Analysis of Violence in Palestine as an Example of Bullying Behaviour

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The contextual model to understand "school bullying" is used to explain the relations between Israel and Palestine. A presentation of the model helps to understand the role of all the actors involved: aggressors, victims, observers and defenders, and the strategies used by each one to play these roles (Salmivalli, Huttunen, & Lagerpetz, 1997).

School bullying provides us with a contextual model that includes the victim, the aggressor (as a group), the observers and defenders, as all the roles including in this phenomenon. The application of this conceptual model to the relations between Israel and Palestine helps to understand the strategies and the effectiveness of the actions taken by all the parts (Lera, 2007).

From this point of view, the first issue to clarify is the definition of the roles. When the violence is committed intentionally against the victims, in a repetitive way, and under the basis of a relevant different of power between both sides, then the relation is a violent relation (not a conflict)(Smith & Sharp, 1994).

From any point of view the analysis of the situation shows that the difference between Palestinians and Israelis are enormous; one of them has the most developed army in the world, while the other side most of the time has to defend them with stones. The violence has been executed for over 100 years against the Palestinian population, and obviously all the attacks against Palestinians have been totally intentional and well planned by Israeli forces.

Given that we are analysing a violent relation (bullying), roles of parts involved are easy to analyse. From the perspective of the victims (Palestinians) they need to be provided with copying strategies mechanisms in order to carry on surviving under the constant attacks. These copying strategies are related to resilience, that means, a way to perceive the situation as it would be end sometimes; it is taken under sense of humour, and is based on the security and confidence under the feelings that Palestinians will overcome such tremendous situation.

From the point of view of the aggressors, the strategies most frequently used are moral disengagement mechanisms in order to be able to carry on such kind of deathly attacks against innocent people. That kind of mechanisms are strongly manipulated by the authorities using euphemisms like need to defend themselves, stereotypes and dehumanization of Palestinian people, blameless the victims for the consequences of the aggressors, and so on. Also the network made by the aggressors, the resources, economy, and the support of the most powerful group will be analysed, like the influence on the mass media, and the support of EEUU and Europe in their evil behaviours against Palestinians.

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As observers, people or institutions that just look at the situation without any actions against of them are also manipulated. An analysis of the process that keeps the observers just observing will be provided.

The last role is the defenders, actually represented by NGO and volunteers that under personal principles are trying to help Palestinians and denouncing the situation.

The perspective of the students at Seville University have been analysed from this perspective. A sample of 500 students from all the subjects has been analysed. In the questionnaire we asked them about their knowledge of the situation and which role will assign to each one involved. Results shown that most of the students have wrong information about the israel-Palestinian relations; in fact, most of them think that the different of power between both sides is not as big as is in reality. However, and spite these misconceptions, 80% of them assigns the role of victims to Palestinians, Israel as aggressors, and the UN as the observer.

From this point of view more strategies can be useful presented for the victims in order to help them to carry on. One of the proposals we have is to start school interventions supporting teachers in improving relationships with students, and increasing their self-esteem and confidence, so resilience will be also enhance. The proposal we have already started in Palestine is the implementation of Golden5 programme (see www.golden5.org).

Reference

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