l'Éditrice les guides pour soumettre ce genre de publication, ou vous pouvez les chercher dans le Volume 33 #1.

### Procédure d'Édition et de Décision Éditoriale

Les manuscrits doivent être inédits et ne peuvent pas avoir été soumis à la considération pour publication d'aucune autre revue professionnelle ou académique. Ils ne peuvent, non plus, avoir été publiés complète ni partiellement dans aucune autre revue.

L'Éditeur ou Éditrice de la RIP le soumettra à l'évaluation d'au moins trois (3) des personnes integrantes du Comité Éditorial. Les auteurs s'efforceront de ne pas laisser des clefs ou des suggestions qui les identifient dans le texte. Les personnes du comité feront des recommandations concernant la publication du manuscrit à l'Éditeur ou Éditrice qui prendra la décision finale de la publication et la communiquera à l'auteur joint aux changements nécessaires s'il y en a.

### Style

Quant au style les textes doivent s'en tenir strictement au Manuel de Publications de l'American Psychological Association (4ème Édition, 1994).

1. L'article doit être accompagné de deux abrégés (125 mots), l'un dans la langue de l'article et l'autre dans un des quatre langues officielles de la SIP (espagnol, anglais, français, portugais).
2. La page du titre doit inclure une note en bas de page avec des renseignements pour joindre l'auteur au cas où le lecteur ou la lectrice voudrait ainsi faire. Ces renseignements, de même que le nom des auteurs, ne doivent pas apparaître dans aucune autre page.
3. Nous n'encourageons pas l'utilisation des notes en bas de page.
4. Tous les travaux cités dans le texte doivent apparaître dans les références et vice versa.
4. La page du titre doit inclure entre 3 et 5 mots clefs qui permettront d'identifier l'article dès diverses bases de données.

### Rédaction

Quant à la rédaction la RIP encourage l'utilisation d'un langage inclusif de genre, race, âge, origine nationale, orientation sexuelle, désa-

vantage et d'autres caractéristiques sociodémographiques.

L'Éditrice suggère l'utilisation du terme "participants" au lieu de terme "sujets" de l'investigation. En outre, elle requiert qu'il soit spécifié dans les articles la procédure utilisée afin d'obtenir le consentement informé des personnes participantes. La description des caractéristiques sociodémographiques des personnes participantes doit être aussi explicite que possible.

L'Éditrice invite les auteurs à rédiger leurs articles en utilisant la première personne singulière, sauf lorsqu'il y a deux auteurs ou plus. De cette manière l'ambiguïté des opinions personnelles est réduite et l'usage excessive de "nous" est évadé.

L'Éditrice suggère aux auteurs d'utiliser de préférence la voix active au présent de l'indicatif.

Dans la mesure du possible évitez l'utilisation des régionalismes et des termes techniques.

### Présentation et Démarche

Quant à la présentation, l'auteur doit envoyer quatre copies des manuscrits en papier à lettres (22 x 28 cms) à double interligne et d'une seule face à l'Éditrice (Irma Serrano-García, P.O. Box 23174 UPR Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00931-3174) et une version électronique sur disquette 3 pouces  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Cette version doit être faite en Word ou Word Perfect pour IBM ou Macintosh.

Nous enverrons immédiatement l'accusé de réception d'un article et nous informerons l'auteur sur son état dans un délais de six mois. Afin de faciliter cette démarche l'auteur

Doit nous fournir en son adresse (autant pour la poste régulière que l'express), son numéro de téléphone et de télécopieur, et son courrier électronique.

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Os manuscritos aceitos caem dentro de três categorias:

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Além disto, a RIP publicará os trabalhos que tiverem sido destacados com o Prêmio Estudantil de Pesquisa da SIP (tanto a nível de bacharelato como pós graduado) e os prêmios Interamericanos. Publicará também edições ou sessões especiais. As guias para submeter este tipo de publicação podem ser pedidas a Editora.

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Os manuscritos devem ser inéditos e não podem ter sido submetidos a consideração de nenhuma outra revista profissional ou acadêmica. Além disso, não podem ter sido publicados em sua totalidade ou parcialmente em nenhuma outra revista.

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### Estilo

O estilo deve seguir rigorosamente as instruções do Manual de Publicações da "American Psychological Association" (4a. edição, 1994).

- 1- O artigo deve estar acompanhado por duas sínteses (125 palavras), uma no idioma em que foi escrito o artigo outra em um dos quatro idiomas oficiais da SIP (espanhol, inglês, francês ou português).
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Quanto a redação, a RIP sugere o uso de uma linguagem clara que considere gênero, raça, idade, nacionalidade, orientação sexual,

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A Editora sugere o uso do termo "participantes" em substituição da expressão "sujeitos" da pesquisa. Além disso, requer que se especifiquem os procedimentos utilizados nos artigos com relação ao processo de conseguir consentimento informado das pessoas participantes. A descrição das características sociodemográficas das pessoas deve ser o mais clara possível.

A Editora convida os autores e as autoras a redatarem seus artigos utilizando a primeira pessoa do singular, exceto naqueles casos em que sejam dois ou mais autores ou autoras. Dessa maneira tratamos de reduzir a ambiguidade entre opiniões pessoais e também se evita o uso excessivo do pronome "nós".

A Editora sugere que os autores ou autoras utilizem de preferência a voz ativa em tempo presente.

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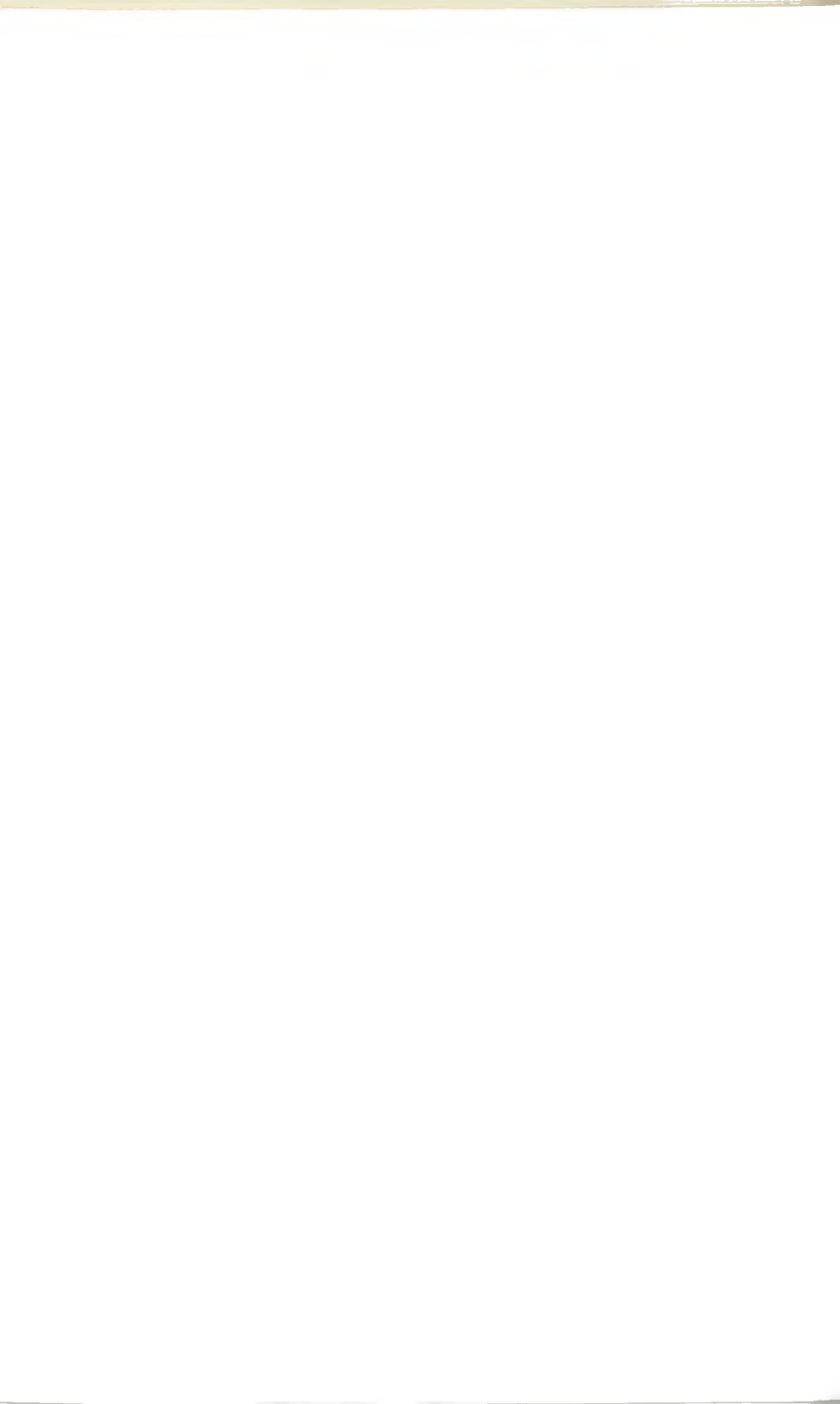
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