

Coexistence in Displaced and Relocate Communities

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Abstract

Objective: To diagnose the State of Coexistence in the Altos de la Sabana Community, located in the Municipality of Sincelejo (Sucre), Colombia. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** Research with a quantitative, transversal, descriptive approach, with a population under study made up of 2,182 households, of which – with a confidence level of 95% and an error of 5% – we obtain an optimal sample size equal to 327 households, selected from a systematic random sampling. For the analysis and processing of the information, descriptive statistical elements are used. **Findings:** After the application and analysis of the proposed diagnosis in the community of Altos de la Sabana, it was possible to demonstrate the existence of problems of coexistence within the conglomerate, demonstrated in conflictive dynamics and moderate participation in activities of community cohesion. From this perspective, problems of a personal nature prevail, with a moderate tendency to participate in activities typical of the cohesion among members of the community. **Application/Improvements:** In spite of the multiple aids provided to the communities that are victims of displacement in Colombia – within these, the relocation processes–, situations that threaten their physical and emotional wellbeing are still evident, due to the fact that they move to live situations of shock and permanent conflict with neighbors, which are in a similar situation.

Keywords: Coexistence, Conflict, Displaced, Participation

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of displacement has marked a large part of history in Colombia. The displacement has been generated, mainly, by violent actions of groups outside the law in places of settlement of peasant population, which have come to be recognized by the Colombian State as victims. They are considered within this condition, persons who have – individually or collectively – suffered damages, such as violations of Human Rights, which occurred as of January 1, 1985, in the framework of the armed conflict, in cases such as Homicide, Forced Disappearance, Displacement, Sexual Violations and other Crimes against Sexual Integrity¹.

“The modern socio-economic and political processes, the emergence of areas of instability, conflicts and even armed confrontations update scientific interest on issues such as the meaning of life, obligations, social

responsibility, human happiness and self-satisfaction. This interest is directly caused by a high risk of human development and a rather low level of satisfaction with life”².

On this dynamic, the Colombian State has implemented various actions, among which are: facilities in the field of education, humanitarian aid, and restitution of land and housing³. On the second type of restitution, structured communities are formed with displaced population, forced to live in urban environments, different from the rural spaces in which they have been a large part of their lives. In this sense, the families that have received the support had to leave aside, definitively, their territory. Under this situation, according to⁴ children, as well as their families, experience stress due to acculturation, which increases social risk, causing a significant reduction in the satisfaction of their basic needs? There is also a

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perception of deficiencies in the host community, as well as difficulties in relations with the inhabitants of the new place of residence and with the institutions that support the process of restitution of their rights.

In this regard⁵ it raises as a relevant element the implications suffered by the displaced as they are torn from the reference points of their personal and collective identity, which are framed in their memory, leading to the loss of residence not being just one absence of properties, but of all those elements characteristic of a tradition proper to each individual. Displacement – in addition to constituting material losses and evidencing violated rights – involves a set of interactions and subjective processes of negotiation, in which the denial or loss of social identity is evidenced⁶ because people are psychologically involved with the places that are significant in their lives, the basis of these links being a cognitive and an emotional dimension⁷.

On the other hand^{8,9} this indicates that from the moment people are displaced and reach a new place, they are integrated into their new lives as the only alternative of survival, creating relationships of neighborhood but also conflicts, and that is what will definitively mark the way of being and inhabiting the new territories. From this perspective, another part of the problem facing this type of population is evident, in consideration of the changes suffered in the lifestyle and environment, reaching an unknown environment, with different customs and dynamics; situation that generates an acculturative stress, understood as the phenomenon that the immigrant or group of immigrants experiences when it is in the process of adapting to a new culture^{10,11} and triggers conflicting circumstances that lead to problems of coexistence.

Similarly¹² this indicates that, from the perspective of conflict, the root of the conflict in neighborhood disputes is generated by the collision of interests and rules of coexistence, due to the need to share common spaces. In this regard¹³ argues that it is difficult to speak of constituted communities, because there are few relations of solidarity between neighbors and no sense of belonging, which has repercussions on weak social cohesion, giving priority to distrust and competition for access to goods and services, consolidating the sense of uprooting that accompanies the displaced and reinforcing feelings of loss due to the rupture of their network of relationships.

Given the difficulty of strengthening networks, situations that threaten the coexistence of the community

to which it is linked are manifested. And it¹⁴ establishes that Conflict and Coexistence are constant and interrelated variables, when analyzing certain communities and their process of social change. Thus, with the arrival of a new population and the accentuation of the residential movements of the old area to other areas, there is a concentration of population and a whole series of conflicts likely to favor the imbalance of the factors that guarantee coexistence, within a situation of normality in close and daily relationships.

In attention to the problems described and the characteristics of the population taken as a reference, it is worth highlighting the projects related to housing programs developed in the capital of the Department of Sucre (Altos de la Sabana Urbanization, Tierra Grata/Phase II Urbanization, Villa Orieta/Phase V Urbanization and Villa Karen Urbanization). The first one is the one with the greatest impact, due to the number of people it houses: according to¹⁵ it benefits 2,182 households, equivalent to 7,570 people. So, with the intention of corroborating the situation described, the Research Group of Social Sciences of the Corporación Universitaria Antonio José de Sucre, decided to make an approach to the community, posing as the main objective to diagnose the State of Coexistence and Management of Neighborhood Conflicts in the population described.

The importance of the process is that it allows finding timely information to propose intervention actions, mainly from the field of Psychology. We must bear in mind that, from the area, we have the social responsibility to develop strategies that contribute to the construction of a culture of peaceful coexistence, with adequate tools for the resolution of community conflicts¹⁶. From this perspective, it seeks to facilitate social change, with a process of awareness and participation of the people who make up the communities, respecting their diversity and differences.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Instrument: State of the Coexistence in Communities

To carry out the corresponding diagnosis, an instrument was used, characterized by presenting relevant questions

within its structure to measure the Conflict and Participation variables.

The first block is made up of questions with different scales, while the second one registers Likert scales questions, which allows carrying out a tabulation with information on the Participation variable and a description of various aspects in it.

The information is collected in the natural environment of the members of the community – selected randomly in each of the blocks that make up the study group –, and has been complemented by the leaders of the neighborhood group, considered important participants for the lifting of the information.

2.2 Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive study is addressed. In this regard¹⁷ suggest that the quantitative approach is characterized by using data collection to test hypotheses, based on numerical measurements and statistical analysis, with the intention of establishing patterns and testing theories. In this sense, the Survey technique was used as a research technique, characterized by a closed questionnaire, useful for measuring the variables Conflict and Participation in communities, aimed at heads of household (men or women), with the capacity to provide information representative of their Family nucleus.

2.3 Population

The selected population is made up of the homes of the Altos de la Sabana Urbanization, located in the city of Sincelejo, capital of the Department of Sucre. Population made up of displaced and relocated people, based on the housing programs proposed by the Colombian Government for a population victim of the conflict, where, according to figures from the Red Nacional de Información¹⁵, 2,182 homes are located. In the calculation of the sample, a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95% Exc.M is considered, and an optimal size of 327 households – in which the questionnaire is applied – is obtained.

2.4 Research Procedure

Initial Phase: A meeting is held with the leaders of the community under study, where, from a directed

workshop, an exploration is made related to the main problems present in that community. It is obtained, as a common core in the answers given by the representatives, conflicting dynamics between neighbors for situations in which the members must share a space or for lack



Figure 1. Meeting with community leaders.

of collaboration in activities related to community strengthening (Figure 1).

2.4.1 Second Phase

An analysis of the information obtained by the members of the Research Group is carried out and, based on the elements found; a closed questionnaire is prepared to be applied to the members of the community. From this perspective, an outline is drawn up, useful for carrying out the corresponding piloting in a community with characteristics similar to that taken as an object of study. It



Figure 2. Information gathering in the community.

is applied by students linked to Research Seedbeds, trained as Surveyors by the person responsible for the preparation of the instrument (Figure 2).

2.4.2 Third Phase

The information obtained in the application of the pilot test is detailed, making the respective adjustment of the questions. Then, from the consideration of experts, validation of the instrument is carried out. It is applied to the people referenced in the study sample and, finally, the definitive analysis of the information collected is carried out.

3. Results

The diagnosis made in the Altos de la Sabana Urbanization, by the Research Group of Social Sciences (Gincis) of the Cororación Universitaria Antonio José de Sucre, presents pertinent information for future interventions of said community, by groups in charge of carrying out research, to enable the improvement of coexistence in communities made up of displaced population. It has been taken into account that a holistic view of the variables Conflict and Participation is presented, important topics to determine the state of coexistence and the way in which the various situations related to the variables described are dynamized.

It is an opportunity to generate timely actions, consistent with the Psychology of Coexistence. Today, it is important to prepare proposals for peace, creating conditions to resolve conflicts peacefully, reducing the use of violent actions. In this context, it is pertinent to examine in what way and in what sense the professionals of

Psychology are contributing to reduce actions of violence in community settings¹⁶, strengthening, in addition, the necessary communication for the development of personality and life social: a violation of it and the family environment can cause a negative influence on a person¹⁸.

Initially, information related to the Conflict variable is reviewed, before which a description of the causes that generate conflicting dynamics is made, how often it is presented and actions taken by the community members to solve them. In this regard¹⁹, it proposes that community action arises from the need to resolve conflictive situations, which is essential for the group to progress and contribute to social development. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the topics considered in this variable is important, showing a real panorama of the situations present in the community referenced as an object of study.

In the case of conflict generating situations, Figure 3 shows that 42.5% of the surveyed population determined the nuisance noise generated in neighbors' houses as the main cause of conflicts within the community, and

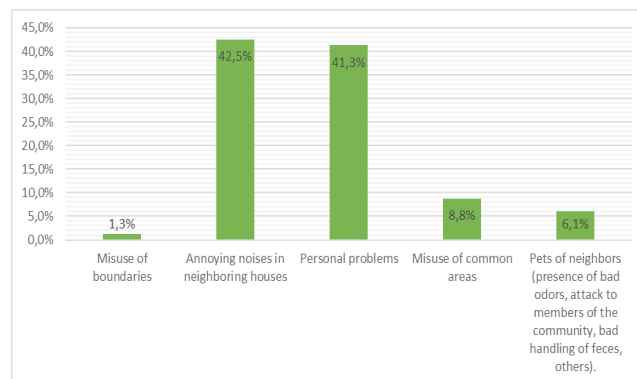


Figure 3. Causes of conflicts in the altos de la Sabana community.

Table 1. Frequency with which conflict generating actions are presented in the altos de la Sabana community

Answers	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Very rarely
Misuse of boundaries		4,20%		
Annoying noises in neighboring houses	36,00%	41,70%	52,20%	37,50%
Personal problems	40,00%	50,00%	43,50%	12,50%
Misuse of common areas	12,00%	4,20%		37,50%
Pets of neighbors (presence of bad odors, attack on members of the community, bad handling of feces, etc.).	12,00%		4,30%	12,50%
	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

41.3% % manifests, within this topic, problems of a personal nature. Regarding the frequency with which these situations occur, Table 1 shows that more regularly there are problems of a personal nature (50%), followed by annoying noises generated in neighbors' homes with 41.7%.

Regarding the measures taken by the members of the

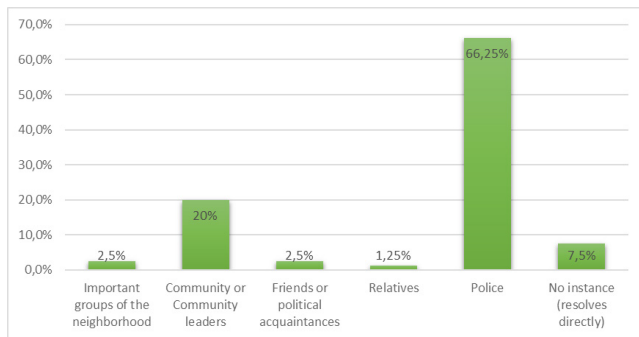


Figure 4. Instances to resolve conflicts.

community in order to solve the conflicts in Figure 4. It is specified – with 66.25% – that the main instance to which the members of the conglomerate resort is the Police, followed by 20%, where Communal and/or Community Leaders are manifested and considered as a support instance.

On the variable Participation, a consolidated record of the information obtained on each one of the questions that take into consideration the proposed activities within the community is presented, to allow the active

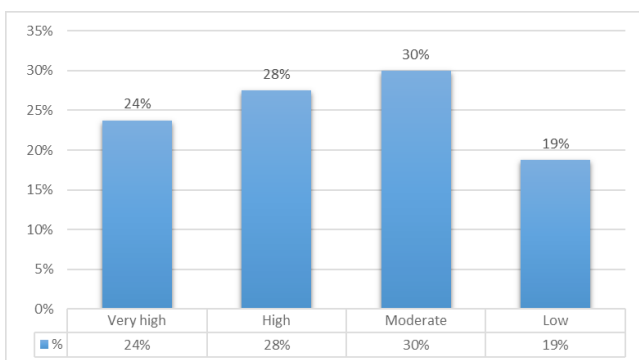


Figure 5. State of participation of the altos de la Sabana community.

work of each one of its members, represented in a useful scale for synthesize said conglomerate. Thus, in Figure 5, there is evidence of a Moderate Participation of the members of the community, 30%; followed by a High Participation, 28%; a Very High Participation, 24% and a Low Participation, 19%.

4. Discussion

According to²⁰ “Live together” is related to the ability to live together without risk of experiencing violent acts, with the latent expectation of positively taking advantage of differences, having as a challenge the tolerance of diversity. This implies a transformation of identities and their mechanisms of reproduction, so that, to have a strong identity or to preserve it, it is no longer necessary to deny the identity of the other, it is not necessary to exclude it. The possibility and usefulness of the coexistence of different society projects in the same community is accepted, and the extension of the scope of agreements is viable.

In this regard²¹ consider coexistence as a positive relationship of respect and communication, not free of conflict, in which tensions and problems should be addressed in a dialogue, negotiated or measured, without the need for verbal, psychological or physical aggression. It is possible to reflect on this, within different communities, from multiple dimensions or variables, where Participation and Conflictivity stand out.

The aspects highlighted from the research allow us to have a holistic view of elements that directly affect the state of coexistence; elements that are typical of the field of action of the Psychology of Coexistence, taking into account that Conflicts and Participation are directly related to democratization and the creative approach to the topic. Speaking of Psychology of Coexistence, means referring to the responsibilities of the psychologist to propose and develop strategies that contribute to reverse violent actions and build a culture of coexistence, allowing progress in a preventive and educational direction, which contributes to the democratization of society. Given this, the need arises to build ways to understand and strengthen processes, trying to overcome the negative discourse of violence and move to a creative language of coexistence²².

Faced with this panorama, it is important to approach studies that make possible to generate forceful changes within the development of communities, referencing the present problematic in a certain moment of its history, especially from the actions that show the state of the relations between each one of its members, to enable the generation of proposals that contribute to the solution of the difficulties identified. In this way, the concern for coexistence and diversity in the world finally leads to a change approach, insofar as there is capacity to detect where and how to change²³.

Likewise²⁴ it states that when individuals perceive the world negatively, with static, rigid and totally established realities, without the possibility of change, it leads to a community disappearing, or using the formula of adaptation and enclosing it. In this regard, Psychology – as an area of Social Sciences – must collaborate with the solution of these problems and invest their tools in a development perspective. Thus, within the dynamics of a community, the active participation of its members must be allowed as an element linked to human and social development.

From this perspective, the diagnosis made determined that the state of coexistence in the Altos de la Sabana community is regular, due to the high percentage of dynamics and conflicting actions among the members of the community, accompanied by a low level of participation in proper activities for the strengthening of social cohesion. This requires an in-depth intervention by areas that allow an appropriate approach to the problem, responding mainly with creative and useful dynamics that make possible the change of said reality, before which the field of action of the Psychology of the Community Coexistence is considered timely.

5. Conclusions

With the advance of this investigative process it was possible to demonstrate the existence of problems of coexistence within the Altos de la Sabana population, evidenced in conflictive dynamics and moderate participation in activities of community cohesion, by the people who are part of the conglomerate. The Psychology of Community Coexistence must be one of the areas of Social Sciences responsible for direct intervention within communities with characteristics similar to the one studied, considering its field of action and the strategies

it proposes within its *raison d'être* to improve the relations between members of the same community, taking into account the resources with which this account.

On the experience of addressing displaced and relocated communities, with the intention of diagnosing the state of situations that may be causing problems within the neighborhood, it makes it possible to generate a base of timely information for future interventions from research lines with tools to give a direct approach to the identified problem. In addition, it is important that the Colombian State consider taking measures different from those established with the population victim of the conflict, given that the situations faced by the displaced, after the relocation process, are not adequately addressed.

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