REFLECTIONS ON THE SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK AS A MECHANISM FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF RESILIENCE

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The person is born and lives in a network of relationships represented by: family, school, community, and work, among others. In these ecological environments people develop and achieve a diversity of social interaction places. The relationships between people and environments offer possibilities for support in times of change or crisis and can create opportunities for human development through the quality of the means of subsistence, employment opportunities, study, friendships, leisure, and relationships of support and affection. The social and emotional support provided by the relational network of people is maintained by affective bonds and depends on their perceptions of their own social world, competences and resources available for protection (BRITO; KOLLER, 1999).

The network of relationships seems to be in crisis in this world of constant transformation. Bauman (2004) stated that in the 1920s, a new era in world history was inaugurated, with the passage from the production society to the consumer society. According to this sociologist, the new, ephemeral and sometimes disposable model of society has created accelerated social transformations, in which there has been a detachment from affective bonds. These have become provisional and may lead us into situations of social helplessness that can create new crises. There is a detachment of the networks of social belonging, including family ties. According to the same author this apparent freedom has led to individuals suffering from pathologies such as: depression, loneliness and social isolation. The age of the relational disposability of man is being experienced, which can result in social exclusion. The social and affective support networks are affected, which is destabilizing the cohesion of the social fabric. For Bauman (2001), the integrating element of social cohesion has collapsed, in this time we live in, which he calls Liquid Modernity.

However, the crisis has another aspect, the opportunity for change, which motivates people, groups and communities to seek viable, sustainable solutions that generate empowerment, strengthening and resilience in individuals, groups and communities. Thus, we

must think of the possibilities for the promotion of individual and community resilience that may generate social transformation through the implementation of support networks, as the literature highlights that these allow expressions of resilience and promote the joint construction of solutions and the empowerment of social groups, as discussed below.

Social and Affective Support Networks and protection mechanisms

The support provided by social networks has been a study object for Psychology, due to the influence it has on the development and subjective well-being of people throughout their lives (BRONFENBRENNER, 1979/1996). According to Brito and Koller (1999), the social support network is a "set of systems and significant others, that comprise the received and perceived relationship bonds of the individual". The affective component was added to this concept, based on the undisputed and recognized value of the bond of affection for the constitution and maintenance of support and protection (BRITO; KOLLER, 1999; TAYLOR, 2002). Social support concerns the relationships that people establish in life that can significantly influence the definition of their personalities and development. The quality of interactions in different social contexts has been the study object of many researchers that have proven the positive or negative impact of the interactions on the physical and emotional health of people (BRITO; KOLLER, 1999; CYRULNIK, 2004; YUNES; GARCIA; ALBUQUERQUE, 2007). Lasting social bonds are important because they provide help in times of need, allowing coping and the overcoming of moments of crisis (BARUDY; DARTAGNAN, 2007; BRITO; KOLLER, 1999; TAYLOR, 2002). According to Taylor (2002), humans are biologically "designed" to be social and maintain relationships which in turn are also influenced by their biological aspects. Such constitutional aspects associated with environmental aspects can therefore be protectors and promoters of resilience (YUNES, 2003).

According to Brito and Koller (1999), the existence of links and relationships, and the performance of different roles allow the individual to develop emotionally and socially and obtain more resources for their satisfaction and mental health. The literature mentions three aspects that are crucial for "adapted" development: a) characteristics of the individual, such as: self-esteem, positive social orientation and autonomy; b) family environment permeated by affective bonds that generate family cohesion, and c) to have a network of social support available to help overcome crises that will inevitably occur throughout life (HOPPE, 1998; BRITO; KOLLER, 1999; YUNES, 2003). These three elements are compatible with what Masten and Garmezy (1985) called protective factors in the 1980's when they attempted to investigate the construct of resilience.

The support network concept, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996), should address changes that occur throughout life, not only in the people, but also in their ecological environment, their interactions and their growing capacity to discover, sustain or change the properties of the environment and their relationships. Thus, the evaluation of a social and emotional support network should be made through longitudinal studies that address the dynamic dimension of the development and the role of the individual in particular situations over the life course. It is known that the need for support increases in

determined circumstances and phases of life, for example, in situations of chronic illnesses, losses, traumas, or during important ecological transitions (BRONFENBRENNER, 1979/1996) and/or in old age. Such situations can be characterized as risk conditions depending on the circumstances associated with the individual perceptions and beliefs constructed in the different cultural worlds to which people and groups belong.

To construct and consolidate networks are processes intimately linked to coexistence. To coexist with others means to interact reciprocally, in mainly affective exchanges, which enable the development of the diversity of roles, change and balance of power, combination of views, physical contact, and mutual respect, among other elements depending on the situation. According to Bowlby (1988), an efficient social and emotional support network is associated with the prevention of violence and strengthening of competences, as well as a sense of belonging and higher quality relationships.

Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996) highlighted studies that emphasize the influence of affective support networks in the production of effective strategies in crisis situations. The efficacy of the network is expressed by responses with significantly reduced psychopathological symptoms, such as depression and feelings of helplessness. Without this network, the increased vulnerability of people faced with risk situations can be verified. Contemporary researchers have emphasized the fundamental role of significant relationships, of good treatment, of care, and of social and affective support for the healthy development of children and their reflections in the other life cycles (BARUDY; DANTAGNAN, 2007; BRONFENBRENNER, 1990; CYRULNIK, 2004; RODRIGO; RODRIGUEZ; MARRERO, 1993, RODRIGO; MAIQUEZ; MARTIN; BYRNE, 2008; RODRIGO; PALACIOS, 1998; BAUMAN, 2004). The importance of the family, good teachers or leaders and friends as health sustaining sources in people's lives has been often reiterated (BRITO; KOLLER, 1999; YUNES, 2010). Furthermore, several studies have confirmed the relationship between resilience and attachment (FONAGY, 2003; GANDRA; FARIAS, 2003) and with respect to this theme, the attachment theory of Bowlby (1988) stated that people need to form stable affective bonds and that interruptions and conflicts can result in psychological, psychosocial or psychosomatic disturbances. Bowlby (1988) also emphasized the importance of the initial bond between the child and its mother (or primary caregiver), stating that children with secure attachment see an image of themselves in the attitude of the mother/caregiver or other substitute figure. In adulthood people also direct their attachment behaviors toward institutions, religious groups, political groups, and working groups (GANDRA; FARIAS, 2003; VERGARA, 2008), which leads us to discuss the construct of resilience in its relational dimension, since the good quality and adequate functioning of a network of relationships can facilitate the healthy development of people and groups.

Resilience: a construct that results from the interaction between risk and protection

Some decades ago several Psychology researchers began to observe and study individuals and groups who, although exposed to traumatic, personal, family, and social

situations, managed to develop well and continue to grow in a healthy and adapted way (RUTTER, 1985, 1987; MASTEN; GARMEZY, 1985; WERNER, 1989). The "capacity" of individuals and groups to overcome adverse and traumatic situations is known today by the term resilience. This phenomenon, probably as old as mankind, was the way found by many people to resist the innumerable difficulties that have marked the history of human evolution

The majority of studies conducted by researchers in the field of Psychology and Developmental Psychopathology have aimed to discover and analyze the impact of traumatic factors, currently referred to as "risk factors" or "risk processes". These relate to the consequential negative effects of adverse conditions in people's lives (LUTTAR; CICHETTI; BECKER, 2000; MASTEN, 2001; RUTTER, 1999). The analysis of risk factors should not be performed in a static way, as they represent dynamic and subjective processes. Thus, the impact of these depends, for example, on the total number of risk factors that a person was exposed to. The time period, the phase of human development, the moment of the exposure and the context and severity of the exposure are also important for the person (ENGLE; CASTLE; MENON, 1996; RUTTER, 1987; YUNES; SZYMANSKI, 2001). It is noteworthy that the individual perception and interpretation of negative experiences, the meaning attributed to a stressor event and/or a relational environment perceived as adverse is what classifies it as a stress condition or not. For this reason, an event can be perceived as a danger by one individual and as a challenge by another (YUNES; SZYMANSKI, 2001). According to Pesce, Assisi, Santos and Oliveira (2004, p.137), "whatever it may be that constitutes a risk, it is possible to learn ways of coping from coexisting with individuals who experienced and overcame it successfully". Thus, the relational character of the concept of resilience, cited by numerous authors (CYRULNIK, 2004; WALSH, 2005; YUNES, 2010), begins to be dimensioned.

Another important element for comprehending resilience is the issue of vulnerability. This corresponds to personal sensitivities that potentiate the effect of risk factors (YUNES; SZYMANSKI, 2001). The vulnerable person feels unable to seek alternatives to face crises, or faces them inefficiently, under-using their coping strategies. Resilience indicates an effective positive response to overcoming a risk situation and a consequent "adaptation" and personal strengthening. For this, more than adaptation, current studies on resilience seek to comprehend the "positive" transformations that result from experiences of different forms of suffering that may even generate empowerment (YUNES, 2010). These transformations occur in the observation of protective elements, which will be discussed below.

According to Rutter (1987) the essential characteristic of the protective processes is to cause a modification of the response to risk processes that would be expected of the individual. They have four main functions: (1) to reduce the impact of risks, the fact that changes exposure of the person to the adverse situation; (2) to reduce negative chain reactions that follow exposure of the individual to risk situations; (3) to establish and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, through the establishment of relationships of secure attachment and the successful fulfillment of tasks; and (4) to create opportunities to reverse the effects of stress (RUTTER, 1987).

An important concept associated with protection and essential for comprehending resilience in individuals is that of coping (GARMEZY, 1988; RUTTER, 1981; YUNES; SZYMANSKI, 2001). Coping refers to individual, cognitive and behavioral efforts to deal with the specific demands of stress inducing situations and those evaluated as overloading or exceeding the personal resources (LAZARUS; FOLKMAN, 1985). These efforts can be directed toward adjusting the emotional state associated with stress or toward coping with the situation that gave rise to it. Coping strategies more focused on the direct confrontation of problems or the development of the difficulties are more encountered in individuals defined as "resilient" and can moderate the effects of adversities, becoming a protective factor. However, personal coping strategies alone will not guarantee resilience results, given the fact that the latter present a relational character and are not merely a solitary internal process.

Faced with factors that potentially generate imbalance for each individual, relational protection mechanisms may be necessary key points, or turning points (RUTTER, 1987), for the reestablishment of the lost balance and the demonstration of competence despite adversity. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the focus of resilience, initially centered on individuals was also extended to the family and community contexts (YUNES, 2003). It is possible to identify family members and communities who develop effective protection conditions to overcome adversity. For this, a paradigm shift is needed and studies about these situations should focus on the possibilities of the individuals and groups to overcome traumatic experiences and highlight their health potential, rather than focusing only on their impossibilities and the negative aspects, such as the diseases, symptoms, and deficiencies. This perspective is consistent with the movement called Positive Psychology, reported last century by Martin Seligman and many followers (SELIGMAN; STEEN; PARK; PETERSON, 2005). From the 1990s scholars began to focus on the positive and ecosystemic perspective of resilience, considering that the adaptation process would result from the dynamic between humans, groups and an accepting and positive environment (COSTA, 2005; BIAGRAS, 2007). The exchange between the individual, groups and environments are the more different possible, since the individual continuously interacts with the environment, suffering the impact of this, which, simultaneously, causes reactions in them (BRONFENBRENNER, 1979/1996).

According to Pesce, Assisi, Avanci, Santos, Malaquias and Carvalhaes (2005, p. 436), resilience can be comprehended as "the set of social and intrapsychic processes that enable the development of a healthy life, even living in an unhealthy environment". The relational focus on the processes that result from the interaction between the attributes of the person or group and their family, social and cultural environment is again noticeable. Thus, resilience can not be thought of as an attribute that is born with the subject, nor merely acquired during the development. These are interactive processes between the person and their environment in response to risk, with the same stress causing factors being experienced in different ways by different people. Resilience is not a fixed attribute of the individual (RUTTER, 1987; YUNES, 2001). Many authors emphasize that there is no consensual definition of resilience, with it being characterized in more operational terms than descriptive terms (JUNQUEIRA; DELANDES, 2003; PESCE; ASSIS; SANTOS; OLIVEIRA, 2004; YUNES, 2003).

However, for the purposes of this article, resilience is treated and referred to as a dynamic phenomenon that is constituted by a set of life processes that enable coping with situations of suffering, with consequent strengthening, personal transformation and overcoming of the adversity of individuals, groups and communities (YUNES, 2010). To study resilience only makes theoretical and pragmatic sense given the proven existence of the interaction of vital risk and protection elements, so that it can be developed by the individual or in systems such as the family, school, groups, communities and societies.

Family Resilience and its key processes

In the case of the nuclear family, it is known that all and any family member can be affected in some way by crises and stressful events. Some of these events are denominated by Kreppner (2000) as normative, predictable, coming from the cycles of family life (birth of first child, small children, teenagers, the departure of children, retirement, and old age, among others) and others non-normative or unpredictable and unexpected (death of any member, divorce, illness, unemployment, etc.). However, according to Walsh (1998, 2005), what distinguishes one family from another, is not the absence of problems or normative or non-normative stressors, but the way they face these difficulties and their competence to resolve them. Crises can stimulate the family system to develop skills and resources. According to the same author, the worst times can be the best, which means that one learns through adversity and that all humans can grow existentially with crises and conflicts if there are basic conditions (physical, emotional and environmental) sufficient for this. Yunes (2003) emphasized that one of the biggest impacts of the concept of family resilience is the deconstruction of static and pessimistic beliefs about the family movement and dynamics. It is important to highlight that family resilience is a relatively recent construct, in which studies have been led by Froma Walsh since the early 1990s (YUNES, 2003), culminating in her book being published in Brazil in 2005 from the 1998 original American version (WALSH, 1996 1998, 2005).

The family has been a neglected resource in interventions that stimulate the possibilities of resilience in children and adults and in their environments. According to Walsh (2003, 2005), in times of crisis the family processes may act as stimuli for the resilience or vulnerability of its members. However, it is not just the family that should be taken into account, as the resources of the different contexts associated with the family system are what may compose the "strengths or weaknesses" that affect the individual's adaptation and may increase or decrease the impact of risk factors.

For Walsh (2005), the term "family resilience" refers to the processes of coping and adaptation of the family *as a functional unit*. The author argues for a systemic perspective that allows us to comprehend how family processes effect stress and allow the family to overcome the crisis and face prolonged difficulties.

Walsh organized the knowledge in this area and proposed a conceptual overview including three domains: the family belief system, organization patterns, and communication processes[i] (YUNES, 2003). Interwoven in these key processes are other basic elements in family resilience identified by Walsh (2005) as: processes of cohesion, flexibility,

open communication, seeking solutions to problems in a shared way, and positive belief systems. For the author, in addition to these key processes, there is no static "model" of family resilience. Families have diverse resources, which they organize each in their own way when they encounter different particularities of life (family conflict, trauma, loss); destructive transitions (e.g., forced migration or a contested divorce), or chronic stress, such as disease conditions of serious disability or extreme poverty. Other key elements can be identified, such as trust among the family members, strong spirituality, mutual support, clear and transparent communication, and a collaborative spirit for the solution of problems. Important results of national and international studies on family resilience (DE ANTONI; KOLLER, 2000; YUNES; GARCIA; YUNES, 2007; LIBÓRIO; CASTRO; COELHO, 2006; MCCUBBIN; THOMPSON; THOMPSON; FUTRELL, 1999; YUNES, 2001, 2003, among others.) reiterate that the belief system is crucial, confirming that stated by Walsh (1996, 1998, 2005). The family as a unit that does not perceived itself as the victim of a determined situation and sees suffering as a shared challenge for all the members is likely to find, in themselves or in their ecological and community environment, healthy solutions that promote development.

Community Resilience: definition, indicators and interdependence with the support network

Community resilience is a construct that was developed in South America by Elbio Néstor Suárez Ojeda. His theoretical elaborations are the result of observations of disasters and calamities suffered in and by communities. This researcher found that at the same time as pain and loss of lives and resources are processed, these factors often generate a mobilizing effect on the supportive capabilities that allow the damage to be repaired and make recovery possible.

In Latin America, much of the research on resilience has focused on populations affected by poverty and discrimination, with interventions geared towards a social sense predominating. Accordingly, studies on community resilience, which will be addressed with more emphasis in this article, present specifically Latin American contributions to the knowledge of the subject, given that this region is historically the subject of social injustice and frequent natural disasters with social consequences. It is also a fact that public healthcare policies and support networks for at-risk populations are still fragile and inefficient which enables the study of the capacities of these people, of the population of a city or a nation to collectively overcome adverse situations (OJEDA; LA JARA; MARQUES, 2007, ROCCA, 2007). For Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007) the key explanations for resilience are not found in the individual characteristics, but in the social conditions, in the group relationships, in cultural aspects and in the values of each society. This aspect seems to be a strong indicator for the interaction of the construct of community resilience with the relational dimension of the existence or not of social and emotional support networks.

Barrientes (2003) states that the resilience of an individual affects the group in which he/she is inserted and can generate behaviors of collective resilience. This author

states that this has to do with the leadership that characterizes many of the "resilient" people as capable of, according to him, "infecting" those who are close. Some authors refer to "resilience tutors" or "development tutors" (CYRULNIK, 2004). Barrientes (2003) further states that the resilient groups are not necessarily composed of "resilient" individuals, but have an impact on its members, who learn from the resistance of the group and behave resiliently after their collective experience. It is a bidirectional or reciprocal relationship, as stated by Bronfenbrenner when approaching the main properties of interpersonal relations (1979/1996). Another author reiterated that "if there are conditions internal to each person that make it possible to construct resilience, this can also be done in the community, through the individual-collectivity reciprocal influence" (VERGARA, 2006, p. 707). This author cited examples of groups and societies that, in the history of mankind, collectively responded to overcome adversity, developing community resilience, such as Japan after World War II; the Jewish people in Nazi concentration camps; and the peoples of Central and South America. They all developed resilience to stay alive and developed, with the support of other people and institutions, elements that prove the need for significant relationships, when possible, woven into a network.

We can also cite other studies on the promotion of family and community resilience in response to major disasters (LANDAU and SAUL, 2004). The groundbreaking work of the Australian researchers Sonn and Fisher (1998, p. 6) in minority communities led them to state that:

> [...] This has resulted in labeling minority group adaptations that varied from this standard as 'deviant' contributing to the ignorance and misinterpretation of the coping systems developed by those communities and resulting in differences being interpreted as bad or evil.

These authors present a work that deals with resilience in communities, advocating that the concept should not be restricted to minority groups. According to Yunes (2001, p.51):

> [...] when it comes to groups that suffer oppression, the conclusion is that in contexts (settings) of activities such as the church, extended family, sports associations and other organizations, these groups develop awareness, participation, a sense of belonging and sense of community, being able to protect themselves as a group and propagate what is valued and central for their survival.

What the authors seem to mean is that these institutions and the persons associated with them, should communicate in a collaborative and pro-active manner having the common goal to accept and protect those who need to be protected. This is another connection with the concept of the support network as the social ground of protection for people, families and individuals in psychosocial risk conditions.

In summery, community resilience as the "collective condition to overcome disasters and situations of massive adversity and build on them" (OJEDA; LA JARA; MARQUES,

2007, p. 35) reveals the conceptual parallel of consistency with the definitions of individual and family resilience already presented. In the same sense the Fundacion Paniamor (2003b) pointed out that the perception of belonging to a community and having affinity with its values is part of the resilience condition.

Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007) highlight several challenges for the study of community resilience, namely: a) scrutinizing the interfaces that connect the concepts of community and resiliency, considering that both have a variety of meanings; b) migration of the construct from individual observations to a more holistic epistemological construct; and c) the search for definitions of the "community" concept that, due to having several meanings, has its application dependent on the meaning attributed to it.

Faced with these challenges, there are numerous positive aspects regarding the identifying elements of a community that enhance the integration and help to overcome crises and adversities without loss of identity and cohesion. Although Bauman (2004) did not make explicit references to the concept of community resilience, he outlined his ideas about the nuances of this issue faced with the difficulties of the modern world and the appeals of the market. For Bauman (2004), the community and the neighborhood are spaces of power and resistance in the current liquid modernity, characterized by behavioral patterns marked by individualism and especially by consumption.

For Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007, p.33), the community is "a group of humans united by a social bond that implies a shared cultural orientation that is central to their group identity". These authors explain that social bonds can be ethnicity, territoriality, religion and various cultural elements such as dialect, cuisine, or songs. They also emphasize that in contemporary times, the community sphere is essential in order to survive globalization. For the authors, the absence of structural communication, intrinsic to neoliberalism, can only be resisted through means of social networks, as they offer the sense of community. It follows that, for social interventions aimed at promoting resilience, it is necessary to maintain and strengthen the sense of community in order to enhance the efficacy of the actions.

An example of community resilience given by Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007, p. 33) is the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who joined in solidarity around a shared problem and managed to 'shake' the apparently unshakable structure of state-terrorism. Another current example of community resilience that can be highlighted is that provided by the Chilean people in the episode of the 33 miners who had been trapped for 69 days almost 700 meters underground in the San José Mine, in the Atacama Desert in 2010, and who, due to the solidarity of a nation, their family members and support network, came out of this traumatic experience in what seemed to be surprising good physical and psychic health. In Brazil, a very recent episode, refers to the death of 242 young people in a fire in a nightclub in Saint Maria, on January 27th 2013 and evidenced many indications of elements of community resilience, through the forms of support, solidarity and organization of the different communities of Brazil (and the rest of the world) in support of the families of the young fatal victims and those survivors who had suffered and are suffering the traumas of the experience (ZAPPE; YUNES; DELL'AGLIO, 2013; ZAPPE; YUNES; DELL'AGLIO, no prelo).

Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007) claim that much progress has been made in identifying the pillars of community resilience. According to these authors the pillars of community resilience are solidarity, collective self-esteem, cultural identity, social humor, and state honesty. These categories are defined as follows:

1. Solidarity is the adherence to a cause with a common end to all, with the communion of attitudes and feelings that make the group a solid unit capable of withstanding exterior forces.
2. Collective self-esteem refers to the people's attitude and feeling of pride in the place where they live, the satisfaction of integrating into the community and recognizing that they are part of a society, that they belong to it and share the values that it inspire.
3. Cultural identity is an interactive set of social relationships and symbolic heritage, such as customs, dances, values, idiomatic changes, going through changes, adverse and varied circumstances, and very different scenarios, that are incorporated over time and provide a sense of belonging.
4. Social humor is the ability developed by some groups or communities to maintain a positive outlook in adverse situations, a mature acceptance of common misfortune, that facilitates certain distancing in relation to the problem, allowing decisions to be taken to solve it.
5. State or administrative honesty is the honest and transparent management of public affairs, especially when it relates to aggregated resources for reconstruction and recovery after an adverse situation.

Ojeda (2005) believes that communities where there is high collective self-esteem and exaltation of their traditional cultures, are those that maintain a positive outlook during adverse situations and believe in the honesty of their rulers. Thus, they show a greater capacity for recuperation after experiences involving situations of adversity.

It is interesting to analyze the presence of these pillars in the example of the Chilean miners. There was the solidarity of the family, the nation, a worldwide mobilization and joint effort by government and community entities to overcome the disaster and improve the quality of life of the men faced with the circumstances until the rescue. The cultural identity of the Chilean nation and its self-esteem were stamped on the images transmitted by the media, in the Chile flags, their football teams and the national anthem sung movingly by everyone with their hands folded over their hearts. There was pride in the country because they were doing everything possible for the people, who were not despised for being workers. Regarding the collective mood, reports indicate that leadership emerged among the miners, an executive leader (Urzùa), a spiritual leaders (Pastor José Henriquez Gonzalez) and a leader of happiness (Mário Sepulveda). This was greatly stressed by the media and will surely be highlighted in the case of the fire in Santa Maria which should be the subject of future studies regarding ways to ensure a better quality of life for our communities and prevent new social disasters from recurring.

Ojeda, La Jara and Marques (2007) also highlighted negative factors, i.e., those that inhibit outbreaks of solidarity and the ability to overcome adversity, these being: 1) corruption - no population gives its effort or resources if it can not rely on the correct administration of them; 2) authoritarianism - inhibits the emergence of alternative and spontaneous leadership; 3) impunity; and, 4) collaboration with foreign forces, submissive admiration for all that is foreign as opposed to the cultural identity and collective self--esteem. For the authors, this list of negative factors could be considerably extended, however, those highlighted are the most frequent and seem to have more weight as inhibitors of collective or community resilience. The main studies conducted were in communities affected by disasters in three Latin American countries: Mexico, Chile and Argentina. However, other scholars have used this construct in communities and neighborhoods affected by factors, such as social misery and the vulnerability of their inhabitants, in order to generate conditions of community development, from social empowerment and the joint construction of solutions.

It is important to highlight that the factors that promote community resilience are being heavily subjugated by the current ways of life, as we are immersed in a society characterized by constant transformation, where changes constantly put us in a state of tension and warning, and demand that we adjust ourselves to the changes. If the current trend is maintained, the future panorama is of a gradual advance in the collapse of the social fabric, of the relaxation of the affective bonds and, consequently, of the ingression of a great number of people in to the category of vulnerable. Reflecting on the above leads us to think that if the five pillars of community resilience (solidarity, collective self-esteem, cultural identity, social humor, and state honesty) are not clearly implemented in the operation of the social and emotional support networks, the impact of the relationships will not be sufficient to achieve the goals of providing support, care and protection to users who can not be considered at fault, responsible, or revictimized because they are victims themselves of inoperative social systems.

Conclusions

We live in a time of uncertainty, which creates insecurity about community life and therefore we need more than ever to understand and strengthen the ways in which people can survive and live with physical and mental health in times of crisis and post-crisis that they will inevitably pass through. Resilience is a multifaceted construct (MARTINEAU, 1999; YUNES, 2003) and has emerged in Psychology and other Human and Social Sciences due to correcting pessimism and enabling more effective and optimistic reflections on forms of individual, family and community interventions. Resilience processes are shaped by the various forms, resources and limitations of the individuals, families, groups, cultures and so-cieties, as well as by the psychosocial challenges faced. The focus centered on resilience seeks to identify and highlight certain fundamental interactive processes that allow dissociative mechanisms to be supported in which restorative elements for healthy development emerge.

To study how psychosocial risks are faced in communities and by the community can serve to theoretically clarify the indicators that trigger these resilience processes in

the interface with the functional existence (or not) of social support networks, suggested in this text as essential elements of protection and care for others and their environments.

The consensus is that none of us are safe from problems over the course of life. Community resilience-based approaches are particularly relevant today, for science to help us comprehend the coping of groups faced with the rapid social changes, uncontrollable disasters and structural violence (MINAYO, 1990) experienced by individuals, families and communities today. Walsh (2005) proposes a family resilience approach aiming to identify and strengthen key interactional processes that enable families to withstand the disruptive challenges of life and to be reborn from them. This paradigm can help change the perceptions of families and communities at risk, i.e., not to concentrate on the failures but to direct their attention toward how they can succeed, transform themselves and transform their micro- and macro-systemic surroundings.

We can not fail to mention that currently there is a trend that, far from being the majority, favors another route, this being the pathway of cooperation, an attitude that emphasizes commonalities in a group to generate mutual benefits, solidarity and partnerships. This pathway proposes, for example, social transformation through changes in the ways in which society is organized, through joint partnerships and cooperation networks and through a break with capitalist society and alienated and oppressive ways of life. Environmental Education can foster the emergence of models of integration of struggles through agendas common among the human rights movements, social movements and environmental movements. The causes of environmental degradation and of crises in social relationships that impact on the lives of individuals, families, communities and the environments have a set of undeniably interconnected variables and therefore can only be treated systemically with the primary focus on the multiplicity and complexity of protective networks of social and cultural interactions.

Note

i   Um quadro foi traduzido por Yunes (2003) para detalhar um sumário dos processos chave da resiliência em família segundo Walsh (1998)

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK AS A MECHANISM FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF RESILIENCE

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta reflexões teóricas sobre os conceitos de rede de apoio social e seu possível impacto como mecanismo de proteção e promoção de resiliência. As redes de apoio social vêm sendo estudadas por diferentes áreas do conhecimento e são referidas como uma das principais fontes de proteção e de resiliência individual, familiar e comunitária. O texto apresenta as contribuições de teóricos da Psicologia para a construção da conceituação de resiliência, seus elementos relacionais e as suas conexões com as redes de apoio com especial ênfase na resiliência comunitária, ainda pouco estudada no Brasil e que tem como pilares: a solidariedade, autoestima coletiva, identidade cultural, humor social e honestidade estatal.

Palavras-chave: rede de apoio; resiliência; resiliência comunitária.

Abstract: This article presents theoretical reflections on the concepts of the social support network and its potential impact as a mechanism for the protection and promotion of resilience. Social support networks have been studied in different areas of knowledge and are referred to as one of the main sources of protection and resilience for the individual, family and community. This text presents the theoretical contributions of psychology to the construction of the concept of resilience, its relational elements and their connections to support networks. There is also special emphasis on community resilience, which has as its pillars: solidarity, collective self-esteem, cultural identity, social humor, and state honesty, still little studied in Brazil.

Keywords: social network; resilience; community resilience

Resumen: Este artículo presenta reflexiones teóricas sobre lo conceptos de red de apoyo social y su impacto potencial como mecanismo de protección y promoción de la resiliencia. Las redes de apoyo social han sido estudiados en diferentes áreas del conocimiento y se les conoce como una de las fuentes principales de la protección y resiliencia del individuo, familia y comunidad. El texto presenta las contribuciones teóricas de la psicología para construir el concepto de resiliencia, sus elementos relacionales y sus conexiones a las redes de apoyo con especial énfasis en la la resiliencia comunitaria, y que tiene como pilares: la solidaridad, la autoestima colectiva, la identidad cultural, el humor y el estado social de honestidad, sin embargo, poco estudiada en Brasil.

Palavras clave: redes de apoyo; resiliencia; resiliencia comunitaria