LIFE ON THE STREETS

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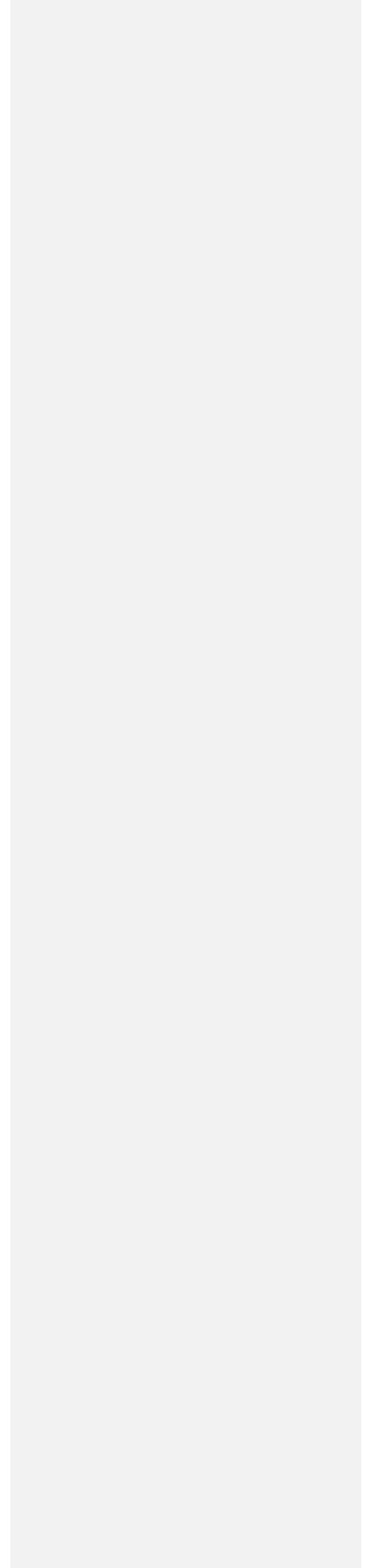
Preface~~sentation~~; Anselmo Lima from Terre des Hommes.

(Preface underway~~TO BE FINALIZED~~)

Introduction; Children and adolescents on the streets: inevitable trajectories? Irene Rizzini

We live in the first few years of the 21st century. Despite the promises of greater equality between countries, laid down in international treaties in the last decades of the 20th century, poverty, hunger and many illnesses are still rife. This period has been marked by important global movements: the democratisation of oppressed peoples, the end of dictatorships in most of Latin America and the fight against apartheid in South Africa, to mention a few examples. However, amidst the dominating discourse on human rights, equality and globalisation, the period has been marked by a growing distance between the rich and poor and by increasing social and economic disparity in the world.

This book is based on the life stories told by children and adolescents found on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Their trajectories are connected to the current historical moment of globalisation, which as the geographer Milton Santos puts it, is: "a moment of rapid transformations, of transitions and of a spatial-political reorganization of the world"[1]. These are the so called *meninos e meninas de rua, street kids, niños de la calle, enfants de la rue…* - common terms for a phenomenon that has become painfully visible since the 1980s.

The trajectories that we present and discuss in this book represent the lives of millions of children and adolescents in the world. Are their life trajectories inevitable? This question will guide our analysis.

The group upon which we focus in this book is part of a larger contingent of people who migrate, are dislocated or exiled from their places of origin – one of the most notable characteristics of the current times. They are living examples of the contradictions of our times, between the emerging discourse rights and the real aggravated situation of socio-economic inequality. The rights of children and adolescents to live with their families and communities is defended, yet they are not given the minimum conditions for a dignified existence and to remain in their homes[2]. In fact, the opposite appears in their statements, they appear to be born without a place in the world. Their lives are marked from the beginning by continuous adversities, forcing them towards inhuman circumstances that make up the background of their trajectories. Though they live on the street with a hunger for life, their stories are marked by death, disasters, losses, hunger and a lack of options and support.

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[1] Santos, M. *Metamorfoses do espaço habitado.* São Paulo: Huitec, 1996.
[2] About rights see: United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Brazil's Child and Adolescent Statute (1990).

This book is based on a concern with the lives of these youngsters. It tries to capture in their words and way of expressing themselves how they see their predicament and the paths they have taken. The book arises with the intention of informing actions, it came about through a process of the creation of a network of organizations in Rio de Janeiro who were to work in concert with the population of children and adolescents in a street situation, the Rede Rio Criança. The research on which this book is based was initiated by the Swiss organization Terre des hommes, who sought out CIESPI to carry out the research[3]. We set off from the idea of producing material that was completely based on the voice of children and adolescents, involving institutions and social educators in a participative process of developing and executing the research. The first product of the research – a report – was debated in a seminar, with the participation of many institutions from Rio de Janeiro, Ricardo Lucchini, from the University of Fribourg, and Daniel Stoecklin, from Terre des hommes, the two being very involved in the reflection and practice of these themes in an international dimension[4]. The book tries to capture this process of learning and of growing sensitivity, respecting the points of view of the children and of the adults who are part of their lives.

We have divided the book into two parts; the first titled *Lives on the Street* begins with a chapter by Irene Rizzini and Udi Mandel Butler revisiting the literature on "street children" over the last two decades, highlighting the main themes in the Brazilian literature and connecting these with relevant international debates. This is followed by chapters by Riccardo Lucchini and Daniel Stoecklin, based on research experience with children and adolescents in a street situation in a number of countries in Latin America, Europe and Asia, which complements the literature review offering ways of deepening our analysis of this present theme.

In the second part of the book, we contextualize these analyses through the observations and interviews with boys and girls we found on the streets and in shelters in Rio de Janeiro. With the title *Life trajectories of children and adolescents on the streets of Rio de Janeiro*, the research team at CIESPI, composed by Alexandre Bárbara Soares, Aline de Carvalho Martins, Udi Mandel Butler and Paula Caldeira, outlines the research experience together with professionals from the Rede Rio Criança. The life stories that were entrusted to us are the source of inspiration for the book as a whole.

For many years we have followed the trajectories of children and adolescents like those portrayed in this book. Not only Brazilian children, but also many throughout the world who

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[3] The research took place from October 2001 to January 2002.
[4] The work of the Fondation Terre des hommes has been inspired by working method termed Child Street System – derived from the research carried out by professor Lucchini and adapted by Stoecklin as a practice in social action, for more on this method see chapters 2 and 3.

move between their homes, the streets and institutions, seeking protection and a sense of belonging. There are many broader political issues that determine the excluding factors that affect the lives of these youngsters and of their families[5]. However, this kind of statement suggests that there is nothing that can be done to change the situation. We do not believe this, basing ourselves on the experience related by children and adolescents[6]. Despite their constant exposure to frustrations and disappointments, they are still hopeful and show awareness and lucidity when reflecting on their lives:

> Society doesn't understand our side. I know that we are wrong in being on the street, but sometimes society makes us get into drugs more quickly, understand? (…) I think that everybody deserves a chance in life. Not only one, many! But you have to take hold of them (Sabrina, 15 years old).

> If I was president? I would do so many good things… (Waldyr, 17 years old).

> …I would help the street children go back home. I would like to help the poor… I would like there to be no drug dealing on the street. I would like there to be peace (Derico, 12 years old).

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[5] Some of these factors are addressed in the first half of the book. See also: Fletes, Ricardo and Rizzini, Irene *Rio-Guadalajara. Paralelisnons en el proceso de marginación y niños de calle*.
[6] It was a priority in the process of the research to value the voices of the children and adolescents. In this way the team, Terre des hommes and the Rede Rio Criança undertook the publication of a book for children and adolescents based on the research. The books is: *A rua no ar: histórias de adolescentes* published in January 2003.

Part I - Life on the Streets

Chapter 1; Children and adolescents living and working on the streets: revisiting the literature. Irene Rizzini and Udi Mandel Butler

Introduction

Are there 'street children' in all the world's cities? If we base our answer on the academic literature and the media we would say yes. At least we can say that children and adolescents live on the streets of every country in the world and that this has been a subject of great concern. In the last decades of the twentieth century this subject gained great visibility and up to the present is treated as an unresolved problem.

In this chapter we will discuss some of the main themes found in the Brazilian academic literature over the last two decades. Where possible we will trace the links with other regions taking on board the international debate. We will see that some of the trends in the debates have crossed international borders despite cultural differences, as in the 'street child' of Oslo, the '*menino de rua*' Rio, or the '*gamine*' of Bogota. The literature shows that there are more similarities than we had imagined, in particular in the way in which each society looks, describes and interprets this phenomenon. Rather than establishing parallels between what is known about this group in different countries, our intention here is to revisit the Brazilian literature and the overlapping contributions from the international literature to reflect upon what these tendencies have taught us.

For conceptual clarity we would like to add that when we refer to 'street children' (*meninos/meninas de rua* – literally street boys/girls), we are speaking of children and adolescents seen on the streets of the city without their families. Generally, they survive on the street, spending some hours each day in an activity that provides them some income, or living on the streets and in the temporary shelter of an institution. The presence of children on the street in this form is nothing new. There are registers dating back at least to the nineteenth century of children who drew attention by being "physically and morally abandoned on the streets" (Rizzini: 1997). Gilberto Freyre, for instance, refers to the *moleques* (street urchins) in his book *Casa Grande e Senzala* of 1930 (Hecht: 1995). However, this topic has gained international attention over the last few decades. Even though there have been constant reports as to the increase in numbers of children and adolescents living in such conditions, there is little evidence, apart from during periods of acute economic and social instability such as that between the late 1970's to the mid 1980's, that this is indeed the case (Ennew & Connolly: 1996).

The national and international literature that has debated this question presents various analyses according to the different realities and historical moments. Despite these differences there is a consensus that the children and adolescents who survive on the street comprise one of the more cruel and unjust expression of poverty and inequality, for reasons that we outline in this chapter.

Visibility: the emergence of *street children* in Brazil

From the 1970s attention towards the 'problem' popularly known as '*the abandoned minor*' grew in Brazil. For many, this time is seen as a period of crisis and transformations both in Brazil and in the global economy (Faria 1991, Rizzini & Rizzini 1991, Swift 1991). It is a time in which social and democratic movements proliferate, inflation worsens as does foreign debt and the fiscal deficit, and the authoritarian regime, installed in the military coup of 1964, begins to crumble. Brazil, which had known high growth rates, enters into crisis and the period that becomes known as the 'lost decade', a time of negative growth, rife with hyper-inflation and huge international debts (Faria: 1991).

The highly unequal results of a developmental model based on accumulation without redistribution also created a heavy social debt to the poorest segments in society, one that is not settled to this day. So much so that in 1981 between 40-50% of the population under 19 lived in homes whose families received less than half the minimum wage per person.

In this context of increasing poverty, and emergent social movements, people began to ask why so many children and adolescents were found living and working on the street, and also what kind of policies the state had to take care of the nation's poorest and youngest members. In the first years of the 1980s researchers began an attempt at discovering the real situation of children from the popular classes. It is in this context that the *street children* gained visibility, being portrayed as a *street generation* (Rizzini: 1986). Young people living and working on the street then became emblematic of the situation of children and adolescents in Brazil more generally (Faria: 1991, Rizzini and Rizzini: 1991, Swift: 1991).

In this sense we can see the focus upon young people living on the street or in the custody of the state, in the form of research and alternative forms of non-governmental assistance, as actions that sought a more fundamental change on the way people saw, and subsequently acted towards children and adolescents in Brazil. From the period beginning in the 1980s the first examples of social research about this population in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo emerge. On the

whole these were qualitative studies describing the profile of the so called 'street children' and their daily life on the street[7].

 This initial significant research compiled in *O Trabalho e a Rua: Crianças e adolescentes no Brasil urbano dos anos 80* [Work and the Street: Children and adolescents in Urban Brazil in the 80's] served to debunk previously held myths about this sector of the population (Fausto & Cervini: 1991). Firstly it showed that '*menores abandonados'* - or 'abandoned minors' as unsupervised youngsters were called - were not really abandoned, they had families that were not necessarily unstructured. These youngsters mainly live in nuclear families which, in order to survive, require all its members to work and to contribute to the household. Also, research from this period pointed out that destitute children are not a minority in Brazil, but could describe over 50% of the population of 0-17 year olds who come from lower income families (Rizzini & Rizzini: 1991).

An analysis of life on the street

The research from this first period of the early 1980s can be broadly divided into two main concerns; a preoccupation with institutionalized 'minors' – in other words those in the care of the state - and with poor children and adolescents present on the street. As regards the first, we see a number of qualitative studies describing the *correctional institutions for minor's,* including the reasons for their internment and their family background (Altoé: 1993). Research with 'street children' was essentially descriptive. Yet these had the important function of providing a critique of the state's services and actions towards this impoverished young population, and of the state's policies in prioritizing economic growth to the detriment this population's well being (Rizzini & Rizzini: 1991). These are the works that we will focus on in this chapter.

We can say that the first examples of research with 'street children' is characterized by the discovery of how widespread the occurrence of young people on the street is, across Brazil's urban centers, and how similar the circumstances in each locality are. At this early stage there was no typology of the population of children on the street, who are generically described as *meninos de rua* (*street children,* or literally *street boys*), a term that also tended to includes girls, those who work and return home, and those who live on the street. By the end of the 1980s, based on a number of research findings, it was known that 90% of those on the street are boys, that their ages range from 7 to 17, with greater concentration in the 11 to 14 age group, that they are

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[7] For a synthesis of these studies see *Deserdados da sociedade: os "meninos de rua" da America Latina* (Rizzini: 1995).

initiated into the street while they are between 7 and 12 years old, and that they stay on the street until they are 15 or 16 (Rizzini & Rizzini: 1991).

While early research tended to lump together all youngsters it found on the street under the generic category of *street children*, it is only towards the end of the decade that a distinction begins to emerge between youngsters who return home and those who have severed their links with the family. In the early 1990s there begins to emerge a typology to better define this street population with the research of Mark Lusk's work (Rizzini: 1993). Lusk was a North-American researcher who conducted research in Rio de Janeiro in which 113 children and adolescents were interviewed. His work was prompted by what he felt was a lack of a standard definition in the literature, which often led to an inflation of their numbers by considering all poor children in an unsupervised situation as 'street children', or else to an erroneous reference to these as 'abandoned'. Lusk uses the UN definition of 'street children' for his study, which is;

… any girl or boy… for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/ or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults (Lusk: 1994, p.161).

This definition is wide enough to encompass those who work on the street full and part time and yet live with their parents, and acknowledges that the child who may appear to be abandoned is part of a family network. Lusk's findings divide this street population into four groups, each with distinct indices of schooling and criminality, and with different family structures, different relationships with their family, and with the street. The four groups are:

-*Family based street workers* – representing 21.4% of those interviewed. These are the young people who live with their families, and it is the need to work that drives them to the street. Of this group 90.9% are boys and 72.7% go to school. Their families are made of a father (or step-father) and mother in 59.1% of cases, and their involvement with illegal activities is considerably less than those in the other groups. The average age within this group is 13.

-*Independent street workers* – represent 50.5% of the interviewed population. Here, Lusk notes, family ties begin to break down and the child involves him/herself more with 'street culture'. Families are made up of both parents in 61.5% of cases. The children sleep on the street periodically, and are more involved with illegal activities (44.9% of cases). They are mainly boys

(73.1%) and 60% have had dealings with the police or correctional institutions. Of this group only 30.8% said they still go to school, and their average age is also 13.

-*Children of the street* – represent only 14.6% of the population of youngsters on the street. These are children who are no longer linked to the family. They come from two-parent families in 53.3% of cases and have a strong tendency to carry out illegal activities (60% of subjects responded affirmatively). They are mainly boys (73.3%), and have a strong involvement with drugs (80%). Many admit to having been arrested and to have spent time in correctional institutions for minors (80%). The average age is 14 and only 6.7% go to school.

-*Children of street families* – represent 13.6% of the sample. They stay all day on the street with their families, primarily their mothers. In only 35.75% of cases was there a male figure present. There is also a significant involvement with illegal activities (38.5%) and drugs (57.1%). While dealings with repressive institutions (police or FEBEM[8]) are lower because they are with their families, 14.3% admit to being imprisoned, and 42.9% have been arrested by the police. Most are boys (though less than in the other categories) at 64.3%, and the average age is also lower than in the other groups with an average age of 10.4, and 14.3% of them go to school.

In this context of trying to define more clearly the young street population, it is also important to mention the various attempts at pin-pointing their numbers in Brazil. An article in *Time* from 1978 put the figure of 2 million Brazilian children "abandoned by their parents" (Hecht: 1998, p.100). UNICEF's 'Ideas Forum' of 1984 put forward a figure of 30 million, which if true would mean that there are more children living on the streets than in homes in urban centers (Ibid). An recurring figure is that of 7 million children living in Brazil's urban centers, cited by institutions, journalists and academics in the 1980s (Ibid). As Hecht observes, this figure is invariably quoted as someone else's estimate. Yet, as he concludes, if this estimate were accurate, street children would account for 6% of Brazil's 1993 population. If one work's with Lusk's typology, we find that surveys that attempted to record those who had been sleeping in the urban city centers apart from their families found much smaller numbers than these. A 1993 survey conducted by social research and policy organization IBASE, found 797 children under these conditions in Rio de Janeiro. Similarly a 1994 survey, cited in *Veja* magazine in which 23 institutions participated,

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[8] FEBEM - Fundação Estadual para o Bem Estar do Menor, State Institution for the Well-being of the Minor - were the now disbanded state-run correctional facilities for children and adolescents.

found 895 children who spent the night on the streets of Sao Paulo. Hecht concludes from these surveys that for every one million urban residents in these cities there are 115 children living on the streets. If this ratio holds true this would mean a total of 13,000 street children in Brazil as a whole (Hecht: 1998, p.100).

As researchers' outlooks become increasingly more sophisticated, different themes begin to emerge towards the end of the 1980s. Though all studies agree upon the importance of the family conditions of these children, information about the family had only been obtained through interviews with the children, and not with the family itself. An exception to this emerges in the work of a group of researchers in Goiânia, in the state of Goiás, published in 1991 under the title *O Trabalho e a Rua: Crianças e adolescentes no Brasil urbano dos anos 80* [Work and the Street: Children and adolescents in Urban Brazil in the 80's] (Cervini: 1991).

The book proved influential because it was based on qualitative and quantitative research which demystified the phenomenon and increased understanding by drawing together many aspects and perspectives. A more careful look at this population in many countries also contributed to this process of demystification. We can also point to other factors in the international sphere that contributed to a more precise analysis of this phenomenon, such as the elevation of 'street children' by a number of international organizations as their main focus since the International Year of the Child of the United Nations in 1979. Another important factor acknowledged by different authors is UNICEF's Bogota Meeting in 1989, a turning point in the attempt to create an adequate typology of children who are found on the street (Alves: 1991, Lusk: 1993). Since this time there have been many attempts to define the category, including the distinction between children '*on*' and '*of*' the street based on the work of Peter Taçon in 1985 (Ennew & Connolly: 1996, p.131). This distinction, which is used in many countries, tried to distinguish between children who were on the street as a "survival strategy", yet whose connections to the family are still important, and those who had lost these ties. The distinctions between the two groups refer to the level of risk to which they are submitted and to the nature of the ties they have to the family. With this definition in mind the researcher Alda Judith Alves asks:

why, facing apparently similar socio-economic conditions, do some children maintain links with their families while others swap their home for the street? Are there differences in the histories, in the dynamic structures, as well as in the life conditions of the families of these two groups of children that could, in some way, contribute to the maintenance or rupture of family links? (Alves: 1991, p.119).

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The research conducted by Alves, Moura, Vogel and Mello in Goiânia consisted of interviews with 128 families. Forty-two of these had children who were *of* the street and the other 86 were families of child workers who returned home daily. In their work the authors depart from the premise that family life is in principle the most adequate environment for the psycho-social development of children. The research then attempts to establish the nature of this family environment by asking about its members, their earnings, their living conditions, where they came from, their current and past family structures and how people relate within this structure, how they relate to other groups and institutions, what their main worries are, and who they count on to resolve these.

Alves found that *children of the street* come predominantly from female-headed households. They tend to display greater difficulties in inter-personal relations than young street workers, and they display a greater incidence of problems at school. For Alves, the difficult relationships *children of the street* have with their father show a complex and painful aspect of the depreciation of the paternal figure:

a picture of the father as unprepared and impotent before the difficulties of life and the responsibility to the family, this image, combined with emotional distance, make them an unattractive model for their sons to identify with (Alves: 1991, p.125).

Also involved in this research are Wilson Moura, who analyses the findings from a psychological perspective, and Anro Vogel and Marco Antonio da Silva Mello who add an social anthropological dimension to the work. Moura describes the condition of tension between conflict and fantasy that children and adolescents of poor families find themselves in, being submerged in a consumer culture symbolized in the collective imagination as the city, and the sad living conditions they find themselves in with poor housing conditions, with no space for leisure or which to call their own. But then, the author asks, what keeps so many children at home? For Moura, people tend to abandon the group when it no longer fulfills one's necessities. What has prevented more youngsters ending up on the street is the presence of affection, of the feeling of protection and safety, of interdependency, loyalty and solidarity. "The situation is like two force fields, each trying to attract particles to its interior" (Moura: 1991, p.171). In this tug-of-war of attractions, there are also forces of repulsion which push out these youngsters; domestic or community violence, weak parental figures who are seen as incapable of facing the adversities of the world or of providing adequately for the home.

In addition to the issue of an unstructured home-life, the anthropologists Vogel and Mello found that there was the added element of curiosity where venturing out to the street was seen as an adventure. In addition to a violent home, there was also the problem of the empty home, where the absence of adults within the home led to an impoverishment of home-life to the absence of care for the child, and an absence of the rituals of home life. As Vogel and Mello write:

The violent or empty home, in many cases, represents servitude in the eyes of these children… This picture shows the transformation of the home, which ceases to be a space where the child finds shelter, care, instruction, time to socialize and free-time for themselves, becoming a space of conflict, risk, solitude and servitude; where, instead of being given, childhood is taken away" (Vogel & Mello: 1991, p.144).

Investigating the family background of young people on the street at the end of the 1990s, the researcher Maria Filomena Gregori also found a high degree of instability in these families. She pointed out how these families are constantly on the move – to seek work, because of rent, etc. - and the child may be circulated between relatives or be brought up by people other than parents[9]. These factors make it very difficult for the child to build roots or connections and emotional links with a locality, school or community as well as with the family. Being constantly on the move makes it very difficult for children to pursue their studies which are constantly disrupted, and it becomes problematic to re-start school because of school year schedules. The unstable nature of some of these families, the author adds, sometimes prompted the mother to intern her child in the FEBEM, the government-run homes/correctional institutions for 'abandoned minors' and young offenders that have been dismantled since the introduction of Children and Adolescent Statute (Gregori: 2000, p.85).

Living on the streets
While the majority of research on young people on the street has tended towards a methodology of questionnaires and structured or semi-structured interviews, another more anthropological line of research has attempted to unravel what life on the street is really like for these youngsters by spending a considerable period of time undertaking participant observation (Ferreira: 1980, Vogel

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[9] For research on child circulation amongst the popular class see Claudia Fonseca's "Children and Social Inequality in Brazil: A Look at Child Circulation in the Working Classes". In *Children in Brazil Today: A Challenge for the Third Millennium*. Ed. Irene Rizzini 1994 Editora Universitaria Santa Ursula: Rio de Janeiro.

& Mello: 1991, Fenelon, Martins & Domingues: 1992, Hecht: 1998, Gregori: 2000). Questions asked about the youngsters by these authors are; where, why and how they work, how they survive on the street, who are their benefactors and who they fear, what are their hopes, and finally, what identities are being fashioned through these processes?

These sorts of reflections have enriched the research in the topic area. Amongst these reflections there has been an increasing concern at looking at the meaning of childhood, as well as the implication of the loss of this life-stage when, for example, the child is forced to enter the world of work. Vogel and Mello (1991) point out that this entails not only an exchange of hunger for work, since also cashed in is time to play, to experiment ludically with the world, as well as the opportunity for an education. Among the reasons researchers found for going to work according to the children interviewed in Goiânia – as well as among those interviewed in the research in Rio de Janeiro as we shall see in this book - was the need to earn one's own money as a recurrent theme, particularly in order to engage in certain forms of consumption that cannot be met by the parents.

Other similarities with the present study carried out in Rio de Janeiro is the description of the process through which some children may gradually become socialized into a street culture, by groups who are already there. The authors reaffirm the importance of this socialization process; "nobody leaves home to the street to be alone"(Vogel & Mello: 1991, p.144). Studies by Vannúzia Leal Peres (1997, 2001, 2002) on the affective relations and the processes of subjectification and rupture between the family and the child in a street situation show the importance of understanding the socio-familial realities of the children. The author points out the diverse circumstances of the contemporary urban world that affect the lives of families, and above all, of those who live in poverty and the crisis situations that this may provoke. As she writes;

…generally these crisis are associated with the broader social context, such as unemployment and lack of access to formal education which make the natural movement of the life-cycle difficult, bringing problems to the organization and functioning of daily life for these families (Peres: 2002, p.69).

Another interesting angle is offered by Rosa Maria Fischer Ferreira in her pioneering work of the late 1970s, which addresses a common profile of what life is like on the street. She offers us the example of Alvaro; he is part of a group of between 7 and 10 boys who take charge of a *'ponto'* - a spot in the city center - and charge for parking in that area. Alvaro goes back to his home every 15 days to give his mother some of his earnings. As the author points out, a lucrative *ponto* allows

for an almost entrepreneurial organization. She describes how the boys sort out regular periods of work so that no gaps are left and all have a chance to earn. They learn to predict according to times and days which are more or less profitable and distribute their activities of rest, family visits and leisure, accordingly. The boys developed fixed customers – reserving spaces, cleaning the windscreen, carrying packages – and a fixed charge for customers (Ferreira: 1980, p.104).

In such cases, public space is appropriated and turned into private space in order to generate income. As Ferreira rightly points out, in the act of appropriation of the *ponto* and in the way that labor is divided, hierarchies of power and control of space from wider Brazilian society are reproduced. The figure of the '*dono do ponto*' or leader of the spot is justified chronologically "he arrived first", and it was him who rationalized the space making it productive (Ferreira: 1980, p.104).

According to the author, the youngsters in her research showed a preference for having '*carteira assinada*', a genuine certified job, rather than to earn easy money because of the constant problems with the police. This issue of the obstacles faced by children and adolescents when trying to secure an adequate job is also noted by Hecht (1998). In Hecht's study in the cities of Recife and Olinda, the boys and girls on the street explained that they did not work because they did not have the right documents. These are the legal papers such as a birth certificate, voter registration and work permit, that are required by Brazilian law in order to gain official employment. According to Hecht, for these boys and girls, their ability to work and advance in life was inhibited by bureaucracy.

So, while for Vogel and Mello emphasis is given to the disruption of social norms that the street ethic brings; for instance the questioning of the work as against the pleasure ethic in learning how to beg or steal, in other words, by learning of ways of gaining resources immediately, others like Hecht and Ferreira stress the continuities with work patterns in wider society. Undoubtedly both processes of rupture and continuity are at work, operating differently in different individuals, perhaps related to the length of time that has already been spent on the street.

In the next section we discuss an important aspect of life on the street, which is widespread in the discourse of children and adolescents - what can be called an *ethos of freedom*.

Ethos **of freedom**

The street is clearly the site for activities other than work. The meeting of groups of children and adolescents and the opportunities for leisure that the urban center brings has to be a major pull factor in drawing these youngsters away from their spaces in the *favelas* and peripheries. Maria

Filomena Gregori, working in São Paulo in the late 1990s, writes that while the street may represent freedom for all social groups, for young people living on the street it involves "an existence whose origin relates to the standards indicated by a family dynamic - the circulation of children, urban mobility, irregular schooling, the familiarity with the city" (Gregori: 2000, p.100). Rather than being the cause of the phenomenon, Gregori sees the family as "part of the context that encourages an experience of circulation that could be – and in most cases is - made use of on the street" (Ibid). Yet, if the family provides the context for 'circulation' in which urban space is used differently from other groups in society, so that the children are gradually distanced from the home, the rupture with the family further alienates these youngsters from the rest of society.

The image of freedom is associated with the space of the street and the city. The great attraction appears as the chance to hang around with one's peers, having fun, fooling around, and getting into mischief, courting, going to parties, consuming legal and illegal drugs - all in an unsupervised environment and in the lavish and spacious urban centers. Many researchers have commented on this issue of 'freedom', often found in the youngsters' speech. For Tobias Hecht, this entailed "a street ethos based on spontaneity, insubordination to authority, and solidarity with other deeply rejected young people" (Hecht: 1998, p.183). This being an ethos which, according to Hecht, made it hard for these youngsters to be absorbed into assistance programs even when the alternatives they proposed appeared attractive. Vogel and Mello (1991, p.145) also captured this sense of freedom as they write:

On the street there is no right time to do anything, and one is not forced to do or stop doing anything. To live on the street means to have no boss or father. Because of this, beyond attaining in time and space a freedom inconceivable to home children, the children are also able to use their bodies in the manner they please, through sexual experiences and drug consumption.

For Vogel and Mello, freedom in time, space and of body, signify something problematic for the social system; "the freedom of someone who does not adhere to the conventions of the market" (Ibid). On the street, they consider, "to have what you want, you only have to take it"; this is how it is possible to have what the family could not offer and which is out of reach of someone who works hard regularly.

Alba Zaluar, conducting research on youth involvement in crime from a poor housing project in Rio, comes to similar conclusions as to the origin of this ethos of freedom, or as some call it, this *immediatism*. For Zaluar, consumerism and a pleasure-seeking ideology lead to an absence of constraints over individual desires. It is an ideology that entices youth through constant

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propaganda in the mass media, particularly television, at the same time frustrating them by the inaccessibility of such goods because of low wages and the lack of opportunities of social climbing. As a consequence a life of crime becomes a way of accessing consumer goods and the status they endow. As Zaluar puts it, we see "the devaluation of words and rules for respectful, equalitarian community living, which can only be sustained by an institutional engineering which seeks justice and social access" (Zaluar: 1994, p.216).

We can then see that researchers have in the 1990s gone beyond attempting a profile of this street population in terms of its typology, its numbers and its habits, and have also attempted to look into the motivations and identities of young people who live on the street. The analysis of the 1990s also emphasized the need for a socio-economic understanding of the phenomenon. This allowed the focus to shift from the family as incapable of looking after its children, to the family as not being allowed to carry out this task because of the lack of resources and material conditions. An understanding of children's lives on the street then acquired a new connotation, in particular in terms of an escape from conflicts, especially within the family, of an escape from the *empty home* and of a search for survival alternatives, which included needs beyond mere material survival, for the street came also to be a space of freedom and better living conditions.

These insights came alongside parallel discussions about human rights and the difficulties in implementing legislation to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents in the face of the sub-human life conditions experienced by a significant percentage of the population. From this period, and occurring on a global level, people also became more aware of the contradictions in the stimulation of consumerism at any price, leading to the frantic search for the means to consume, including illegal means, in particular the trafficking and consumption of drugs. The trajectories of boys and girls that we see on the street are intrinsically connected to this process

Violence – freedom as illusion

The provisional and tense nature of street life filled with fear and violence means that these youngsters are the first to recognize that the 'freedom' of the streets is also an illusion. An alarming phenomenon that emerges in academic research and in the media towards the end of the 1980s is the disproportionate numbers of young poor youths being murdered every year in Brazil's largest cities (Ceap: 1989, MNMMR/IBASE/NEV-USP: 1991, Rizzini: 1994b).

 Particularly significant was the research conducted by MNMMR, (National Movement of Street Boys and Girls), IBASE and NEV-USP (two social research centers) in 1991, published in *Vidas em Risco: Assassinatos de Criancas e Adolescentes no Brasil* [Lives at Risk: Murders of Children and Adolescents in Brazil]. The research, which looked into the murders of youths in Brazil

between 1984-89 through an analysis of newspaper reports and reports from the Legal Medical Institute, found that a significant proportion of the murders had been committed by on-duty policemen and many others, whose culprit was unknown, pointed to the work of off-duty police and extermination groups. As other groups connected to the area of human rights also pointed, it was also significant in these murders the number of times in which the crime was not fully investigated and no one was charged.

One of these organizations, Human Rights Watch, who also conducted research on this theme in 1994, points out that between 1989 and 1991 5.644 youngsters between 5 and 17 years of age were victims of violent deaths in Brazil according to the Ministério Publico (a state department). The report gives the following view of why such violence is perpetrated:

Children, and especially poor children and adolescents, become targets of killing by off-duty police and death squads because they are often popularly perceived as criminals. Violence against children is largely the result of this perception combined with three other factors: the lack of policing in poor neighborhoods; the belief that the justice system is inefficient; and traditions of violence, many dating back to Brazil's era of military dictatorship. In each instance a cycle of official omission, disregard or complicity accentuates the problem and perpetuates the violence (Human Rights Watch: 1994, p.30).

Findings such as these were followed by an outcry among human rights organizations and by a series of studies outlining a deadly campaign of kidnappings, torture and murder at the hands of extermination groups. The widespread international visibility that this provoked forced the country to recognize the seriousness of the problem. The analysis of authors from many countries on the increase in violence and intolerance towards the so called 'street children' contributed to the association of this phenomenon with public urban violence. As Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (1998) point out in "Brazilian Apartheid: Street Kids and the Struggle for Urban Space":

The term 'street child' reflects the preoccupations of one class and segment of Brazilian society with the proper place of another. The term represents a symbolic apartheid. Urban space has become increasingly privatized, inverting an earlier, late-nineteenth century conception of the city as providing an open and heterogeneous public space. Today one notes two tendencies in urban areas: an abandonment of city streets by the urban elite, who increasingly live their lives in gated communities (Caldeira 1992); and attempts to privatize beaches and certain urban neighborhoods,

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which come to be seen as the privileged reserve of middle-class people, people of 'substance' and 'quality' (Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman: 1998, p.358).

While these children have in the past been tolerated, the authors note an increasing weariness towards what over the past couple of decades has come to be conceived as a 'dangerous' group. For Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman what has changed is the inability of the modern and the "hyper-segregated post-modern city" to absorb this large and growing number of children (Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman: 1998, p.358).

Mark Connolly and Judith Ennew, who are well-known in this area of research, also placed this phenomenon in light of the reconfigurations of contemporary urban space. They concluded that children and adolescents on the street are simply poor children *out of place*. The authors use this term to define

The apparent dislocation of those children from the places that are commonly considered 'normal' for modern, Western, middle-class children – their families, schools and clubs organized by adults. A child 'out of place' is one which is found without adult supervision and is visible on the streets of the urban center (Connolly & Ennew: 1996, p.133).

Recent tendencies: critical perspectives

The last years of the twentieth century were rich in terms of experiences and learning if we consider the large number of national and international publications and conferences on this theme. A marking feature of many of these publications was the more critical stance adopted than that of earlier periods. This is a perspective that came to question the categorization of the child or adolescent as being 'of the street' or as being a problem. Many authors guided their analysis away from the 'problem of the child' to what was perceived as the real origin of the problem, that is, the many factors that contributed to the 'production' of 'street children'.

The core of these critiques focus on questions about whose interests are served by maintaining the definition of the child found on the street as a problem. For some authors, the definition of and intervention upon the 'problem of street children' only serves the interests of particular sectors of society keeping marginalized groups, comprised of poor and very often black, youngsters in their place (Aptekar: 1988, Glauser: 1990, Leite: 1991, Connolly & Ennew: 1996, Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman: 1998, Hecht: 1998, Graciani: 1999, Butler & Rizzini: 2001).

These debates about the category of 'street children' over the last decade, echo wider debates in the social sciences, particularly in the newly established field of the Sociology of Childhood

formulated in the United Kingdom by figures such as Allison James, Alan Prout and Chris Jenks. This movement, which has attracted considerable international attention, has sought to deconstruct old concepts and paradigms of *childhood*, seeking to redefine it as a social category that reflects particular visions of society (Jenks *et al*: 1990, James, Prout *et al*: 1992). As such, they differ from earlier concerns of defining and classifying a particular group of youngsters that use the street for work, leisure and/or habitation. Instead, these debates problematize the ways in which society's gaze stigmatizes and excludes these children.

To summarize, the authors who followed this approach were drawing attention to the fact that groups of children on the street did not fit the expectations of what would be a 'normal childhood'. For Glauser the concept of 'street children', "becomes necessary in the response to speak about children who fall outside the frame of what is considered 'normal'". He concludes: "It is therefore, the concern not for children's but society's needs which has given importance to the concept and to the category of 'street children'" (Glauser: 1990, p.145).

This critical stance, which has strengthened at the end of the twentieth century, has its origins in ideas outlined in previous decades. Some of these can be identified in the work of Louis Aptekar, and the research he carried out in Colombia in the 1980s. He argued that the smallest children seen on the street produce a form of 'cognitive dissonance' in many adults. He meant by this that the concept of a child as innocent and in need of family protection is incompatible with the image of a child on the street who is capable of producing a self-sustaining livelihood. Aptekar concludes that, "Street children can be defined as an aberration of childhood in a particular society with a particular point of view about childhood" (Aptekar: 1988, p.46).

Another important precursor to these ideas relates to the legacy of Paulo Freire. His contribution to the field of popular education is invaluable; here we point to only one of his reflections on the search for freedom and the 'political' nature of the lives and actions of the so called 'street children'. In a lecture given to employees of the FEBEM in 1984, and referring to the youngsters the institution harbored, Freire sums up this position:

I imagine, that in truth, each time one of these youngsters breaks a window, he is breaking the dominant class of this country. Symbolically he is not breaking the window, but is killing who kills him on a symbolic level (Freire: 1984, p.8).

Freire's pedagogical approach, where dialogue and departure from the cultural context of the student were of central importance, proved hugely influential in the movement that created new ways of working with this young street population particularly through the figure of the 'street

educator' (Freire: 1987). It is important to mention the *street educator*. In Brazil in particular these educators, who emerged soon after the end of the military dictatorship, have been an important presence in the lives of these children. Many researchers have studied the relationships that develop between 'street children' and street educators, showing the central role the latter plays as a source of support and a point of reference in the lives of children (Leite: 1991, Impelizieri: 1995, Castro: 1997, Oliveira e Americano: 2003). Another repercussion of these studies and of Paulo Freire's ideas was the critique of the public education system and its failure in reaching groups at the margins of society – 'street children' being the most visible example.

Following the changes in the paradigm of the phenomenon of young people living on the street in the 1990s, both nationally and internationally, we can note the shifts in the terminology used to describe them as new elements are incorporated. For instance, the term '*meninos de rua*' – street boys - which was initially used indiscriminately, came to include '*meninos nas ruas*' – 'boys on the street', pointing out the transitory aspect of some; this was followed by *meninos e meninas* – boys and girls – showing an awareness of the gender dimension. In the last few years a new series of terms have been adopted addressing the ephemeral 'situation' in which these boys and girls are found, such as: children '*in difficult circumstances*'[10] or in a '*street situation*' [11] or '*in situations of risk*' or '*situations of vulnerability*'. Though the terms refer to diverse circumstances, children and adolescents on the street, being more visible, end up drawing more attention from the general population.

This takes us to the last two points we wish to make in regards to recent analyses.

The first point refers to one of the authors in this book, the sociologist Ricardo Lucchini, who points to the importance of understanding the street as only one of many spaces and dimensions in the lives of the children and adolescents we have been looking at. They live with and relate to diverse institutions, such as shelters, schools, NGOs, the police and others. In the words of Lucchini they have 'a constellation of relationships' (Lucchini: 1996, p.167).

What is called being a street child corresponds neither to a clearly delimited social category nor to a perfectly homogenous psycho-sociological unity. For some children the street seems to be a residual category; to others it is above all a workplace and its value is firmly instrumental.

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[10] This latest term, 'Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances' (CEDC), adopted by UNICEF, was originally included refugees, children with disabilities, children affected by organized violence, as well as street and working children.

[11] According to Daniel Stocklin, this term was coined by him and has been adopted by Terre des homes since 1998.

Relatively few children distinguish themselves from others by having the street as their principal reference" (Lucchini: 1996, p.169).

This last point made by Lucchini, is very important, raising questions that require further research. Amongst these, we mention only some that will be addressed in the second part of this book, in terms of the identity formation and subjectivity of children and adolescents on the streets. What are these processes? How are they experienced? How do young people living on the street understand their situation and how do they self-identify? What do they dream, want or wish for their lives?

Clearly when authors question attempts at tackling the 'problem' of young people on the street they do not simply mean that nothing should be done. Instead they offer a critical vision of a society which makes a life on the street an alternative for some who are excluded from the possibility of a healthy, wholesome and dignified childhood and adolescence, and who are then further stigmatized and violated by society.

This takes us to our final point which Rizzini and Barker have been developing over the last few years from an apparently simple question: why should such a relatively small number of youngsters in our urban centers provoke so much interest and indignation from society while millions hidden away at home in the peripheries or in rural areas go hungry, or suffer silently in their homes and remain invisible (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 1998, 2000, 2002)? In the words of these authors:

In a certain way, the 'street child' has come to represent an image or symbol of the children and adolescents who live in a condition of poverty and marginality. (…) Street children are perhaps the most visible, and in some cases, the most obvious, example of the problems of the lack of concern to children's needs. However, there are millions of children and adolescents without such visibility who, despite being more protected than the child who lives or works on the street, also do not have access to services, to health and education, to social programs or other forms of support which could contribute to their wholesome development (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000, p.7).

These authors have drawn attention to the need for a change of mentality and attitude to then be translated into policies and practices that refer to the rights which are at present universally recognized. For them, these policies and practices have tended to emphasize "the problems, failures and deficiencies, and, frequently, reach children and adolescents when these are already

in a situation that is difficult to reverse". Rather: "a change of mentality is required which instead sees the competencies and potential – of the child/adolescent, of the family and the community" (ibid, 2000, p.10).

We point out that this does not involve a 'discovery' or something that is entirely new. The change of point of view only reflects the tendencies of this historical moment, in particular in terms of the global movements towards privatization and decentralization of policies and actions towards the population. Specifically in the case of childhood and adolescence, notably in the poorest sectors of the population, we witness a lack of opportunities and support for families and communities, as well as the urgency for allocating our efforts and resources to improve the life conditions of these people through integrated policies related to the respect and guarantee of the rights of citizens (Paica-Rua: 2002).

We would like to conclude this chapter saying that the so called 'street children' are the most visible and alarming part of this picture. We would like to show in this book that their life trajectories could have been otherwise. We learnt with the boys and girls that their lives are full of uncertainty. Amidst the turbulence that characterizes their daily life, between fear and courage, strength and fragility, they teach us important lessons. That to live and to dream, despite everything, is worth it. They dream of the day in which they will have that which has been lacking: affection and safety. We finish with a stanza from a poem written by Betinho[12], which concisely expresses the urgency of this situation:

The child is the beginning without end. The end of the child is the beginning of the end.
When a society allows its children to be killed it is because it has begun its suicide as a society.
When it no longer loves them it is because it has ceased to recognize itself as society…
(Herbert de Souza. "Criança é coisa séria", 1991).

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[12] Herbert de Souza, eminent Brazilian sociologist and social activist.

Chapter 2; Children on the street: a complex reality. Riccardo Lucchini

About the complexity

One of the main difficulties in constructing a typology of street children, even if a partial one, stems from the absence of a precise definition of what is a street child. As J.G.Cosgrove (1990) writes, "the term 'street children' refers to members of a population that it attempts to describe by reference to where these commonly meet rather than by appealing to common characteristics of a collective group of youngsters who have been neglected and abused". The street child is a one of the categories that in the system of classification adopted by UNICEF, regards the child as being in a situation of risk. In this case, the key variable of the classification is the degree of contact between the child and the family. It is not easy to define what is understood by this family contact, though what this expression means appears to be globally understood. But difficulties appear as soon as we try to define precisely the nature of this contact as well as what is understood by its degree. In truth, degree does not mean the number of meetings between the child and the parents but its quality. This refers to the affective and material expectations as well as those in terms of the identification of the child, in respect to the relationship between parent and child and the responses that are given to the child. When these expectations meet adequate responses, we are sure of the quality of the family relationship. If many 'street children' suffer from a lack in the affective, material and identification fields, they are not affected with the same intensity. There exist important differences between children, especially in relation to their family's socio-economic situation. On the other hand, children lacking in similar affective and material resources do not all go to the street and no explanation has been given to this phenomenon. We can even say that the great majority of such children do not go to the streets for if they did the streets of the large Latin American cities would be literally invaded by children. All this suggests that there is a 'selection' between children who leave and those who stay. This depends on factors that have not yet been isolated nor studied in a comparative and systematic way.

This gap, however, does not prevent the recognition that, from a psycho-sociological point of view, 'street children' consist of heterogeneous category. This heterogeneity asks for the development of a typology of the 'street child', having not only a scientific interest but also a practical one. In this way, intervention and prevention on the street and together with the family cannot be universally effective by only knowing empirically the phenomenon upon which we wish to act. Since we are led to believe that 'street children' will not disappear in the near future, our efforts must be oriented towards the constant support and accompaniment for the child. There

are measures which have a positive effect on children (security and material assistance in particular), however, the greater part of interventions are concerned with individuals or small groups of children, each with their own histories and personal identities. If the effectiveness of intervention depends on its duration and, therefore, its accompaniment, its success also depends on the degree of personalization that this can acquire. All this, of course, depends upon the available material and human resources, but even more on the image that we have of the 'street child' as a personality type of the urban scene. On the other hand, the educators almost always dedicate themselves to urgent interventions (illnesses, casualties, imprisonment, physical threats) not leaving them much time to work in a long-term collaboration with children. In this way, intervention becomes fragile and looses its effectiveness.

We know that 'street children' cannot be singularly defined from criteria such as their presence on the street or the absence of relationships with family members. On the other hand, the notion of the trajectory developed by the sociology of marginality proves useful in this case. This trajectory is – as we shall see – a constitutive element of the psycho-sociological heterogeneity characteristic of 'street children'. A child does not become a 'street child' from one moment to the next, even when s/he is suddenly expelled from home or when s/he abandons home. The fact of being on the street during a prolonged period is an important criteria for distinguishing the 'street child' from other children. But this is insufficient to identify a 'street child' as a particular social category. In this way, if we take a two-dimensional definition of the child as proposed by many institutions working with children said to be in a situation of risk, we have the following schem
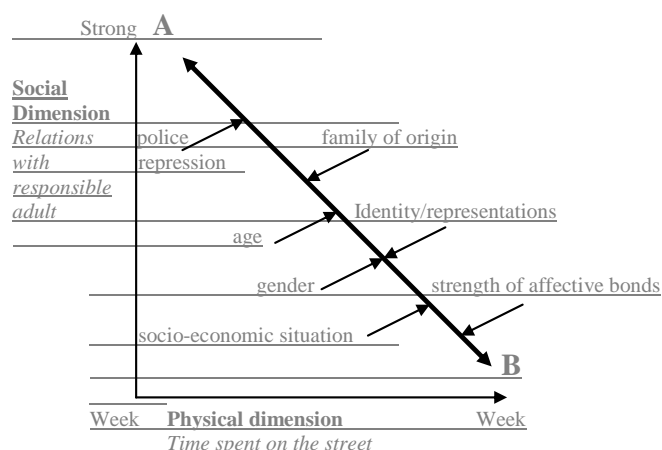

FIGURE 1. Two-dimensional definition of the 'street child'

We found that the 'street child' is here defined by two dimensions: the physical and the social dimension. The first has to do with the time the child has spent on the street, the second, with the relations or non-relations with parents or other responsible adults.

In this diagram we see that the position of A is defined by the existence of frequent contacts with responsible adults, as well as by the short existence on the street, for the child regularly returns home. The notion of the 'responsible adult' implies the existence – in the identity of the child – of a reference to this adult. On the other hand, this responsibility is of a gradual nature and can be divided between various people who do not necessarily live in the same place. It can also be temporary as when the child circulates from one domestic unit to another going back home daily and yet without necessarily maintaining a relationship with a responsible adult. The two-dimensional model is not adequate in these cases.

Position B in the diagram is defined by the absence of responsible adults. It is also defined by the use of the street, which becomes the primary residence of the child. *Between A and B, there exists a space for a series of intermediary situations which raise important problems of classification.* The greater part of definitions given to 'street children' emphasize the time that s/he spends on the street, *but this criteria is insufficient to define who this 'street child is', since it relates to a gradual evolving condition.* In this way, the child who moves on the axis from A to B, progressively actualises her/his status as 'street child'. But the inverse is also true: the child who goes from B to A. When does a child become a 'street child'? The criteria of duration of stay on the street is insufficient to answer this question. In this way, the child moves from A to B progressively becoming a 'street child'. Certain careers are very long and intense others are very short and unengaged.

The position that the child occupies in the continuum between A and B depends on numerous other factors that can be grouped under five different categories:

a) Biological factors like age and gender.

b) Factors directly linked to the family, such as family composition and organization, the strength of family ties, the economic situation of the family and the degree to which the family is rooted in the city (bringing up questions of migration).

c) Factors directly connected to the street: the representation (the image) that the child has of the street, the contacts the child has had with persons who already have experience of the street, the

presence of the child within a group or network of other children, the profitability of activities, police repression and the violence between children.

d) Factors connected to urban spaces: the significance of the distance which the child would have to cover from home to the street in which s/he practices her income making_money making activities, the speed of dislocating between these two spaces, the nature of the urban space which the child has to cross to reach this place. This last issue has to do with the survival opportunities that the child encounters in moving within or towards the city centre.

e) Factors that we can term macroscopic. Referring to the social, political and economic situation of the country.

These different factors are interdependent and offer the possibility of multiple combinations. *These combinations, like the nature of the factors that make them up, accelerate or brake the trajectory of the 'street child'.*

There are also other influences that need to be mentioned, such as: the partial insertion of the child in the informal economy, the ~~pendulous~~swinging, shifting movements between the street, home (with responsible adults) and institutions, the circumstances that provoke these movements, the initiation rituals for life on the street and for the world of crime.

The two-dimensional definition of the street child is surpassed by the psycho-social and cultural complexity of this phenomenon. It is preferable to operate in terms of models than in terms of definitions. This has become necessary because of what we have come to term the Child-Street System, *in this way all typology related to 'street children' should bear in mind the constitutive dimensions of the Child-Street System[13].*

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[13] Child-Street System as initially developed by Professor Lucchini. This model is not static and has evolved (see the article by Daniel Stoeckllin).

The Child-Street System is comprised of *nine interactive dimensions.* The whole system can be visualized below.

Fig.2: The nine dimensions of the Child-Street System.

(1) and (2) The *temporal and spatial dimension* are concerned with questions such as the existence of territories on the street, the child's exit from the street and the progressive character of this distancing, the dislocation between the street and other places (family, relatives, friends, institutions). This mobility occurs not only by chance nor on the child's whim but occurs because of particular choices and pressures of life on the street. 'Street children' do not always have a well-delineated territory. Important differences can exist between one group and another, between groups in one district and another and, even more so, between groups found in one city and another. On the other hand, the child does not become a 'street child' from one day to the next. Only false appearances lead us to think this way. The progressive movement to the street does not only depend upon the occurrences and circumstances that led to the departure. Instead they reveal the existence of a complex process that includes, amongst other things, the child's representation of the world of the street (Lucchini: 1997). The progressive character of the movement is not only about a material dislocation to the street and a distancing from the home. It also involves a symbolic appropriation of the street and a distancing in relation to the place of origin. The degree of symbolic appropriation (representation) of the street and of the distancing in relation to the place of origin (family home, institution, etc.) greatly varies fr   his increases the diversity of the personal situations of the children wh
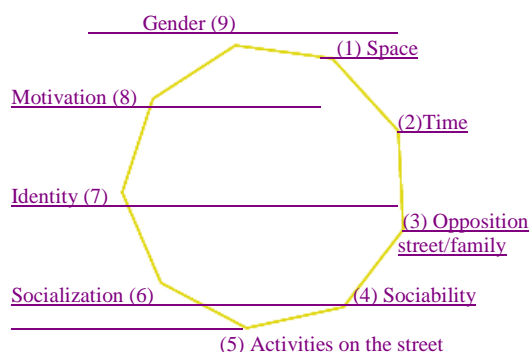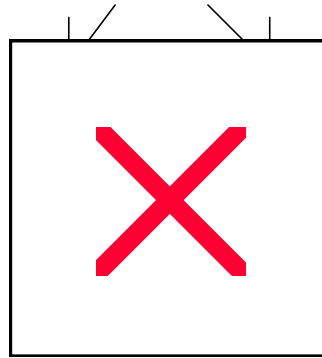
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The process of symbolic appropriation of the street-space is incorporated into the identification system of the child and the spatial and temporal dimensions are connected to the dimension of identification in the Child-Street System. It is true that some children are expelled

from home by a violent incident, such as an accident or death of a parent, or by the degradation of the economic situation of the family. We then have a *continuum* of concrete cases between two poles representing ideal types:

immediate expulsion (A) ⟵——————————⟶ _____**(B) chosen and progressive exit**

Some children leave home without an apparent motive that may threaten her/his position within the family. The child here does not leave the home because of initial difficulties or violent situations. On top of this, there are significant differences between boys and girls. For girls, the conditions of access to the street are not the same, and in the same family conditions boys tend leave the family home more quickly. It is what we refer to as the different access for girls to the world of the street (Lucchini: 1995).

Neither poverty nor violence then is a sufficient explanation for the child's exit to the street; the intervention of other factors is necessary. Firstly there is the subjective perception of violence by the child that varies from individual to individual. No determinism is capable of explaining why, living under similar conditions, only a minority of children leave for a certain period to the street. It is simple to evoke poverty, violence, promiscuity, instability of family relations and possible conflicts with parents, the absence of responsible adults, the high spatial mobility of the family group, the precarious work in the informal sector by the child, the lack of functional spatial division characteristic of many *favela* settlements, being expelled from school, etc. to justify the child's exit. Considered in isolation, single factor, even if important, does not explain anything. On the other hand, the simple addition of the effects appropriate to each factor does not make sense. What connects the factors together, what makes a factor into an occurrence, to transform into a rupture, all this depends on the sense which the child and his/her context gives it. The identification of these ruptures is indispensable in order to partly reconstruct the biographical plot of the child who leaves home[14]. The complexity and progressive nature of the movement to the street is the consequence of a subtle mixture between the limiting effects of the social and spatial context, the experience of the child and her/his resources (affective, social, physical and in terms of identity). These latter ones are always very different from one child to the next, age and gender also being important differentiating factors. *This explains why similar*

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[14] For the concept of biographical rupture, see: Varela F.J, *Quel savoir pour l'éthique. Action, sagesse et cognition*, La Découverte, Paris, 1996, pp. 25-38 ; Denzin N-K., *Interpretive Interactionism*, Sage, London, 1990, pp. 18 ss.; Moles A., *Micropsychologie et vie quotidienne*, Denoël/Gonthier, Paris, 1976, pp. 17 ss. ; Giddens A., *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 35-70).

environmental disturbances do not produce standard reactions, quite the reverse, we can see important differences in how the child exits the home, in the degree of distance to the family home, the number of exits, the frequency in the periods between exiting and returning home and the choice of destination which is not always the street.

(3) *The majority of children oppose the world of the family to the world of the street.* This is the third dimension of the Child-Street System. Three cases present themselves. The first is of a child who values the image of an ideal family. The street is here perceived and lived as a state of emergency. In the second case we find the opposite, the street is valued, whereas the family is presented as a space that is momentarily closed. Finally, some children adopt both of these attitudes in an ambivalent posture – valuing and devaluing the street and the family. This is more often the case. In these three cases the street is also a subculture, even if all the children do not identify in the same manner. This in turn depends on the child's history and resources, on the circumstances that took her/him to the street and on the image s/he has of the street.

(4) The *forms of sociability* have to do with the forms of social organization of 'street children'. There are many variations of such forms and a network of subgroups, pairs or groups of threes being the most common arrangements. The highly organized and hierarchical group is, however, the exception. This arrangement is not flexible enough to adapt to the volatile conditions of the street that children encounter. On the other hand, the group, because of its great spatial mobility, is accompanied by a significant rotation of its members from diverse networks. Children then must adapt to the conditions of life on the street, meaning that their forms of organization are quick, open and not very visible. The most effective form of organization is then the combination of a network with a particular group. In fact the network is made up of "ties between actors (individual or collective) that form a mobile resource base for the accomplishment of specific objectives with particular conditions" (Houchon: 1990, p.213). The network also shares certain characteristics with the *near-group* analysed by L.Yablonsky (1979), this is evident in the diffuse definition of roles, in the lack of cohesion, the transitory character, the shifting membership and the limited expectations in relation to the group, all these are found to different degrees within the network. The coexistence of the network with pairs and subgroups implies multiple belongings as well as distinct forms of cooperation between the children. Naturally this cooperation occurs in the short term of daily existence and is constantly crossed by repeated crisis that provoke at times violent conflicts between the children.

The social, economic and spatial characteristics of the streets of the city centre that are frequented by the children are very different from those that characterize the streets of the Latin American *favelas* or of the North American slums. In the latter, the most influential aspect for the

social organization of youngsters appears as the defence of territory, almost always defined in ethnic terms (USA), as well as economic factors (mainly drug dealing). This, combined with the well-armed defence of a defined territory, requires well-structured and hierarchical forms of organization that are incompatible with the necessities for 'survival' of 'street children'.

(5) *The fifth dimension of the Child-Street System* has to do with the different activities that occupy children on the street. Despite their multiplicity these activities have neither the same diversity, nor the same intensity in all places. This depends on, amongst other things, the presence of strong individuals amongst the children and on the characteristics of the spaces that they occupy. A functionally diversified space (transport, commerce, services and leisure) stimulates the children who live within it. They spend some period in great activity and some in inactivity, alternating between situations of urgency or expectation. The first has to do with favourable occasions and events in the immediate environment which the child is faced with and which s/he wishes to take advantage of at any price. They also have to do with the traps and dangers which the child faces. The periods of inactivity are marked by the expectation of events that do not occur or which do not surprise the child because of their repetitive nature. This alternation of rhythm in daily life on the street is part of the experience of the child. The alternation between urgency and expectation also depends on the nature of the urban context that the children frequent. A multi-functional space increases the rhythm of this alternation.

It is also necessary to distinguish the daily routines, such as searching for food or the consumption of inhalants, from specific income making money making activities such as stealing or sporadic work in the informal or service sector, or from the dislocation in urban or interurban space. The first are part daily routine and are of a repetitive nature, whilst the second have an exceptional character. The distinction between these two categories of activities must be contextualized, for stealing can also be routine, whilst the consumption of inhalants can be an isolated act.

The literature states that the activities of children are survival strategies. It is not easy to define survival as a concept. This notion refers to the conditions of existence and to an experience that is both individual and collective with many dimensions: economic, cultural, social, psychological, environmental and ethical. These dimensions form a whole and it is not easy to define a universally valid standard where we can place the conditions of existence of the individual and the group. This notion implies a 'must-be' in terms of a definition of a 'normal' life condition and therein resides the difficulty. We can content ourselves with saying that survival exists when the superfluous is impossible or that survival corresponds to a line above which the individual runs the risk of physically disappearing, and the group (family, community)

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of being dislocated. We can also define survival as a collection of conditions of existence that do not respect human rights. In this sense, we consider survival as being incompatible with human dignity, of containing considerable symbolic and physical violence. But it has also to do with a question of degree, for poverty and destitution do not have the monopoly on violence. There does not exist, then, a satisfactory definition of the concept of survival outside a concrete context of existence. It is necessary to contextualize the life conditions of an individual or of a group in order to know its necessities (whether these are expressed or not) in order to see how or whether these are met. We then find a benchmark below which the necessities that are not met lead to a state that is judged as being intolerable by the individual and by the community to which s/he belongs. This benchmark will then be the benchmark of survival that manifests itself in a certain socio-cultural context in a certain moment of the existence of the individual and the group. It is true that this limitation of the notion of survival raises important questions. In fact, it does not consider the external conditions to which the individual and the group or community may be subject to. It is the problem of alienation that creates an obstacle to the awareness by the individual and the group of the state of objective discrimination to which they may be subject to. There is also the question of the relationship between domination and the act of expression of who is dominated.

(6) *The themes of socialization and of subculture* have to do with questions such as:

(a) the acceptance and the initiation of neophytes into the group;

(b) the rules of cooperation and, eventually, of solidarity that guide the relations between the children;

(c) the sanctions and rewards that connect these rules;

(d) the mediation of conflicts within the group;

(e) the relations with people outside the group (adults and children);

(f) the basis of trust and, therefore, the social ties on the street;

(g) an important question is also the representation of justice for the child on the street.

In relation to these points many questions must be left open. Even if we do not really understand this reality, parallel to the perception of the world of street as a place where the survival of the fittest is the rule, there is no reason to affirm that the children are deprived of a moral sensibility. Many other authors have shown the importance of this dimension [15].

(7) *The dimension of identification* is one of the central dimensions of the Child-Street System. Amongst the components that constitute the identification system of the child the most

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[15] See Ferreira, F.:1979; Dallape, F.:1987; Cussianovich, A.:1997; Parazzelli, M.:1995; Larvie, P.:1992; Rubén, E.R.:1990; Ennew, J.:1994; Aptekar, L.:1988; Lucchini, R.:1996; Lucchini, R.:1993.

important are the references (to place, group, category, people) and the image of the self. In relation to the references we found identifications, or distancing, that differed among the children. These are directly linked to the time spent on the street. Here it is the experience of the child on the street, as well as her/his resources (material, symbolic) that, evolving, change her/his relationship to the street. The children have many discourses about the street. There exist different ways of being on the street, as well as many modalities or types of street. The system of identification is by its very nature dynamic: the references change their objects and value and the relationships shift. Besides this, the self-presentation or the presentation of the public or social self and the phenomenon of identity negotiation and of the maintenance of self-image, influence the dynamics of the system. The social, emotional and linguistic resources of the child also influence her/his identification performance. On the other hand, these performances do not only depend upon the context in which the interaction occurs but also on the way in which the child feels her/himself to be perceived by whom s/he is interacting with. The comparison of the different identification performances of children in different contexts of interaction is imperative in order to understand their behaviour.

(8) *The aspect of motivation* in the Child-Street System has to do with the way in which the child perceives of the street: as a means capable of resolving the problems with which s/he is faced (in terms of family, school, identity). Going to the street is also connected to ludic and utilitarian motivations. In this way, for some children, the pleasure in breaking prohibitions is a significant motivating factor. It is necessary, therefore, to consider the relationship that the child has with risk and adventure. This component is almost always an important incentive, not only for the child to go to the street but also to remain there. 'Chance' is also relevant. Here the child stays on the street without the initial intention of not returning home. It is the circumstances of the moment that prevail. It is the occasion of remaining on the street that becomes the determining factor. Following this, the child rationalises her/his behaviour and builds her/his motivation. Imitation is almost always an important element that motivates the child to go to the street and remain there for a period of time. However, more frequently, it is a combination of different aspects that come to make up a motivational dynamic.

The street cannot be presented as simply a means used by the children to resolve their problems or realize their aspirations. Motivation does not reduce itself to a simple rational choice in which the children consciously combine an objective (solving a family problem) with a means (going to the street). Actually, motivation is only one of the constitutive elements of the identification system of the child. Its genesis is influenced by the combination of components of this identity and by factors of an affective nature. According to J.P.Hewitt, the components of identity are the

following: (a) motivations, (b) the roles and knowledge that allow individuals to interpret them, (c) the norms and values, (d) the cognitive competencies and (e) the self-image. Identity is then a combination of predispositions and potentialities related to possible behaviours[16].

(9) *The last dimension is that of gender.* Access to the street as a living space differs between boys and girls. We have seen that it is necessary to speak about the differential access to the street and about the invisibility of girls on the street. This question, like many other dimensions of the Child-Street System, is still ignored by the scientific literature. In fact it has been mainly boys who have been the objects of studies on 'street children'. We know very little about the different modalities that guide the girl's exit from home and her relation with the world of the street, as well as about her trajectory as a 'street child' or about her eventual exit from the street. We know nothing about her insertion in networks or groups of boys, nor about the nature of the relationships that exist between girls. This ignorance has consequences: the 'street girl' is often associated with prostitution. Because of this we highlight all that distinguishes 'street girls' from professional prostitutes. Not only is this assumption false, but it also creates prejudices that stigmatise street girls. Even if some girls sometimes sell their bodies, this does not mean they are prostitutes.

The Child-Street System shows that the reality of the child on the street is a complex one and that its study is delicate matter. This has consequences for social interventions on the street or in institutions and for the evaluation of such interventions. This complex reality highlights that we cannot under any circumstance reduce the children in question to statistics. There are no trustworthy indicators to 'measure' in an objective way the impact of interventions. This is even more so when the intervention occurs directly on the street: the histories of children in a street situation (CSS) imply all the dimensions of the Child-Street System. These dimensions allow for the reconstruction of the experience the child has of the street as a spatial and social environment. They also permit us to understand their relationship with other social environments (family, neighbourhoods, school, institution, work). The dimensions of the system are interlinked and a variation in each of them will influence all the others. This explains the diversity of the personal circumstances of children in a street situation even if the children share similar life-histories. Amongst the factors that explain this diversity there are:

(a) the modalities of the exit to the street;

(b) the references and models of identification;

(c) the symbolic and instrumental competencies;

(d) the degree of insertion/participation of life on the street;

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[16] Hewitt:1970.

(e) the movements between the different fields (street, family, parents, school, institution, etc.);

(f) the necessities and motivations;

(g) the modalities of the exit from the street;

(h) the institutional experiences (NGO, police, courts, media, education system, work).

These factors make up the stages of that which I have described as the trajectory of the child in a street situation. The combination of these factors is variable and any modification in any one of them has repercussions for the whole. The trajectory is, however, a central element that defines the place that the child occupies on the street. This place is almost always different from one child to the next because of the stage in which s/he is found as well as because of the stages s/he has already passed through. Knowing at what stage a child finds her/himself in and of her/his trajectory is vital for any intervention that seeks to improve the situation of the child while on the street, or of distancing her/him from this space. We can in this way understand the relation that a child has with the street as a living space. An example with five stages illustrates the notion of trajectory.

Progressive distancing: the child gets close to the street after successive stages; s/he explores the urban space found between her/his house and the streets in the centre;

The observed and the ludic street: the child still maintains a distance from the street;

The alternating street: here the child takes on the world of the street with all its contradictions and almost always claims the status of 'street child'. For her/him, the street is neither good nor bad, it is ambivalent;

The denied street: the child recognizes that the street no longer meets her/his necessities;

The exiting from the street, which includes many modalities[17].

Not all children pass through these stages in the same way. The stages are not something static, they are the result of a combination of many variables amongst the factors that we mentioned above.

A systematic approach shows that the children 'of the street' do not become a homogenous category and, therefore, that it is preferable to speak of children in a street situation. Intervention, therefore, can no longer restrict itself to the child; it must encompass the collection of social interactions of the children on the street and in other social environments (social fields).

Comings and goings. Mobility between the fields

The children studied here show a high degree of institutionalisation[18], but they also remained on the street for long periods of time. As we shall see, these children are not 'street

children', as the street did not become an autonomous space of survival in relation to the family home or the institution. These children are found in many fields, without one being necessarily more important than the other, and without one complementing another. They tend to enter in opposition to each other.

A field does not only define itself by the collection of position that it contains, but also by its specific challenges and interests (Bourdieu: 1984). The challenges and interests of a field are not reducible to those of other fields, in this way the children oppose one field against (another?). The limits of the field "are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease" (Bourdieu: 1992, p.76). These limits are not precise as the actors – in this case, children – have different representations of the fields that they frequent. The collection of these representations is part of the identification system and follows the actor in her/his movement from one field to the next. The limit, however, does not only have an objective aspect comprised of the influence of those who exercise positions of power within a field, but is also of a subjective nature. In this case, the actor elaborates on the symbolic and emotive realms the particular forces active in a field and the positions that come to make it up. The limits of the different fields touch and overlap one another. The actor who finds her/himself in a field resorts to the resources and representations that correspond to the challenges and interests of the field. Here, the actor is characterised by an instrumental approach to the field, whose limits s/he tends to delineate.

Each of the fields (family, assistance programme, school, street) is in itself conflictual. The child makes advantage of this double tension (internal conflict and a lack of integration between the fields) to justify her/his periodical abandonment of the different fields.

In this way the child leaves the street to return home but runs away from home to the street or to an assistance program. Or, s/he runs away from the program to return home or to the street. The child is imprisoned between the influences of the different fields and cannot choose between them. The family, dominated by the maternal figure, is the organizing pole of the relationships that the child establishes between the different fields.

However, because of material reasons and reasons of identification, s/he is not in condition to establish a stable and lasting position in this field, despite the importance awarded to the affective relationship with the mother, who has a central position. Almost always it is the figure of the stepmother or stepfather who structures the family field and conditions the type of adjustment that the child will encounter within it.

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[17] Lucchini: 2001.
[18] State institutions, social work programmes.

We can, on the other hand, speak about the emotional priority of the family field above other fields. But this priority is not demonstrated in the evidence, for the child has access to a position that, even within this field, is itself unique. There are material obstacles (housing conditions and the economic situation, amongst others), but these are not the most important ones. The symbolic and identification dimensions, the emotional dimension, as well as the search for autonomy, are elements that prevent the stabilisation of a child in a field. There is also a ludic component in the movements of a child from one field to the next. All these elements influence the process of distancing the child from the family sphere.

Institutionalised children are characterised by an incessant mobility between different fields, with the street as the organising pole. The child, integrated in the social, family and school levels passes from one field to the next following the paths traced by adults and these movements are legitimated by precise practices and rituals. In most cases the child alternates between two fields: family and school. The institutionalised child, on the other had, regularly abandons all fields for one of them, for instance, temporarily abandoning an assistance program to go back home or to the street. Almost always this is done in an abrupt way. The rhythm of the passage from one field to the next is more intense than that of the 'street children'. For the latter, the street is the main field, even if there are significant differences between the different categories of children (Lucchini: 1993).

The child tends to fix itself to a field that allows the best investment of her/his resources (emotional, cognitive, social and in terms of identification). There is also the case of those who use psychotropic drugs (almost always glue or other inhalants) and who have developed an addiction to these products. It is this addiction which, to a large degree, serves to explain their permanence on the street.

The conflictual character of the fields, the absence of integration, and the vague nature of their limits influence not only the rhythm of the movements from one field to another, but also the distancing from the home as well as the returns home. The 'street child' alternates between the family and the street, but always has the street as the main field. S/he determines the rhythms of her/his activities. This does not occur with the institutionalised child who runs along a circuit that is more or less the same. Some 'street children' who go to the street go through a circuit, but not as a matter of choice, rather than alternating between different fields. Their condition is similar to that of institutionalised children. However, work on the street stabilises for a certain time and in certain conditions the relationship that the child maintains with this field.

It is, therefore, hard to distinguish clearly the different fields in the process of distancing. For most institutionalised children everything is mixed up: running away from home to an

assistance programme, from the program to the street or back home, abandoning school for the street. There is a kind of equivalence between these movements so that the child remains constantly in movement without there being clearly marked stages. There are also children who leave the family home to find a parent who lives in another locality.

All this makes studying the process of distancing from the family home more complicated, since there is no definitive pattern. Escape and distancing are not the same phenomenon. The first implies the improvised and short-term character of the departure leading to a new set of changes. Distancing, however, suggests a longer process; the existence, if not of preparation, at least of an apprenticeship. It follows from the insertion of the child in the family field, even if this occurs briefly. As a general rule, from the moment that a relation of relief is established in a particular field in detriment to another, we can speak of distancing. It is not about a rational choice, as understood by the theory of that name, in which a scale of preferences is clearly established and leads to strategies of a utilitarian nature.

The child seeks, preferably, to satisfy her/his necessity in function of her/his past and of the circumstances that lead to her/his departure. When the motivation that led to the departure is, above all, of a ludic nature, and the need for experimentation of the child is strong, escape prevails over distancing. Repeated escapes end up as distancing when they imply a project, and/or when the insertion of the child in a field meets for a time her/his needs. Distancing does not imply a definitive separation. In the case of the institutionalised child, distancing is short term and coexists with repeated returns to the family. The normal form of leaving is the escape, distancing being more exceptional.

However, in the case of the street child, leaving home through distancing is more frequent. This occurs even when there are returns home. In this case it is the centrality of the street for the child that explains the difference in relation to the institutionalised child: the street becomes the organising pole for the daily life of the child. This is why it is important to highlight its importance. As mentioned previously (Lucchini: 1993, p.134), children produce different discourses about the street. There are, as a result, many different ways of being on the street and many different kinds of streets. These differences are not of a physical kind but of a social and symbolic kind. In fact, when there is a change in the way of life on the street and the child has access to new networks, we can speak of a new modality of the street in which the child offers a new definition of it. When the evaluation offered by a child changes, her/his relation to the street changes: s/he becomes another person. In this way we can say that there is an evolution in the children and in the way they participate in life on the street.

It is in this evolution that we find the origin of the significant diversity of living conditions on the street. This diversity is the base of what we call the psycho-social heterogeneity of 'street children'. The passage of the child from one modality of the street to another constitutes a stage in the trajectory of the 'street child'. In this way her/his trajectory is defined, among other things, by the combined stages that s/he experienced on the street. The combination of these stages constitutes a *continuum* that children undergo in different rhythms and in different ways. Some children stop in a stage or skip another. These different routes comprise an important component of the psycho-social heterogeneity of the 'street child'. This heterogeneity prevents us from affirming the existence of a unique departure to the street. This means that even for 'street children' distancing occurs in different ways.

Institutionalised children also do not comprise a homogenous category in the psycho-social field. It is, however, plausible that their departure organises itself differently because of certain parameters. Though it is not sufficient to isolate these parameters in order to build a typology. It is necessary to obtain information about the uses that children make of the street and the place of this in relation to other fields that s/he frequents (Lucchini: 1996).

The departure cannot be explained exclusively by economic conditions neither by precarious housing conditions. Children who leave the family home live under very different material conditions that are not always unsatisfactory. Instead, what characterises the majority of these cases is the dissolution of the union of the parents, a frequent movement of the domestic unit and premature institutionalisation. All this leads to instability in terms of the references of the child, who, at regular intervals, seeks to reconstitute her/his relations in the affective and social levels. Far too early then, the child is faced with the provisional and fragile character of social bonds.

Institutionalised children who work on the street comprise yet another category. If they run away, their escapes are less frequent and their movements from one field to another are less disorganized. The income ~~making~~money– making activities on the street confer a certain organization to the daily activities of these children (Lucchini: 1996). The income generating and regular activity the child is subject to – at least for a time – have an effect upon the self-esteem of the child. In the more favourable cases, self-esteem and the gratification of work lead to a positive self-image, and, therefore, a positive identification system. Her/His daily activities and perception of time, in such cases, become more stable. This stability is a result of a greater integration between the different fields (school, family, assistance programme, street-work). However, the problem is the precarious informal work of the child. At any moment s/he can lose it or be a

victim of abuse. It is necessary, therefore, to have some kind of protection or control over this work so that it can be, over time, integrated to the other fields.

The commercial areas of the urban peripheries are almost always the places that allow the child her/his first apprenticeship of the street. The street is, in these spaces, a source of many gratifications. It allows the child to be in a group, to experience the excitement produced by places where there is an abundance of objects and the presence of money and the possibility of escaping parental control and pressure. Progressively the child then moves towards the city centre. Leaving home takes place when s/he discovers that the street can be a place of new gratifications and an antidote to boredom.

What collectively characterizes institutionalised children is the precocity of the first escapes. These first experiences comprise an initiation into the world of the street. But this initiation is not the end, for in each new incursion the child remains only for a little time on the street. This initiation is never finished and in the absence of a structured field, the activities of the child have a double effect. On the one hand, the child multiplies her/his exits on the hope of appropriating a position in a given field. For this same reason s/he returns to where s/he left. Because of this, we would rather speak of a *circuit* between different places rather than a distancing.

In this way the *unfinished initiation* is not only about the street but also about all the other fields, with the exception of the closed institution which, in general, the child refuses. The movement towards the moment when the child manages an initiation into one of the fields is subjectively important for her/him. Children, however, differ in terms of the degree of initiation and in the fields involved in this initiation. The initiation consists of the progressive appropriation in a field of all that allows her/him to secure this position.

It would be imprudent to suggest a causal relation between an event (physical violence, the leaving of a parent, etc.) and the exit of the child to the street. Many factors are in play, such as the age of the child at the time that the parent leaves the family, the make-up of the group, the example of a sibling or a friend who frequents the street or an assistance program, the sudden arrival of a partner for the mother, a change of house which coincides with the departure of the father, the placing of the child in the house of relatives or in an institution, the economic conditions of the family and the work of the mother, as well as the support network of neighbours. But these characteristics, belonging to the social environment of the child, do not explain why only certain children regularly leave the home and undertake the circuit between the

different fields[19]. The factors that filter the influence of the environment are of a personal nature and have to do with the identity of the child, as well as with the social, cognitive and emotional resources available. It is not the episode retold by the child (punishment, conflict with a member of the group, violence by the step-father, poverty, etc.) that explains the logic of the exit and of the circuit between the different fields. The majority of children from the more impoverished social groups are not runaways. The episode that apparently leads to the exit of the child does not offer much explanation if it is not connected to a combination of other factors that influence the adjustment between the identification system of the child and of the different fields that s/he crosses.

It is almost always enough that the fields become integrated (for example, the family and the assistance programme) for the rhythm of departures to diminish. This interdependence of the fields explains why it is not sufficient to reinforce in an isolated manner the integration of the child to a particular field to reduce the number of her/his exits. We can also speak of a *continuum* in which different children are found. One of the poles of this *continuum* marked by the total absence of integration between the fields, and the other, by a perfect integration:

absence of integration (1) ⟵⟶
(2) perfect integration
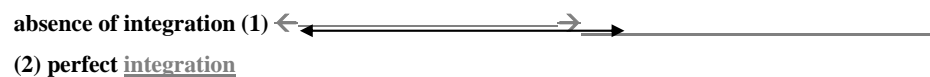
Institutionalised children are close to pole (1) and experience a large number of exits. They are very susceptible and their departure almost always depends on a chance encounter or a small eventuality. In this case their exit is more the result of a succession of events that fit together than a reflexive choice.

The child can leave at any moment. This depends on small events and on encounters with other children and adolescents who influence her/his decision. These children are regarded as runaways. However, the further a child moves from pole (1), the less will her/his departures depend on chance and on the unfolding of small events. The rhythm of departures is reduced, and they occur because of significant events (for instance, the worsening of a conflict) and because of the need to find a solution to a certain problem.

The trajectory and the process of leaving the street

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[19] In actuality, the number of families in which various members of the group where or are runaways is very low. This is also the case of the children in street situation that we studied in Rio de Janeiro.

Leaving the street is the final stage of a complex process that is not always progressive and linear. It brings to the child numerous challenges and questionings. The connection of the child with the world of the street is real and must be interrupted – at least partially – in order for her/him to begin the process of leaving. In fact this connection and the feeling of belonging to the world of the street are important components of the identification system of the child. Leaving the street represents therefore, a modification of this system. It implies a change in the components that constitute the system. According to Hewitt, these components are the following: 1) the motivations, 2) the norms and values, 3) the social roles, 4) the cognitive competencies and 5) the self-image (Hewitt: 1970). These elements interact amongst themselves when the social actor is positioned in relation to her/his close and distant environment. The resulting combination of this interaction allows the actor to create meaning, to situate her/himself in relation to other actors and find a place. S/he categorises things, people and events. This process of mediation is not always gratifying for the actor. In the case of the 'street child', the connection and feeling of belonging to the world of the street are strong when s/he finds her/himself in a place that satisfy her/his different needs (affective, social, material and in terms of identification). The need for consistency amongst identifications is one of the most significant and leaving the street implies an important shift in this dynamic.

The question of leaving the street is put from a theoretical and empirical point of view: how to define it, but also how to verify it? This, then, has as much to do with the researcher as with the mediator (educator, social worker, psychologist, NGO worker). In this way the notion of leaving is directly connected to the trajectory one of whose characteristics is to go through stages. The definition of the stages is no easy task. For each stage it is necessary to locate an event that marks in a different way the person in relation to an anterior or preceding stage. This mark modifies the status of certain roles of each individual and, therefore, her/his identity. We consider such modifications to be related to a stage in her/his trajectory if they influence the way in which the person perceives her/himself and is perceived by others and by the place s/he occupies in the group. It is also possible, but not indispensable, that the individual change her/his reference group. There can be a clear rupture between two successive stages or else a progressive passage from one to another. A trajectory does not correspond to a linear trajectory, for it has returns and periods of rest in the progression from one stage to another (Ogien: 1995). The following diagram gives us an idea of the 'production' of the trajectory of the child in a street situation.

8. Institutional and adult perception

1. Ways of going to the street

7. Ways of leaving the street

2. References and identifications

6. ~~N~~Necessiti~~es~~eeds and motivation~~s~~ of the child

3. Symbolic and instrumental competences

5. Movement between different fields (street, family, institution, work etc)

4. Level of integration/participation in the ~~social life on the~~ ~~social~~ street ~~life~~
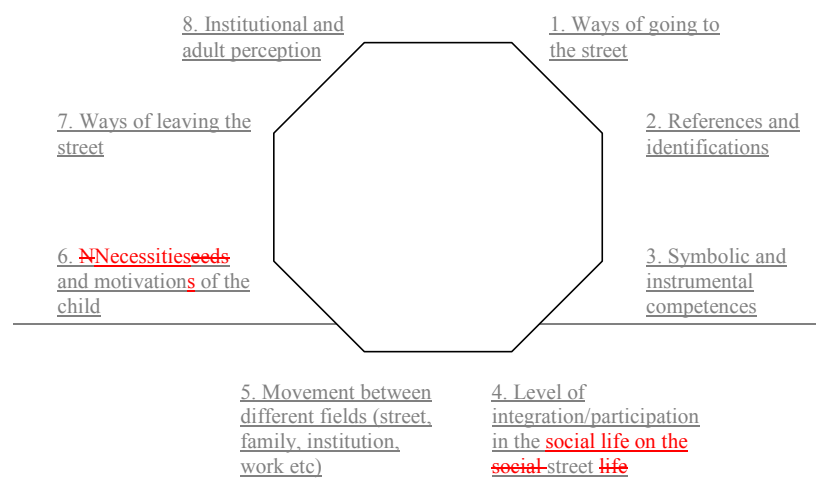
~~[~~Fig.3: Factors in which the combined variables 'produce' the different stages of the career of the child in a street situation.

All these factors are interdependent and the modification of one of them has repercussions for all the others. The trajectory in this way becomes the central element that defines the place that the child occupies on the street. This place differs from one child to the next because of the stage that each one occupies at a given moment, as well as because of the stages already passed.

Leaving the street is influenced by the trajectory of the child and depends on the combination of factors I have mentioned. From a theoretical point of view, leaving the street does not require that s/he cut all ties with the world of the street. We have a number of examples of children who left the street and placed themselves in a field of new activities (school, work or the military, for instance) and that for a certain time they kept in touch with old friends. However, in order for us to be able to speak about an exit from the street, it is necessary that there is a change in the dominant biographical line of the child. The child begins leaving the street when the desired or ideal image of her/himself becomes irreconcilable with her/his way of life on the street. This image is almost always built through various positive references which have to do, almost always, with people to whom the street is not the central field.

A change in the biographical line takes time and greatly varies from one child to the next[20], As A. Ogien (1995) writes, the notion of the biographical line "refuses the idea of the uniqueness of the biography, admitting the postulate: the life of an individual can rarely be understood as a linear homogenous and definitive history". And, according to R. Castel (1998, p.26), "a normal individual can represent his life as being organized around some key lines of investment: the history of his childhood, of his loves, his professional career". Each one of these lines of investment "remains relatively independent, and imposes its own kinds of demands". The child in a street situation is, therefore, a child whose daily life is organized in function of only one reference: life on the street and its demands. Her/his line of investment is exclusively organized in terms of life on the street. Leaving the street, therefore, can begin when the child is still physically residing on the street. This exit can begin as soon as there is a change in the factors of the mentioned scheme. In order for this to truly occur, these changes must harness the first manifestations of a new line of investment being able to replace the line that is organized around life on the street. According to the children, this process can be short or lengthy. The meeting of an adult who is a point of reference (educator, parent, street hawker, passer-by, etc.) is almost always an event that begins this process of leaving. We therefore see that leaving the street has many dimensions that can evolve at different rhythms.

The complexity of the process of leaving becomes evident. This has to do with the fact that the street is a plural space permitting many uses and forms of belonging. This belonging can be 'measured' by the resources (material, social, affective, symbolic and in terms of identification) that the child has access to on the street or that s/he attributes to the street. The relationship to the street-space is therefore complex, in the sense that it contains different ways and degrees of appropriation of this space. The appropriation as well as the insertion in this space allows for

…behaviours and actions that express concrete forms of action, feeling and allow at the same time a dominance over places and the production of cultural symbols. This appropriation establishes itself through an essential dialectic: the existence of control, on the one hand, and the introduction of freedom, on the other. (…) Appropriation and projection of human conduct over space. It affirms the dominance that can be expressed in many ways (Fischer: 1984, p.88).

Fischer distinguishes different types of appropriation of space which go from the gaze, as minimal form of domination over the exterior world, to the freedom of marking a place and

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[20] For the concept of the 'dominant biographical line', see Castel: 1998; Ogien: 1995.

performing certain acts within it that differentiate it from other places. The transformation of space into territory is the strongest degree of appropriation of space. We can say that the greater the degree of appropriation of the space of the street, the longest the process of leaving. The appropriation of the street is high when the child dominates the dialectic that is established between control and freedom. This domination is very gratifying, for it refers to the power that the child exercises over the risks that make up life on the street and over access to the different resources of this space, benefiting from the freedom but also from the obligation that this situation endows[21].

There are also children who go to the street for limited periods of time (a few days, a week, etc.) and return home. They generally do this because of the adventure, to 'have a party', consume inhalants or steal. These children are 'visitors' for whom the street is primarily about fun, a field that does not monopolize either all their competencies or their energies. The street is a parenthesis, a place to 'hang out'. It is not opposed to family, school, work or the institution, but something that complements them. The relevance of the street and the child's identification with it are limited and are part of a project whose beginning and end are part of a project that the child her/himself has defined. It is the existence of this project that distinguished between the child-visitor and other 'street children'. This project is essentially of a ludic nature, and does not meet material necessities or those related to identification. However, the child-visitor lays claim to the importance of meeting her/his friends and of living with them for a time the adventure of the street. For this kind of child there is no exit from the street as such for the world of the street is not her/his main reference point.

Ricardo's (an 'ex-street child') exit from the street started because of a double meeting and an event and it has a paradigmatic significance. The meeting with one or various people and the events this is associated with culminated in the build up of a motivation that is indispensable for the child to think about living the street. The child can then envision a tangible alternative to life on the street. It is important to remember that the richest and most promising meetings only have continuity if they occur in a 'good moment', that is, when the child is in a receptive state, seeking an effective alternative to her/his situation. In order for the 'good moment' to take place, it is necessary that the child define the price that s/he pays for being on the street, this price must be higher than the advantages that s/he has in staying on street. This kind of 'accounting' is not easy in as much as it requires that the child imagine a different future that is, at the same time,

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[21] This domination is always partial and temporary and, in most cases, occurs in a specific field of activities that are limited in time and space – thefts, diverse income making activities, conflict resolution between children, distribution of food or inhalants, negotiations with professionals from assistance programmes, etc. – and in the sphere of subgroups or partnerships that make up a broader and unstructured network.

real. It is in this moment that meeting with one or various people and a certain event become particularly important. The reflection that is started by the child is not only of an instrumental or utilitarian nature but also involves a dimension of affect and identification. When exiting the street is solely motivated by utilitarian reasons, it is the fruits of calculation and will be reassessed when the child does not see any further advantage in it.

Ricardo's case is interesting in the sense that it displays the progressive nature of his exit from the street and the necessary presence of an event that has a catalysing effect. Ricardo remembers the exact date – 3rd of December – of his first encounter with someone who offered to help him. He was 14 years old and at the time of this meeting had got some money with a friend helping the market stallholders. This person behaved very well ("was very special with me"). Ricardo even suspects that she had unwholesome intensions for there is a rumour that foreigners ('gringos') kidnap children in order to sell them. A month later he sees the same person again who is in charge of community assistance programme in a *favela*. It is then that the child accepts the invitation to go to her house with his friend. They have a bath, are given new clothes and have a meal. All this surprises them ("we were missing it"), but at the same time is very pleasing to them. They then begin to frequent the community centre although remaining on the street. This occurred over two years[22].

During all this time, Ricardo alternates between the street and the community centre, but without giving up the first. He does not leave it because it is still the space that offers him more gratification (money, adventure, recognition by his friends (status), absence of institutional obligations and as a result a feeling of freedom). However, a considerable reason for children staying on street is the possibility of benefiting at the same time from the opportunities that it offers as well as the opportunities offered by the community centre. There is, in this way, also a utilitarian logic in the relation with these two fields.

For this synergy to stop, it is necessary that an event come to change the biographical line of the child, changing the relation that s/he has with the street, but also with the community centre and society. This event is Ricardo's imprisonment for vandalism (he sets fire to, together with a friend, a judge's car), being sent to a youth correctional institution and, above all, his meeting with his mother. He is almost 17, the age in which the 'street child' begins to see this space as a dead end. This is because the individual comes to resemble an adult and in her/his increasing

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[22] When the children say that they want to leave the street, it is very difficult to truly know their real intentions. As Turnbull Plaza writes, "they also know what we want to hear. It is normal during a visit that more than one child will speak about rehabilitation without being prompted. The uninformed visitor can then come to believe that many of them are practically leaving the street and abandoning drugs" (Turnbull Plaza: 1998, p.115).

visibility increasingly attracts attention from repressive forces on the street and from other passers-by. The child is no longer able to negotiate this new visibility in as much as it imposes an identity that removes all legitimacy for being on the street. This visibility is basically produced by a new stigmatisation of the child who has become an adult. It is a visibility produced because of the idea of the marginal. The child then becomes receptive to a discourse that evokes the abandonment of the street as a way of life. As far as Ricardo is concerned the important event was, above all, meeting with his mother whom he had not seen for many years. He meets her on mother's day when he was imprisoned. She tells him whilst crying that she wants to do all she can to free him. This maternal tear, which is also shed for him ("I saw my mother shed a tear for me"), is decisive, for it reconstitutes the link between mother and child. This tear is proof that Ricardo exists for his mother. His imprisonment is no longer the event that by itself allows for a biographical rupture, but is an occasion without which the meeting between mother and son would not have happened. The core of the biographical rupture is comprised by this new bond and by the reconstruction of the youngster's identity.

It is possible to schematically reconstruct Ricardo's exit from the street as the end of a process comprised of many elements:

6. the positive attitudes of friends upon the intention of leaving the street

1. the street as risk factor for imprisonment, new social visibility for the child

5. an encounter that permits the reconstruction of family ties~~links~~ and reorganization of self-identity

2. the street no longer provides a future alternative (fun and instrumental aspects lose value) ~~alternative and an integration into society~~

4. an encounter that proposes a credible alternative and possibility of -integration into society

3. the costs in the streets become higher than the benefits~~integration into~~

Fig.4: The process of exiting the street

The most important element in order that the child begins the process of exiting the street, is the reorganization of her/his system of identifications. This means that s/he must find or find again the personal references that allow her/him to think of a future without the street. This does not mean that the child must wipe the slate clean of everything s/he has learn on the street, negating the value that can be attributed to this (for instance, the competencies and abilities acquired on the street, the friendships and solidarity, the pride of knowing how to live in a dangerous environment). Children then value part of the experience they acquired on the street. For the majority of children who claim the legitimacy of being on the street, this is not only a way of life that is imposed by circumstance but also because of a choice[23].

Leaving the street then depends on the kind of integration that exists between the world of the street and other fields. This integration is, in turn, influenced by the references and representations (activities or cognitive competencies) of the child, as well as by structural elements such as the place that s/he occupied in the different fields. This place is a resource that allows the child to position her/himself in relation to challenges (material, affective and in terms of identification) that characterise a field at a particular moment. When the child has a choice, s/he stays in the field that offers her/him the most gratifying place. Having said this, the choice is not always definitive, for the structure of the field can change over time and the child moves to another, thus the frequent returns to the street.

The cases of Donald (16 years old) and Carine (21 years old), from Mexico City, illustrate a situation in which the street is a place offering more gratification. The first left home to leave his authoritarian father, but whom he respects a lot. On the street he discovers the natural influence that he exerts on the other children from the network that he belongs. This discovery is of great importance to understand why Donald remains on the street despite the affection he feels

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[23] It is true that not all children have this discourse about life on the street. Those who submit themselves to the street and experience it entirely as suffering do not value this experience and present themselves solely as victims. We here find a difference between children who have an active relationship with the street and those who submit themselves to it with fatalism. Aptekar differentiated these two categories of children in his book (Aptekar, *op. cit.,* pp.55-78). He distinguishes between the "*gamines*" and the "*chupagruessos*". He writes: "*where the gamine defines himself independent of others, the chupagruesso sees himself in relation to others*". The first assert that hey chose to leave home, the second, on the other hand, that they were thrown out. The latter define themselves as victims and do not appreciate being on the street. I could also observe the existence of these two categories in Rio de Janeiro (Lucchini: 1993).

for his mother and father. It is on the street that he becomes aware of his power to influence other people and of not being subdued by his father's authority. This endows him with a very rewarding identity, especially when compared to that of the dominated son. Therefore, it is unthinkable for Donald to think about leaving the street to return home. Donald does not refuse school in itself but only because it necessarily implies submission to his father. He therefore refuses any exit of the street that means a return home. The two attempts at returning home ended up in failure. Although Donald recognises that despite all that it offers (autonomy, prestige, money and entertainment), the street does not offer him a future. He left the street definitively when he was accepted into military school. This allows him to see his father once again whilst living outside his home. This exit occurs with the help of an assistance programme.

The street is also for Carine a more gratifying place. This attraction is explained by the dominant position she occupies in the small group of children to which she belongs. She takes on the role of mother for some and of woman for others. Carine resolves the conflicts that arise within the group, divides the food and almost always the money that is given to the children. She also keeps the vials of inhalants, sometimes she buys things for the group, finds buyers for the objects stolen by the children and prepares hot meals. This confers on the group a type of family atmosphere.

Carine occupies a place that allows her to control an important part of the resources of the group without requiring great investment on her part. It is enough to represent various roles (mother, lover, referee, watcher) to keep her influence over the different children in the group. Her influence does not rest on her natural authority, but, of course, on the fact that the consequences of the disputes between the children appear to her more important than the mediation and the tasks that she imposes. It is therefore the integration of the children's and Carine's needs that allow her to stay in power. It is important to say that this influence also rests on the numerous negotiations between the children whose objective is to obtain a favourable decision from Carine.

She left her group when the territory that her group occupied was definitely lost[24]. This loss did not change the composition of the group but its functioning and organization. Carine's authority could no longer be exercised as before for she no longer had control of a given territory for the private activities of the children, such as a place of meeting and of rest (protected by the gaze of others and from the surrounding commotion) and the abandoned plot that guaranteed the

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[24] This was an abandoned plot of land surrounded by a high wall which was transformed into a car-park by the municipal authority. This space was situated next to an area where there was a bus and underground station, supermarkets, shops, restaurants, kiosks, markets, car-parks and two parks.

private sphere in which she could assume different roles. Carine's exit occurs because of an exhaustion of the resources that she found on the street[25].

It is possible to differentiate three types of exit from the street: (a) the active exit of the street; (b) the exit because of the exhaustion of resources or because of inertia; (c) the exit because of expulsion or forced dislocation.

1. ~~Sortie active de la rue~~Active exit ~~of~~from the street

3. Exit by ~~Sortie par épuisement~~lack ~~des~~of resources or by inertia

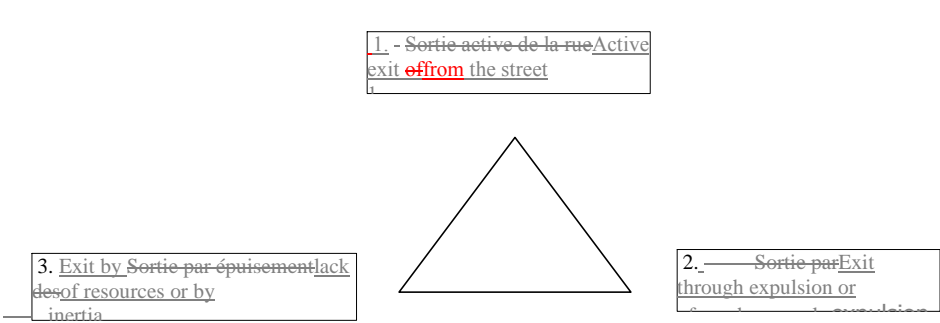2. ~~Sortie par~~Exit through expulsion or

Fig.5: Types of exit from the street

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[25] We will speak of this kind of exit further on.

a) *The active exiting of the street* is connected to a choice and to a project that is elaborated during the process of leaving the street. In order for there to be a project, it is necessary that the child imagine her/his future out of the street. It is also necessary that s/he has a tangible and desired future. For this category of children the street becomes a laboratory in which s/he experiments with an identity connected to a post-street project. This child contributes to the creation of opportunities that allow her/him to leave the street. The active exit of the street has many aspects:

- The first aspect is illustrated by the case of Mamo (14 years old, Mexico City). Life on the street, from the beginning, is part of a project that connects three fields: the street, school and the family. The three fields form a system whose coherence is secured by the integration in terms of meeting the necessities of the child (material, affective, symbolic and in terms of identity). Exiting takes place with the rupture of this integration. The obstacles that impede an exit from the street are considerably reduced and it is the child who decides to abandon it. The external influence (assistance programme or other professional intervention) is normally absent. It consists of a self-controlled exit (Castel: 1998). This type of exit from the street does not require any modification of the biographical line of the child. It is also one that has the fewest temporary returns to the street.

- A second modality is that which corresponds to the case of Ricardo. Here there is no integration between the three fields (street, family, assistance programme or institution), prior to leaving the street. This exit begins when a first meeting provokes an integration between the street and an intervention programme or another place outside the street. This weakens the street's centrality in the child's reference system. However, only words are not sufficient and it is necessary that an event takes place that questions the biographical line of the child (for instance, a death threat, the risk of being institutionalised for a long period of time or the valuing of the identification with a person who is affectively important for the child). It is also necessary that s/he can benefit from that which is offered as an alternative to life on the street. Leaving the street, therefore, organises itself around a new reference of identification, of a real alternative to the street and a new self-image. This kind of exit demands a radical change in the biographical line of the child for life on the street comprises an exclusive way of life. The exit is partially controlled[26]. The main component of the leaving process has to do with identification[27].

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[26] Here we do not find a total attention on the part of an institution but only the support of someone who s/he trusts.

[27] Other factors also interfere, such as the child's resilience. Despite the criticism levelled at this concept, for it implies a normative dimension that is not made sufficiently explicit, there is no doubt that there are

- A third aspect is that which we find in Donald. Here there is also an absence of integration between the different fields and the street. The street is experienced by the child as an all-encompassing life environment which is at the same time temporary. The street is a parenthesis that contains the development of a post-street project. The gratifying character of the street, in the material field and in the field of identification, gives it an essentially ludic and hedonistic connotation. Leaving the street occurs without there being any integration between the street and another field (which is always the case in the second aspect of exiting the street). Leaving the street does not contain an initial phase in which the child alternates or circulates between the street and other fields. This leaving the street only requires a partial biographical rupture. Actually, the child always considers life on the street as a parenthesis that s/he can go beyond at any moment. It is insufficient that an occasion present itself for the child to seize it or want it. For this to happen s/he must still rely on external support. As in the previous modality the exit here is partially controlled.

- A fourth modality of leaving the street is that of Samuel, a child who leaves the street at 17 years of age (Tegucigalpa – Honduras). This kind of exit is characterised by the impact of a transformation of identification of the child in relation to the adults whom s/he met on the street. The refusal of a *marginalizing identity* by the child is at the centre of this process of exiting[28]. The street for Samuel consists of diverse activities that allow the child to meet many needs: material, ludic, social and in terms of identification. For a long time this street is not propitious to the implementation of a process of leaving for Samuel's biographical line is determined by his way of living in the world of the street. This excludes any insertion of the child into another configuration (family, school, work, institution). The process of exit is initiated when he acknowledges a change in the behaviour of passers-by in relation to him. Samuel speaks of the hostile gaze of others ("everyone saw me as bad"), observing that others will do anything to avoid him on the street. The women who crossover the street not to pass him, profoundly chock him. At first he does not understand these actions as they imply a new learning about life on the street.

amongst children different ways of living through events that are hazardous to their development. Here I do not touch on the necessarily contentious use of this concept of development and of the stages that comprise it. This would be beyond the scope of this chapter.

[28] It is not, however, a change of identification that is – like in Ricardo's case – induced by a meeting with the mother and the person responsible for an intervention programme. However, for the two children the changes in identity are connected to changes in their physical appearance. They are both perceived by others as young adults and as a potential threat by other people on the street (passers-by, shop-keepers, police).

When he understands that he is perceived as a potential aggressor, he feels very angry[29]. Samuel refuses this identity and begins his exit from the street in two periods.

First he tries to remain on the street by adopting a strategy in which his presence may be more acceptable to others. In order to do this he becomes a shoeshine again and afterwards a chewing gum and cigarette salesman (someone still helps him in this). But this does not last very long because he uses his earnings to buy inhalants. Then he and a friend find jobs as security guards at a car-park in the city centre. Both stop using inhalants at the same time and use the money to buy clothes and food. Samuel is then not alone when he leaves the street, and this exit with a friend is strengthened by a sharing of the task of the job at the car-park. This change of behaviour is important because it allows a connection between Samuel's exit to the question of the frames of references that orient his actions[30]. Exiting the street begins when Samuel acknowledges that his presence on the street is incompatible with the image he has of himself.

The existence of an alternative project to the street and of a dynamic of identification is what all four kinds of exit of the street have in common. In terms of the differences, there are four aspects that are immediately apparent: 1) the absence of a biographical rupture in the first case, the radical rupture on the second and fourth cases and a partial rupture in the third case; 2) the rupture of the integration between the three fields leads to an abandonment of the street in the first case, whilst in the second it is the establishing of an integration between the street and the field of the adult of reference who is outside the street, who is crucial for initiating the exit from the street and supporting him; in the third and fourth cases, exiting the street occurs without the need of any integration; 3) in the first and fourth cases leaving the street is self-regulated, whilst in the other two cases it is in part the result of what Soulet (1997) terms spontaneous control[31]; 4) life on the street is considered by the child as a parenthesis in the first and third cases, whilst in the second and fourth it is totally undetermined by time.

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[29] Other children, at different places, have also spoken to me about this same feeling.

[30] The concept of a frame is not the same as that of the field. The latter refers to a collection of relations between social positions that contain phenomena referring to power, influence and the negotiation between things. The concept of the frame of reference or reference group has to do with the mechanisms that "serve to link men to groups and their values". This concept applies, therefore, to questions that have to do with the normative orientation of individuals and the structuring of their expectations in relation to their environment. This environment can be near or distant, or both at the same time. Many times, the individual orient themselves through groups to which they do not belong to or through individuals who they do not know. The structuring of expectations can also occur through mythical or dreamt characters. Often individuals have multiple references, which are, at times, very diverse (Merton: 1965).

[31] This means that the exit is connected to a project of intervention by an adult – professional or researcher. As Soulet writes, the process "of managing an alternation between relational distance and proximity is particularly difficult in some types of social work such as that of working on the street".

b) *Exiting because of expulsion or forced removal* from the street is concerned with cases of prolonged institutionalisation or imprisonment of the child. Here, rupture with the world of the street almost always means the insertion of the child in the world of adult delinquency. In any case, the youngster who leaves prison or an institution after some years can no longer find her/his place on the street. In this way for these youngsters, as well as for other children who have had a long existence on the street, family does not constitute a real alternative. As Turnbull Plaza writes (1998, p.164), "the obvious difference between the institution's agenda and that of the youngster have to do with the reintegration with the family: s/he no longer sees this as an alternative to the street. There is also the additional discrepancy between the superiority of our point of view over hers/his". We will see this in leaving the street because of the exhaustion of resources and in the aborted attempts at exiting.

c) *Leaving because of exhaustion of resources* (material, symbolic, effective and social) differs from the active exit because the child does not have a project or a real alternative to the street. The gratifying moments are exhausted and the child remains on the street through lack of choice and inertia. The exhaustion of resources has a subjective and objective aspect. The first is cognitive and concerns the child's perception of the street and its associated images. The second has to do with the changes in the configurations that structure life on the street (networks of children, networks of adults and children, police repression, assistance programmes, informal economy, for instance). The exhaustion of subjective resources can manifest itself without their being any change in the objective resources.

In this kind of exit the motivation to leave the street is not absent but it is above all reactionary. In leaving the street the child reacts rather than acts. Normally the only option that s/he has is to return home or go to an institution. This is a very unstable exit and often has many returns to the street. It occurs in children for whom the street no longer has any specific attraction but whose biographical line is not changed in any significant way. The exhaustion of the resources of the street means that the street becomes a place in which the child can no longer make choices in terms of survival strategies, spatial mobility and sociability (even if s/he belongs to a network or group). The pleasure of living on the street has gone. Even the excitement in the risk connected to certain activities has lost its attraction. The exit because of the exhaustion of resources is more fragile than the active exit because it is improvised and occurs because of "a lack of better things". This exit is marked by resignation and the anticipation of probable failure. It is for this reason that the exit because of the exhaustion of resources is very close to the aborted attempts at leaving the street.

From the affective point of view, leaving the street because of the exhaustion of resources seems more painful than the active exit of the street. It in effectimplies the reestablishment of family ties with all that this implies in terms of rethinking and questioning that which "is not said". For the children, as well as for the parents, the responsibility for failure cannot be attributed to a third party or outside causes. The actors are placed before themselves. It is one of the reasons that explains the hesitations and questionings of the children who wish to leave the street.

The attempts at leaving the street have to do first and foremost with the family, and, to a lesser extent, with institutions (assistance programmes). The latter constitute a stage in the process that takes the child out of the street. Or else they are simply used by the children as an easy way of obtaining shelter and food. The child regularly leaves the assistance programmes when these no longer meet her/his expectations and when her/his needs are met. In these cases, the child does not have the intention of leaving the street, and staying in the institution is for "taking some time out". The narratives of children and adolescents about this are very revealing.

The attempts at leaving the street must not be confused with the visits that children make to their families without any intention of staying. It is not always easy to make this distinction for they frequently alternate between home and the street. In order for us to speak about an attempt at leaving, it is necessary that the child show a wish to leave the street through concrete actions. Amongst these actions we find repetitive returns home with the intention of staying, as well as repeated requests through an intermediary or an adult of reference to be taken back home and the search for a stable job outside the street. The changes in behaviour of children and adolescents reflect a wish to leave the street. The decrease in consumption of inhalants, the refusal to participate in risky activities like robbing and stealing, the direct criticism of friends who behave like "street children", the growing anxiety to return home and the wish to live with a woman outside the street are examples that show this change in behaviour. The intention to leave the street is also seen in unprecedented behaviour such as buying clothes or school material for later use. This sort of behaviour shows that a significant change is taking place: the capacity of postponing gratification. The child already begins to identify with roles and practices that do not belong to the world of the street. However, these changes remain fragile, for returning home requires preparation, must be made real and, therefore, be more than a simple wish to leave the street.

The aborted attempt of returning home is essentially connected to two factors. There is, first of all, the refusal of parental authority and the hostility of an adult – normally the stepfather or stepmother – in relation to the child. The child is also incapable of finding a place in a group whose members are no longer those who were there when the child left to the street. Next there is

the discrepancy between what the street offers in terms of entertainment and sociability and the reality of the district where the family home is found. Nostalgia for the street and idleness make the child easily bored. In this way a return to the street is planned.

Exiting the street cannot be build only through a perspective of a return home. The child and in particular the adolescent aspire to the status of adult with all that defines this status. They aspire to "the reconstitution of their place in the world" and, therefore, to an "insertion in the universe of normality" (Castel: 1998, p.210). We have here an important reason that explains the failure of leaving the street. The presence of this aspiration distinguishes an attempt at leaving from a mere alternation between the world of the street, the home and the institution. Almost always the same child chronologically goes through a logic of alternation to one of repeated attempts of leaving the street. In the case of the alternation, the child does not have the intention of leaving the street and balances between the two worlds, between which s/he cannot choose. In this way when a child leaves home to return once again to the street we are not seeing an aborted exit but a new instance of alternation. We find here the integration of the fields. It is only when this latter is weakened that alternation is substituted by the attempt to leave the street.

Chapter 3; From abilities~~/potencial/capabilities~~ of children in street situations to social development. Daniel Stoecklin

Acknowledging and strengthening the abilities of the beneficiaries is essential to link service delivery to sustainable development. This principle should also apply to children in street situations. The long-standing experience of NGOs in this field shows that children can become actors in the search for alternatives to their marginality when, and only when, the abilities they have already acquired within and outside the street are truly taken into account. This perspective of the social actor – a subject of rights constructing his own life project - is far removed from the current prejudices still suffered by children living and/or working in the street. This is the philosophy guiding the work of the Terre des hommes Foundation where the author is currently facilitating a collective process of elaboration of a specific strategy regarding programmes for « children in street situations », a strategy that is addressed in this chapter.

Taking the capacities of children in street situations into account amounts to a paradigm shift in relation to classical approaches. This new way of looking at the phenomenon is being assimilated by Terre des hommes' supported programmes thanks to the qualitative research undertaken at the University of Fribourg, in Switzerland. The author worked for 6 years (1992-98) as an assistant of Prof. Riccardo Lucchini, Head of the Department of Sociology and Media, who supervised his dissertation on street children in China. Since 1998 he has been a resource-person at the Terre des hommes Foundation, where he has been facilitating a capacity building process, illustrating how important and fruitful it is to listen carefully to practitioners, in order to model practices. This process of capacity building (learning from experience and sharing) is also flowing back for further field application. It can therefore be seen as a continual process of informal action-research. Academic backing for this process has been important and constant throughout.

The works of Riccardo Lucchini are pioneering in the deconstruction of many stereotyped views on street children. Taking the biographies of children and adolescents as a starting point, he has shown that one can identify several types of relationships to the street world. The street can

actually be invested, to various degrees, and depending both on the children and on the contexts, with positive activities and significance. R. Lucchini has thereby shown that there is a psycho-social heterogeneity among children experiencing street life. This is a major and appealing contribution: it is essential to uncover the degree of heterogeneity of a population because this diversity will inevitably influence intervention. Any attempt at "solving the problem" defined in simple ways and unaware of this complexity is condemned to fail. This approach clearly departs from classical approaches which consider marginal children as being only objects of external constraints or of some pathological incapacity to adapt of specific social classes. On the contrary, it considers that the subject, though deprived of many opportunities, is still making choices and adopting strategies related to personal and social elements. There is no one-way macrosocial determinism pushing individuals down a certain path, but complex interdependencies between the individual and the social environment which allow for a more or less broad margin for manoeuvre. It is this question of the degree to which people can develop their own directions in life that is of primary importance when it comes to sustainable development.

The complex interdependencies between the child and its social surroundings can be visualised through a model, the « *Child-Street System* », elaborated by R. Lucchini in his first research on the topic in Rio de Janeiro (1987-1992), and further developed through comparative research in Montevideo and Mexico (1992-1996) [32]. It is an inductively constructed analytical framework capturing the diversity of relationships different children have with the street space, depending on the following 8 elements making up the child's subjective experience of street life. This is shown in the diagram below.

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[32] Riccardo Lucchini, « *Enfant de la rue. Identité, sociabilité, drogue* », Genève/Paris : Droz, 1993 ; R. Lucchini « *Sociologie de la survie. L'enfant dans la rue* », Paris : PUF, 1996.

The Child-Street System (CSS Tool) [33]

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                              GENDER              SPACE
                                8                   1


   —   MOTIVATION  7                              2 TIME

                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ The child's perception of street │
                          │ life, according to...            │
                          └─────────────────────┘



   —___  IDENTITY  6_                               3
SOCIALIZATION




   ___       ACTIVITIES  5             4  SOCIABILITY
```
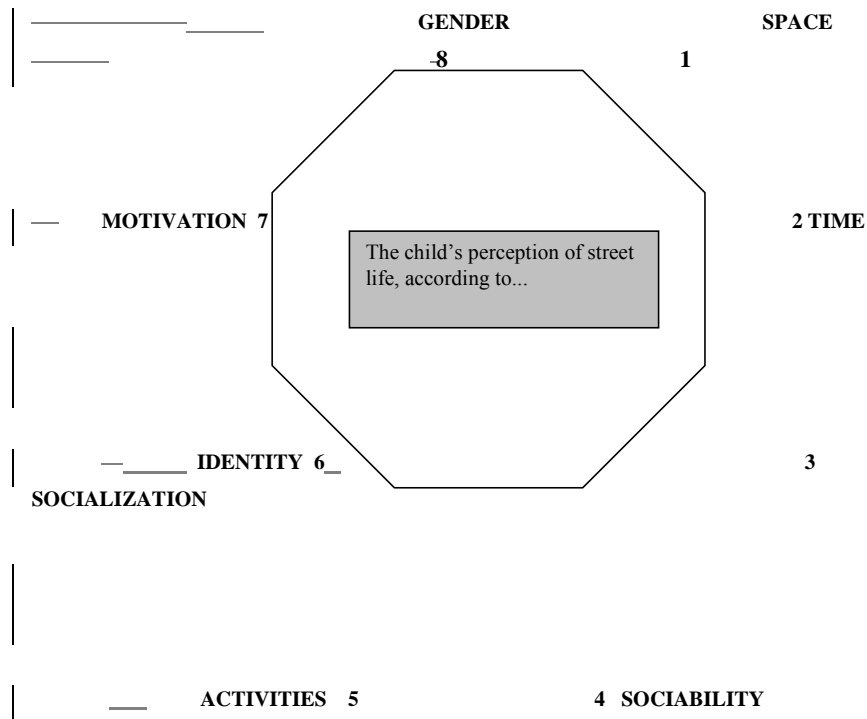
All these aspects form a system because the elements affect each other. This systemic approach therefore enables a phenomenological understanding of the dynamics behind the child's biography. This generalised framework of the "street experience" is a reconstruction R. Lucchini has systematically achieved through induction, by alternation of in-depth analysis of descriptive material (interviews, observations) and pre-existing knowledge and theories. Comparative research developed at Fribourg University (Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, Mexico, Shanghai, Lima, Lisbon) have confirmed the cross-cultural relevance of this approach. The author has tested the value of this analytical framework by applying it to children he observed in the streets of Shanghai during 14 months fieldwork (1993-1996) [34].

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[33] Adapted by Terre des Hommes from the works and with support of its initiator, Prof. Riccardo Lucchini.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this conceptual framework is proving its universal validity, not only regarding research but most evidently in the field of intervention. *De facto*, the "*Child-Street System*" is now currently implemented by Terre des hommes Foundation and its partners in the field. So far, the "*Child-Street System*" has been introduced into the following 10 countries (15 cities): Afghanistan (Kabul), Albania (Elbasan, Korça), Bangladesh (Dhaka, Chittagong), Brazil (Fortaleza, São Luis, Rio de Janeiro),Burundi (Bujumbura), Egypt (Cairo), Morocco (Casablanca), Pakistan (Peshawar), Senegal (Dakar), Vietnam (Saigon, Can Tho).

The implementation of the "*Child-Street System*" within these diverse contexts is currently proving a valuable methodology for individual case studies and quite helpful for profile identification, psycho-social counselling and follow-up. It is striking to see how social workers and researchers in contexts as different as Bangladesh, Brazil or Senegal can make use of it. It is revealing of the validity of the tool that any difficulties found mainly concern the cultural translation of the concepts used, and not its systemic logic and child-oriented biographical perspective. This phenomenological and systemic model is valid cross-culturally because the 8 elements of the system can be found everywhere. The contents vary considerably according to the context but the topics i.e. time, space, norms and values, relations, activities, image of self, motivation and gender, remain universally applicable. If we are allowed a technical analogy, we would say that the "hardware" of the system (logic) proves universally valid, and only the content or "software" (aspects of the dimensions) are context-specific.

The "*Child-Street System*" has also been used for the present research in Rio de Janeiro, conducted by CESPI and supported both methodologically and financially by Terre des hommes. This analytical model elaborated from field observation of intervention programmes in Rio more than a decade ago, now returns to this very city increasing the scope of qualitative intervention. This in itself is immensely satisfying for a social scientist who, like R. Lucchini, is truly concerned with the social usefulness of his findings. As a cornerstone of the Rio network "*REDE RIO CRIANCA*", the present research is based on the shared assumption that beneficiaries' capacities are the first resource of any project oriented towards social development. The articulation of a network of organisations should in our view also be based on people's own perspectives.

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[34] Daniel Stoecklin, « *Enfants des rues en Chine* », Paris : Karthala, 2000.

This systemic model helps understand street life from the point of view of those who are experiencing it in a variety of ways. It enables the adaptation of intervention to the diversity of situations experienced by children. This is why we speak of "*children in street situations*". The experience acquired by Terre des hommes in Fortaleza and São Luis show that it is by considering how children subjectively consider street life that the partners in a network can avoid the traps of parallelism and blind competition. Over all, the articulation of service delivery oriented towards empowerment must be adapted to the different profiles of children in street situations. This identification of different profiles - through use of the "*Child-Street System*" tool - makes one understand the societal causes and dynamics of the phenomenon, and is therefore a basis for prevention of marginalization and promotion of rights. The situations we observe are reflections of specific social dynamics. Therefore a fundamental question we, as both researchers and practitioners, are concerned with is the question of the relationship between the development of people's capacities and their social environment.

It is this question that the present chapter will develop by presenting the psycho-social perspective adopted by Terre des hommes in its approach to children in street situations (part 1), discussing the interactions between individuals and structures, and thereby highlighting some results of the Rio survey (part 2), and eventually advocating a bottom-up and networking perspective for social development (part 3).

1. Psycho-social approach to children in street situations

The overall goal set by Terre des hommes in its programmes with "*children in street situations*" (CSS) is to contribute to social integration. The objective to be attained is that children come to see their daily life and future prospects improved thanks to a response to their needs and the development of their own competencies. The corresponding strategy links the microsocial level of empowerment of children and the macrosocial level of prevention of marginality and promotion of rights. This interactionist and systemic perspective improves our ability to situate the interdependencies between these two levels. It therefore offers an alternative way of looking at the phenomenon, which corresponds to a psycho-social approach to children in street situations. We believe that policy-making regarding social development can benefit from an approach in which social forces and individual initiatives are always considered interdependent. It is so obvious that children living in street situations are the "outcome" of socio-economic constraints that we often forget to see the other side of the coin: the children's own strategies and points of view about their own situations. Meanwhile analysing their own words and ways tells us much more about social dynamics than such big concepts as "poverty" or the now more trendy "globalisation" can ever do.

1.1. Figures and categories

It would be difficult to give an exact figure for children in street situations, as the literature uses different categories – "children of the street", "on the street", "homeless", "abandoned", "in conflict with the law", "in a especially difficult circumstances", etc., and such diverging yet overlapping categories cannot be compared or unified. In addition, it is practically impossible to draw up reliable statistics, as these children are highly mobile. However, some figures crop up regularly: to give a certain weight to their statements, but also because they feel that without sensational numbers their pleas will not be heard, many NGOs talk of "100 million street children in the world", a figure voiced by UNICEF nearly 20 years ago [35]. In the same vein, a distinction is made between a child "on" the street (working in the street but sleeping with his family at home), a child "of" the street (who has left home, lives, works and sleeps on the street), and a child who lives on the street with adults.[36]

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[35] Cf. J. Ennew, "*Street and working children. A guide to planning*", Save the Children, Development Manual 4, 1994, p. 32. In the mid 1980s, J. Ennew & B. Milne (1989) arrived at a much lower estimate (23 million), and the NGO Childhope-UK (Strategy Plan 2001-2003) expressed the same reserve as ours regarding the possibility of giving a precise figure for children living on the street.
[36] The distinction between on/off the street was conceived by Peter Taçon, "*A Unicef response to the needs of abandoned and street children*", Geneva: UNICEF, 1985.

Such categories take only two aspects into account: the frequency of contact with the family, and the time spent on the street. This synchronic vision (the state of the art at a specific moment) overlooks a whole series of biographical factors and their significance for the child. We learn about the facts through statistical language which is not that of those concerned. The analysis of the problem using such figures gives an interpretation of certain elements according to the implicit vision of normality of those drawing up and assessing surveys and projects. This may lead to corrective rather than participative intervention. This is why we should not be so concerned about the number of children found in the street but rather by the quality of their life in and off the street. The child's history must be understood if one is to regard him as an actor in his own rehabilitation. This is, in fact, a question of the interaction between individuals and social groups. Terre des hommes, therefore, prefers to use the expression "*children in street situations*" (CSS), since the problem is not the child itself but the situations in which it may find itself.

Life on the streets is made up of various constraints affecting the child and his survival strategies, and vary according to the context. The observation therefore should not only focus on the numbers (how many street kids in this city?) but rather ask for whom, since when, where, how and why living on the street is a problem. The whole question of children in a street situation requires that we also cast light on those who are in contact with them, because they are part of the problem, and hopefully also of the solution. When talking about these children, people usually analyse the situation using their own values, positions and interests. For some, such children are bandits, for others victims. Some exaggerate statistics, and this may increase the feeling of insecurity, which, in turn, will be exploited to justify « cleaning-up » the streets. Others underestimate the problem or simply censure the topic. The media like figures and thus contribute to the widespread derogatory label of "street child", making such children the object of sentimental compassion or violent repression. The fascination for figures often corresponds to interests which are very distant from the legitimate expectations of those we want to help: these interests are those of institutions, politics, media, and international relations. By categorising children living on the street, we are not necessarily getting any closer to understanding them.

It is essential to allow the children themselves to express their feelings and needs. It is better to assess the quality of life of the children we are really in contact with, instead of just brandishing huge figures for institutional reasons. It is not only more ethical, but also more scrupulous, more professional. Our experience in the field has shown that it is not always easy to find out where all

the children deprived of such rights actually are. They are not all always on the street. They may be in institution, in prison, back with their families, in an NGO programme, then back on the streets again – in a circular way or just alternating between two places. Therefore Terre des hommes only uses figures when relating them to the conditions under which they have been drawn up.[37] Although our estimates are less alarmist, we do however refuse to adopt the attitude that regards "small" numbers as insignificant. For rights are not due as a function of numbers, rights are due to all human beings and every single child is entitled to the same rights. What is of prime importance is to understand why millions of children pass from one type of social life (village) to another (slums, street), and how social solidarity is evolving in this movement.

1.2. Causes

The phenomenon is multi-faceted and consequences are retro-acting on one another, so it is difficult to pinpoint causes and even less relevant to isolate a single cause that would explain street life worldwide. However the observable visible effects are linked to macro level politics, imbedded in a routine ideology [38]. Life on the street is one of the visible effects of neo-liberal deregulation: *"All over the world, the social role of public authorities is being questioned, due to the necessities of profits and budgets. An increasing number of governments reduce their social programmes and delegate certain tasks to non-governmental institutions or individuals or withdraw from others"* [39]. Children having to resort to street life are also paying the price of the tremendous external debts contracted by corrupt governments [40], that are granted new loans if they implement the structural adjustments imposed by the international creditors [41]. The shortcomings of investment in productive sectors aiming at self-sufficiency contribute to land deprivation, soil erosion, and corresponding rural exodus. As a result, massive urbanisation

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[37] For example, in Chittagong (Bangladesh) we interviewed 246 children, after having first estimated their number at 4,000 or 5,000. Our discussions with 10 people in daily contact with these children (railway staff, policemen, judges, etc.) revealed, however, that they estimated the number of children sleeping on the street at less than 1,000. This is far removed from the estimate of "100,000 street children in Chittagong" announced by UNDP.
[38] Pierre Bourdieu: "Les structures sociales de l'économie", Paris: Seuil, 2001.
[39] Terre des hommes: Strategy Plan 2000-2004, p. 6.
[40] According to E. Toussaint, the total debt of the Third World (not including Eastern countries) in 1997 was around 1.950 billion dollars; quoted in: "*Briser la spirale infernale de la dette*", Le Monde Diplomatique, Paris, September 1999, p. 23.
[41] These plans, decided by the IMF, WB, Club of Paris (Northern creditor governments) and the Club of London (Northern private banks), are characterised by the privatisation of state enterprises and the reduction in the bureaucracy of public services, in particular healthcare, education, housing, transport, environment, etc; the promotion of exports of raw materials and export industries and in parallel the liberalisation of imports and the suppression of customs formalities; the elimination or reduction of subsidies for agriculture, healthcare, education and social welfare; and lastly a drop in salaries, combined with a restrictive monetary policy with high interest rates, measures aiming to control inflation. Cf: S. George & F. Sabelli, "*Crédits sans frontières. La religion séculaire de la Banque mondiale*", Paris: La Découverte, 1994, p. 26.

provokes the overwhelming problems regarding social life, education, sanitation and housing, all of which exceed the capacities and policies of the public sector.

The results are all too clear: growing number of slums without any basic amenities; inadequate educational policies – direct and indirect costs of schooling, lack of vocational training – and an exceedingly rigid juvenile justice system, contributing to installation in the street; fights for survival in urban areas, the break-up of the family, frustrations of unemployment, mostly aggravated by alcohol and drugs, with children involved in trafficking; massive institutionalisation of children in conflict with the law, resulting from the fact that legal texts are frequently not fully applied, or the fact that legal norms themselves are lacking [42]; unofficial norms influenced by public opinion are sometimes preferred, which are based on power relationships between social groups and therefore impose corrective measures with limited or no legal foundation [43]; economic mechanisms which contribute to putting a price on human beings, exchanging and mutilating them; abuse of children, child trafficking and intolerable violations of the rights stipulated in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989), particularly as regards the right to live a decent life, have a home and an identity, the right to protection, food, health, education, and the right to express oneself.

The structures of economic power are spreading right down to the family level, and affecting, wherever we can observe it, the status of the first most important person for any child, namely the mother. The economically induced break-up of the family, forces the woman to find a new partner in order to protect her in an environment where solidarity is shrinking. In such contexts, men tend to react violently to their financially weakened role, often rejecting and sometimes abusing the children who are not theirs. The mother is trapped in a dependent relationship which prevents her from defending her former children, a part of whom finally decides that the time has come for them to leave home [44]. Society's reaction to life on the street fluctuates between extreme violence, indifference and assistance. The dominant attitude considers the strategies used by the children to survive and to adapt (work, theft, drugs, sexual acts) as symptoms of the social pathology of the impoverished. This triggers off the vicious circle of deviance and repression: from the moment that being a vagabond is considered an offence, the criminalisation of children in a street situation provokes greater delinquency. In the beginning, the child commits petty

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[42] See the strategy of the Sector "Child Rights", Terre des hommes, Bernard Boëton, December 2000, p. 2, point C.
[43] Interests related to the maintenance of public order often minimise article 3 of the Convention for the Rights of the Child (The best interest of the child) and the relative formalities (probatory procedure, separate detention of adults and juveniles, etc.).
[44] Riccardo Lucchini: "*Between running away and eviction: the child leaving for the street*", Fribourg, FSES, Working Papers, 1997.

crimes just to survive, then, as he is already branded a criminal, he takes on the role of a true delinquent and ends up specialising in this career. It is repression which will maintain the child on the street. Invisible economic reasons force the child to swing between domestic violence in the slums and public violence in the street. The child moves between these two worlds.

Therefore, it is not enough to explain that life on the street is caused only by such a vague term as poverty. Poverty is a state in which one finds oneself. We should also analyse the causes of such poverty, i.e., how such impoverishment has come about. The greater the inequality as regards access to decent standards of living (and of work), the greater the increase in violence within marginal families. This is the other face of global competition, accentuating the concentration of wealth (financial capital and real estate) and of power. Dependency on production and redistribution systems which are becoming increasingly selective, remote and anonymous, diminish the social integration of the population. Corruption, transfer of currency, tax evasion, money laundering, organised crime, unemployment, exclusion, insecurity and violence, are the symptoms.

1.3. Actors

Impoverishment is the result of economic factors and political and social elements, over which the children have no control. But they are not only victims, they are also actors. As is always the case with those on the margin of society, children not only just adapt to the situation; they actively try to surmount their difficulties by joining another world, the street, by creating their own world, their street. And not all poor children go to live on the street. The affection that the majority of poor families manage to show their children is admirable. However, the only thing we really notice is what is lacking in the families who can no longer provide for the child's basic needs, while ignoring those who are coping. We only consider slum children once they have become street children, a public and visible issue. There is a confusion between the symptom – children living in the street – and the problem, which is in fact worldwide economic competition affecting social bonds and the moral orientation towards the "common good". Yet it is the children's "abnormal" behaviour which is condemned and not the macro-social dynamics leading to such behaviour.

The issue "Street Children" therefore indicates that the real problem is the crisis of social integration, which can be defined as the adjustment of the relations between individuals and groups based on a « social contract » bounding them to mutual and legitimate rights and obligations. This crisis is induced by a fundamental tension inherent to the actual pattern of "development" which jeopardises economic and social rights. While income has become the main mechanism of people's insertion and distinction, economic competition compressing wages and dismantling the public sector is increasingly condemning large sectors of the population to social exclusion. The weight of this economic growth model of development over people's lives is only "seen" when we eventually encounter children looking for opportunities in the street in order to survive. The perspective of economic development contains its own failure: ever more children surviving in the street environment. Ever more children in distress exploited by growing mafias, including grown-up former "street kids", and without forgetting the numerous cases of children physically eliminated by vigilante groups.

Meanwhile, questioned by occasional contact with these children, "public opinion" is hovering between solutions that range from radical repression to empowerment. Criticism is directed at the institutionalization of children, still prevalent in many countries, and which only covers up the symptoms, without addressing the root causes. It is assumed that NGOs will make a better job. But the task is so huge that only a networking approach, associating governmental and non-governmental organisations, may have a chance to make a difference, provided a common perspective is shared. More than ever it is probably the moment to push for a development model characterized by a deep examination of the relationship between economy and society. An alternative vision is needed to replace the confrontation between neo-liberal globalisation and global neo-liberation. Instead of endlessly repeating that the market will create a global civil society, or that equality will realise global wealth, it would be more responsible to wonder which institutions will assume which roles, with what resources, and with how much transparency and efficiency [45].

Amartya Sen, a winner of the Nobel Prize for Economy, appropriately reminds us that in the end institutions are man-made. He opposes theories which consider human beings as maximisers of their personal interests, and emphasises their ability and capacity to react when faced with somebody else's difficult situation, uniting to fight against discrimination, torture, misery and

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[45] See J.-P. Deler, Y.-A. Fauré, A. Piveteau & P.-J. Rocca: "*ONG et développement. Société, économie, politique*", Paris: Karthala, 1998, p. 574.

poverty [46]. And such is the mission of Terre des hommes. We share Sen's view when he stresses that development cannot be reduced to access to material resources. He recommends to focus on the actual lives that people can choose, lives which represent different modes of human functioning [47]. According to Sen, the freedom of leading different ways of living is what he calls a person's "capability". A person's capability depends on numerous elements comprising personal characteristics as well as the social organisation. Therefore, the responsibility of the society towards individual freedom is to pay attention to the increase in the capabilities which different persons actually possess, and one should always consider the capacity of the social organisation of improving human capabilities [48].

Sen therefore sees poverty in terms of lack of freedom to lead a suitable life, a lack of « capabilities ». In consequence, he claims, it is essential to take into account various ways of converting revenues and primary resources into capabilities and freedom [49]. Thus, the question is: how can we transform our human and material resources into better development for children? The perspective of social development depends on the answer to this question. If, like Sen, we consider that a person's capability depends on both personal characteristics and the social organisation, then our strategy has to link individual development with that of the social environment. In the field of CSS, intervention has to address the relationship between the individual and society: social integration results from the interactive adjustment of individuals and institutions. Integration needs reciprocity.

This is also the philosophy behind the International Convention on the Rights of the Child: don't ask children to conform to social norms if these norms do not respect their fundamental rights. Advocacy for rights and service delivery reinforce each other, and Terre des hommes regards them as complementary [50]. Changes depend on the way the members of the civil society organise themselves. Therefore our vision of development is interactionist and can be expressed in a few simple words: social development is the result of individuals joining efforts to achieve respect for human rights. Our approach regarding children in street situations is based on reinforcing their capacities for association, because symbolic competencies (empathy, negotiation, critical mind) are the necessary tools for transforming people's living conditions. We have thereby come to the

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[46] Amartya Sen, "*La liberté individuelle: une responsabilité sociale*", dans: L'économie est une science morale, Paris: La Découverte, 1999, pp. 74-75.
[47] Ibid., pp. 63-64.
[48] Ibid., pp. 64-65.
[49] Ibid., p. 66.
[50] Tdh Strategic Plan 2000-2004.

following diagram that specifies the dynamics existing between empowerment options and prevention and promotion options by considering the interactions between 3 major actors: the Programme, the Child and Society:

Social Integration

Society   **Child**

**Prevention &
Promotion Options:**

Advocacy
Decent work conditions
Juvenile Justice
Networking
Sensitization
Situation analysis

Programme

**Empowerment
Options :**

Counselling
(CSS Tool)
Family Bond
Healthcare
Non-Formal Education
Organisations of children
Protection
Street Contact
Vocational Training
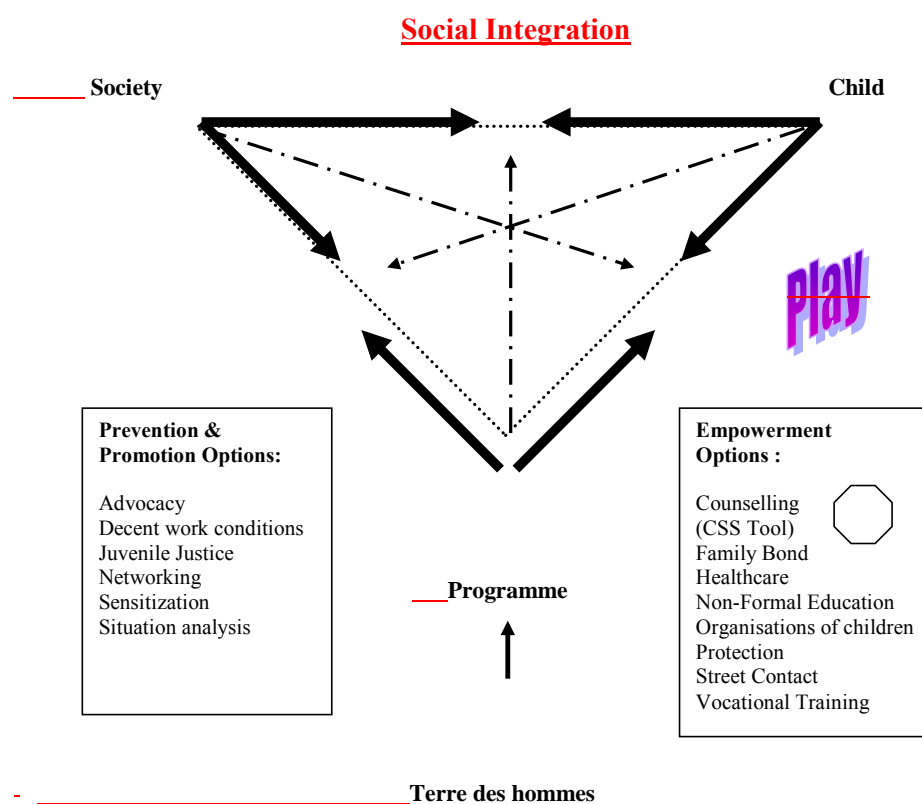
Terre des hommes

As a programme implementing agency, Terre des hommes develops empowerment options directly with children in street situations (right side of the diagram), and options aimed at preventing social marginalization and promoting child rights at societal level (left side of the diagram). The plain arrows in the diagram symbolize concrete interactions, while the broken arrows symbolize the influence of one actor on the interactions of the other two. As an NGO, we

can only define what we want in the two relationships in which we are directly involved: Programme – Child, and Programme – Society. We don't have the capacity or the right to dictate social integration, the Child – Society relationship. We can only influence this relationship in the direction of mutual adjustment through concrete activities: empowering children and at the same preventing further abuses within society through promotion of rights.

By situating the concrete interactions and the indirect influences, this systemic diagram helps to raise awareness of the latter. If concrete interactions with children and within society are developed in a relevant way, the Programme may favour mutual moves of children and society towards social integration. This can happen if skilled children become actors in favour of promotion and prevention, and when enough pressure is placed on society to assume its responsibility in the satisfaction of children's basic needs. These influences constitute the dynamics of our intervention model where empowerment options are both the pre-condition and the outcome of promotion and prevention options. Direct interactions with children are shaped by social forces which in turn evolve during the course of continuously renewed interactions. At the project level the awareness of this systemic interdependence is vital. Any option can be linked to others and therefore a specific input to one option affects the others and modifies the balance of the whole system. To be aware of this is of crucial importance when the options are shared and / or articulated among different implementing agencies, as in a local network.

1.4. Principles of action

With such a systemic diagram, the principles of action are not only related to the values of the organisation, but also, and this is probably just as important, with the nature of the interdependences between the 3 major actors depicted in our model of action. Apart from the general values and norms regarding the superior interest of the child, we can therefore specify the following principles of action:

- Articulate empowerment options with one another according to the identification of profiles (sub-groups) of children corresponding to levels of needs and of competencies.
- Let the child participate in identification of the kind of needs and development of competencies in which he/she would want the project's assistance.
- Let the child free to participate to the activities in any option, considering that children's participation can be a valuable contribution to the synergy between promotion and prevention options.
- Promote and optimise the children's active participation to the definition and carrying out of the project's activities through valuing of their competencies.

- Value children's competencies acquired in or off the street (sharing, solidarity, critical mind), as a strong basis for better living conditions, alternative ways of life, promotion of the rights of the child, and of civil society. The programme's human and material resources include the competencies of the children themselves.

- Help the children transpose their competencies, by first acknowledging and then redirecting and developing their competencies in socially accepted directions. For example, a child who is leader on the street has an organisational competence which could be redirected towards advocacy campaigns.

- Encourage the children to voice their perceptions and to defend their rights. Raise public awareness of the children's perception of stakeholders, such as police, mafia, etc., and their representation of justice/injustice and child rights.

- Empower the children to transform individual conflicts into collective positive actions, through development of symbolic competencies (language, negotiation skills) for better access to basic social services and/or self-reliance.

- Above all, always have a playful way in interaction with children.

This last principle is probably the most important, because games are essential to social development. Playing games is not only a fundamental right of the child, it is also the most direct and best way to understand the rules of the game. This principal is essential when it comes to awareness, because awareness-raising is nothing else than the process by which one comes to understand the rules of the social game. This element was especially underlined during a workshop Terre des hommes organized with representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan [51]. The principle of a playful attitude which flows within any of the empowerment options, as shown in the diagram above (triangle Society – Child – Programme), is linked with a quite complex and intricate relationship between individual capacities and the social structure in which one's life is embedded. This is the question that we shall deal with now.

2. Dynamic contexts

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[51] « *Terre des hommes Inter-Regional Workshop on Strategy regarding Children in Street Situations* », (Daniel Stoecklin), Kathmandu. 7-10 May 2002.

The most important question regarding a strategy aimed at social development is probably the following: how does the model of intervention fit into dynamic contexts and does it contribute to modifying these contexts? It is believed that the systemic character of the core method that is used - the "*Child-Street System*" (CSS Tool) – allows relevant articulation of empowerment options with prevention and promotion options. This is possible since the precise identification of children's profiles is necessary for their active participation and development of skills, thus multiplying the effects of intervention. The profiles indicate typical relationships that children in one setting may have to the street. Profile identification is made through the use of the "*Child-Street System*", following a systemic methodology linking empirical observation of children's behaviour with their discourses, and thus reconstructing typical ways of experiencing street life.

Such analytical reconstruction of experience is achieved through the Weberian perspective of the "ideal-type" [52]: each profile represents a typical way of living the street, an « ideal » image obtained by accentuation of one or several "points of view" that link together a multiplicity of aspects found during observation. Each child who is part of this observation has an experience that can be constitutive of an emerging profile. This ideal-type reconstruction of experience enables us to avoid rapid categorisation of children, such as in the "on/of" distinction. We are therefore no longer dealing with categories that imprison people by labelling them. On the contrary, we are considering to which extent each individual child almost fits into one profile or another, as a typical way of experiencing street life. This approach emphasises the dynamic biography of the children: how they evolve in their subjective relationship to the street world according to their needs and acquired competencies.

This biographical approach is essential in order to work with the child on the most important element for the construction of a life project that is an alternative to street life. The child's motivation to stay in the street or to leave it is deeply influenced by his level of competency. R. Lucchini speaks of an "active exit" from the street when the child has acquired the capacity and will to elaborate his own motivation with enough autonomy [53]. Intervention should therefore first identify at which phase of its "street career" the child finds himself in order to help him elaborate this motivation. This requires that intervention pays close attention to the actual needs and competencies of children. On the other hand the variety of types, or in other words the diversity

[52] Max Weber, "*Economy and Society*", New York: Bedminster Press, 1968 (1921).
[53] Lucchini, R., « *Carrière, identité et sortie de la rue : le cas de l'enfant de la rue* », in : Déviance et Société, 2001, Vol. 25, No1, pp. 75-97.

of profiles, inform us about the social dynamics and gives insight into possible steps that would need to be taken in order to modify these dynamics towards more respect for children's rights. Social integration is therefore possible only if beneficiaries of intervention are seen as actors in their social world. Intervention must be conceived with them and never imposed on them.

2.1. Individual capacities and social structures

Amartya Sen's view that individual capability depends on a number of factors which include both personal characteristics and the social organisation, is not a new perspective. It is however quite interesting that this classical sociological question regarding the link between the social environment and individual abilities is now gaining recognition in economics. In other words, Sen's authority give more weight to the critique of the theories of rational choice, where the individual is conceived in a socio-cultural vacuum. This is an invitation for specialists from other fields to concentrate on questions regarding social exclusion that was considered for too long almost as a "side-effect". Nevertheless, reintroducing aspects of social organisation in order to better understand the choices people are able and willing to make requires close observation at the microsocial level. It is only by observing people's individual capacities that one may eventually uncover the aspects of the social organisation that can explain either the limitations or the developments of these capacities.

The focus on the capacities acquired by children living in street situations is therefore doubly important. As we know, the primary importance of acknowledging the capacities already acquired by the beneficiaries will favour their participation and empowerment within the project. But there is another fundamental aspect: analysis of the beneficiaries' already existing competencies also casts light on a more sociological level of analysis regarding the socio-cultural context. This macrosocial level of situation analysis helps identify elements that should be addressed on a more structural level. In other words, identification of the capacities of children living a street life, that is possible through reaching out to them and by in-depth observation and interviews (Programme – Child interaction), is part of the situation analysis and sensitization option (Programme – Society interaction).

The results of the Rio survey, based on interviews with children, allow us therefore to situate the question of "street life" in relation to more general trends in society. Of course, this level of

analysis would need careful consideration by specialists who are better informed than the author regarding the macrosocial currents at work in Brazilian society. The focus in the second part of this chapter is limited to the approach that can be of use in achieving a deeper understanding of the relationship between the individual's capacities and the social structure. In this respect, the works of Riccardo Lucchini are once again invaluable. He makes a fundamental distinction between two types of capacities found with children in street situations, namely instrumental abilities and symbolic competencies [54]. We believe that this distinction is an excellent starting point for our discussion.

2.2. Instrumental and symbolic capacities

According to R. Lucchini, instrumental capacities are visible abilities: concrete know-how and performances. Children in street situation display such capacities quite evidently in their multiple activities in the street, including work (shoe-shiner, vendor, etc.) and other "income generating techniques" (stealing, begging, etc.). Symbolic capacities in turn are invisible. The symbolic capacities by which children in street situations elaborate not only long-term survival strategies but also inventive relationships in the street are also associated with a feeling of freedom, the capacity for association (solidarity), the capacity to evaluate the environment (critical mind) and the capacity to influence the reactions of others (creation of opportunities). Symbolic skills are above all concerned with representations of reality, and thus with the means necessary to interact with others. In short, symbolic skills concern "language". Of course instrumental and symbolic skills influence each other.

However, the public rejection of children in street situations only focuses on the instrumental side, the activities that are directly visible. We believe that in order to stop both condemning street children as delinquents and accepting the fallacious discourse of the powerless victim, one should pay more attention to the question of symbolic skills. Are solidarity and a critical mind not essential components of a civil society? When observation shows that children in street situation have already developed these skills, then it becomes clear to those who are ready to admit it that street life cannot be reduced to a simple normative question (good/bad). When listening to these children and observing them we can learn a lot about how actual societies allow or refrain from developing vital skills for social cohesion. Their symbolic competencies are a reflection of the

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[54] R. Lucchini,1993, 1996, 2001, op. cit.

types of social structures in which they live. Put in this perspective, the question of street life becomes much more complex, interesting and challenging. This is the path we would like to take.

The individual's symbolic capacity is linked to his socio-cognitive structure which in turn acts as a filter through which the world is perceived. Perception and evaluation of the environment thus depend on the development of these resources: « *The more differentiated the behaviour stemming from (them) the better adapted the individual is to the environment* » [55]. Yet these resources are both individually and socially developed, through the process of socialization by which the child acquires the ethos of his social environment, but at the same time reproduces and transforms these social norms and cultural values. Language and representations are social constructs that in turn frame human communication and interaction. Symbolic capacities are thus both products and constituents of a society.

The symbolic capacities of children in street situations are therefore indicators of the ways in which they have been socialized and of their corresponding potential to transform their environment. Mechanical adaptation to and reproduction of the dynamics of the environment signals that the socio-cognitive structure corresponds to heteronomous thinking, where the individual's behaviour tends to be dictated by others. On the contrary, an inventive adaptation to and transformation of the environment indicates that the individual has developed autonomous thinking. The question is then: how can one pass from mechanical reproduction to inventive transformation?

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[55] R. Lucchini, 1993, op. cit., p. 68 (English translation by the author).

2.3. From heteronomous to autonomous thinking

Piaget's theory of the development of moral judgement offers some valuable answers, especially regarding the process allowing the passage from heteronomous to autonomous thinking. Piaget considered that the movement from heteronomous to autonomous thinking is heavily influenced by the social environment and in particular by the experience of adversity : « *For Piaget, in the domain of moral development, it is above all the interaction with peers and the feelings accompanied by experiences of injustice, which trigger moral development* » [56]. Following these authors, Piaget's theory of moral judgment can be summarized in the following way:

Heteronomous thinking	(Process)	Autonomous thinking
	→	
Rules' origin = authority Rules cannot be changed.	**(Understanding of rules of games)**	**Rules can be changed by consensus.**
Any punishment for a rule transgression follows intrinsically from the act itself (is immanent to the very act).	**(Decrease in immanent justice)**	**Punishment is not « attached » to the act ; sanction needs mediation.**
The wrongness of an act is defined by its objective outcome (the amount of damage it produces)	**(Change from objective to subjective responsibility)**	**The act is evaluated with reference to the bad or good intentions of the act.**

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[56] Lutz H. Eckenberger & Roderick F. Zimba, « *The development of moral judgment* », Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Vol. 2, 2nd Edition, London : Allyn & Bacon, p. 302.

Especially interesting are the three elements allowing this process (in brackets), which correspond to what is also called a process of "distancing" which is a classical question in sociology. The link between individual autonomy and social structure has been discussed ever since Emile Durkheim's distinction between "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity, which according to him characterise "traditional" and "modern" societies [57]. In short, "mechanical" solidarity characterises traditional social structures where social bonds are marked by a predominance of the collective over the individual: people's thoughts are strongly shaped (heteronomy) by social norms and values oriented towards reproduction of the social order. Whereas "organic" solidarity is expressed in the contractual, day-to-day bonds between members of society, according to their reciprocal specialization and interdependence in the social division of labour. This type of social structure favours critical mindedness, distancing, and inventiveness (autonomy) regarding norms and values.

In reality, even though all societies seem to be marked by one type of solidarity more than by the other, it is reasonable to think that there are probably sectors in the same society where an overlapping of "mechanical" and "organic" solidarities can be found. The author would even tentatively suggest that street corners of big cities are typically places where such "social crossroads" can be observed. To consider this level of analysis in the "urban agenda" is more challenging, but probably also more interesting and useful, as the social dynamics and symbolic features of the street environment have more influence over people's strategies than just the physical space. When children in street situations say they experience a certain sense of freedom in the streets, it is clearly these social and symbolic aspects that they are referring to. These aspects correspond for instance to the possibility of children taking another direction than the one they were assigned to by adults who tend to maintain them in a submissive and reproductive position. Experiencing such environments and frequenting peer-groups where alternative ways and habits are made and unmade is very stimulating for the imagination. Children working in the street see possibilities of inventing emancipatory opportunities instead of always obeying the adult demands they progressively regard as abusive. They see crossroads that we ignore if we do not place ourselves at this social and symbolic level of understanding.

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[57] Emile Durkheim, « *The Division of Social Labor in Society* », New-York : The Free Press, 1933 (1893).

Continuous submission of children to adults exploiting them is favoured by a socialization process where the mediation between cultural norms and the individual are concentrated in only a few dominant institutions. This kind of social structure can become totalitarian. The totalitarian character of the filter placed between the self and others, replacing a multiplicity of mediations or diversified role-models, represses the expression of the individual's distancing in relation to the group. In extreme cases, it can annihilate the individual's very capacity to maintain a critical distance. It is of primary importance to be aware of the fact that relative autonomy is vital for social cohesion. Actually, when autonomy drops to a certain level, the individual is no longer capable of adjusting to ever more demanding social norms (performance, rationality) from an ever more fragile position within the social structure (work, citizenship). The feeling of arbitrariness settles in and may lead to explosions of violence. The viability of modern society is thus dependent on the relative autonomy of the individual [58].

Therefore, an essential implication for intervention is to develop children's differentiated views, and multiply the normative references and critical discussion of these norms. One must help children to pass from a heteronomous way of thinking, where individual behaviour is dictated by injunctions formulated by others, to an autonomous one, where the subject decides in a responsible way.

2.4. ~~The trend~~The trend in Rio

However, even though we can find children developing inventive ways in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, and the present study confirms this, we must also admit that this is not the case of the majority of children in most cities, and that, also in Rio, the proportion of children experiencing "freedom" in the street is shrinking. It seems that behind the findings and conclusion of the present research in Rio, there is a more general trend, affecting Brazil and other countries, involving a growing deficit of autonomy, real and symbolic, which is directly linked to the reduction of "public space". The author would suggest therefore that one of the major findings of the survey is the high mobility of children and the corresponding difficulties they have to develop elaborate survival strategies, due to the policy of limiting access to physical "public spaces",

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[58] See D. Stoecklin, "*Enfants des rues en Chine*", Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 300-301.

which also have, or had, the symbolic function of the "public space" (J. Habermas): spheres of social exchange and debate.

We can also observe a growing phenomenon accompanying this trend: children in the streets of Rio tend to identify themselves with groups sharing more violent signs of membership (see the drawings made by children). This evolution confirms the relationship between social structure and individual decentration: «….*the state of the Self depends on the socio-cultural environment, and thus on the social structures to which the individual is confronted. L.A. Zurcher postulates the existence of different degrees of intellectual (cognitive) flexibility, autonomy, tolerance and openness. R.L. Coser links these degrees of openness and of decentration of the Self (J. Piaget), to the degree of complexity of the social structures* » [59]. There are different levels of intellectual flexibility, autonomy, tolerance and openness, and these levels depend on the types of social structures. Referring to "identitarian" massacres (Rwanda, Ex-Yugoslavia), the French-Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf, drawing on his own experience of dual nationality, poignantly discusses the question of the construction of "identity". He advocates the recognition of multiple memberships in order to counter discourses stemming from dominant positions in the social structure, which reduce an individual's identity to a single (ethnic, national) characteristic thus exacerbating dualism ("us/them") conducive to violence between communities [60].

Both labelling "street children" and the consequently delinquent and violent reactions to this labelling, are processes which are indicative of such a reduction in the definitions of people's identity. The movement of reduction of the "public space", where excluded people have no voice because they are deprived of expression and political representation, deserves closer attention. Seen from this point of view the level of poverty (in both its material and social consequences) is not really a "cause" of street life, but only a condition, and most probably above all a symptom of structural inequalities within society, leading to identitarian tensions and explosions of violence. The problem of social exclusion is too complex to be expressed by a crude cause-effect relationship between poverty and family break-up, leading mechanically to street life.

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[59] Riccardo Lucchini, «*Sociologie de la survie. L'enfant dans la rue* », Paris : PUF, 1996, (p.112). R. Lucchini quotes L.A. Zurcher, « *The Mutable Self* », Beverly Hills, 1977, p. 217 ; ainsi que R.L. Coser, « *Complexity of Roles as a Seedbed of Individual Autonomy* », dans : L.B. Coser (Ed.), « *The Idea of Social Structure* », New-York, 1975, p. 246).
[60] Amin Maalouf, « Les identités meurtrières », Paris : Plon, 1998.

However what is most interesting is that we observe children in a street situation that have developed important symbolic skills and autonomous thinking, not because they have been encouraged to do so by positive adult role-models of a "modern" society, but on the contrary because they find themselves in circumstances where only inventive ways of behaving can enable them to escape from abuse. This emancipatory movement also varies greatly according to the socio-cultural context. We don't find as much emancipation in Pakistan or Senegal as in Brazil for instance. These differences show that what is called "resilience" is only indirectly linked to the individual's own capacities. The individual's ability to succeed despite "adverse conditions" cannot be independent of the social structure, or in other words the power distribution, framing legitimate representations, language and behaviour. Inventive ways are already inherent to or absent from these frames.

It can be suggested that these elements confirm the perspective we share with Piaget, Sen, and others, who see the individual's symbolic competencies as indicators of their relative autonomy, and thus of the social structure in which they live. Whereas, by reducing the whole environment to "adverse circumstances", the theories of "resilience" ignore the diversity of social structures. By re-introducing macro-social elements, we now see that both resilience and empowerment require socio-cultural frameworks which allow socio-cognitive structures at the level of the individual to develop with a certain autonomy.

Meanwhile, there is a general tendency for people to ignore the competencies of children in street situations. This ignorance is socially constructed: such blindness is due to the fact that people only consider visible abilities, especially if they are shocking and deviant. It is the conformist or deviant character of action that is evaluated, and not the symbolic skills (association, negotiation, solidarity, critical mind) the child is displaying. And if tolerance is there, it mainly considers physical survival, not the affective and identitary needs that the child tries to fulfil in the street environment because they are not met elsewhere. If these symbolic skills are exerted in deviant activities, it is because spaces to display them in socially acceptable ones are simply lacking.

A reasonable attitude would be to consider that the children's symbolic skills should not be ignored just because they are being exercised in delinquent activities. On the contrary, a participatory project should strive to redirect the symbolic capacities already acquired, in and off the street, into positive and constructive activities. For instance, a gang leader who has organized collective stealing can be given a leadership role in organizing a show (theatre, music, etc.)
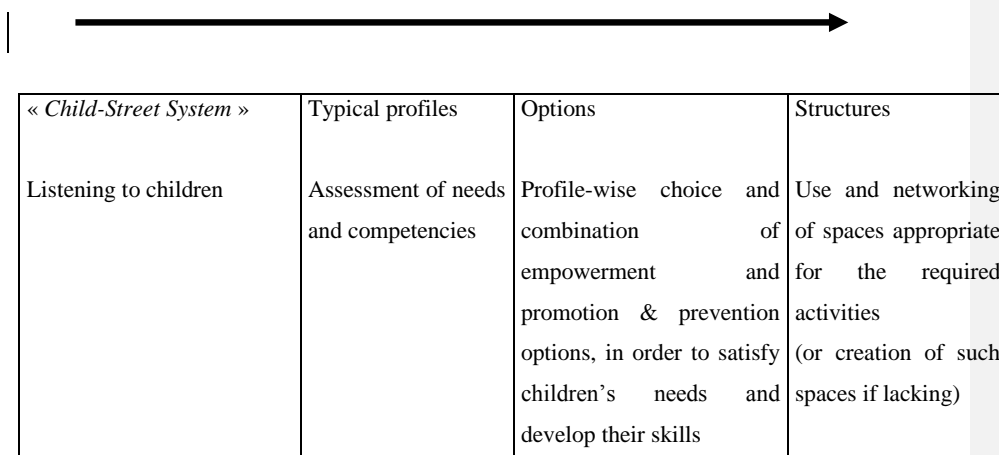
sensitizing the public to children's rights. This is what we call "transposition" of symbolic skills from negative to positive activities. From stealing to promoting social bonding, for instance. Such transposition is in fact what turns the ~~individual's symbolic~~individual's symbolic skills into an instrumental collective capacity.

3. Towards social development

Intervention should help children to develop their symbolic skills (critical mind, distancing, association, negotiation) so that they have better chances of transposing them to other types of activities and to pass to a phase where the "generalized other" [61] and the sense of common good can appear. Thus one can see that the objective of giving children autonomy, through their constructive socialization, is based on any child's innate potential : the capacity to develop symbolic skills. The sustainability of a social project implies therefore that the potential of the actors be inscribed in the objective itself. Sustainability depends on the autonomy of individuals, in other words in their "capabilities". This implies that service delivery should be linked to skills development of those who see their capabilities limited by the type of social structure they live in. Social development depends on the importance given to individuals' symbolic competencies.

Our perspective thus begins by paying close attention to the children's needs and capacities (profiles) that call for appropriate spaces where these can be satisfied. Listening to children in street situations comes first. One can then reconstruct a typology according to the children's profiles, and choose appropriate actions and spaces. This bottom-up approach is summarised in the following diagram:

CSS Bottom-up model of action

« *Child-Street System* »	Typical profiles	Options	Structures
Listening to children	Assessment of needs and competencies	Profile-wise choice and combination of empowerment and promotion & prevention options, in order to satisfy children's needs and develop their skills	Use and networking of spaces appropriate for the required activities (or creation of such spaces if lacking)

According to this approach, social development is a process where people's existing and desired capabilities, contribute to adapting social structures. This social change process rests on the principle of the CRC regarding the child's right to expression. To start with options, and not structures, is to give more weight to children's expressions, and less to institutional interests. It also provides more chances of adapting the structures in a constructive way. This is why in our strategy (see the triangle diagram), all empowerment options can take place in different settings: the street, the family, a drop-in centre, a shelter. Promotion and prevention options add two other levels, which are "virtual places": local networking and international networking.

Special attention should be given to the social dynamics of each context. Each one is characterised by the particular form of those influencing the child's life: police, judges, prison guards, families, local associations, mafia, gangs, groups of children. The interaction and links between all these people must be understood, so that the project may have multiple, extensive effects. The differences in the children's behaviour and strategy are evidences of the types of life they are experiencing. Power relationships, moreover, are trans-national. They impact the situation of children living and/or working in the streets through economic pressure on their family members and especially the status of mothers. It is therefore essential to develop a gender approach. While boys tend to "abandon" their family when they are mistreated, the situation of the girls is far more worrying, since society's view of the girl prevents her from developing valid strategies. Her forced insertion in the "underworld" of physical and sexual exploitation is thus more than probable.

The most urgent issues are not provoked by local causes. But the response should promote local actors who are most marginalized: «*It is well known that the most efficient aid is that offered to children and women, who multiply its effects. At least 20% of all funds available should be allocated for the development of projects in favour of children, in particular basic social services essential for the development of human beings in the countries in question* » [62].

As we know, effects of social development actions are difficult to measure as they are above all qualitative and have long-term results. This demands investment in monitoring and follow-up techniques, evaluation and capitalisation of experience. Moreover there is a tension between the

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[61] See P. L. Berger & T. Luckmann, "*The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*", New-York: Anchor Books, 1966.

[62] Speech by Mrs. Lydie Err, Reporter with the Commission of Legal Affairs of the Coucil of Europe Parliament: "*Council of Europe Strategy for Children*", Acts of the Conference closing the project "policies for children", Leipzig, 30 May-1 June 1996.

timescale necessary to understand and therefore have a positive impact on social dynamics, and the short-term rehabilitation perspective which is still trapping so many NGOs into a logic of competition.

However, the exchanges of experience that networks allow are extremely precious and the coalitions thus made possible can carry great weight with governments. It is becoming evident that the potential of networks may be increased even more through exchanges of capitalised experience. Above all, imparting relevant information to institutional donors requires qualitative capacities. It is true that the level of respect for human rights is difficult to assess with synthetic indicators [63]. Some rights simply cannot be quantified, and the information on human rights is biased, since government offices of statistics lack political independence [64]. Furthermore, high-quality, trustworthy data is needed. Indeed, "*figures, despite and because of their power, cannot fully express reality, and as they are only instruments, can be manipulated. It is therefore essential to use them democratically, to be able to interpret them in context and to complete them with qualitative data*" [65].

The best working methods are the processes which systematically use collection and exchange of experience, in the hope of improving the ability of the beneficiaries to take charge of their problems. In order to encourage this movement, assessment of projects should concern both the synthetic indicators and the way projects circulate qualitative data. Making strategic choices involves understanding the local situation to the greatest possible extent. And to achieve this bottom-up transfer of information, we must begin by strengthening the ability of both the children and the staff to translate their immediate concern into more general problems. Each activity (Empowerment, Promotion & Prevention) should therefore be given sufficient space in the report using qualitative language (significant facts, explanatory hypotheses, lessons learnt) which will mean that the synthetic indicators used (figures, percentage) will be placed in context. The participation of all levels in defining the strategy of intervention calls for a bottom-up consultation process (action-research).

Research taking quality of life into consideration, paying attention to the way in which the children themselves consider their life on the streets, has definitely eliminated certain prejudices

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[63] International experts at the Congress "Statistics, Development and Human Rights" in Montreux, 4 - 8 September 2000 identified important limits in the production and interpretation of statistics and indicators in this field.
[64] Conference by Thomas Hammarberg, Swedish Foreign Affairs Minister, at the above-mentioned Conference in Montreux.
[65] Closing speech by Joseph Deiss, Swiss Foreign Affairs Minister, at the Conference in Montreux, 8 September 2000.

and improved the quality of intervention. In many countries, those who think a strong hand is the best way to deal with such problems now have to face the opposition shown by NGOs and various public movements, as well as, which is quite new, the academic world. Networking organisations have been set up also thanks to participation of Universities. Part of the information which flows between those involved is made up of analyses of situations and capacity building carried out in collaboration with social science experts.

Their input helps in understanding that the notion of efficiency must be compatible, both in the way it is expressed and in the way it is measured, with the social nature of the problems we wish to deal with. If our aim is to extend the freedom of those who suffer from lack of possibilities, action should be measured in terms of the growth of personal freedom, what A. Sen calls "capabilities". Taking human and child rights as a yardstick, we must observe the relationship between the development of personal capabilities and the nature of the institutional environment.

Conclusion

To ensure suitable social intervention, we must understand the specific dynamics of each context and identify the levers which will permit civil society to initiate a movement towards greater social justice. Long-term solutions must be found through participation, taking into consideration the role of informal solidarity in catalysing institutional solutions that still need to interact better. The CRC is our main strategic lever to advocate the respect and protection of children, and therefore encourage the development of a society where social integration implies access to basic services.

Terre des hommes seeks to prevent marginalisation and stimulate social integration by encouraging more favourable attitudes towards children on the part of those in power, and by setting up partnerships and networks of solidarity. The redistribution of resources, which is essential in view of the disastrous disparities in wealth, can only be the consequence of a social movement, which in turn is triggered off when people become aware of the need for changes. Our aim is social integration, the reciprocal adjustment (Society – Individual) described in our model of intervention. Terre des hommes is not a machine reinserting successive waves of children in distress, whilst refusing to address structural changes. The situation of children must improve in and off the street.

Our approach shows that «delinquent street children » is a stereotype that is socially constructed by unsufficient acknowledgment of their symbolic competencies and consequent lack of imagination regarding the possibility of redirecting these capacities towards socially acceptable activities. And this blindness depends precisely on the way in which ordinary members of society elaborate their view of "reality". The greater the differentiation and nuances in the eyes of those looking at a phenomenon the more inventive will strategies of rehabilitation and empowerment be. Dead looks kill.

This in not independent of broader interests concerning the phenomenon. Street life is highly invested in terms of political interests either to pinpoint it or to hide it. There is also a media policy, formal or not, whose latent function is to create or to maintain the social labelling of outcasts. The general suspicion this labelling produces also limits the margin for manoeuvre and the development of symbolic competencies of children in street situations. But there is another consequence, a sort of vicious circle in which the initial label diminishes the very capacity of ordinary members of a society to admit elements that would contradict their prejudices.

One thus observes that the type of social structure in which individuals live can block or on the contrary develop both the competencies of children in street situations and the social recognition of these capacities. There is therefore a double-victimization of children in street situations: not only are they denied access to fundamental rights, they also have to face the barriers implicit in peoples' hostile stare. It is reasonable to think that we first have to remove these symbolic obstacles in order to allow children to climb the wall that separates them from their most elementary rights.

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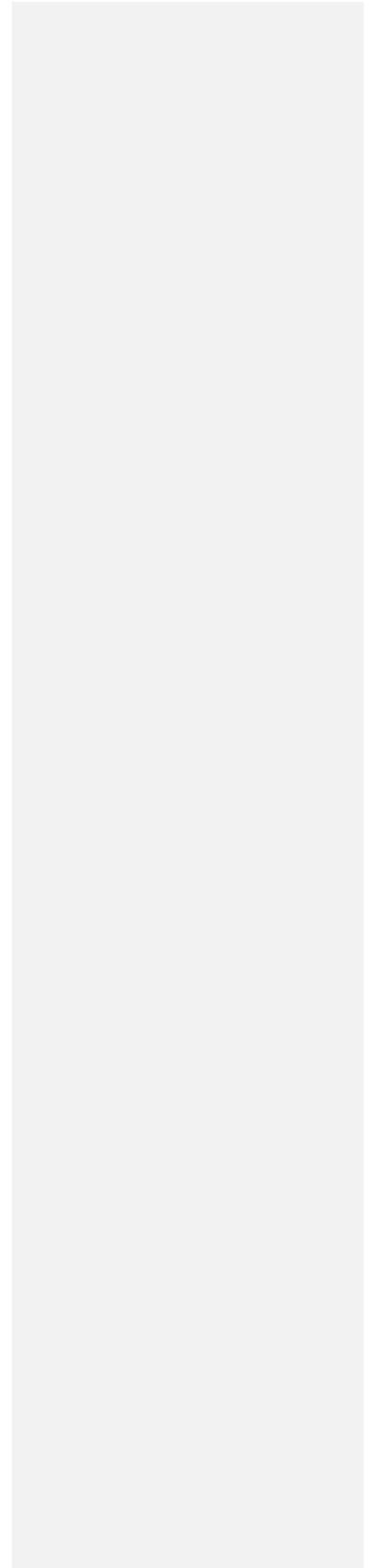
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Part II - Life trajectories of children and adolescents on the streets of Rio de Janeiro

Chapter 4; Constructing the research

The broader context of the research

In chapter 2 we saw that the literature on children who live on the street has shifted its focus and concern as new concepts and research methodologies, cultural and political trends, prompt new questions and lines of enquiry to emerge. More recently this literature has been concerned with the identity and subjective world of children and adolescents who live on the street. Taking place within broader societal concerns with participation and inclusion, this shift in emphasis has demonstrated an increasing concern to hear the voices of those who have been historically excluded.

The impetus to try to understand children and adolescents as agents in the construction of their identities through their interaction with the world they live in, is indebted to the reappraisal of childhood as a cultural-historical construct credited to the work of Philippe Ariés *Centuries of Childhood (1963).* Those who have followed Ariés' footsteps have drawn attention to the ways in which "childhood" has over the last few hundred years been transformed, particularly through middle class Euro-North American culture, into a space that is increasingly controlled by adults who attempt to shield youngsters from society at large (Jenks: 1990, James & Prout: 1992).

For Tobias Hecht, a North American who researched youngsters living on the street in Recife and Olinda, two kinds of childhoods result from these cultural-historical developments (divided as they have become according to the socio-economic conditions of the family in question); one where children are "nurtured", and the other where they are seen as "nurturing", that is, where children are expected to help their mothers with household chores and bring home an income (Hecht: 1995). It is common in a city as diverse and unequal as Rio to see this contrast vividly everyday. Whereas children from poorer families can often be seen selling flowers, sweets and other goods on the streets, their wealthier counterparts shielded behind gated communities and condominiums, are expected to do even less than children their own age in Europe or the US, with maids doing many simple tasks for them such as tidying their clothes or their rooms.

This shift from a nurturing to a nurtured conception of childhood has profound implications as regards the agency, or rather lack of it, attributed to children. As Hendrick writes:

The modern conception of childhood – which dates from the 16^{th} century and stresses the innocence and frailty of children – forcefully ejected children from the world of work, sexuality and politics, and designated the classroom as the major focus of children's lives. Children were no longer allowed to earn money or to decide how to spend their time; they were forced into

dependency on adults and obliged to study or play. Cute, contented and dependent, but without autonomy in important decisions concerning their lives, children 'should be seen and not heard' (Hendrick: 1990, p.3).

Countering this conception of children as individuals "to be seen but not heard", the present research situates itself within the emerging paradigm in the social sciences that regards children as knowing not necessarily less than adults, but as Wulff writes, as individuals who know "something else that has to do with their particular situation and surrounding" (Wulff: 1995, p.11).

We do this by trying to listen to the children and adolescents on the street and attempt to understand in what way they are agents in the construction of their identities, and how they orient themselves in the world of the street. "Street children" are particularly significant within these wider debates regarding the category of childhood and the child as agent because, as Hecht and many authors on the subject have come to believe, of the way in which they have become an obsession "because of the extent to which they diverge from readily accepted models of childhood" (Hecht: 1995, p.217)[66].

The history of the construction of the research

Due to the perspective adopted by the research team, of trying to understand the subjective feelings and meanings expressed by children and adolescents in a street situation, we opted for qualitative methods. These methods included the collection and analysis of data that allowed for the active participation of many other actors such as representatives and educators from organizations connected to the Rede Rio Criança.

Qualitative and participative research is valued because of its capacity to explain the inter-connectedness of different aspects of the studied situation. We mention the researcher González-Rey to emphasize the importance of understanding the different forces at work in the social field, for these affect the actions of subjects (Gonzaléz-Rey: 1997). Only when we are aware of the dialectical integration between the internal and external dimension of human beings that we can hope to understand the internal logic of individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the interconnected elements that are capable of giving meaning to individual history, his/her social relations and motivations.

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[66] See also Aptekar: 1988, Glauser: 1990, Leite: 1991, Ennew: 1996, Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman: 1998, Hecht: 1998, Graciani: 1999.

There were some challenges in carrying out the present research. We sought to increase our understanding of children and adolescents who dwelt, worked and/or slept on the streets of Rio de Janeiro[67]. With this goal, the research team opted to develop an action-research in which a participatory methodology would integrate a group of actors with diverse experiences and professional qualifications.

The proposal was that the process of the research should become a place and opportunity for exchange between the various members of the Rede Rio Criança. We felt that the participation of street educators would help our field research and at the same time would be an opportunity for learning and exchange between them as well.

The methodology indicates the way in which the research is carried out according to certain theoretical references that underpin the process of investigation. This research involves a qualitative and participative methodology for two reasons: first, as mentioned, because of our wish to actively incorporate in the study a group of educators. Secondly, qualitative research allows us to approach the child with a differentiated perspective, taking into account the multiple aspects of their subjectivity, and not merely taking her/him as an "object of study".

The methodology employed here departs from the premise that the experience and opinion of children and adolescents about particular topics must be taken in consideration in order to contribute to an effective change of paradigm in terms of understanding their life conditions and the kind of support that is offered them.

It would be useful, therefore, to mention some of the methodological premises that informed the development of the research, as well as an outline of how this development occurred.

Methodological premises

The research must be seen as one of the elements that contributes to the making of decisions about actions to be implemented in social projects. Primarily, it has to do with an understanding based on a certain reality with a view toward implementing actions that are capable of changing aspects of that situation.

Participative research seeks to study and transform a certain situation, involving groups that are to a degree autonomous, and involving them in actions that have a collective character. These are studies that seek to rupture the dichotomy between knowing and doing so common in our society (Rizzini, Castro and Sartor: 1999). In this way, the participative focus allows for the

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[67] We use the terms 'children', 'adolescents', 'boys and girls', to refer to the children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 19 years old who were interviewed.

possibility of getting closer to the processes experienced by groups and for possibility of mobilizing their potential, offering instruments to improve the actions that are developed. The participative focus normally leads to a lengthy and complex research process which is being constantly improved upon. It is an approach that allows for an interdisciplinary interaction, reducing the possibility of projects becoming dissociated from reality (Cordioli: 2001).

In general we can say that participative methodologies provide tools that allow action and interaction, creativity and for feelings of belonging to a certain group or to society to arise. It also allows for the possibility of increased motivation and enthusiasm of people involved, contributing to the expression of their potentialities. Participation incorporates affective elements, making the group more secure and confident in assuring its own continuity. To participate is to take an active part in the process and decisions to be implemented.

Participative research arises from the understanding that our social problems must be understood based on their complex and changing reality. This type of research departs from the principle that only through the active participation of groups directly involved with an issue can we know these processes and work towards their transformation.

How are these concepts linked with the research?

The present research is of a participative character in as much as it includes the vast knowledge and experience of social educators. These educators were part of the research team and were asked to contribute to the construction of the interview questionnaire as part of the process of carrying out the research.

Regarding the children and adolescents in a street situation, it was not possible to adopt more participative techniques because of the extremely short time (two months) allocated for data collection. However, the qualitative aspect of the research is grounded in the fact that it is guided by the perceptions and experiences of these youngsters. The assumption was that taking on board the expression of their subjectivity, new ways of support and of more adequately meeting their needs might be found. Participation would, ideally, in this case have been for the children to have taken an active role in the decisions affecting their lives, to improve the effectiveness of the projects designed for them. This vision of the research has been defended internationally in connection to the idea of defending the rights of the child as laid out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (Flekoy: 1997, Angeli: 1998). According to this vision the child is seen as the *subject of rights*. Treating the child as subject means primarily being mindful of their subjectivity and their interests in the policies that are undertaken in their name. However, even considering the *child protagonism* – a term that has been widely used over the last few years

– we cannot confuse this with a call for children to take an adult position to make decisions about their own destiny.

The active participation of these youngsters in the decisions affecting their interests is a stimulus to their growth as a subject. It is important when speaking of child and adolescent participation that we take into account the different stages of their development. It is necessary to take into account their perceptions and understandings of their problems, interests, capabilities and potential. It is of vital importance not to forget that the child has values that vary according to their life conditions and their socio-cultural references.

The objectives of the research

One objective of the research was to identify the current profile of children and adolescents found in street conditions in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The study took place from October to December 2001, and explored the contexts in which they found themselves with the goal of understanding their basic needs as they themselves expressed them. The proposal was to try to capture how the child and adolescent saw her/himself and how s/he saw the world s/he found her/himself in as a way of fine-tuning the actions of the Rede Rio Criança. We sought to explore elements that could improve the relationship with these children and adolescents by taking their wishes, dreams, aspirations and expectations through looking at their life trajectories within the short time available to us.

The research process and the assumptions

In the methodological debates about how best to carry out the research, seminars attended by Daniel Stocklin and his discussion of the Child-Street System proved useful in outlining a possible methodological approach to youngsters on the street[68]. Very briefly, over-simplifying the model, we can say that the methodology suggested by this system places the child at the centre and tries to establish the connections between some dimensions of her/his life, and attempts to identify her/his competencies and vulnerabilities in order to define the profile of the child and create a work strategy for the empowerment of the child from this. For this, it is essential that information be collected about the child regarding the spaces through which s/he circulates, the relationships found within and between these spaces, forming the Child-Street System.

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[68] The Child-Street System as elaborated by Riccardo Lucchini is discussed in the first part of this book.

This kind of methodology presupposes a lengthy and systematic interaction with the child in order to establish the "connections (…) between the dimensions of the child's experience of the street allowing for a better understanding of her/his needs and competencies" (Stoecklin: 2000, p.7). However, this methodology implies a strong connection between the educator or researcher and the child over a period of time and through systematic observation.

As mentioned, our time limitations meant that we could not use this methodology which implies a deeper relationship with the boys and girls interviewed. We sought to establish an atmosphere of trust during the interviews, which was helped by the presence of street educators. Yet the time constraints meant it was impossible to carry out a systematic observation of the children. We tried to minimize these limitations by having focus groups with the educators. They complemented this study by contributing their extensive experience of working with children on the street, sharing their observations and reflection about the children in this study.

In the process of analysis, we worked with the subjective elements that motivated the speech and actions of children and adolescents, respecting their values and the meanings they attributed to these (Gonzaléz-Rey: 1995, Peres: 2001). In the words of Stoecklin: "It has to do with understanding the meaning of life on the streets from the eyes of the children and the aspirations that these experiences awaken in them" (Stoecklin: 2001).

An important assumption which informed the construction of the research was the change in paradigm indicated Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga (1998, 2000) shifting the focus from the child seen as a *risk* to perceiving her/him as an *opportunity*:

The social policies and programmes designed for impoverished youngsters normally prioritise their problems, deficiencies and, frequently, reach children and adolescents when these are already in a situation that is difficult to reverse. A change of mentality is required which instead sees the competencies and potential – of the child/adolescent, of the family and the community (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000, p.10).

Fieldwork: observations and reflections

The theme of subjectivity and identity requires much sensitivity within any context, demanding great care be taken as to how questions that deal with intimate matters are approached. Because of this we took various precautions in respect to how we interacted with the interviewees. Our approach was to be non-judgmental, leaving the children and adolescents at ease to express their feelings in answering our questions. This is an important point considering that the majority of interviews were carried out in places where the youngster was extremely vulnerable, especially

on the street. We sought to formulate questions that allowed the child and adolescent to express her/himself freely. For example, in a question concerning self-perception, we asked boys and girls what they thought others thought of him or her, and what he or she would want others to think of them.

To prepare the questions, we sought in the literature for information to help show us how to better formulate questions concerning children's subjectivity. Researchers like Lewis Apptekar (1988), who carried out his fieldwork research with children who lived on the streets of Cali (Colombia), noted mistrust among boys and girls on the street, which he describes as a survival strategy. Graciani (1999), who carried out her fieldwork research in São Paulo, writes how the boys and girls are used to people coming up and asking them questions like – "where is your family?", "do you steal?", etc., and as a consequence they become adept at offering ready-made answers or fables so as not to expose themselves.

Although we did witness this "fabulation" we also noted in our interviews how keen to participate the boys and girls were, how freely they recounted their stories to us which, in many cases, were very intimate. It is as if in sharing their stories they were reaffirming themselves and their identity of "survivor" or "fighter"; presenting themselves as experienced and proud of the fact that they are there, alive to tell the tale, like a trophy they had conquered. This is an important point saying something about their identity which we will address later. With care we tried to get close to the self-representations of these boys and girls in order to understand how, in the specific circumstance of living on the street, their identity construction showed so much dependence upon the "gaze of the other", that is, on the perceptions and actions of people with whom they daily interact.

An additional comment about the children and adolescents who appear in this text: when we carried out interviews in particular places the children interviewed are those who were available in those places. This selection meant that we "chose" children and adolescents without having prior knowledge about their experience of the street. In this way we encountered children and adolescents not only of different ages, but also at different moments of their trajectory on the street: some had been there for a short time, still disorientated, some finding their feet, and others completely "adapted", at ease in being on the street. Without wishing to trace some kind of model of a trajectory through which all children we see on the street pass through, we have to recognize that there are profound differences in the stages, let us say, in the process of establishing oneself on the street.

The places where the interviews took place were chosen based on the points of greatest concentration of children in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. In order to go deeper into the life

histories of the children we chose to carry out a second interview with five children who were staying at a shelter. The criteria for choosing these youngsters was based on their willingness to share their experiences with us and on the fact that their stories contained common themes also described by many other children.

We carried out in total 60 interviews, as anticipated. However, in some interviews more than one child spoke. In this way, we have interviews with 67 individuals, 48 boys and 19 girls. Forty-five of these interviews were carried out on the street and 15 of them in shelters. The larger than expected number of interviews on the street occurred because of children's desire to speak to us even when we had already conducted an interview with another individual in that locality. We found it important to listen to whoever wanted to talk.

"Being of the street" or "being on the street"?

Since the 1980s authors have discussed what is the most appropriate way of categorizing the different groups of children and adolescents found on the street (Lusk and Mason: 1993, Rizzini: 1995). Currently there is a critical recognition of the use of categories that attempt to frame children within certain characteristics – like for example "being of the street" or "being on the street" – and which problematizes this kind of perspective that ends up reinforcing an existing stigma in relation to the children who are on the street (Ennew and Connolly: 1996, Bulter and Rizzini: 2001).

We consider that this kind of reflection, present in the social sciences, has not been demonstrated in practice. Generally they are still seen as *street children* and seen as elements that disturb the peace, as we learnt from a number of children interviewed here.

We have tried to avoid any type of categorization of the children we heard, and we will discuss what we learnt with them without being imprisoned by classifications or numbers. We will mention certain quantitative data when relevant only in order to have a certain idea about the frequency of certain events in the lives of these youngsters.

We depart, then, from the principle that no child is "of the street" or is only "on the street". These terms are only important to the extent that they have some meaning to the youngster. In this study we prioritise the information that help us to understand the signs and meanings that make sense for them.

Paths of analysis

Briefly, the paths of analysis of a research give it orientation and point to what direction should be taken. These paths are connected to the objectives of the research. We here briefly outline the routes we chose in this study for our analysis of the information collected.

For this research a well defined objective existed: to present the current profile of boys and girls in street situation in Rio de Janeiro, giving a special focus to the subjective processes of these children and adolescents, including the meanings and feelings they conveyed in their statements. Based on these we outlined themes related to their identity; their anxieties, dreams, aspirations, and expectations; in particular by looking at the significant bonds in their lives and the various relationships that characterized their day-to-day.

To reach these objectives there was a long process of debate and collective construction of the research instrument, involving the educators from the Rede Rio Criança, in the elaboration of the key topics to be investigated. Returning from fieldwork we had the raw product of this process. Shaping this material meant highlighting the more significant aspects of the statements of these boys and girls, analysing them in light of what was originally proposed. To deepen this analysis we also looked at the national and international research literature on the subject, as well as to the discussions we had with educators during the research.

In this way we arrived at five dimensions of analysis that refer to the different aspects of the lives of children and adolescents we encountered on the street; 1) their multiplicity of links and trajectories, 2) their daily life on the streets, 3) their mobility, 4) their identity and subjectivity and 5) their perceptions of the changes occurring on the street. These dimensions not only clearly present the different themes that were raised, but also allowed for a better organization of their stories and statements, which are by no means linear. In the same way we believe that these dimensions allow us to better understand the meanings of groups of ideas and feelings while remaining faithful to the objectives of the research.

We should point out that the dimensions presented here do not exclude the possibility of a number of other connections that can be made in the stories of these youngsters. We believe that these dimensions can be best understood as a possible way of looking at fragmented ongoing life-histories without closing off or excluding other categories.

With this said, we now turn to the first path of analysis referring to the multiplicity of links and trajectories, looking at what children and adolescents remember and say about the paths that led them to their present situation and the people who have been significant in this path.

Chapter 5; Nara and Raí tell their life-stories[69]

We have chosen to begin the analysis of the children and adolescent's interviews by presenting the life trajectories of Nara and Raí so that we do not to lose track of their stories and the sense of lives unfolding. These brief life-stories also illustrate the trajectories of many others, stories marked by ruptures and a constant, almost desperate, search for a place in the world.

Nara and Raí were born like any other children full of the will to live and grow. For them to develop normally they needed an environment, even if simple or poor, where affection, food, health and security needed to be present. But they did not have these in their lives rather, they recount a series of episodes marked by adversity and violence which making us wonder how they managed to reach adolescence.

In retelling their stories we are aware that they may provoke strong emotions, but we wish to move away from sensationalism, away from the feelings that touches us when we hear of some atrocity, like the Candelária Massacre, but which dissipate without leaving clear paths for the facing the problems being raised.

What moves us here is the fact that Nara and Raí need not have gone through what they did. They could have had alternative life-trajectories, like many others who at this moment seek the street for protection or for the illusion that this will meet the dreams they harbour. Let us turn to the paths they took in Rio de Janeiro.

The story of Nara, 14 years old

Since she was a baby Nara says that she has lived in orphanages. There was, however, always a maternal aunt who came to visit. Even today Nara dreams of her brothers that this aunt claims to exist but which she has never met. She also has not met her mother or father. At a certain time of the interview, the adolescent emotionally remembers that on her fifth birthday her aunt revealed that she was interned in the orphanage because her father murdered her mother.

Nara tells that this revelation made her cry a lot (and she cries once again every time she remembers the news). In one of her aunts' visit Nara asks her to take her away from the orphanage. Her aunt answers that she cannot because she already has too many people living with her, and does not return to visit Nara who does not even have her address.

When she is a little older (she does not recall exactly what age), Nara decides to run away. From this point on she begins to live between the street and institutions that care for

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[69] The life-stories presented have been prepared by Paula Caldeira.

children and adolescents. She gets to know shelters, institutions for internment of children and adolescents and police stations. On the streets she fights for survival, begging, stealing, living with being abandoned and using drugs to deal with this.

On the streets since she was small (she cannot recall exactly from what age), she starts using glue, thinner[70], marijuana and cocaine. She also starts stealing in order to support her drug habit. She is exposed to insecurity and all kinds of abuse.

When she is thirteen, Nara is raped under a bridge, "by many guys", as she retells: "I couldn't do anything. I stayed quiet otherwise they would have killed me. The street is the worse thing there is".

Even outside the street, however, Nara still faces many difficulties. She recalls with sadness her experience of the institutions which she passed through. Still only thirteen years old she is sent from a shelter in which she had been for a short while to an internment institution, because she had fought with another girl from the shelter and made death threats to her. This is how Nara describes her stay in this institution: "I had to have my bath, put on prison clothes and stay inside the cage where we were imprisoned. We only left the cage to eat".

Whilst inside this institution she recounts being physically abused more than once by its employees: "The guy there slapped me hard on my breast. They are very bad".

From there Nara was sent to another shelter, and then to a drug rehabilitation centre, where she stayed for three months for treatment. Today Nara says that her only vice are cigarettes. She says: "I asked myself to stop with the drugs, because drugs only bring stealing, only brings death".

Nara claims to have gone to hotels with 'gringos' for money. "My friends taught me", she says. With the money she bought marijuana, glue, clothes, bracelets and sandals.
Amongst the stories she tells us, many are about souls and ghosts she claims to have seen in various institutions through which she circulated: pictures that moved around, portraits of people whose "eyes moved around", "black souls' that pulled her feet at night.

Her words about the future are also full of magic. Her dream is to be a ballerina or a model, "but I am too fat" she says. Nara does not really appear to believe that these dreams are possible. Her thoughts appear to be in constant conflict between the desire to escape reality and the immense longing she has for a family, a pain that she cannot forget. She says that the place she liked the most was a shelter modelled on the 'surrogate family': a 'social mother' in charge of looking after up to ten children and a social worker who Nara refers to as a father.

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[70] Thinner (pronounced tchiner in Portuguese) is a solvent-based paint stripper widely available in shops and used by a number of youngsters on the street especially since it is cheaper than glue.

During the interview Nara refers to this institution with many compliments. It seems very contradictory then the fact that Nara has also run away from there as well as from many other shelters. How do we understand this?

Interviewer: Why did you leave there then if you liked it so much?

Nara: I don't know, it is anger really.

Interviewer: Anger at what?

Nara: Anger at… about my life. I am angry at my family who didn't come to visit me. I really miss my aunt – my dad I don't care about at all – I miss my brothers, my granddad, my grandma, my great-granddad and my great-grandma. I never saw them. Sometimes I cry, missing them.

Raí's story, 15 years old

"*Ah, my life was… was bad".* This is how Rai sums up. His trajectory is one that is full of loss. The first occurs when he was two years old. His mother and father fought a lot. He says that during one of these fights, after being beaten up again, his mother ran away from home. She abandons her children (Raí, his four year old sister and his seven year old brother) at "some woman's" house, as he remembers it. Raí recalls that his mother had tried to run away from her partner many times before. Her departure provokes an immense sadness in Raí, as can be seen by his words:

My dad beat her up, and it was me and my sister who got the blame. She abandoned me. Left me at the home of some woman and did not return. I know where she is, but I don't have contact with her. I hate her. Nothing will change what I feel for my mum. All I want is that she lives her life on one side and me on the other.

Raí says that he and his siblings were beaten up a lot in the house where they were left. His older brother managed to escape. Him and his sister tried to escape. They sought an aunt on their father's side who then took them back to the house. They tried again to runaway. This second time this aunt took them to an orphanage. "It was the orphanage who raised me" - says Raí. This aunt then returned when he was ten years old. He did not want to leave the orphanage where he appeared to be happy. He recalls how there were many trips there - to waterfalls, the beach. He cried a lot and asked to stay but to no avail and was taken to his maternal

grandmother's house. His sister returned to live with his mother where she is to this day – "only because she has nowhere to go" asserts Raí. These days he stays in touch with his sister by phone.

Raí could not adapt to his grandparent's house. He felt confined. He says he was forced to go to church, to school, and could hardly go out to play. Even though he liked his grandmother he stayed there for just over a month. These days he goes to visit her, but only on weekends, "to spend the afternoon", as he says.

During this time he lived with his grandparents Raí's father, who had been in prison for the past seven years, is released from jail and comes to see him:

He came at night and I was already asleep. My grandma woke me up to say my dad was there. I could not believe it was my dad because I hardly knew him. So then my grandma explained that he had been in jail. In my head my dad was already dead. So it was like this that I got to know him.

It was December and they spent Christmas together. This happiness, however, was short lived. Shortly before New Year Raí's dad was murdered by the police during a shoot-out between the police and local drug dealers. For Raí this was the worst thing that has happened in his life as his father was for him the most important person in the world.

When he was alive, Raí's father took him to meet his friends who were part of the drug trafficking gangs. Afterwards Raí also joined the gang. "I already knew how it was because I saw many people doing it, so I learnt. It was just a matter of selling the drugs on the hill [the shanty town] and passing on the money to the boss. I earned $100 a week, more or less." He sold marijuana and cocaine, keeping half the money for him and giving the other half to the drug boss. Whilst in the gang he walked around armed and enageged in shoot-outs with the police. He was wounded once by a bullet in his thigh when he was eleven.

Raí's older brother also worked for the drug gangs, and does so to this day. This was his brother's path after having ran way from the house where his mother left him. He lives with his wife in a house that Raí claims was bought by their father. Raí lived with them for a while but did not get on with his brother's wife.

In any case, today Raí is banished from his community on account of a debt incurred with the local drug gang. He owes them about $500 and can only return once he has the money.

Raí relates how this debt came about, how he was caught by the police with a bag of marijuana and a gun. The judge gave him a sentence of a year and three months inside an internment institution. "That was the worse prison I went through" - Raí claims. "Jail" is how he (and many

others) refers to the government's 'socio-educational' institutions for children and adolescents[71]. Once his sentence was over Raí goes to the street to try to get the money for the drug gang – which he owes to this day. From this point on his life entails a constant circulation between the street and institutions that care for children and adolescents. He even sought out a judge to claim his right to being accepted in a shelter that did not want to accept him: "Shelters were made to accept minors", he says. Raí returns to shelters every time the street becomes unbearable: "When we are going through bad times on the street, when we can't stay anymore, I go".

Raí discovers that the street is not as he imagined it. "On the street we suffer a lot, life is a lot worse" he says. Instead of going round well-dressed, of getting things easily, as he thought, he experiences hunger and violence from the police and other boys, as well as other kinds of abuse and discrimination: "Some people walked by and swore at us, told us to get a job. How?! If even for those with schooling it is hard to find work!"

Raí claims to have had six years of primary education through all the institutions that he circulated, but he has difficulty writing simple phrases. He concludes then, that what is left for him is to just steal despite the consequences. Raí has been in 'jail' nine times. On the whole he claims to have spent three of his fifteen years in 'jail'. With the money that he got from stealing, he bought glue, which he learnt to use on the street, and marijuana, which he began to use whilst still living in his community. He says that he uses drugs to forget the things that have already happened to him, to forget the death of his father who he liked very much and whom he constantly remembers.

He also does not forget the violent episodes perpetrated by the police. He says that he is in the shelter at present because he received a death threat from the police. This threat was given as a result of him throwing stones at the police in response to them confiscating his glue. In this episode, Raí was told by the police that they would kill him if they caught him on the street again.

A year previously Raí had been 'caught' with other boys by the municipal guards. After being beaten up they were left by a hospital. The following day the boys sought out a judge and as a consequence photographs were taken of them and the story made it to the newspapers. Raí's greatest fear is to be murdered at night by the police in his sleep. He is also afraid of drug gangs invading the shelters.

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[71] Legally speaking the introduction of the Estatuto da Criança e do Adolecente (ECA), the Children and Adolescent Statute in 1990, was supposed to have heralded a radical change in how the state dealt with juveniles who broke the law overhauling the abusive regime of incarceration which dated back from Brazil's military dictatorship towards institutional arrangements concerned with 'socio-educational' concerns of children and adolescents in conflict with the law. Yet, as we see here, the provisions of ECA are yet to be fully implemented and youngsters report many cases of abuse within these institutions and conditions that appear to have changed little from before 1990.

Raí's institutional life is extensive. He recalled thirteen places including shelters, homes, socio-educational institutions and day-centres through which he passed. The precise chronological sequence of these passages is impossible to ascertain with precision and the order of these episodes is also unclear. Each memory is filled with emotion, he is always running away. Underpinning the memories is a feeling of a lack of care and affection, of not being listened to. He asks for people to talk to him. He remembers lovingly two educators who treated him with affection. One of them he regards as a mother, even though they are not in touch any more. It seems that the few ties which he managed to build through his life – the two educators, his sister, grandmother all of whom he speaks lovingly – are not enough for him to break this constant process of escape. All the while Raí says that he does not like to stay in one place for too long. Things become boring and he needs to get away. This difficulty in adapting wherever he maybe leaves the impression that Raí is always out of place in the world.

Raí says that he asks God for the courage to change his life. He says that he does not have the courage to get a job, to ask for employment. The only time he worked (outside the drug gangs), he managed to stay with it for four or five months. "I used the photocopy machine, took the cases" – he summarises – at the General District Attorney's office. He liked the work.

"Raising a family" also appears important for Raí. His fondest memory is of a photograph, which his aunt mounted in a frame, in which he stands next to his mother and father as a little boy.

About his future he is not sure of much. He wants to be a parachutist, but he remembers the many 'prisons', and fears not being able to join the military. Then he says he wants to be a football player. He ends up admitting that it all depends, in the end, on him: "The only one who can help me is me. Only I can really change my life".

Chapter 6; Multiplicity of links and trajectories

Family

How do we define the family today amidst so many fast transformations occurring all over the world? Is the phenomenon of the 'break-down of the family' an adequate way of classifying the diverse structures of families as the literature points out? (Ribeiro: 1987, Almeida: 1987, Kalousitian: 1994, Souza: 2001).

For a long time there have been discussions concerning the so called 'crisis of the family'. It seems that the traditional model (the providing father, the house-wife mother and children) is currently in decline. The main changes date back to the twentieth century, when the traditions of previous centuries which distinguished male and female roles, with the former occupying public roles, were questioned.

This movement is intrinsically connected to the possibilities of employment and access to the labour market that women attained in this period. With the possibilities of earning an income and gaining economic independence from their husbands or fathers, women began to assert a more equal social status (Villa: 1999). This change, in turn, has been causing many changes in the ways in which families are organized, amongst which we identify different marital arrangements than those of the previous generation and migration related to employment opportunities (Rizzini: 2001), as well as a reduction of the time that mothers have available for their children. This opens the door for the growth in influence of the child and adolescent's group of friends.

But recognizing that new family arrangements are taking place does not mean that we are witnessing the 'end of the family' as it is still a social and symbolic construct that structures social life (Amas: 1995). It is a space in which the feeling of belonging, affective and emotional security can be enjoyed, a space, that is, where we can be 'somebody' for another (UECE: 1998). The family is, therefore, a privileged space for the sharing of affection, even if this sharing is governed by rules that point out the contradictions of the family in the present.

Indicators referring to the changes occurring globally reveal the challenges of family life, and especially regarding the raising of children. These indicators show that today families tend to be smaller. In some countries, like Brazil, the average number of children per family has halved over the last four decades. Also, a growing number of families are today headed by females. In Brazil, from 1992 to 1996, families with this profile increased from 21,9% to 26% according to the IBGE[72] (2001). This reduction in size allows for the possibility of better living standards for

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[72] IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatisticas – Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics.

the children but on the other hand has led to the increasing isolation of the family as both parents work and do not rely on extended families or other forms of support to take care of the children (Rizzini: 2001, Peres: 2001).

A vast national and international literature has tackled the delicate points in this transition of the family, pointing out the various aspects that are revolutionizing people's daily lives and parental roles (Bronfenbrenner: 1990, Andrews: 1998, Pereira: 1999. Souza e Rizzini: 2001). The reflections on these changes contributes to our better understanding of the factors affecting the lives of children and adolescents. This leads us to the crucial question: what happens in families in which the children do not want to remain in these spaces? Children and adolescents from all social groups can show a distance from their families at different times in their life-cycle and many all over the world run away from home. The so-called 'street children' appear to show an attempt of escape from something, or a way of protecting themselves against something. These are the more frequent reasons for using the street as a living or working[73] space, and a space of leisure, as we see here.

Focussing on the links that these boys and girls maintain with their families and the ties that are significant in their lives was of particular interest in this study. Their stories reflect a multiplicity of links and trajectories, frequently interwoven with violent episodes that appear as a succession of losses and ruptures of affective ties. During the research, a common element found in many interviews was the seeming discontinuity of their life histories. The constant circulation of strangers through their families and the passage through different institutions for assistance and protection during the same year were factors that contributed to a lack of clarity these children and adolescents had about their stories, creating a certain confusion in the construction of their identities. On the other hand the children demonstrated the abilities they had developed in order to relate with diverse people who make up their day-to-day lives. These abilities are clearly expressed in the enthusiasm with which they reveal their capacity to survive on the street. The first aspect we will refer to are the links that are maintained with the family.

The families of children and adolescents in a street situation

A dynamic understanding of the relationships developed inside the families of the boys and girls found in a street situation, is fundamental in order to formulate policies that create or strengthen the family and community support strategies for the care of children (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000). In this way it is essential to analyse the subjective processes within the families of these children and adolescents and the processes of rupture (Peres: 2001, p.77).

In this it is relevant to understand the family as a historical institution that is in constant transformation. It is also necessary to point out that there is no single type of family, that is, some ideal type of union and recipe of happiness to be followed by all, but instead an idea of families in the plural (Neder: 1994). As Mioto points out (1997), studying the family is challenging because of the difficulty in developing an impartial or distanced analysis.

In this chapter we are mainly talking about the families of the children and adolescents interviewed. By family of origin we are not only referring to those formed by consanguinity, but also, the parental and affective relations that those interviewed defined as family. This methodological option makes it possible to contemplate the different conceptions of family and the diversity of existing family arrangements. According to Mioto, "in this way, family can be defined as a nucleus of people who live in a certain place, for a more or less long period time and who feel themselves united (or not) by ties of consanguinity" (Mioto: 1997, p.120).

"I was always swapping family, swapping home"

The interpersonal relations established by children, initially with a maternal figure and, gradually, with the people who are part of her/his world, are the basic pillars of her/his development. Many researchers on this topic have pointed out how the first relationships of the child, in particular during its first three years, are fundamental for her/his developing a sense of identity, of belonging, grounding her/himself in the world as a human being (Erikson: 1971, Kaplan: 1978, Mahler: 1979).

In creating this feeling of belonging, which is fundamental to the development of children, the greatest challenge is the establishment of more stable ties, considered crucial to the formation of identity. Because of the frequent participation of both parents in the labour market, the time available for the care of children is reduced, a factor which may prevent the strengthening of these ties. If families are not provided with the objective conditions for the supervision and care of their children, they may end up 'loose in the world' and vulnerable to breaks in these family ties.

It is important to emphasize that the capacity the individual acquires to establish relationships throughout her/his life trajectory is dependent on the quality of the relationships maintained in childhood with those who care for her/him. According to Costello and Fenton (2002, p.16),

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[73] Work is here understood broadly, including informal activities.

The capacity to form and maintain mutual and intimate relationships, as well as a balanced understanding of her/himself, is developed through the constant and secure interactions with some key figures who look after the child, and this capacity gradually expands to a broader circle. (…) Her/His social and cognitive development also depends on the level of security, stimulation and intimacy of those who look after the child.

These are fundamental elements when the child goes through adversities in life. In the case of children in a street situation, their account of their life histories reveals episodes of the rupture of affective ties. Painful ruptures appear so frequently in their stories that the children had difficulties in listing all the homes that they lived in; their parent's, one of their parent's, adopted parent's, stepfather's, grandparent's, uncle's and even those of people they did not know. The experience of life in different houses, which do not have the connotation of a home that served to protect the child, appears in their statements to make the establishment of deep and lasting ties more problematic. We see this in the interviews below:

Interview with Roger, 15 years old.
Interviewer: When you were small who did you live with?
Roger: I lived with my mum and dad, but my dad was arrested and my mum abandoned me in the house of a woman, a friend of hers.
Interviewer: How old were you?
Roger: I was two.
Interviewer: So who raised you?
Roger: It was an orphanage, because this woman put me there.
Interviewer: You stayed at the orphanage until what age?
Roger: Until I was ten.
Interviewer: Are you still in touch with her?
Roger: No she died.
Interviewer: And your mum, are you in touch with her?
Roger: I know where she is, but I am not in touch with her, I… I don't like her.
Interviewer: How do you know where she is?
Roger: Because my dad before he died took me there. I didn't like staying there, he wanted me to stay there, but I said I didn't want to. So I went away, to the street.
Interviewer: So you don't have any more contact with your mum or with this woman?
Roger: No.

Interview with Rôni, 16 years old.

Interviewer: Say something about your life since you were born. Who did you live with? How was it?

Rôni: My life was very messed up because I never stopped in the same place. I was always swapping family, swapping home. I was with my mum, then I was at my stepfather's house, then suddenly I was in my dad's house. I was always raised this way. Because of this I am now at this age, and still at fifth grade, because I never stopped in the same district. I went to my dad's house studied a bit, went back to my mum's, back to my stepfather's, studied a bit more. I never properly finished my studies.

Interviewer: Why did that happen?

Rôni: I don't know, because I do not remember well what happened. I only remember that I was always swapping family. It is because of this that I think I am not well adapted to my mum. Because it seems I was always raised outside, so when I came back, it seems like I am changing my habits.

The difficulty of establishing solid, continuous and lasting family relationships appears to function as a catalyst for leaving home. However, the process of leaving home does not only involve family relations. Other factors such as economic necessity and the attraction of the street are also important elements in this process. In terms of family relations, because many come to live in an independent way on the streets, they end up creating other kinds of relationships, developing important competencies for their survival. An example of this is the speed with which the children 'group up' on the street, pushed by the need for affection.

Interview with Roger, 15 years old.

————**Interviewer:** And what was good there (in the institution)?

Rôni: Good was the love of the people.

Interviewer: Of whom?

Rôni: Of the social worker, the director, the cook. I don't know it seems like wherever I go I can make friends with everyone. I can have the love of the people where I arrive.

Frequently the street appears as a way out of conflicts and difficulties within the family sphere. However, this is only initially. As we see, many of those interviewed spoke of developing a sense of disillusionment with life on the street.

Fundamental factors in the child's leaving home which deserve special attention from programmes providing assistance to families, and in particular to fathers, are cases in which the family does meet the needs of the child. One situation that often comes up in the children's statements are scenes of domestic violence and alcoholism, which prevent the parents from perceiving the needs of the child.

Interview with Jonas, 18 years old.

Jonas: It was because of my stepfather. He slapped me in the face, my mum was pregnant, not with his baby though, and even like this he accepted her, with her belly, right. So he stayed with my mum for two days and then started drinking cachaça, started arguing with my mum, so then I went to lose myself on the street.

We also identified cases of imprisonment or death of members of the family. Beyond the financial difficulties created by the absence of a family member who systematically contributes to the family, these circumstances accentuate the degree of affective fragility of the child. When the families lack the *support bases*[74] upon on which children count, often they turn to other groups to satisfy their needs. The street is one of such spaces because of the fascination it exerts over the children, and especially, over adolescents (Vogel and Mello: 1991).

Is it the family's fault?

As we have seen in the first part of the book, over the last twenty years the literature has pointed to diverse factors, besides economic pressures, that lead children to go to the streets. The most simplistic way of explaining why children are present on the street would be to blame the parents for being negligent. However, in Brazil the woman's insertion into the labour market was not backed up by state mechanisms to assist children and adolescents. Thus families from the popular classes have had to develop alternative strategies of care, often relying on grandparents, uncles and aunts and older siblings, and in some cases children are left alone. This situation

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[74] The concept of 'support bases' was developed by Rizzini and Barker from the idea of promoting the integral development of children and adolescents with reference to the Children and Adolescent Statue. Children, adolescents, families and communities are described as possessing many potentials. The authors emphasize the need to change the attitude and perspective by not perceiving children as a 'risk'. In this way the authors emphasize what they define as the 'support bases' as "Fundamental elements which make up the ingredients for the integral development of the child". These can be formal or informal supports that exist in the family or community which encourage the child to develop her/his abilities, friendships, security and affective relationships, as well as her/his cognitive, cultural, vocational and emotional development. See: Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000, Rizzini, Barker and team: 2001, Zamora and Silva: 2001, Rizzini, Barker and Zamora: 2002).

creates an impasse in the lives of many children for they are frequently left without protection and are subject to many risks affecting their development. It is important to emphasize that the family

cannot substitute for society in the defence and promotion of the rights of citizenship of its children and adolescents, but it can mediate and fight for those rights. That the family may present difficulties, crisis and risks is not the problem. The fundamental issue is that it find support and ways of dealing with these difficulties and problems (Amas: 1995, p.19).

To blame families is, at the very least, a reductionist perspective. Many children and adolescents, for example, said that they left home because they could not stand the excessive control of the family. However, when we heard the parents, they argued that to confine their children is in fact a way of caring and protecting them. This care entailed maintaining the child at home, preventing their exposure to dangers. But this kind of concern, if it is not followed up by explanations, supervision and affection can be interpreted as a imprisonment, leading to children's distancing from home.

It is important to emphasize that the commonly held view which blames the family, accusing it of not guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the child, cannot be sustained. It is a proven fact, for example, that the financial difficulties faced by families influence the child's exit to the street in order to find ways of helping in the subsistence of the home.

The poverty faced by a large proportion of the Brazilian population should be understood within the public political context of the affirmation of citizenship and the guarantee of the social rights of its inhabitants. In Brazil there is a disregard for the laws that regulate proposed actions and social support for children. The Children and Adolescent Statue (ECA) and the Federal Constitution[75] are very clear about the rights of the child, within which is included the right to a dignified life as well as the responsibility of the state and society to help parents to raise children (ECA Art.7, Art.15).

According to the Children and Adolescent Statue, children have the same fundamental rights as all human beings (Art.3) and must receive preference in the formulation and execution of social policies (Art.4). It also states that poverty must not be a reason for the removal of children from their families, advocating in these cases the placement of the family within an assistance programme (Art.23).

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[75] The Federal Constitution affirms in article 227: "It is the duty of the family, society and the state to secure the child and adolescent, with absolute priority, the right to life, health, food, education, leisure, vocational training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community life as well as making them safe from all types of neglect, discrimination, exploitation, cruelty and oppression".

When new relationships arise

As mentioned, in many cases the main reason for the child's distancing from home is not only poverty. Another often-occurring situation is the many separations in the lives of mothers who establish new relationships and family configurations. These new arrangements do not usually occur easily and the role of the child tends to be redefined, often coming to lose the protected position it held within the family (Gregori: 2000). In our interviews, stepfathers and stepmothers were very present in the children's and adolescent's talk. The incorporation of these new figures inside the family structure at times creates conflicts that end up providing another stimulus for the search of an alternative sphere of acceptance. In this process of rebuilding ties, the presence of children in the home sometimes becomes impossible. At these moments life on the street becomes a viable alternative.

In at least eight of the interviews, the parent's separation and the presence of stepfathers and stepmothers were crucial factors in the child's first exit to the street, particularly because of the child's relationship with these new actors and the new family situation.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

———**Interviewer:** When you were ten years old, you left home for the first time, why?

———**Aldair:** It was because of my stepmother. The second was because of my dad.

———**Interviewer:** Tell me how it was the first time?

Aldair: She threw a knife at me, tried to kill me. Stabbed me with a knife here in my stomach.

Interview with Rôni, 16 years old.

Rôni: When my dad went to look for me, he said it would be just me and him, that we would sort out our lives, so I went to live with him. So we stayed one week in a rented house, he found a woman, we went to live in this woman's house, his last wife. So then there were lots of arguments. He didn't treat me well anymore and gave more attention to her son than to me. He didn't talk to me. I was there at his house like a servant. I didn't have dinner on the sofa, I didn't sit next to him.

Matching our findings, Gregori's (2000) research on the family histories of boys and girls in São Paulo, identified a high degree of instability. The families were portrayed as being in constant motion. Also identified was a high degree of circulation of the children between parents as well as being raised by people without ties of consanguinity.

In our study, in addition to stepfathers and stepmothers, grandparents also come up in the statements of the children and adolescents we interviewed. In the entanglement of these temporary relations, these children and adolescents relate their difficulty in maintaining affective ties with their families, with friends at school and in their neighbourhood, and in establishing roots in their community. Constant movement harms important aspects of their socialization process and interrupts their education despite the wish of many to continue their studies, as we shall see.

Interview with Aldo, 16 years old.

Aldo: Ah… I've lived at my grandmother's house… at my grandmother's house. There I completed sixth grade.

Interviewer: Where was it?

Aldo: There in Queimados… in São Roque…

Interviewer: Why did you prefer to live with your grandmother?

Aldo: No… It was because the police there in Tijuca were after me… So I escaped to my grandmother's house.

"My dad drank cachaça and hit my mum. Then my mum would beat me"

Domestic violence appears in many forms in the interviews. This is a very complex question, as it manifests itself in many different forms. According to the literature on this theme we can classify four different types of domestic violence: *physical abuse*, an intentional act committed by an adult aggressor that provokes physical damage to the child; *sexual abuse*, an act or sexual game with the intention of using the child as an object of sexual satisfaction; *psychological abuse*, a negative interference of an adult over the social competency of the child producing a standard of behaviour that is destructive; or *negligence*, depriving the child of something that is necessary for her/his healthy development (Deslandes: 1994)[76].

Stories of violence in the home were a significant factor for going to the street in six cases. In at least three of these cases physical violence by the stepfather or stepmother was referred to, but these were not the only agents of violent acts:

Interview with Camarada, 15 years old.

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[76] It is not our intention here to have a conceptual discussion of domestic violence, only to point to some elements that may be able to specify the different modalities in which this is expressed.

Camarada: It was my mother, she beat me, damn. She beat me a lot. But my mum was cool. It was my dad who beat me a lot.

Interviewer: So why did you leave there?

Camarada: It was more because of my dad, he liked beating me. He was bad, real bad he… He liked beating me for no reason, if anyone went up to him and said 'your son did this', he believed them…

Interview with Jenifer, 17 years old.

Jenifer: My mum beat me, she came with ignorance, thought she didn't have any responsibility for me because I was older, so I ran away from home.

It is also important to point out that violence against children is related to the Iberian tradition of instilling discipline through physical punishment, in the way that sometimes families attribute a pedagogical function to these episodes of violence. In the child's perception there is a difficulty in identifying most of these episodes as violence, so that physical punishment is only considered violent if it reaches extreme brutality.

Despite the mechanisms instituted in Brazil to combat domestic violence, this is still a common occurrence. The result is the continuation of a conservative mentality in which the child ends up being doubly punished. The child who wishes to break with this cycle of violence and who cannot count on the support of the family, or does not manage to access institutions who defend her/his rights, ends up having to go away from the domestic space.

"Ah, they (the parents) were worried, they came to pick me up, sent my brothers to come and get me"

Even in situations where there is a lack of protection, as related by the children and adolescents, there were also cases when, for a period of time, families tried to attract the youngsters back home. These cases point to situations in which, especially the mother, came and went from home to the street, in particular when the children/adolescent began her/his trajectory.

Interview with Filomena, 16 years old.

————**Interviewer:** In (name of institution) did your mum also come to get you?

————**Filomena:** (she confirms with a gesture).

————**Interviewer:** You never stayed for one or two months?

Filomena: No, because I have a home and now I am on the street because I want to. Only yesterday my mum came to get me.

Interviewer: Does your mum always come to pick you up?

Filomena: Every time.

Interviewer: Do you go back once in a while?

Filomena: Sometimes we go and say we are coming back and then we return here, and she comes again.

Interview with Bolinho, 19 years old.

Interviewer: You said that you went to Cabo Frio, Búzios that you 'went around'…

Bolinho: So I went for a month over that way, and my mum got worried, she went there to Madureira with my photo thinking that people had seen me, so someone told me about it and I went to meet her, so I went there and met her and went home again, but they like me, they do not fight with me, not even beat me. I went to Cabo Frio, stayed for a month and then went back, then I left again.

Why is it that children and adolescents do not go back? What lies behind the family giving up? Based on this and other research, we can say that there are many factors, including those generated on the street, which prevent this return. Many of these are connected to financial independence, because on the street you have access to money and other goods that are inaccessible whilst at home. As we heard from children and adolescents, the street frees one from tasks and duties, from limits and timetables that are demanded at home. This way, even when relatives try to persuade them, children and adolescents see many attractions on the street.

There are also situations in which the child attempts to reactivate the family ties. S/he tries to return home but for the same reasons mentioned above, difficulties are encountered in this attempt. Though the financial aspect is not the only factor it should not be underestimated. Until the national political agenda prioritises the social, economic and human development, and universalises the possibilities for a dignified life for these families, it will be difficult to change the situation of these children.

Despite all these difficulties we cannot say that a complete rupture with the family is the rule for these children and adolescents. Analysing their statements we can say that more than two thirds of them maintain some kind of tie with their family. This fact is of great importance as a way of informing the policies and practices designed for this population. This shows that despite

the many adversities faced by these children and their families there are initiatives that can be implemented to ensure that these ties are not severed altogether.

"My mum is really nice"

The mother is often idealized in the stories of boys and girls in a street situation and is presented as a person who gives them support, even when evidence points to the contrary. Her absence is felt all the time.

Interview with Filomena, 15 years old.

Filomena: Because half of the people here have no mother, so we survive like a family on the street. A family that we didn't have and that we want to have. So in the middle of them, with a person to talk to, to have a dialogue with. For most of the girls if something happens they come and sit down, cry, talk, say that if only their mum was there at the time… So we who still have a mum feel sorry and say: "yes, that's right". We know that when we loose our mum there isn't anyone else in the world.

Interview with Lorenza, 17 years old.

————**Interviewer:** Are you in touch with your mum?

————**Lorenza:** Yes, I live with her. I adore my mum. I love her. She is very good.

This romantic or idealised image of the mother contrasts with the statements in which she is the protagonist of violent acts towards her children. Even in the stories in which she appears as negligent, it is emphasized that all her actions are pardonable, as in the example below. There is then an explicit wish for a greater proximity with her, a desire for a construction of the relationship under different conditions.

Interview with Camarada, 15 years old.

————**Interviewer:** So what did they do, what violence did you suffer?

Camarada: Ah, no violence, only my mum who beat me, damn. She really beat me. Just that, nothing really. My mum was cool.

This statement presents two possible interpretations: idealizing the mother may be a strategy of maintaining the idea of belonging to a family in as much as it allows, at least in the

imagination, a possibility of return. The second hypothesis is that there is recognition by these children of the centrality of these women in the family and in their lives.

Women, particularly those from the poorer segments of society, have an unmatched position in the socialization of the family and in the important processes faced in daily life. They are recognized as important figures in the day-to-day lives of these children, even when they are not present or when these stories are permeated by violent episodes.

The father

Our study found there is not the same degree of idealization of the father. There is still much to be investigated on this topic, but it seems clear that contact with the father is not as frequent as with the mother. The greater closeness to the mother is not something particular to children in a street situation. The different way in which boys and girls are socialized has been amply documented, showing, for example, that girls are educated to be responsible for contraception ~~(voce nao acha este fato menos pertinente que outros a que poderiamos referir?, eu ate diria que garotas nao sao socializadas a ser responsaveis por "contaception", mais meninos nao aceitam qualquer responsabidade, que entao forca elas a tomar responsabilidade) podiam referirse as mulheres mantendo o relacionamento social em geral ou dentro de uma dupla ou matrimonio…~~ as well as for the care and education of their children. We know that these roles are not as rigid as they once were, especially since the increasing entry of women in the labour market. In this way in occidental cultures, women have developed a greater autonomy in relation to their husbands and parents. Women have come to assert a more egalitarian position in society, and this has provoked changes in the idea of 'fatherhood' (Villa: 1999).

If looking after and socializing children has historically been a position predominantly occupied by women, whereas men have been responsible for supporting the family, today we find a greater contribution of men in raising children. However, this remains, to a great extent, the responsibility of women.

We must then evaluate in what way these changes have taken place and how they are experienced by men and women in the domestic sphere. Only in this way can we understand the new power relations occurring within the contemporary family, and encourage a greater participation of men.

Since the 1980s there have been a number of studies specifically focussing on the ways in which men look after the domestic sphere. These studies have shown how middle class men have been changing hegemonic conceptions of female participation in the raising of children, and thus revaluing the paternal role (Villa: 1999, Barker and Promundo: 2000). This model reaffirms

egalitarian values in terms of the responsibilities of men and women for raising children. However, this change occurs more slowly in the popular classes, who are still reproducing a hierarchical model of family organization.

It is necessary to outline the masculine and feminine specificities in the process of raising children. It is important to rethink social and power relations taking place in everyday life that reinforce the disqualification of the male figure and overvalue maternal functions in the relationship with children (Villa: 1999). We must note that even with a discourse of male participation, the man is often disqualified from this process and called upon to be only a financial contributor. It is this relationship that feeds the discourse which blames 'absent fathers'.

It is not difficult to know the importance of the active participation of the paternal figure in the quality of life of children and adolescents. On top of this, with a growing number of family members entering the labour market it is important that the relationship of all members of the family with children be stable enough to ensure a continuing sense of belonging.

Of the 70 interviews, and considering those who mentioned a paternal figure, we saw that only ten maintained some kind of relationship with the father. From these interviews, 13 boys and girls said that their father had died. About 20% of the children affirmed not having had any contact with the father for a long time. Many did not even know him. Even in the three cases in which the youngster maintained contact only with the father, their words did not express much intimacy:

Interview with Aldo, 16 years old.
Interviewer: Do you still have contact with your family? How is that?
Aldo: I have with my father… I have… But I don't stay with my dad. Sometimes I went home to see my dad. To give me money…

Interview with Lúcio, 15 years old.
Interviewer: At this time you lived with your mum, tell me this, since you were born did you live with your mum?
Lúcio: Until I was one, then she abandoned me.
Interviewer: Where did she abandon you?
Lúcio: With my dad.
Interviewer: With him, where did he live?
Lúcio: There in Villa Kennedy.
Interviewer: So you lived with him since you were one?

Lúcio: Since I was one.

Interviewer: Until what age?

Lúcio: Until I was 15.

Interviewer: Did your dad always look after you, your dad and who else, was there someone else?

Lúcio: Only my dad, only he looked after me.

Interviewer: Are you still in touch with him?

Lúcio: No he died.

Such cases as this are, however, the exception rather than the rule. More often in the memories of children are stories in which fathers are associated with repression and punishment rather than with care and attention. We found this in 12 interviews as in those found below.

Interview with Mirna, 18 years old.

Interviewer: Ah, so you knew your father… When your mum died didn't you stay with him?

Mirna: No I didn't.

Interviewer: Did you have any problems with him?

Mirna: Ah, we fought a lot. I didn't stay with him.

Interview with Lorenza, 17 years old.

Lorenza: My dad when we arrive, he begins to swear, swear at us, calling us lots of names, right. But we are not like that right. What I do here on the street, I only go out, have fun, hang out with my friends, but then we find a place to sleep and then go. I don't really do anything.

Children and adolescents tell us that when punishment is excessive it is recognized by them as a form of violence and serves as a stimulus for leaving home. As mentioned, domestic violence can be a catalyst for leaving home. However, we also found occasions when physical punishment is seen as a sign of attention and an attempt at educating them. This leads us to think that, whilst on the one hand today there is still a culture in which to be beaten can be equated with being educated, there is also a defence by the child of these acts of violence and a wish to project an idealised image of protection and affection which is often absent at home. We see two examples below:

Interview with Rôni, 16 years old.

Rôni: I won't say that he is really aggressive because I also got up to mischief. I'm no saint. I messed up, but he didn't just beat someone, he thrashed them. Like you thrash a bandit on the street. Right? So I never got used to his ways.

Paola participated in Lorenza's interview.

Paola: My name is Paola. Even if my dad is bad to me I worry about him and my mum. (…) I go back home, even with him beating me. He can hit me because a dad is a dad and a mum is a mum. He can beat because parents always want the best for their children, but I think its wrong for him to beat us now because we study, we are good girls. Now, if we'd got up to mischief, snorted, smoked, really drank, got pissed, then he could say something, could beat us.

Sad stories, happy stories

The relationships with the family cannot be analysed in a one dimensional way. Every child has a particular story of the family with both happy and sad memories, as Filomena recalls:

Interviewer: How was life at home before you came to the streets? How did you begin to come to the streets?

Filomena: Ah, my life was really bad. My father beat my mum a lot. I didn't know my dad because he died but at least I remember that when I was small he beat my mum.

Interview with Jeovana, 17 years old.

Interviewer: From your life what was the coolest thing that happened?

Jeovana: When I was with my mum in Paqueta, and my brothers all together.

Interviewer: What happened?

Jeovana: It was really good. We swam in the sea. Took pictures.

Interviewer: This was an outing?

Jeovana: It was.

Interviewer: Tell me a bit about this outing, how was it?

Jeovana: It was good because my mum was there, my younger brothers were there. Before they were adopted and went to live in Holland, it was good because we were all together, all the family together.

Interviewer: It was a happy day!

Jeovana: Yes! It was the best day I had. The best days were also when she was alive, now these are the bad days in my life because she is not by my side and because I don't know my dad. I don't know if he is dead or alive, that is why I want to meet him…

Good stories with family are remembered followed by feelings of happiness and tenderness but these are images full of ambiguous feelings.

Interview with Filomena, 15 years old.

Interviewer: How was life at home with your mum?

Filomena: My life was good. Because my mum gave me what I asked for. She didn't leave us wanting, we only had to ask. Even these days, yesterday she came after me. Even today if I go up to her and say: "mum I need this or that". Yesterday she spoke so much about Christmas clothes.

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: I've had good times. Very few were good times, but I have had some with my mum.

Interviewer: Do you want to speak about one of them?

Alba: There were days when we got on, days when we went out and she laughed. But not always, you understand. This only happened a few times. So sometimes I think and wonder if only things were always like that, but it wasn't and it didn't last. She said I was a prostitute and other bad things. Well, I don't regret it. I only remember, stop and think about some of the good things that could have happened if I'd stayed at home, but I also think about the bad things.

Interview with Raul, 17 years old.

Raul: The coolest thing that happened to me I think was when my dad was alive, my dad was always studying nothing else. But my dad was always nice to me, he gave me whatever I asked for, but that is life, when the moment arrives when you lose someone you really love a lot, we have to, well lets say, I lost my dad, there is only my brother and my mother, so I have to help my brother and mother.

In practical terms

There are many challenges to be highlighted when we discuss questions related to the families of children and adolescents who are not at home. Perhaps one of the most important challenges is of how to strengthen the families so that they can protect their children and adolescents. There are no ready answers for this or quick solutions, but there is an incredible

amount of potential in the investments that can be made to support these families and communities.

In this sense it is important to avoid two movements commonly seen in society: that of blaming the family for the child's situation and that of blaming the child for her/his life on the street, without offering them some kind of support or alternative. This is no easy task for in order to contextualize the realities of children and their families it is necessary to re-assess many reified preconceptions. As we have seen, a reflection on the family is of special significance here for we know that the history of the child begins in the family. Many feelings, positive and negative, are nurtured from the child's first experiences with her/his family, which will come to have repercussions upon the building of her/his identity and subjectivity.

On top of this, it is fundamental to conceive of the family as a strategic space. A space that must be understood and strengthened when looking for an effective action for the protection of the rights of the child and adolescent.

Alongside the points discussed here regarding the relationships with the family, in order to better understand the multiplicity of links and trajectories of children in a street situation, it is necessary to understand their paths, the course of their comings and goings until they are 'fixed' on the street. In the next chapter we focus on this process of leaving home and going to the street.

Chapter 7; Daily life on the streets

Going to the street

There are many aspects that come to make up the scenario that leads children to go to the streets. However, recent studies show that higher indices of community supports available to families lead to the creation of more solid bonds of trust in the home, allowing children to remain in an environment in which they feel secure and protected. These are what we term the 'support networks'.

The 'family and community support networks' (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 1998) refer to the resources available in the family and community, including the services offered by the state and the private sector. These comprise the forms of support available to children and adolescents, through affective ties and impersonal relations, as well as through opportunities for participating in activities in the community. Many theorists of child development have pointed to the importance of establishing stable bonds, particularly during the first years of life. We point to the work of Erik Erikson (1971), who argues that these bonds allow the child to develop a sense of 'basic trust' in her/himself and in the world, which are fundamental for a healthy and safe growth.

We believe that we can find the solution to the question of going to the street inside the communities from which many of these boys and girls originate. We work with the idea of fields[77] which are in constant conflict; the family, the community, the street. When the first two work in synergy, the third loses force. When the first two are weakened, the third gains force. In this constant battle, the 'winner' is the one who appears to offer the child better conditions of security and shelter. When the family and community spaces become unbearable, going to the street can come to be a rational and logical choice for the child seeking the security, protection and affection not found in the two other fields.

The statements of children and adolescents offer us their different motivations for leaving home to the world of the street. These will be used in our analysis.

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[77] The concept of force fields was mentioned in Riccardo Lucchini's chapter and has its theoretical base in the work of Bourdieu.

Going and coming back, going and not coming back

Leaving home and having the world at your feet, images that for middle-class youths are filled with positive meanings, do not have the same meaning for those without the same opportunities. Leaving home can be a choice for youngsters from low-income communities, but few times is it a pleasant choice, and almost never is it a 'life project'.

A first data from our study in Rio de Janeiro that draws attention in the interviews is that going to the street, in most cases, is a gradual process. The child goes for a first time and then comes back at night to sleep at home or with relatives, eventually sleeping on the street. Through a gradual adaptation, the child gets used to the space until s/he stays more definitively.

This distancing from the home and the family has many motivations, though in most cases it is connected to the contrasting values and norms in the fields of action in the life of the child. Moura writes that people abandon the group when it no longer meets their needs. According to the author, "a situation is like two force fields (home and the street), each trying to attract particles to their interior. In this image, the only force available to the field of the family is solidarity" (Moura: 1991, p.171). When these forces of attraction and the bonds of solidarity in the home and community are weakened, the influence of the other field begins to act.

The child seeks spaces and environments in which s/he can feel safe and confident. If s/he finds in the community supports that encourage her/his development and guarantee her/his family's security, the tendency is that the force field of the street looses strength. However, when the journeys to the street become more frequent, it indicates that this field has been strengthened in the child's perception in her/his search for better living conditions.

Within this context of constant movement, youngsters' stories are marked by many comings and goings that make up their existence on the street. Some statements show us this:

Interview with Bolinho, 19 years old.

Bolinho: I came to the street when I was 12 years old; but I stay more at home, like this, I stay two days on the street and one at home…

Interview with Jonas, 18 years old.

Jonas: I went from the street back home, from home to the street, but I stayed longer on the street. If I stayed on the street I stayed for a while, about six years, I only stayed at home for two, I'd go back to the street…

Those interviewed offered many motivations for going to the street: for work, because of a pragmatic need to help their family; to "*zoar*"[78] – hang out, have fun, mess around – with friends. In 11% of cases there is a definitive rupture that induces the child or adolescent to go to the street at a particular moment. In these cases the fields of home and the street take on new dimensions in the life of the child. Whilst the field of the home gradually loses force due to many factors (addressed further on), the field of the street gains force and presents itself as a tangible possibility, despite its difficulties.

It is possible to identify in recent studies, such as Zamora (1999), factors such as, for instance, the growth of drug trafficking gangs that have increased the phenomenon of 'confinement' within the communities from which these youngsters originate. Rizzini and Rizzini (1991) had already pointed to this in the early 1990s in reference to girls. Studies carried out in the 1990s suggest that this phenomenon has increased over the last few years[79].

It appears that families are increasingly withdrawing into the private sphere, removing themselves from more extensive community relations, either because of the possibility of their children's involvement with crime, or because of the city's real or imagined division enforced by organized crime factions that dominate different areas. In this way boundaries are created through which not everyone can freely pass, reinforcing the idea that the home is the safest place to raise children. It is in this context that many problems emerge, particularly during the child's transition to adolescence.

In the study with children and adolescents in street situations in Rio de Janeiro we found that approximately half of those interviewed had their first experience of staying on the street between the ages of 7 and 11 years of age. This is the phase in which the child begins to expand her/his circle of relationships beyond the family environment and a small circle of friends, leaving her/him more susceptible to external influences. The child's need for attention and safety are increasing while the supports available are apparently not to be able to meet these new demands.

In another study taking place in a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro (2001)[80], it was observed that for most parents this phase is the one in which parents most feared for their children. According to them, at this age there are the least opportunities (recreational, educational, etc.) available for them, so they spend the bulk of their time outside school without any productive or structured

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[78] The many connotations of this term are more fully discussed further on.
[79] For this see the texts published b by CESPI/USU and CIESPI, from the projects "Links" and "Support Networks", the later in partnership with Instituto Promundo (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000, Rizzini, Barker, Zamora and team: 2001, 2002); also see the work of Simone de Assis.
[80] Project "Children are not a risk they are an opportunity", coordinated by CIESPI and Promundo. The study with focus groups took place in Santa Marta, a *favela* in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro, see (Rizzini, Barker and team: 2001).

activities. In many cases both parents work so that care for the child is left with older siblings, or else they are left home alone, without supervision. This lack of opportunities of which parents complain is due to the lack of even a minimum level of governmental involvement in creating extra-curriculum activities for children. Added to parents' fear is the presence of violent drug trafficking gangs in low-income communities, particularly in Brazil's urban centres, which has greatly affected the bonds of solidarity and trust in these places.

The most visible repercussion of this is the emergence of children being imprisoned in their homes. Justified by their parents as a form of protection, the confinement of children makes difficult the establishment of the social bonds necessary for their development. This is part of the reason why many in the research mentioned feeling 'free' on the street, and able to "do what we want". This aspect of the discourse on freedom is of great interest in our study and it will be addressed in detail further on. According to our study, 25% of those interviewed had their first experience of staying on the street between the ages of 12 and 15, during the period of transition to adolescence, precisely when the influence of friends and partners becomes decisive in the choices and strategies taken by the child.

"Fui!"[81] – "I'm gone!"

Interview with Roger, 12 years old.

Roger: I already knew some people, some friends of mine, so one of these dudes said: 'look, there are some dudes that stay there at Guaratiba rock, want to go there?' So I went there. I would stay on the street for a long time then go home…

Of the 49 interviewees who answered the question "before you came to the street, did you know someone who lived here?", 29 replied in the affirmative and 19 of these said that they came with friends from the area where they lived. These come to be relationships that escape from the afore-mentioned confinement, and make new contacts outside the family. These end up being catalysts for further movement away from the domestic environment. It is also an attempt at creating and building new bonds.

Going back to the idea of force fields, the lack of community supports for families raising children appears to make the street an attractive space in which their material and emotional needs can be satisfied. More than parents abandoning their children and children abandoning home, leaving home is often characterized by a search for different possibilities. The feeling of freedom, mentioned by many of those interviewed, is related to this broadening of possibilities.

Though, as we shall see, the street also imposes tough rules of survival that do not lead to real opportunities for growth and social integration. If life in the family offers difficult conflicts for children and adolescents, life away from it brings new challenges.

As mentioned previously when we spoke of the families of these children and adolescents, another factor that leads them to the streets are the many episodes of ruptures and loss in their lives. In our research we found a number of children whose mothers and fathers died when the children were still young, as well as cases of where parental imprisonment and illness profoundly impacted their lives. Here are some examples

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Interview with Andrade, 15 years old.

Andrade: My mum abandoned me, so I stayed with my dad. I stayed with my dad and then he passed away, so I came to the street…

Interview with Roma, 13 years old.

Roma: I came to the street when I was eight years old because my mum died, so I went to live with my grandmother and then she died, so I came to the street…

Almost always these losses result not only in affective consequences, which already in themselves contribute to a sudden change in their lives, but also have financial repercussions beyond the psychological effects of the crisis. Frequently the child becomes responsible for the subsistence of the home, in many cases being its only source of income.

Work and its significance for boys and girls

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.

Luíza: I started going to the street to sell sweets when I was nine years old… With ten I stopped selling sweets and got more involved with the boys and girls…

In 30% of cases, work was mentioned as the main stimulus for life on the streets.

Friends who already worked on the street encouraged boys and girls to do the same. In at least 10% of cases, this work began with the child going to the street together with a parent. The

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81 Slang term used by youngsters in Rio de Janeiro as a farewell, end of a meeting or when going from one place to another.

many episodes of deaths and imprisonment mean that working on the street in these cases gains a further significance, whilst in others, it is only a movement to complement the family income.

Interview with Teotônio, 13 years old.

Teotônio: I've worked since I was six years old selling flowers… I was with my cousin and he called me, so I came to help my mum…

Interview with Raul, 17 years old.

Raul: I had to help my mum because she couldn't work properly because she had a stroke and her hand was atrophied. Damn, so I started putting in my head that I had to help her, after my dad died I had to help my mum… So then I came with my cousin to sell peanuts, I grew up and made friends with people…

This first journey to the street, in the case of children who work, is almost always spoken of as being influenced by another child or adolescent with some experience of life on the street: "I went with a friend who already worked there…" Because this is profitable, the boy or girl ends up returning to the street. The statements of children and adolescents interviewed show that leaving home to work increases their range of relationships and they gradually establish new contacts and increase their confidence in the space of the street. The fear of the street gradually gives way to a feeling of belonging to that space.

This new confidence, taken alongside with the expense of their comings and goings from their often distant homes and the new connections they create allows children to spend some nights sleeping on the street. Another important factor is the acceptance of these children by others on the street.

Lusk and Mason (1993) define as 'street workers with a family base' the children who are on the street but return home, or maintain periodic contact with their family. We will use this specific definition for children who go to the street during the day but return home at night. In the case of children who work and spend most of the day on the street, with only sporadic contact with their family, we will use the term 'independent street workers' (Lusk and Mason 1993).

In response to the question of what they do with the money they earn, the children, particularly those 'street workers with a family base', replied that they help out at home and, in many cases, buy things for themselves such as clothes and sweets. Work on the street, even when motivated by survival, allows children and adolescents to be independent from their parents in terms of their consumer needs. The child earns respect, being able to become the central

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economic figure in the home. In their statements we can see this sense of responsibility for the family:

Interview with Mateus, 12 years old.
Interviewer: When you sleep on the street what do your parents think?
Mateus: Ah, they don't think anything because they know I am getting money.
Interviewer: What do you do with this money?
Mateus: I take it home for my mum to buy medicine.

Interview with Dario, 12 years old.
Dario: Working here is good, I can also get money to take home. This way I give half to my mum and keep the other half. So my mum buys what is needed and I buy clothes, sandals, for me…

Work appears as a positive element, and especially as an important value, associated with the idea of the 'honest worker'. Rizzini and Rizzini (1991, p.71) mention, addressing a study by the University of Pernambuco (UFPE), that there are subjective factors at play when the child economically contributes to the home. Amongst these, we find work as a way of social inclusion and ethical legitimation of a way of life; work as compulsory, a widespread idea expressed in the saying "the devil makes work of idle hands" (meaning that it is necessary to occupy the children of low income communities with productive activities) and that work is an educational practice, a culturally acceptable way of educating children and adolescents.

In this way certain productive activities carried out on the streets such as carrying goods, selling sweets, peanuts, flowers, looking after parked cars and juggling, guarantee some kind of income. But this work is not always connected to subsistence. At least three of those interviewed said that they worked on the street in order to meet their own consumer needs, giving them more autonomy from their parents.

Interview with Sidney, 15 years old.
Sidney: I come only to get a little money, so I can spend it, play arcade games, have a soft drink in the *favela* where I live, get a hair cut, it isn't because of need.

Through our meetings with children and adolescents it is possible to see that some of the activities they pursue on the street help them to develop ways of thinking and a degree of

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maturity, opening up little explored possibilities of empowering them, giving value to their activities and developing virtues:

Interview with Raul, 17 years old.

Interviewer: So how do you do it? You go and buy and work it out?

Raul: Yes, I buy the peanuts which cost R$ 3,00, so I buy one kilo of peanuts and make forty parcels. So each one is R$ 0,50, I make R$ 20,00 and make R$ 17,00 profit.

Faced with adverse situations, children and adolescents make up strategies that use their potential in order to survive on the street.

We can see that remaining on the street entails not only an emotional distancing from the family, but is in many cases an economic need because of the expense of coming and going daily from the streets, and, as we saw in the Rizzini and Butler's chapter in the first part of the book, staying on the street is also partly related to the fascination that it exerts on children and adolescents (Vogel and Mello: 1991).

"I do what I want!"

Interview with Lorenza, 17 years old.

Lorenza: I started sleeping on the street because I want to go out. My dad doesn't give us the house keys and when we arrive late at night he doesn't open the door for us. So we stay on the street. We want to go out, he doesn't give us freedom, so we stay here...

The children and adolescents we interviewed showed that, for them, the street is essentially a ludic space, seen as 'fun' and a 'good time' with freedom as one of the key words which expresses this fascination. Amongst them 17 said that this was their main reason for coming to the street, even when other factors were present. Let us see how this theme of freedom appears in their discourse:

Interview with Sandra, 15 years old.

Sandra: Freedom, damn! Many times on the street you don't hear the things that you have to hear at home, there isn't any rubbing your face in it, sometimes on the street you could even be hungry, know that you are risking your life, but even so you know that to an certain extent you are free, you can think what you want, do what you want, regardless of the circumstance…

So if the home and community environment is rigid, suffocating, and full of conflict, is the street an option in which limits, even if they exist, are somehow of a different nature? This is one important question to consider, but there are also others.

Alongside the question of freedom, also appearing in the interviews is the issue of the non-interference of others, that is, the freedom from others, what has been referred to as 'not lecturing' in slang terms. This was also pointed to in the study conducted in Goiânia. Its authors, Fenelon, Martins and Domingues argued that, (1992, p.60) "the limits, if they exist, belong to each individual, and are never imposed by their friends". The statements by children and adolescents clearly show what they understand by freedom:

Interview with Andrade, 15 years old.

Andrade: I thought that the street was good because we go where we want to, when we want to, and at home we couldn't do that…

Interview with Bill, 12 years old.

Bill: But at home… I don't really like being at home, because she (mother) confines me too much, I want to go out to play…

Terms like *freedom, money, food* and *fun* appeared in around 50% of the interviews to refer to what is good on the street. Even when the child is not motivated to go to the street because of work, the attraction for a space in which the rules appear more fluid appears to exercise a particular fascination. If at home "you can't do anything", on the street coming and going is more free, the rigidity of timetables is less, playing is less controlled, that is, on the street there is no routine to be followed like at home. On top of this other more subjective expressions of freedom are also found, such as those in the following interviews:

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: One thing that you have on the streets that you don't have at home, at least that I didn't have at home, is freedom. Not the freedom for you to go out, fool around, shout, say that you are going here or there… Another type of freedom. You can talk, like that, the freedom that I didn't have at home. At home I couldn't even laugh without being asked what I was laughing at. So this was a freedom that I had outside, I could talk to whoever I wanted without being stopped,

because at home I couldn't even talk to a friend… If I wanted to cry I had to lock myself in the bathroom, not on the street.

This statement gives more of an idea of the range of expressions contained under the term freedom, for boys and girls who are in a stage of change, who are ever more fenced-in in the family environment. Freedom becomes related to talking, meeting, emotions and sexuality. Within this field, the street represents a space in which the child is not judged or repressed.

In the process of carrying out the research we encountered some interesting cases, such as, for instance, children and adolescents who spent the day playing on the street, and not always in favourable circumstances. In at least one case, we met two boys who had just finished playing in the sewage canal and who were dirtier than the all other youngsters we interviewed. They told us that they lived with their parents and came out every day to play on the street.

Another boy told us that he left home without his father's permission. We still do not fully understand what this may mean but see that there is a certain lack of supervision over this child but which somehow differs from the children who are on the streets of the *favelas* without parental supervision, but who are under the gaze of neighbours and acquaintances in the community. In these communities, as the research team from the project *Children, adolescents and their support networks* (CESPI/USU- Instituto Promundo: 2001) shows, there is a spontaneous support network which means that the child is constantly 'watched' by neighbours, that is, even when playing 'loose' in the *favela*, the child is known and there is always someone there to help her/him in the absence of parents. These *support networks* forge a resistance to the growing movement of confinement, which we spoke of earlier. It is important to point out that in contrast to situations in which there is a lack of care and supervision as found on the street, the child in these cases knows that there is someone who is responsible for her/him in the community.

"Ah, the first day was good"

Interview with Camarada, 15 years old.

Camarada: The first day I only remember a bit: I played a lot, I thought it was good, I stayed with some dudes, I wanted to come back everyday…

Many feelings emerged when those interviewed mentioned their first day on the street. Children and adolescents mentioned that their first impressions were always positive. At least 26 of the 45 who replied had good things to say about their first day. This observation is of interest for it shows the novelty, adventure, and feeling of freedom the street provokes, which are negated in the place and family of origin.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: Ah, the first day was good, the second, the fourth, from then one things started getting worse… It was cool, I got used to it, but afterwards I didn't like it… Then I met her (girlfriend) in Barra, then I met others on the street, at this same time I met a bunch of people in Barra…

Not all describe this positive reception on their first day on the street. This is more likely when it occurs in groups, when the work activity is not the most important feature, and when financial competition is not markedly present. In such cases, a new arrival may represent a threat and the reactions of others may not be so welcoming:

Interview with Juca, 12 years old.

Juca: Sometimes they (other boys) already come wanting to hit, these things, they think that we are invading their sale pitch, so we go on talking to make friends…

However, we heard many statements in which children mentioned that in arriving for the first time on the street they were well received by other groups. This occurred in at least 15% of cases. ~~Mas nao disseram anteriormente que 26 dos 45 tiveram boa recepcao?~~Boys and girls consider this first encounter with the street as being positive. The lack of affection and support that appeared to have distanced them from their families is in principle made up for by these encounters. What are the issues related to this good reception on the street? Some clues emerge

from the statements from the boys, associated in particular related to the use of drugs, which appears to be a way of acceptance and socialization into the street and into the group:

Interview with Branco, 11 years old.

Branco: When I got there I said: 'what is this?', 'thinner', so I said: 'this is like glue, yes, you can get high', so they called me over to have a sniff.

A good reception may also relate to the fact of the child or adolescent not being associated with a rival group[82]. Some boys recall being questioned, for instance, about their 'area of origin' upon arriving on the street:

Interview with Camarada, 15 years old.

Camarada: Ah, when I arrived the dudes asked me where I was from, so I said I was from Santa Cruz, so then they go: 'its cool'. It was like that, but if I was from Comando[83], they would have killed me, or beat me, if I was from Terceiro.

In many interviews boys and girls reported disillusionment with the street. In their statements this disillusionment occurs after the first few days and is related to experienced episodes of violence. It is as if they begin to see the negative side of the freedom they experience by leaving home.

Day-to-day on the street (one day after the next…)

Many aspects and subjects make up the daily life of children and adolescents on the streets, however, some appear more significant in their statements. The lack of a rigid routine does not mean that many reports of life on the street do not show similarities and continuities in people's day-to-day. Common scenarios and strategies emerge in relation to the group and to economic issues.

"Everyone here is like a family"

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.

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[82] We will speak more about this further in the chapter on mobility.
[83] Comando or Terceiro Comando is one of the drug trafficking factions in Rio de Janeiro, see chapter on mobility for further discussion.

Luíza: Everyone there was like a family, like this, what happened, sometimes something happened to one, he'd come like this: 'the men there are going to beat us', so sometimes they would beat on one, they'd have to beat on everyone, so everyone went running together, each defending themselves…

A first point to be mentioned relates to the formation of groups. In many cases 'grouping up' on the street, as those interviewed say, is made easier in cases where someone is known before the first entry into the group. This is normally through someone who lives in the community of origin. This person will present him to the group, easing her/his reception. Because of the growing rivalry between different drug trafficking gangs in many parts of the city, this approximation to the group is made more delicate. In a study published in Rio de Janeiro in 1995, Silva and Milito pointed to the fact that in the city the expression *'alemão'*[84] was a sign of the curbing of the movement of youngsters through the city. The interviews made it clear that territories were clearly demarcated and defended in direct relation to the drug trafficking faction which dominates the area.

Upon arriving on the street, the majority of children and adolescents recognize their friends and begin to develop specific activities together, from work, to drug consumption and petty theft.

Some clear conclusions can be made from the interviews and observations in the field. One is that the groups are small, normally between four and six children[85]. The murders of children on the streets, which were well publicised in the 1990s, appear to explain, at least in part, the disappearance of large groups of boys and girls. Large groups were very visible and therefore very easy to capture. Besides, smaller groups can easily move through the city. However, in order to sleep it is common to see smaller groups joining up together as a defence strategy against violence at night. A whole range of acts of aggression is committed against these children at night and they know they are vulnerable and exposed. In this way forming groups offers an important bond, conferring security within a threatening environment:

Interview with Raul, 17 years old.

Raul: Sometimes we stayed with other lads, other girls, sometimes we were alone, but when we went to sleep, we slept all together, each one like this, next to the other, like this…

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[84] *Alemão*, literally German, is a term used to describe an enemy, someone not from the area.
[85] The reasons for this are discussed further on.

Interview with Filomena, 15 years old.

Filomena: Here I have more friends, right, when I sleep there is always someone awake looking out for me so that no one will abuse me…

These bonds, which were much emphasized in the interviews, show a kind of support with references to a family. There is at times a romantic image in these youngsters' statements, a kind of group behaviour summed up in the saying "one for all and all for one". The group is important in this process for it makes the child feel closer to the street, bringing a feeling of protection and belonging.

We mentioned that violence is found in many aspects of the lives of these children and adolescents. Violence here appears as an important factor in the union or separation of groups. Whilst uniting can be seen as a defence strategy, the relations within the group are unstable, so that violent episodes also occur between members of the group. In contrast to the initial discourse of brotherhood, many of those interviewed mentioned not "trusting anyone on the street". We conclude that rather than a spontaneous bond, groups function more with a rationale of creating a survival strategy within a hostile environment.

Older ones, younger ones, boys, girls

Another important issue to point out is the diverse forms of protection within groups. One of them is that older children and adolescents protect the younger ones. Some statements reveal the differences between the experience of being older and younger on the street:

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: On the street it's good when the person is small, but from 15, 16 years up things get even worse because the guards beat us more. They think that we who are big have to pay for the little ones. So they get the big ones and beat them, on the little ones they just give a slap and send them away, the big ones they put in the van and break them. The big ones pay for the little ones…

Or else, the girls speak of how they are protected by the group from abuse:

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.

Luíza: But also the dudes defend us a lot. There are some dudes who defend when they see the men abusing us, they just beat them, they don't care if the police come, the important

thing is that if they messed with us, they really beat them. Once there was me and a friend, this man went by, and she always had this acid thing in her bag, the men came to mess with her and she threw the acid their face…

Another topic tackled by the research was the position of girls within the group. According to those interviewed, 'being a woman' on the street is fearful. Thirty children and adolescents amongst the 51 who answered the question "on the street is it better to be a boy or a girl?", replied that it is better to be a boy. For them the answer is related to the supposed vulnerability of females in situations of violence and abuse, an opinion voiced by many girls:

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.
Luíza: It is better to be a boy, because girls suffer more consequences… There are men who abuse them, I was never abused, but have seen many friends who were, the men walking by on the sidewalk, seeing us asleep wanting to come over for a grope, think that just because it is a street girl she is loose, they don't care, we can't say anything or else they beat us…

Interview with Jenifer, 17 years old.
Jenifer: It is better being a boy, because on the street the majority of boys have a job, they shine shoes, and the boys seem to have more friends. The men on the street they are stronger, have more creativity to protect themselves and deal with people, the girl is more fearful, she is scared…

However, girls come up with their own resistance strategies against such threats, not always remaining passive victims of these kinds of violence. In some cases, some girls mentioned the strategies they adopted in order to protect themselves from abuse:

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.
Luíza: Many girls, if you looked at them you'd think it was a bunch of boys, all with shaved heads, cap, men's clothes, full of slang, all cocky…

Interview with Cássia, 17 years old.
Cássia: When I was on the street, for you to have an idea 'uncle', during the day I was like a girl, but at night I dressed like a man. I always went round with a bandana, coat, trousers, like a dude, if you looked at me, you'd say I was a boy…

In fact, during fieldwork, we did find girls dressed in baggy masculine clothes, trying, especially at night, to blend in with the boys in the group. However, some answers showed that not everyone was in agreement. For instance, of the interviews carried out, 42 were conducted with boys. Of the 8 interviews where it was claimed that it was better to be a girl on the street, 5 of these were with boys. Among these the main reasons had to do with the fact of it being easier for girls to obtain money and food:

Interview with Andrade, 15 years old.

Andrade: On the street? A girl, because with girls the women are no longer frightened, the boy when he goes over to ask for something, the missus already thinks you are going to steal…

It was also possible to see that some girls disagreed with the strategy of blending in, wearing feminine shorts and small tops. Generally, these girls had fixed partners, and in some cases were older or leaders of groups.

One last point in terms of the group refers to the number of conflicts that emerge from a girl's developing many amorous relations with different persons in the group. Statements show that in such cases the girl was very often distrusted and distanced from the group. Many of the adolescent's attitudes showed a prejudiced view of the female.

Courting on the street

We could note a number of stable relationships amongst the boys and girls interviewed. 22 mentioned having, or having had, fixed partners on the street. Relationships or even marriages, legal or informal, point to another kind of support that is forged on the street. The fact of establishing a relationship with a member of the group triggers new needs and strategies for self-esteem, connected, for instance, to the search for more privacy or more care with personal hygiene.

Many interviewees related unexpected situations to the research team, such as going to a hotel to have a bath or to have sex with a partner. inesperada ao entrevisado ao o entrevistador?

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Interviewer: So where did you have sex with your boyfriend?

Alba: Ah, he paid for a hotel room for me… Not always, when we didn't have money, we stayed out on the street, in a hidden place…

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.

Luíza: Sometimes we went to the hotel, so they paid for the hotel. Just because we are minors, no, we pay for a hotel room, we don't care, all the hotel owners want is money…

The girls seemed in almost all cases, to have deeper and more stable affective ties, particularly with their children. It is important to point out that of the 16 girls interviewed, 9 had children. The issue of amorous relationships on the street raised more questions than answers. Up to what point can you have a 'stable' relationship on the street? Do relationships work differently on and off the street? Are relationships different within institutions? What are the consequences of raising children on the streets? These questions need to be explored, for they are essential in thinking about ways of supporting these young parents so that their children may have the opportunities that their parents never had. We know of generations that are being born and raised on the streets, therefore, a greater attention to the subjective aspects of these relationships can offer important clues to new ways of working and offering opportunities for leaving the street.

Night-fall: between fear and (in)security

In all statements night-time appeared threatening, for it is the time when all kinds of violence occurs. Boys and girls feel threatened and report that this is the time in which they feel most vulnerable. When asked what they feared, the idea of people being burnt alive at night emerged in many statements.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: The danger is the cowardly acts. Didn't you see on TV that some men burnt an Indian alive? I think it was in Brasilia, so here these acts of cowardice also happen…

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: When it's time to sleep it is very bad, I am scared of sleeping on the street and there suddenly be someone setting fire to us or doing something…

Many mentioned the case of the Indian Galdino[86] as an example, others the Candelária Massacre.(nao quer explicar a Candelaria?) These two episodes in particular are very present in the imaginary of these youngsters and appear to reinforce the night-time feeling of vulnerability and threat. Many episodes of violence, in particular by the police and municipal guards, do take place at night according to the children. Private security guards are also feared by the children, and are often present in their statements. It is apparent that these are the main 'enemies' of children on the street, always regarded with anger and fear. Some exits from the street, even if temporary, are a result of death threats or physical violence from them.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: Lots of damage, guards running after us, taking our things, beating us, there is the guard duty by V…, he disses us. He is a guard here and he works with a gun. He told me that I would turn into compost the next time he found me here at night. That is, that I am going to die, right. He said he would take me to Alto da Boa Vista, like he has already done with four others. Come here at night and you'll see, today he is on duty, he will break everyone, when we see the van arriving we run away.

Interview with Andrade, 15 years old.

Andrade: I was walking on the street, the policeman got angry with me, started dissing me, gave me a big whack here on my head with his truncheon… police diss us, say we are tramps, they want to diss us…

It is interesting to note the use of the term 'dissing'[87] in the way boys and girls refer to people who persecute them on the street. More than only physical aggression and repression, the term is used in reference to all sorts of humiliation to which youngsters are subjected. The term is discussed further in the chapter on identity and subjectivity.

Beyond these actors, other adults are also present in the day-to-day lives of children and adolescents. Some are referred to in a positive way, emphasizing that they 'respect' them, 'treat them like a person' and similar terms.

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[86] This was a famous case which happened in Brasilia in 1997, when a Pataxó Indian who was sleeping at a bus stop was burnt alive by four middle-class youths. They were going by in a car when they saw the Indian asleep and poured alcohol on him and set him on fire. Galdino had burns over 95% of his body and died on the way to hospital.

Interview with Raul, 17 years old.

Raul: I started to make friends with some well-to-do people, but who think that everyone is the same, treat us equally, not differently, treat us with respect, dignity, also think that we are all the same…

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: Some people even stop to talk, to give us advice, right. A minority…

Silva and Milito (1995) define as 'street fathers' adults who exercise some kind of force or control and/or coercion over the children, offering them some kind of protection in exchange. They exercise an ambiguous role of protection and leadership or command over the group of boys or girls. In only a few interviews was the fear or power that these adults have over them made explicit. However, the presence of these adults was observed during fieldwork, and even without more concrete evidence it is possible to perceive the relation of power, protection and exploitation. These adults at the same time that they exploit the children by having them sell-on drugs or other goods at traffic lights, offer them all kinds of drugs and threaten them. Their existence in Rio de Janeiro is also associated with the ever-growing presence of drug trafficking on the street, making children their intermediaries or direct sales point, which is a growing phenomenon. We could note that in some parts of the city, children are approached by drug-dealers from the hill-settlements close to where the children are found, to sell on drugs in exchange for money and protection.

There is no precise data on the actions of drug-dealers and it is a difficult and dangerous subject to explore. However, it is necessary to point out that they presently play a central role in the dynamic of the life of these boys and girls on the street. How is this link established and what weight does its presence have in the lives of these youngsters? How to develop actions that guarantee children and adolescents support and security? These are some of the questions and challenges that must be faced so that Brazilian children and adolescents can have a wholesome development – a right which is ensured in legislation and denied in actuality.

Glue, thinner, marijuana

Amongst those interviewed, only 27 mentioned that they use or had used drugs. However, when asked if they knew of others who had used, they all spoke freely about drugs and

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[87] Dissing, or *esculashar* in the Rio de Janeiro slang, short for disrespecting is a term also found especially in African-American circles. It means to ridicule, deride, humiliate.

in particular about those which are most used. As the literature on this subject has been showing for many years, this is a topic with which the children are very familiar. Marijuana and thinner[88] were cited as the most widely used drugs by 17 of those interviewed, 4 cited cocaine and glue. Cigarettes, the only legal drug, was mentioned by youngsters in ten interviews.

The use of marijuana drew our attention. Those interviewed said that using it provokes a feeling of relief and relaxation in an environment marked by tension and conflict. There are instances of boys who smoked until they got *teto preto* [whiteied – English slang]: in which their vision becomes altered and there is a feeling or complete torpor. Many have mentioned that they were able to stop using all drugs except marijuana.

Interview with Acácio, 15 years old.

Acácio: Now I only really use marijuana. You know what it is 'auntie', I can't stay away from marijuana. I'm obsessed by the herb (laughs). I can't do it, I can go without thinner, without everything, but I can't go without marijuana.

Despite the emphasis given to the harmful effects on health in the medical literature, children and adolescents in this research pointed to its ludic aspect. They refer to drugs as fun, more than a simple anaesthetic against hunger. In some cases it helps to "be turned on" aware of possible aggressions; at other times it helps to relax. Some initiation rites when arriving on the street involve the use of some drug, and many conflicts are caused by a dispute over a bottle of glue or a joint. What is always mentioned is the functional character of the drug, that is, it always has a well-defined function; to socialize, to remove fear or tension, to disguise hunger. More than a mere anaesthetic against suffering and hunger, the drug is active in the construction of identities and relations on the street. Just as it is used and seen primarily as an instrument for the pursuit of pleasure in other social classes, so it is perceived on the street, though on the street the context is one marked by extreme suffering.

Another important point related to drugs and everyday life on the street is the role of the adult who sells it. Some street educators have pointed to the existence of *bocas de tíner*[89], that is, places where this solvent is readily available. Why thinner is a drug of preference is still an open question, for the interviews did not delve into this. However, we cannot ignore its presence in the

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[88] Paint thinner, or as pronounced in Portuguese *tíner*, is an ethanol-based solvent and paint stripper widely available in shops which when sniffed, often doused on a cloth or T-shirt, produces mildly hallucinogenic effects like glue. Thinner is much cheaper and easier to find and distribute than glue, hence its growing popularity.

lives of these children. Given the presence of drugs, who are those who sell them? And what is the nature of this relationship: commerce or work or some combination of these? How do you prevent this kind of transaction? These are important questions because drugs, or the relationship of drug use, distribution and sales continue to put at risk the lives of many children and adolescents, poor or otherwise.

"Uncle, spare us some change?"

As mentioned previously, the street offers these boys and girls a key attraction: money. On the street it is possible to spend money in many ways. The possibility of acquiring consumer goods and having relative autonomy is present in their statements.

According to the interviews money is obtained by begging and carrying out small jobs, like carrying shopping or looking after parked cars; selling sweets, peanuts, flowers, shinning shoes; and by petty theft. The youngsters use their money not only to buy food. About 30% of those interviewed said that they spent their money on food, though many also said that they were given food. In this way, money earned on the street serves to buy a better quality meal or a more "sophisticated" snack like a sandwich in a bar, or a meal at a restaurant. Money serves many functions: to buy drugs for twelve of those interviewed, to buy clothes for ten of them. Seven said that they used the money to help out at home, and eight said for their own entertainment.

Interview with Sidney, 15 years old.

Sidney: So we started to get some money, so we got used to stopping here… I also spend it, I can buy sandals, or get my hair cut, play arcade games…

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: Sometimes some women went by and we'd go on begging until we had enough money to buy what I wanted… Clothes, face-cream, because I didn't like staying on the street without anything, like without having a bath, so I bought things for me…

As in this last example, other statements show that money is used to buy clothes, often of designer labels, in shopping malls, creams and other personal hygiene products, as well as for paying hotel rooms to have sex or a bath. The very pragmatic character of money is related to

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[89] *Boca de tíner* or thinner dens, are a variation of *bocas de fumo* – smoking dens – which are the drugs sales points, often, though not exclusively, situated in *favelas* where marijuana and cocaine are sold.

meeting immediate needs. In some cases, boys and girls did not hesitate to tell us that they stole to get money.

> Interview with Bolinho, 19 years old.
> **Bolinho:** Ah, money we ask for it, but sometime we steal from the ladys too…

However, in general, they know the rules of the street well and avoid conflicts in the place in which they stay. In a study carried out in São Paulo, Gregori (2000) noted that in order to stay in a certain locale the youngster tries to respect certain local rules, particularly in abiding by certain ways of conduct that did not 'burn' her/his chance of staying in that place by having problems with other people who occupy that space. Because of this, children and adolescents try to establish cordial relations with passers-by and shopkeepers. They also establish relations that ensure them certain resources, receiving food from restaurants and bars, clothes from local residents and rarely threatening anyone who lives in the neighbourhood or on the street where they stay. If criminal activities are practiced, these are normally take place at night, in places frequented by tourists such as Copacabana beach, and against tourists or people who do not live locally.

Many statements also link money with leisure activities, revealing the many meanings of this word for youngsters.

"Hey, wanna "*zoar*"?[90]

> Interview with Geissa, 14 years old.
> **Geissa:** I like to *zoar* with the crew…
> **Interviewer:** What does *zoar* mean?
> **Geissa:** Many things; play around, throw things at each other, fly up on one another…

Some forms of play and leisure appeared frequently, like going to the beach for instance; a space where fun is free and at the same time offers the possibility of earning money. The free leisure spaces of the city are used in many ways. For instance: playing on the streets or playing football at the Aterro do Flamengo, on the beaches or pitches (fields) in the various districts, as well as kite-flying, another entertainment that requires few resources. The association of the street

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[90] *Zoar*, a slang term used in Rio de Janeiro that can be loosely translated as to, fool around, have fun, get up to mischief, and which we translate as "mess around".

with freedom occurs not only through the term 'messing around', which we frequently heard, and which may mean anything from a trip with friends to a real 'mess', but is also found in things like shouting and singing, bathing in fountains, running around, playing ball, etc.

If many claimed that they seek a certain freedom on the street, another meaning inherent in expression is found in the kinds of leisure activities that boys and girls develop in this space. Within an urban environment that is evermore fenced off from public use, these youngsters appropriate the city in a way that subverts the given social 'order': they have fun in groups, 'mess around', and use drugs as entertainment. In some isolated cases, acts of violence were considered as entertainment:

> Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.
> **Aldair:** Fun on the street is glue, thinner. Nothing else…
> Este exemplo nao entendi… essa e' uma expressao subversiva, indica alguma rebeldia?

Interview with Luíza, 15 years old.

Luíza: We stayed playing on the sand, high, messing around, everyone high in the rain. So when we were all high we went: 'let's get that guy'! So we'd throw sand, when we saw that the dude was going to mess-up. At other times it got heated, a heavy vibe, there were fights no one separated, we left them there one killing the other.

Other kinds of leisure mentioned are associated with acts of consumption in enclosed spaces. In the research we found a number of cases of youngsters who frequent *funk dances*[91], emphasizing its popularity in Rio de Janeiro. This taste for the dances is also seen in the dozens of songs the research team heard during the interviews, most of them about drug trafficking gangs or sex. In addition to the funk dances, trips to shopping malls and other private spaces frequently appear in their statements:

Interview with Jonas, 18 years old.

Jonas: I love the funk dances, right. Sometimes I went there to the dance at Asa Branca, sometimes I went in too, but like a big boss, all dressed up (laughs). Damn, just because I am

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[91] Funk dances or *baile funk* have become a popular feature of Rio's youth culture, occurring mainly, and until recently exclusively, in *favela* communities. These dances attract tens of thousands of youngsters every weekend.

from the street, so what, I went, I stayed with young girls, asked them to dance, they had fun with me…

Interview with Geraldo, 17 years old.

Geraldo: Ah, to have fun I go to the funk dances up the hill… There in Cidade de Deus, but only sometimes…

Interview with Filomena, 15 years old.

Filomena: I go out with my friends, we have fun, there is a dance, we go to the dances… We go to the communities, to Rocinha, Barreira do Vasco, we enjoy the communities…

Interview with Sandra, 15 years old.

Sandra: Look, uncle, I put together money all week so I can go to the dance there at Praça XV, there at Zé's bar. Every Friday there is a dance there, I save up all week and when Friday comes I go there. Even if it is to only have a soft drink and eat a burger, but with samba at my feet. It's damn fine!

Interview with Eva, 15 years old.

Eva: To have fun? I get money together and go to Terra Encantada[92], I go to Bob's[93], to the cinema…

We believe that is important to highlight the presence of funk dances in these youngsters' lives. The research project *Children, adolescents and their support networks* (CESPI/USU-Instituto Promundo: 2001), based on a study of a low-income community in Rio de Janeiro, pointed out that though not an ideal place of leisure for youngsters, these spaces are still one of the few places in which youngsters can get together and mingle. "Funk dances and their organizers have been under much criticism, frequently, however, there are few alternatives and opportunities that are as attractive for youngsters" (Rizzini, Barker and team: 2001, p.18). Likewise, in relation to youngsters in a street situation, this space opens up the opportunity for a democratic leisure in which it is possible to interact with others, other adolescents and also other social groups and classes. Many organizations defend Rio de Janeiro's funk music as an

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[92] A theme park in Rio.
[93] A fast-food chain.

expression of local culture, endorsing it as a legitimate form of creative resistance to the absence of leisure opportunities and other cultural venues for youngsters from low-income backgrounds.

Even when the only expectation is for the development of survival strategies, the unexpected and the desire to live and be happy are encountered in myriad forms. Before indicating the problems in the ways in which money is used by these youngsters, it is important to note the creative ways in which they appropriate urban spaces and the strategies based on leisure they develop to maintain their self-esteem.

In the following chapter we discuss the many ways in which the city is appropriated, the use of survival strategies in these spaces and the constant movement between home, the street, and institutions that make up the forms of mobility of these youngsters.

Chapter 8; Mobility

Dozens sleep crouched in an amorphous and dirty row… Maybe the cold of winter prevents them from sleeping. The time of these boys without age is not the same as that of the street that shelters them. The time of those who are marked in no place is intense and nervous. A nylon thread at their ankles binds these boys during their sleep… when one awakes, because of a nocturnal visitor, they all awake. The inhumanity of the city is one more trap, like the boy's nylon thread… the city does not violate humans, but helps in this. Cut, woven and produced, the amorphous row… it presents us a chronicle of time, of the body, of itself and of resistance (Baptista, Luis Antônio. *The city of the wise*, 1999, pp.97-170).

Rio de Janeiro, 13h30min, Copacabana. Four policemen violently deal with two boys who slept under the marquee of a bank. Brutally, they are put inside a van and taken to a state-run triage centre for children in a street situation. Still dazed, the boys are sent to a shelter from which, two days later, one of them runs away. On his return the street is no longer to the place where he slept before. This became a risky place, since he might be spotted by the same guards who 'arrested' them previously. The boys are no longer together so that the one who ran away needs to readapt his survival strategies. Now his stopping point is the Flamengo district, where there is a bustling underground station and where some acquaintances 'stop'[94] daily. At night, however, he knows he cannot sleep there, for the municipal guard normally has surprise late-night raids. Tomorrow, our boy has no idea where he will be. For him, as for his friends on the street, there appears to be no place in the world.

Life on the street is necessarily one of constant movement for the child and adolescent. Even if they have a fixed point of reference in the city, they rarely fix themselves exclusively to it. If these boys and girls make the streets their home, this home is always changing address and district. A change that is never free from danger.

During the research we could see the constant movement of boys and girls. We could see this not only through their statements but also in the number of times in which we searched for a particular group but could no longer find them in the same place. Amongst the factors that generate this constant circulation is immediate necessity – when the place in which children live becomes economically unproductive – making them migrate to other places where it is easier to find money and food. Another factor that causes them to move are leisure opportunities in other

places. Many speak of going in a group to the beaches for a trip and to have fun, going back at night to sleep at the spots in which they feel safe, like Central Station (railway terminal). The pressures of the local drug trafficking networks also have an influence over the movement of children and adolescents through the city streets.

The children's comings and goings and the meanings s/he attributes to this circulation in the city are the focus of this chapter. Our intention is to study not only the child's exit from the street but also her/his transit, that is, the different places through which s/he passes in her/his day-to-day on the streets.

"I went and came back, auntie. There is no explaining it"

The researched pointed to three key elements that determined the intense movement of the child and adolescent in a street situation in Rio de Janeiro: leisure, the economic factor and the desire to leave the street either temporarily or definitively. Observations during the interviews and a careful reading of the news can also offer us another motivation that remains unspoken: the fear of violence.

Leaving the street does not only occur according to the children's own wishes and desires, as they are also being constantly forcibly removed to shelter institutions. Such forced mobility is also a part of the stories of children and needs to be taken into consideration as a factor that influences their circulation through different spaces. If freedom, in a number of cases, provides an initial motivation to stay on the street, mobility is not always related to this same reason rather, it may be induced and/or violently motivated.

From group to group, from place to place, children and adolescents reorganize their day from the facts and happenings that they encounter. At the same time, this fluidity between groups on the street, between which youngsters are moving, is conditioned by two factors: the first is the large numbers of internments and removals which children and adolescents are subject to, as we shall shortly show. In the institutions they end up creating new bonds that often continue back on the streets, particularly since the ties with the old group become severed. In this way, when they leave or run away from institutions, it is easier to unite with youngsters that they recently met and with whom they are still in touch instead of trying to find the old group.

A second factor is the great mobility of groups, which make it easier for the youngster to lose her/his links, even if they are away only temporarily. This theme is analysed later on.

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[94] Stop, or the Rio de Janeiro slang *para* designates a place youngsters reside, hang out or sleep, the term captures well the high mobility and transitory nature of life on the street.

Interview with Geisa, 14 years old.

Geisa: I lived in various places. I lived there in Campo Grande, then I lived in Santa Cruz. I've studied in a boarding school. Went to live in Santa Cruz, went to Nova Holanda, from Nova Holanda I went back to live in Santa Cruz. Then I went to live in Vila do Pinheiro. Then my mum came here to Lapa to live, when my stepfather murdered her here, with a knife in the neck. Now my grandmother lives in Sepetiba, an uncle in Nova Holanda and my aunt in Santa Cruz.

It is very common for children and adolescents to narrate their trajectories in a discontinuous way. It was this fact that prompted us to pursue the life histories of some adolescents by interviewing them more than once. But what drew our attention was the fact that, in the chaotic and diffuse world of the street, not everything that appears out of place is out of place. Rather than seeing this discontinuity as solely a loss in the linearity of life, the dislocation and discontinuity in the statements relating to their own life-stories can in fact be taken to reflect a defence strategy and a means to maintaining a certain identity. The fragmentation of their lives by successive events that provoke ruptures cannot be simply analysed from the perspective of disorder. There is not only a "lack" here, but also a clear reflection of the violence to which they are submitted.

The city that does not breathe: mobility(ies)

Rival groups, drug traffickers, shopkeepers, security guards, municipal guards and military police are some of the many examples of agents who force the children and adolescents to continuously move through the city. This fact is connected to an "urbanization" policy in Rio de Janeiro which limits access to public spaces, in particular, the spaces in which these populations have gathered in the past. Thus, fences have been put around viaducts, parks and squares, making it impossible to use them and for youngsters who frequented those places to meet. The curbing of the circulation of boys and girls takes shape in a policy of "urban cleansing", making urbanism one more tool in the daily exclusion of these children. Arantes (1993), reflecting on the role of the square in the city, defined them as "… contact zones, where contradictory moralities cross and which bridge worlds that, though part of the same way, appear irredeemably apart". So the space of the squares that before permitted exchanges, visibility and contrast between people from different origins, today is characterized as a space of contemplation and, primarily, of passage. It is precisely these movements that the urbanization projects in Rio de Janeiro have come to fragment.

We are speaking here of the construction of identities that are evermore enclosed within themselves, through a daily construction in which the other is not tolerated or understood and thus appears as potentially dangerous. The city of the urban specialist or technician appears evermore as separate, isolating other possibilities of expression. Sennet (1998), speaking about the transformations in urban space in France in the XVIII century, discusses themes that remain current as strategies of control and discipline:

The social question relevant in these cities was that of living with a stranger or being a stranger. The question was to know where these strangers would be habitually seen in such a way as to establish characteristic images of these strangers. The old meeting place, the square that had many uses, was being taken over by the space for monuments to itself (in Paris) and as a museum of nature (in London). In this way, the demography created a tool through which the 'stranger' became 'unknown'[95].

The street through which we transit is no longer that in which diverse subjects relate. The street as "scenery" through which everyone passes but no one stays, gains strength as a standard of the civilized city. Urban discipline is subtle, leading us to obey 'invisible' rules of the appropriation of space according to the prevailing urban order. The child who makes the street their living space, according to this vision, is given an identity as a marginal person, seen as potentially dangerous because, amongst other things, s/he subverts the moral order, either actively or passively. It does not surprise us to overhear people's comments of discomfort and anger when children are seen bathing in fountains in the city centre.

The children and adolescents portrayed in this book live a very nomadic existence and, because they are not known, this leads to an ever-growing hostility connected to the widespread image of them as being dangerous. It is in this context that, according to those we interviewed, private security guards, passers-by and municipal guards have increasingly come to expel this population from public spaces.

If their interviews mention that they were well received by other youngsters on the street, the same cannot be said of their reception by other actors found in public space. The boys and girls we interviewed were sure that at present there was more intolerance towards them by different sectors of society. We were surprised to encounter during an interview on the street, a man and a woman who began to verbally abuse the boy being interviewed, and by extension the rest of the team. The man said that the boy was a "scoundrel" and that we had to take him to an

"orphanage" because "he had a home and he stayed on the street because he wanted to, because he was a scoundrel". A person from the team whose function was to help with the interviewing process went over to this man to explain the research and that we were recording. Only then did he calm down and leave.

This incident illustrates the current situation leading to the question: is it not possible that situations such as this may induce a greater mobility by children and adolescents, contributing to their feeling of being even more undesirable in the spaces where they seek to live?

Drug trafficking and violence
The concept of territory and area is also related to the zones of influence of the of drug trafficker, which is today one of the strongest agents delineating territory and frontiers. Today the street or block in which one lives carries symbolic ties to particular groups and of belonging. Comando Vermelho and Terceiro Comando (two of the larger organizations involved in the drug trade), more than just organized groups, are symbolic entities that delineate territories, limits, frontiers, life and death, being on the street, seeing and being seen, identified with the local 'culture' of the place in which it manifests itself (Soares: 2002, p.109).

It is not only passers-by who exert pressure on youngsters to leave the street. The circulation of these youngsters is not as free as it first appears, for the influence of drug trafficking has curbed this mobility. Even if in most cases boys are not directly connected to the criminal factions operating in their *favelas*, drug trafficking gangs work as a sign of group identification that cannot be ignored. This means that boys know that they cannot circulate through any space, even if their own passage through many institutions makes them more tolerant toward other groups. Because of, or by means of, its constant movement, the group is more likely to receive new arrivals. The presence of the drug gangs is both physical and notable in less visible ways. It is reflected, for example, in the music sung by the boys below:

Interview with Sorato, 13 years old and Almir, 8 years old.
>   **Sorato and Almir:** (singing) The soul has no mystery
>   Our life is what we plant
>   If you come up (the *favela)* you will get it (shot)
>   If you come up you go down
>   Lelelelerê……lelelelerê

[95] Sennet, R. *O declínio do homem público.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998, p.83.

The key is the CV… (Comando Vermelho)

The music is full of the unsaid, but it expresses the power of criminal factions, preventing the entry of rival groups and inciting violent expulsion as a solution to conflicts. Many youngsters told us that they are not able to go from one district to another because of the gangs that dominate different districts. This is something that begins in the *favelas* but which has a growing influence on the streets, showing a partitioned map of the city. With the spaces for free movement being constantly reduced, even inside shelters, this division is always present. Emphasizing what was previously mentioned, here were are not only referring to dislocation, geography and urbanism but primarily to the construction of identities that are ever more enclosed and violent, intolerant of each other, and which present themselves as hostile and potentially dangerous. The same treatment that the city accords these boys is, very often, reproduced by them.

On the other hand, when the music points out that "life is what you plant"[96], it shows the limited perspective of the future and the incapacity for nurturing plans in a life which early on exterminates its own members. As the graffiti on a wall near a *favela* dominated by the Comando Vermelho put it: "why fear if the future is death?".

"I stop at Barra"

It is not only violence that motivates youngsters to circulate through public space. Mobility in the city is also influenced by financial considerations and by leisure. When circulation is motivated by the flux of capital, the places with more money are sought, that is, where there is a concentration of shops and tourists, like the districts in Rio's *Zona Sul*. Even the groups that 'stop' at a certain place say in the *Zona Norte* district, normally go to other spots during the day to ask for money, have fun, or sometimes even to steal.

When we ask these youngsters where they go most often, *Zona Sul* is mentioned. The combination of leisure activities and the possibility of earning more money mobilizes these children to go to these districts. Money is earned from tourists or local residents.

Interview with Tarcísio, 13 years old.

    Interviewer: And to get money?

    Tarcísio: I also asked (begged).

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[96] "Life is what you plant" refers to the slang *plantar* a reference to both planting the drugs that the dealers sell as well as to the process of staring up a drug sales point, hence the nihilistic tone of the song – life is about selling drugs.

Interviewer: Who did you ask?

Tarcísio: To the *gringos*, to the people…

Interviewer: They gave you?

Tarcísio: (affirms with his head).

Interviewer: More or less how much did they give you?

Tarcísio: One real, two real, three real…

The research showed that Zona Sul districts were cited more frequently and that Copacabana was mentioned by more than 30% of those interviewed as the place that they stayed during the day, even when these interviews took place in other parts of the city. After Copacabana, the next most popular district was Barra da Tijuca, with 15% of youngsters saying that they have spent some time there. The city centre also appears as an important place in these youngsters' movements. The suburban districts were not much frequented by them, with the exception of Madureira, mentioned by 10% of those interviewed, and the districts of Tijuca, Praça Saens Pena and Maracanã in the Zona Norte. The beach is a great focus for youngsters, with districts like Copacabana, Flamengo, Ipanema and Barra da Tijuca being particularly popular.

Micro-circulations

Besides the circulation between districts and institutions, there are also micro-circulations that are established in the area in which youngsters lives. The place where these youngsters stay shows their survival strategies in the urban environment. Depending on the locality it is possible to learn about many issues that characterize the daily life of boys and girls: how the groups are organized, the places where they get money, the best places to sleep, and so on. We observed in Central Station (the city train station) for instance, that a large number of youngsters used the squares during the day to consume drugs; slept at night on the staircase to the underground; normally got money during the busiest time of the day in the area near Avenida Presidente Vargas; and, in case of an escape, they went to an area behind the bus station. We can see that the use of these spaces is according to certain strategies and a the minimal level of organization which enables them to stay there.

"I'm getting out of here"

If the entry into the world of the street is gradual, leaving the street is no different. It is usually adolescents who seek to "get out". Many motivations lead an adolescent to arrive at a

point of "saturation" with the street, or to a maximum point of tension that take her/him to seek alternatives.

Often what leads the adolescent to want to leave the street is a temporary need to be away from it. Two situations are often found: one of them is when the youngster needs to leave the street because of death threats by other boys, extermination groups, drug dealers or the police. The other situation is when the wish to leave is motivated by a feeling that mixes a desire for protection and shelter with needs for food, hygiene and comfort. In these cases the adolescents themselves claim that the exit from the street is temporary and that they just want to get away from it for a while and then come back.

Interview with Roger, 15 years old.

Roger: I wanted to get out of the street for a bit, like the others who say: 'I only went to eat, to sleep', then left. Eat, have a bath and get out. I slept one day, two days, then I jumped again, went to the street again. Like that.

Interviewer: But you said that you went to the (name of institution) because you wanted to, right? Why did you want to?

Roger: To leave the street for a bit, distance myself a bit.

Interviewer: Why did you want distance?

Roger: Because on the street it got very boring, it was raining, I didn't want to stay on the street and be cold. So I went to the shelter, until it stopped raining.

The child/adolescent appropriates in a number of ways the services that are offered to her/him according to her/his immediate needs. In this way many institutions end up attending to the same individual many times without being able to offer other alternatives.

"From here I don't leave, from here no one takes me"

One intriguing question of the research was of how these youngsters appropriated urban space. They appear to challenge the notion of this space as merely one of passage, where squares are fenced-off and the condominiums are enclosed. Their presence on the street disturbs this logic of segregation and confinement in which individuals only exist with their "equals".

Even in the face of prejudice and other kinds of hostility the space of the street becomes for these children and adolescents a place of opportunities for work, leisure and exchanges. In their statements they mentioned a lack of leisure spaces and opportunities in their communities of origin. These needs are confirmed by other studies and challenge us to revise the priorities for

action in these communities (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga: 2000, Rizzini, Barker and team: 2001).

Leisure opportunities and the being able to play on the street appear to be important in the lives of children:

Interview with Adílio, 12 years old.

Interviewer: What do you do here?

Adílio: Have a bath (in a place that is a fountain and pond).

Interviewer: Only have a bath?

Adílio: I play in the park.

Interviewer: Play in the park? What do you play?

Adílio: Play on the rides, on the swing…

The video "Parallel dreams, Different worlds"[97] supports our analysis, juxtaposing the day-to-day of children and adolescents in different locales in Rio de Janeiro; a *favela* in the Zona Sul, a district on the city's periphery and a middle-class condominium. The youngsters' statements in the video show similar dreams, perspectives and aspirations, though within highly unequal contexts.

In our study we could see that youngsters seek from the street something that they do not find elsewhere. Their search can in part be understood as an attempt to create or increase the possibilities in their lives. They provoke discomfort because they challenge existing norms and by their presence show that there are different ways of existing in urban space. Their presence is disturbing because it is evidence of social and economic inequality and injustice. It remains to see how they understand and experience these perceptions of the place they occupy in society, and how they see themselves, how they think others see them and what their hopes are. These are questions that lead us to discuss the issues of their identity and subjectivity.

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[97] CESPI- USU/Promundo Institute: 2002

Chapter 9; The Group, the Person and the Self: Identity and Subjectivity on the streets

The present chapter refers to what we have considered as the field related to the identity and subjectivity of the children and adolescents living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Within this field terms such as the "group", the "person", and the "self", serve as significant markers through which we try to make sense of how children and adolescents engage with the world of the street, constructing their identities in the process.

Identity and subjectivity – clarifying the terms

The more childhood has become a protected enclave in the life-cycle, the less agency has been attributed to the constituents of this group. Many developmental theories in psychology, sociology and anthropology have conceived of children as passive receptacles of knowledge, as "social becomings", in which the child is socialized by benevolent adults who teach it the ways of the world in what we have come to know as "growing up" (Jenks: 1990, p.15). Criticizing such theories is not to deny the enormously important role that adults have in the upbringing of children. At the same time this is not to deny that the biological immaturity of children and their, in most cases, lack of experience in dealing with a number of situations may place them at risk or make them vulnerable. However, a consequence of such developmental theories and understandings of childhood is that they obscure the processes through which children and adolescents make sense of and act in their world and construct their identity. Often absent from these theories is the role of the individual as locus of practice and interpretation. Also absent is the significance of his/her peers, who collectively make up what has been designated by Talcott Parsons as "youth culture".

 An alternative way of conceptualizing childhood has been offered by authors such as Virginia Caputo, who seek to promote a view of children actively engaged in the production of their own social worlds (Caputo: 1995, p.29). We echo Caputo's concern in asking the key question "what is the child's experience of being in the world?" (Ibid). Or more specifically, what is the child's experience of being in the world whilst living on the street outside parental supervision? Such questions concerning the subject's own understanding can best be answered by addressing that which appears most fundamental in the individual; its identity and sense of self.

Identity is embedded in the structure of subjectivity, in the way a person experiences him/herself as an individual and social being, in the way the subject orders experience, creating a sense of self

in the process. This ordering process is shaped by many ingredients: the values, forms of behavior, and representations expressed through culture, the actual historical socio-political conditions the subject is situated in, as well as her/his gender and sexuality among others. This sense of "self" is liekwise effected by relationships of power. For, as we see in our work, power lies behind not only the kinds of representations that are assimilated by the self, but may also lie behind the self's impetus to defy and reject certain kinds of representation in favor of others.

A useful definition of Self has been given by Mageo & Knauf (1995), as the domain which encompasses all aspects of being a person and her/his subjectivity, constructed by acts of identification with internal elements of experience, and with persons, groups and representations in the cultural world. Identity is the sense of "me" , of one's self, that is derived from these acts of identification. According to the authors we identify ourselves with our emotions, with our family, our clan, village or job, though in most cases all these operate simultaneously as constituent parts of our identity (Mageo & Knauf: 1995).

The Self, then, is not seen as a fixed essential entity, but as ever shifting and multiple. Identities within gender, ethnic, religious and class categories are not conceived of as hermetically sealed and homogeneous, but as multiple, complex and ever shifting. People cannot be placed solely within any one category since individuals live their lives within a series of identities depending on the contexts they find themselves in. Identity is not essential in the sense that it cannot be traced back to an original point, a defining and definitive quality such as 'Brazilianess'; instead identity is always articulated within particular historical contexts and the form it takes is contingent upon these contexts. This point is addressed by Stuart Hall:

 Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall: 1997, p.4).

For Hall identities are points of temporary attachment that connect an actor to a myriad of social positions throughout the life-cycle. And these positions all exist within specific cultural and historical contexts. The subjects' attachment to any one of these positions is contingent upon the cultural value and power that embracing a particular identity confers. Our research seems to confirm Hall's view of identity as a process of engaging with the available resources of language, culture and history.

Tracing, in our study, the elements of subjectivity and the construction of identity amongst children on the street we considered two interconnected perceptions: *the perception of the street*; before and after dwelling in this space, including the theme of a vision of the street as a place of freedom and autonomy, and of the fear which is also experience there and secondly, *the perception of the self and of others*: where we explore many identities that are appropriated by children and adolescents on the street and their diverse strategies to strengthen their self-esteem, including their values and dreams for the future. In this analysis we work with the perceptions of the children and adolescents about the prejudiced views of others, as well as how the view of the "other" is an important aspect in the construction of their own identity.

Perception of the street – the street in the imaginary of children and adolescents

We understand subjectivity not as a closed category but as part of a process that makes up the psychic constituents of a subject. We believe, like Gonzalez Rey (1997), that subjectivity is organized through processes linked to the insertion of the subject in society. This way, within our analysis, we understand the street and the child and adolescent as making up and reordering each other simultaneously through the actions and answers which one offers to the other. Subjectivity is not only related to the values that the child and adolescent attribute to the world and things, like good or bad, right or wrong, but primarily as an answer and an ordering of the subjects' history which is determined and reacts within this field. It is not only the street that determines the action of these boys and girls, they also come to construct a certain street through their actions within this space (Stoecklin: 1999).

Within the topic of the perception of the street, we sought to identify how the street was imagined before the youngster entered its space, how it emerged in their imaginary, whether there were friends or parents who frequented the street before them. We also sought to understand the influence of friends and family in the process of initiation to the street. Beyond this, we sought to identify if this image and vision of the street changes after living there, and how they understand this change. Here we focused on what these boys and girls felt to be the good and bad aspects of the street.

Freedom

As has been previously pointed out, our research found that about half of the youngsters we interviewed went to the street between the ages of 7 and 11. This is precisely the developmental stage when the child begins to forge links and venture outside what has been up to now his main circle of influence: family and close friends. Between the ages of 12 and 15, 25% of those we

interviewed had their first experiences on the street, the stage of entry into adolescence marked by the attachment to and formation of groups of friends. In this respect it is interesting to note that twenty youngsters, of the 57 who answered the question, mentioned "freedom" or "play" as their motivation for going to the street: the street, in these cases, is imagined as a free and fun space where resources for survival are easy to find.

This factor has been pointed to by various writers (Gregori: 2000, Hecht: 1998, Fenelon, Martins & Domingues: 1992, Vogel & Mello: 1991) who draw attention to the way in which boys and girls who come from environments of extreme poverty, confinement, and at times violence, appear magnetized by the promise of freedom and fun which urban centers seem to offer. The chance to live amongst other boys and girls, fool around, hang out with youngsters of the opposite sex, go to parties and consume legal and illegal drugs, all in an environment without adult supervision, are extremely attractive, especially in the urban centers where opportunities to have fun are never far away. Many researchers have mentioned this issue of "freedom", so present in the statements of these boys and girls.

Also, as cited by Hecht (1998) and Gregori (1999), we noted the importance of freedom as autonomy, as the absence of restrictions and reprimands by adults, or as the boys and girls sometimes said "*alugação*" or "*jogação na cara*" a slang that can be roughly translated as "being a drag" and "rubbing it in your face".

Interview with Elias, 15 years old.

Interviewer: What is good on the streets?

Elias: Some things are cool… there isn't the same thing that there is at home. We can go where we want to, go any place. These things are better I think. At home I was always confined…

For Gregori the promise of freedom on the street begins within the very context and family dynamic into which these children are placed, especially their circulation between parents and others (Fonseca: 1993), by the family's mobility, irregular schooling, and the children's familiarity with the city. In other words this 'taste' for freedom is generated within a context of instability that makes it difficult to create roots; roots within space – to specific places like the community, the home or school – and within time – like the daily routines. This is also a context that encourages movement through urban spaces in order to provide for the home, a process that makes these spaces and the opportunities for leisure contained in them more familiar.

In a third of the cases work was cited as the factor motivating going to the street. In some of these cases the youngster went to the street to work accompanied by a parent, in others s/he strikes out

on her/his own to supplement the family income, and in still others, while the child maintains ties to the family, the income raised was spent solely by the youngster. Whatever the particular circumstances, work, even if only a temporary phase and a transition to living on the street, appeared to be a source of pride for those engaged in it. Working, particularly if it increases the family's income, can also mean that the youngster is more esteemed by his/her parents.

If, in the beginning, some of these children and adolescents venture to the street with the purpose of contributing to the home, at some stage they become not only present "on" the street but also begin to live a "street situation". That is, the links of the child and adolescent with family become more fragile and her/his community becomes more distant as his/her connection to the street becomes more solid. This process was described by Mark Lusk, who identified different typologies of children and adolescents on the street according to the ties they maintained with home on the one end, and their submersion in a street culture at the other (Lusk 1994). We have already spoken of this polarity of influences – the home or community and the street – as akin to force-fields: each attracting or repelling the child according to the degree her/his needs are fulfilled within that space or not.

The role of other boys and girls who have been on the street for a longer time is very important in the process of transition. From an initiation period in which the child generally begins to "work" on the street, some of these boys and girls gradually socialize into what can be termed a "street culture" either through groups that the child meets or people s/he already knows. Over half of those we interviewed already knew someone on the street before they went there. This process of socialization or initiation into a "street culture", voiced by many children we interviewed, demostrated commonality with many of the themes identified by Vogel & Mello (Vogel & Mello: 1991). Many stories or episodes involve the questioning of prior values as a consequence of things that occur on the street, for instance in those stories which refer to an ethic of work or obedience. Sniffing glue or thinner, or having one's shoe-shine box or other belongings stolen by other youngsters who live on the street whilst working provoke this kind of questioning of values – such as respect for work or obedience – and contrast them with other values, such as those of leisure and autonomy.

Freedom, autonomy, leisure and drugs were cited by 26 out of the 56 boys and girls who answered the question "what is good on the street?". Another important factor is "friendship", cited by 6 out of the 56 children. But what is considered friendship for them? How are these bonds created on the street? The children and adolescents interviewed related examples of strong friendships created on the street and of groups that had lived together for many years. In some cases, this friendship already existed inside the community of origin, facilitating the initiation into

the street. We could observe that friends do help each other on the street. We consider the term "groups of street children" to be misleading, for in actuality it seems that there are groups of friends of different sizes who "*param*" – i.e. "stop" or "hang out" together and who pass through different places where they can meet other groups of friends.

As we noted before, the larger group is normally sought at night for protection since this is the time when they feel most vulnerable. For children and adolescents who live on the street this experience of friendship and group bonding gives them a sense of protection and support, and perhaps, the feeling of social belonging absent in their past with their families. This may explain, in part, why many affirmed they feel safer on the street than at home.

Interview with Sandra, 15 years old.

Sandra: I always slept here, but I never slept alone, I always slept in the middle of boys bigger than me, boys, because I was a child, you understand uncle (…) so on the street, you seek out protection, it doesn't matter if they have broken the law, but someone who defends you, because there are people on the street who defend us, you understand, who have been longer on the street… There are always bigger people who ask for money for the smaller ones and help them, stand by their side, help out, sometimes take them away from them police and from thieves, doesn't seduce them.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Aldair: I stayed with the guys close by on the street, they took care of me, it was a better system than now.

Interview with Filomena, 15 years old.

Filomena: Here where I stay everyone is a friend, if a police car comes by to get us, everybody goes, because here we are united, if someone wins something it is shared amongst everybody, because half the people here have no mother, so we survive like a family on the street.

We also noted that in some cases children and adolescents didn't like to walk around in a group and preferred being alone walking through different parts of the city:

Interview with Kaká, 11 years old.

Kaká: Sometimes I walk around alone, it is better to be alone than with others. Sometimes I stayed alone, slept, I didn't have a cover so I got cardboard and got by, on the street everyone has to find a way to get by.

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: I don't really like grouping together, I don't like it. I prefer being by myself. I like friendship but it depends on the friendship, so I stayed more with her. When I couldn't be with Jaqueline I preferred being alone, I didn't hang out with other boys… Also because grouping up causes many problems.

That "grouping up" should cause problems is an interesting theme we will address further on.

"Nastiness" and "dissing": violence and fear

In the interviews we where surprised to find how frequently the children reported that the street did not have anything that they thought was good. From the 30 interviews that directly tackled the question "what is good on the street?", 20 said "nothing". We noted in this respect that the answers were tied up with a vision of the street as violent and as a place of suffering. Of the 43 interviews that answered the question "what is bad on the street?", 26 mentioned violence. Also mentioned was: "hunger" (6 answers), "drugs" (6 answers), "the police" (8 answers) and "prejudice" (7 answers).

Interview with Ruanda, 13 years old.

Interviewer: What do you think is good on the street?

Ruanda: The street has nothing good.

Interviewer: What is nothing?

Ruanda: Nothing good, nothing is good on the street, right!

Interviewer: And what is bad on the street?

Ruanda: A lot of things.

Interviewer: Like what?

Ruanda: People like, doing violence with the people on the street, people who like dissing. Sometimes there is nothing to eat and you have to stay hungry all day, that's it…

Interview with Marcela, 15 years old.

Interviewer: What is good on the street?

Marcela: The street has nothing good to offer us but it is the only way for us to survive.

We noted that the term "*esculachar*" – here translated as the slang 'dissing' or "disrespecting"– is used to label the violence they referred to, expressing a violence that can be either physical, symbolic or moral, as in being humiliated or ridiculed. To get hit or be verbally abused are encapsulated by this slang which is very present in the statements we heard. We also noted that the police where very often the perpetrators of this 'dissing'. The police, as well as the unarmed municipal guard, are greatly feared. Many statements refer to violence suffered at the hands of the police for various reasons, even for just being on the street. Of the 30 children who addressed the question of whether they had suffered some form of violence, all affirmed that they had. Of the 24 who referred to who committed the act, 15 mentioned the police, 3 mentioned private security guards and 6 mentioned other children.

This is also a theme that is very much discussed in the national and international literature. In Brazil's case, for at least the last 20 years, a great number of children have reported cases of enormous cruelty. Currently this violence is exacerbated by the actions of drug trafficking gangs. There is no doubt that this is a point which demands more attention and urgent measures by the organizations active in the area of the rights of children and adolescents.

Another term we often heard is "*maldade*" translated as "nastiness" or "evil". The street is at times referred to as a space where "evil" occurs, a term that expresses the resentment these youngsters feel in relation to acts of violence or injustice that are committed and which are seen as unnecessary or unjustified. Once again the authors of this violence can be the police, private security guards or other youngsters on the street.

While researchers have tended to emphasize the role of "freedom" in the discourse of youngsters on the street, the representation and experience of fear and violence appears as often. Boys and girls who live on the street live an extremely stressful life, where fear, especially of the "nastiness" of others, is a feeling that is always close at hand. At night, when these boys and girls imagine and fear danger the most is the time when the "nastiness" of others manifests itself in a concrete way; in the violence of the police, the security guards, the "playboys" (middle class boys, predominantly from Rio's *Zona Sul*) and from other youngsters on the street.

As we saw, many boys and girls cited the fear of being set alight at night like the case of the Indian Galdino. He represents the fear these children have of death, like any other human being of any age, the fear of dying suddenly, in the dark, alone. Galdino gives them the certainty that this is a very real possibility. In contrast to the children who are protected from the difficult subject of death, those who find themselves on the street are forced to face it at every moment. Reasons to

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be afraid are not lacking. This is an issue that says a lot about the urgency of ensuring more humane conditions for the lives of these children and adolescents, as well as for those who, because of a lack of alternatives, are going to the street. It is clear that they are exposed to unacceptable levels of violence, jeopardizing their development and destroying their potential.

The level of violence on the street appears to increase the older one gets. As has been noted in other chapters, adolescents on the street tend to not only protect the younger ones but also suffer violence at the hands of the police or security guards on their behalf. In many cases this more stressful existence on the street due to violence, combined with the increasing difficulties of obtaining resources by asking or begging, means that there is an increasing disillusionment with the street. Going back to our metaphor of the force-field, the street, it would appear, begins to exert a negative force on the adolescent who finds it ever harder to fulfill her/his needs.

Interview with Roger, 15 years old.

Interviewer: Did you imagine the street to be a certain way?

Roger: It's a lot worse. A Lot worse because we go hungry every so often… if we ask for something, some people swear at us, tell us to get a job…

Interviewer: How did you imagine the street to be?

Roger: Ah, I imagined it to be everything… that we got things easily, everything easy, walking around all smart. I imagined it would be that way, that it was cool. When I saw what it was like only some things are cool. Even your friends sometimes want to hit you.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Interviewer: Is the street like you thought it would be or is it different?

Aldair: It was very different from what I thought.

Interviewer: What did you think?

Aldair: Well I thought it was good because many friends that came to the street said it was good, this and that, but I didn't see anything good on the street, only the harm that people do.

Interviewer: What did they tell you was good?

Aldair: Glue sniffing, walking around the street, speaking to everyone, knowing lots of things, getting loads of women, many things. But I saw that everything was very different from what they said.

Interviewer: Did you see this straight away?

Aldair: No, I came to see it after 2, 3 years on the street. (…)

Interviewer: After all these years what do you think is good on the street?

Aldair: Nothing. There is nothing good on the street. It's good when the person is little, but from 15, 16 upwards things get even worse… It gets worse because the guards beat us bigger ones more, we get hit for the little ones too.

Perception of the self and others

We could observe that boys and girls living on the street, like anyone else, identify with different persons, symbols and ideals at various moments. This process of identification can be seen as analogous to the way in which a compass is used to orient ourselves in an unknown landscape. By adopting particular ways of behaving or styles, or else by representing oneself before others in certain ways, one indicates a familiarity with the terrain they are in and imply a series of competencies or systems of knowledge gained by the child and adolescent. Lucchini has observed that being "streetwise", which these competencies represent, may be a central aspect of the identity of children and adolescents on the street (Lucchini: 1999, p.201). As we mentioned, there were many instances in which youngsters related their pride at having survived, of being alive despite all they endured.

Gregori terms these competencies "*viração*" – which can be translated as "getting by", or "making do" – a colloquial term that refers to a certain skill or craftiness in obtaining resources for survival, particularly through informal means. For boys and girls who live on the street, this means something more than mere survival. This strategy is a way of manipulating "symbolic resources and resources of identification" especially those having to do with the category "children on the street" as the representation used by various societal sectors. *Viração* used in this sense is a way to dialogue, "communicate and position oneself in relation to the city and its various personalities" (Gregori: 2000, p.31). This is what Hall described as the using the resources of history, culture and language in the process of constructing our identities with which we represent ourselves (Hall: 1997).

What Gregori termed "viração" closely resembles what Ervin Goffman called "information control", or in the case of groups of people who are stigmatized, "stigma management" (Goffman: 1990). The work of Erving Goffman can help us in our analysis of the relationship between "self" and "others" by clarifying the processes through which the interaction of children and adolescents with other actors on the street contributes to their identity formation. Published in 1963, *Stigma* drew together a decade's worth of theorizing on the theme of individuals who are "disqualified from full social acceptance" (Goffman: 1990, p.9). The book goes on to show the ways in which those whom Goffman calls the "stigmatized" and the "normals", in a complex dialectic mutually define each other and themselves. The "normal" and the "stigmatized",

Goffman writes, "are not persons, but rather perspectives. These are generated in social situations during mixed contacts by virtue of the unrealized norms that are likely to play upon the encounter" (Goffman: 1990, p.164).

These encounters are not only meetings between individuals in their day-to-day, but more broadly speaking, interactions between the dimension of the social and that of the personal. These debates are relevant to the children and adolescents on the street because they not only belong to a highly stigmatized social group, but are also the most "public" or "exposed" social group. For Goffman, stereotypes can exist without one ever meeting a representative of the category. There is a popular notion, Goffman writes, that whereas impersonal contacts between strangers are subject to stereotypical responses, "as persons come to be on closer terms with each other this categoric approach recedes and gradually sympathy, understanding, and a realistic assessment of personal qualities takes its place" (Goffman: 1990, p.68). Yet, as he rightly observes, this does not always take place: "familiarity need not reduce contempt" (Goffman: 1990, p.70). Boys and girls in a street situation are a very clear example of this, suffering daily abuse from those who see them everyday: the police, security guards and the guards inside the youth correctional facilities through which some of these youngsters circulate. Likewise the local residents in the areas where these youngsters settle have been very vocal to the local authorities and the media about their wish to see them removed from the area.

Revealing and concealing the signs of stigma are part of the everyday cycle of youngsters living on the street, where they adopt, according to Goffman's terminology "techniques of information control". Depending on whom they are addressing and the spaces within which they are found, different strategies of "stigma management" are adopted. These options, or orientations, as we noted, serve as survival strategies on the street, where images of them held by the public at large are appropriated youngsters to their advantage. As a group of our researchers recounted, on one occasion the youngsters they approached feared the researchers were council (social) workers there to take them away. They were adamant that they were not "street children" but were there waiting for their mothers to pick them up. This occurred at Rio's Central Station, one of the more dangerous parts of Rio's center at this time of night, i.e. after ten PM.

These encounters in the public space of the street are very significant in trying to understand the processes of identity formation of the children and adolescents who reside there. Though embodying collective representations and stereotypes they also take place in the dimension of the "personal". The "personal" would appear to lie between the "social" – the realm of collective representations and practices - and the "self" – that of the subjectively experienced. This is where Erikson considered the "interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental

and the historical" takes place, a space of what he called *psychosocial relativity* (Erikson: 1968, p.23).

Personal identity, then, has to do with the assumption that the individual can be differentiated from all others and that around this means of differentiation a single continuous record of social facts can be attached, entangled. Like candy floss, becoming then the sticky substance to which still other biographical facts can be attached (Goffman: 1990, p.74).

Goffman discusses social and personal identity and contrasts it to ego identity. A concept of Erikson's, it refers to ego or felt identity, that is, a subjective sense of the individual's own situation, continuity and character obtained as a result of various social experiences, what Erikson described as a *subjective sense* of an *invigorating sameness* and *continuity*, what we here refer to as the Self. Social and personal identity, in contrast, are part of other people's concerns and definitions regarding the individual in question.

In this respect the Fenelon, Martins & Domingues (1992) study on "street girls" in Goiânia noted that the girls they interviewed ended up reproducing an institutionalized discourse in their talk, speaking about the need to change their own lives or other things that society more broadly wanted to hear. But next to this "acceptable" institutional discourse, they also found another discourse that reproduces the prejudice of society:

"What do you think people think about girls like you?
Tramps, *maloqueiras* [young ruffians]
And you, what do you think about yourselves?
Tramps, *maloqueiras* [young ruffians]"
(Fenelon, Martins & Domingues: 1992, p.63).

'Pickpocket', 'thief', 'marginal' and 'glue-sniffer': the prejudice
The statements we obtained in our research also present, to a degree, the interiorisation or naturalization of the prejudiced discourse from certain segments of society. For instance, there where many cases when the interviewee referred to her/himself and to other boys and girls as "minor". A term originally created to refer to children and adolescents in conflict with the law, it has become a more generic, and prejudiced term, referring to youngsters from the popular classes in general.

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More telling were the cases when the children showed themselves to be extremely sensitive to the prejudice of others. When we asked them what they felt other people thought of them, almost all replied that they had a sense of being discriminated against. Of the 34 interviews that broached the subject, 29 reported that others feared them, believing them to be thieves or undesireables. Only three reported positive perceptions that others had had of them, and these were all children below 13 years of age who worked but did not live on the street.

In some cases we observed that others' fear could be useful as in the case of the robbery described below.

Interview with Andrade, 15 years old.

Interviewer: These people that pass by here, what would you like them to think about you?

Andrade: Think about us? That we wouldn't go and rob them. They become scared so then we really go and rob them. Because they are scared if we get close to them so they go: 'Here take everything!' So we go and take it. If they didn't get scared, nobody would go after them.

But in other cases we noted that when no robbery takes place, the child is treated the same way.

Interview with Aldair, 17 years old.

Interviewer: These people here on the square, who pass by each day, what do you think they think about you?

Aldair: They must think we are going to rob them… today I asked for R$1 from a woman, she then held on to her watch and mobile phone, and I said, 'look I am not robbing you, I am asking'.

Interviewer: Do you think that people have a reason to think this way?

Aldair: Yes because the majority of people here rob, do shitty things, so they get scared."

Interview with Sandra, 15 years old.

Interviewer: The people who are passing here on the street, what do you think they think about you?

Sandra: Pickpocket, thief, marginal, bum, glue-sniffer, sometimes you don't even use drugs, or maybe you have used in the past, but it doesn't matter, 'when dust mixes with the crumbs you end up eating it all up'. If you are in the middle of a posse of minors sniffing glue, but you don't use, you have used but don't anymore, you are taken as a glue sniffer, you are taken as the same thing as they are. A lot of times the revolt of street children is society, uncle.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Sandra: Because society doesn't understand our side. I know we are wrong in being on the street, we could look for a shelter, or something, but sometimes society makes us get into drugs more quickly, you know what I mean? There are many people who have never gone through what we have on the street and who think that to say something bad to a minor won't hurt them, but we feel, you know what I mean uncle. We also feel. We are also a person, right uncle, even if we are drug users, or whatever, it doesn't matter what he is or isn't, but he is a person, he is a person to me, and I think that everybody deserves a chance in life, not one, many. You just have to take them.

We could observe that although boys and girls are aware that many of them rob, they feel discriminated and hurt when they are mixed up with the real robbers. There are those who assert that being viewed as robbers could even lead them to begin robbing since in the eyes of the other, s/he is already a robber anyway. If the boys and girls are aware of the different kinds of behavior that exist on the street, they are also aware that there are many reasons why children and adolescents end up on the street.

Another observation of this study is that the youngsters almost never touched on the subject of ethnicity. The literature on "street children" in Brazil has rarely explored the question of ethnicity or race. This "color-blindness", can be partly attributed to what thinkers on the subject have termed the "cordial racism" in Brazilian society, the way in which it operates in more subtle less aggressive ways than in other countries such as in the USA.

This confusion over ethnicity was also noted on the street. Figures dating back to Rizzini's initial research in the 1980s, corroborated in this research, indicate that around 80% of children and adolescents on the street can be considered black or brown (Rizzini: 1986). Yet for children or adolescents on the street that we interviewed ethnicity did not appear as a conscious marker of identity. In the many cases where the sense of being discriminated was present this was always felt to be because of the category of "street children" rather than as an attribute of race or ethnicity.

Interview with Marcela, 15 years old.
Interviewer: *O que você acha que as pessoas pensam de vocês ?*
Marcela: They think that we are on the street because… because of our heads, that is, they think we use drugs. Just looking at us with that disgust…

The overrepresentation of black and brown youngsters on the street, though noted by a few authors, has yet to be analyzed more comprehensively (Rizzini: 1986, Leite 1991). For instance we do not know whether there are different treatments and trajectories for whites and non-whites on the street.

As regards the over-representation of non-whites on the streets, Helio Santos' analysis of the legacy of slavery appears poignant[98]. The manner in which the abolition of slavery was conducted, Santos argues, condemned blacks to social immobility, hindering their economic and educational possibilities. On the 14th of May 1888, the day after abolition in Brazil, more than 700,000 people, 5% of the population at the time, were at one stroke put in what Santos calls a "fictional labor market" already saturated with recently arrived European immigrants (whose immigration the state had actively encouraged). For Santos the legacy of slavery and this post-slavery period is with us today in the issues of poverty, housing and violence, as well as continuing in issues of ethnicity, as it is the non-white population that has suffered from being excluded from full participation in Brazilian society. This is a legacy that can be seen not only in the external signs of poverty but also in the psychology of those who are stigmatized and continue to be discriminated against in day-to-day life. Whether or not youngsters on the street are conscious of the connection between this more wide-spread Brazilian racism and their own discrimination, it would appear that in being on the street they suffer doubly; both for their color and for where they are.

The other side of the experience of prejudice or stigma is the great need to project oneself as equal to others, as being "normal", as Goffman would say. We saw that being treated like a "person", "citizen", or just like anyone else is a strong wish, repeatedly expressed by the children when asked what they would like others to think about them. Of the 25 who answered this question, 12 answered "good things", 5 referred to "understanding" and 4 showed the desire to be treated like a "person" or a "citizen". Only one showed the desire to project the image of himself as a "bandit".

Interview with Alba, 17 years old.

Alba: Even though you are living on the street you don't stop being a person, you don't stop being a human being. You are living on the street but in many cases you have an *educação* [education but usually meaning more specifically moral conduct or upbringing].

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[98] In Rio de Janeiro, according to a recent census, blacks and browns are said to account for 42% of the state's population (PNAD, 1996 in Santos: 2001).

Values and self-esteem

Home, work, family and study

Related to the necessity of being respected and treated like any other citizen, a series of values and strategies are used in order to maintain ones' self-esteem on the street. Although prejudiced sectors of society believe that the street is a place devoid of values and morals, our research, like that of others, found precisely the opposite. Almost all the interviewees valued the same things as society in general: being respected, having one's own home, work, family and education as a means of social mobility. At least 33 children showed that they desired work, their own home, family and study in their future. Although the life projects of boys and girls who live on the street are normally linked to their immediate survival and security, their dreams are frequently related to overcoming the prejudices they suffer in their day-to-day, and in particular they dream of doing so by acquiring the goods and status valued by society, as already pointed out by others (Hecht 1998, de Castro 1997).

Interview with Emerson, 15 years old.

Interviewer*: How would you like your future to be?*

Emerson*: I would like to have a family, work, to finish my studies. That's what I'd like. To have my life, have it easy.*

Interviewer: *What is having it easy?*

Emerson*: A life better than now.*

Interviewer: How would it be better than now?

Emerson*: Having my own home, managing to work, being happy. Raising a family.*

Interview with Gisele, 17 years old.

Interviewer*: Gisele you were saying that you want a better future for your son, what do you think your future will be?*

Gisele*: I don't know only God knows…*

Interviewer: *How would you like it to be, if you could think about it, wish it…*

Gisele*: If I were to, to think about, what I think is, a home, for me and him, him in the creche, me at work, his dad out from jail, out of the Justice system and us living together, him working, me working too, my son at school, that's all.*

The statements and actions of youngsters on the street expressing their desire to be regarded as a person like anyone else were very frequent, Goffman considers this a universal feature of the stigmatized. Assertions about being a "citizen", of having similar dreams than the majority of Brazilians – for a house, husband or wife, children, job and education – are claims to the identity of "normals". This is also seen in acts of consumption, fashion and leisure: bleaching their hair, wearing designer labels, going to the shopping mall, the beach, to funk dances, playing football, etc. At the same time that the stigmatized individual lays claim to the identity of the "normal", as Goffman notes, s/he and those around her/him also define her/him as someone set apart. This for Goffman is the basic contradiction faced by the stigmatized individual everywhere (Goffman: 1990).

Interview with Pricila, 17 years old.
Interviewer: *I was speaking about the people who pass by on the street, you anwered me very well. How would you like them to see you?*
Pricila*: Look uncle, I only want them to see me as a person and not like a bunch of minors. I only wanted them to see me as a person and not like an animal, understand. Only as a person, because everyone is a child of God, everyone regardless of their attitude, or the degree of incosequence that they do in life, but he is a son of God.*

Goffman held that the individual constructs his image of himself "out of the same materials from which others first construct a social and personal identification of him, but he exercises important liberties in regard to what he fashions" (Goffman: 1996, p.130). We already noted the instances of this fashioning, particularly in practices of consumption and leisure. To think of such practices as calculated claims to the identity of "normal" as Goffman's language might suggest, however, would be wrong. A more appropriate metaphor would be one in which we imagine individuals surfing within the larger tides of Brazilian youth culture, and more specifically of poor Brazilian youth culture who live in the *favelas* and city peripheries, combined with the added waves that living on the streets generate. And like any good surfer, even confined by the structure and momentum of the wave, that is the cultural forms and historical moment, the individual is also an agent, standing up and maneuvering with her/his balance and skill.

This begs the question, do youngsters on the street see themselves as "different"? This very much depends to whom they are representing themselves. On the whole when statements about identity, about life goals and, to a degree, morality, are made to an outsider, that is, one who is not part of what Goffman would term the "In-Group", they tend to lay claim to a "normal"

identity. This is of course to be expected since to do otherwise, specially in the case of youngsters on the street whose stigma is associated with immorality, would be to betray the group. This is in fact what we witnessed many times on the street. Sometimes when we interviewed a youngster s/he would be intimidated by his group who would say s/he was *"dando mole"*, a slang term that can be loosely translated as "letting your guard down", or in other words, betraying the group. Yet in our interviews youngsters did not shy away from retelling episodes that society at large would deem highly antisocial behavior; leaving home, stealing, drug taking, fighting.

When we speak of identities that can be said to be "different", as opposed to those that lay claim to being "normal", two notions can be observed. The first refers to the identity of being someone who is a "sufferer", an expression that is heard from the poorest sectors of Brazilian society. To be a "sufferer" means to endure socio-economic hardship, but to get by, to survive. In many interviews we found the youngster's identification with being a "sufferer", statements that included the words "*tô vivo*", "I'm alive" or "*tô aqui*", "I'm here", always said with pride for having survived this far. With this assertion, their very experiences, the fact of having gone through so much, can sustain their self-esteem, like a trophy to exhibit, or a mark of strength and perseverance.

Interview with Sandra, 15 years old.
Sandra: *When I lived on the street I thought like this: ah. I was born to suffer, to live like this; but I saw that it wasn't that which was happening, that all was different, we suffer because we want to, right, that's all.*

A second form of identifying oneself as being "different", was observed at certain moments when youngsters on the street were aware of having adopted an identity whose values are loathed by society at large. Many children refer to their life on the street as "the bad path", frequently related to their use of drugs. We also noted that an initiation into the street, or at least the moment in which the child understands herself to have been initiated into a "street culture", is associated with their experience with drugs. In this sense we frequently heard the reference to life on the street as a "vice", even when the youngster did not consume drugs, as if it was a habit that was difficult to break, something which when we get used to doing becomes hard to "leave", something that we discuss now.

The bad path, the vice and drug dealing…

As Lucchini points out, the use of drugs seems to have many functions on the street (Lucchini: 1999). It has a ludic aspect, the issue of "fun"; also serving as a provocation and as a means of participating in a collective identity with other "street children". In this sense it serves as a ritual of social integration into the group. In some occasions drugs can serve as a tool for breaking inhibitions (for instance; the fear of robbing). In others, as a physiological tool to combat cold or hunger, as well as in order to break everyday routine (Lucchini: 1999).

Lucchini concludes that the use of inhalants on the street, especially thinner and glue, has more to do with a social conduct than with physical dependency. Inhalants cannot considered be only as substances that alter physiological states, that is, an end in itself, but also as a means through which the youngster participates in group behavior. Even if there is individual consumption, the most important is collective consumption especially, as Lucchini points out, considering that most adolescents stop or reduce drug consumption once they leave the street. We can say that drugs occupy a central position in life on the street, leading boys and girls to find resources to purchase it, search for it and share it within the group. It is also important to point out that drugs are very often the cause of fights and arguments within groups. In regards to drugs, it is significant to note that they are the most stigmatizing mark of the "street child". The image of the "street child" holding a plastic bottle filled with glue has become the principal way through which society sees her/him.

In some cases we noted the influence of drug trafficking gangs within the choices of identities for these boys and girls. Not that these would necessarily be directly involved with drug trafficking gangs, although some were, but that the territoriality of the drug gangs, the *comandos*, exerted an influence over their lives and over the way in which they saw themselves. We saw how drug trafficking gangs and the various demarcations of territory are present on the street as well as in the institutions like shelters and correctional facilities. In a way the association of a boy with a certain area, and as a consequence with a certain *comando* is inevitable, although this mark is not necessarily visible in all of his relationships. Whenever it does operate it may strengthen the solidarity between individuals or discriminate against non-members. But this identification with the *comando* is no different whether the youngster resides in a *favela* or on the street. More information is needed about the position of youngsters within these organized crime factions. One worrying aspect of the statements we heard is the way in which the drug trafficking gangs may end up exiling youngsters from their community of origin, prompting him (for it is, up to now, almost invariably males who are affected) to seek protection on the street. These youngsters seek refuge on the street, in institutions, or in other communities, sometimes putting the lives of others

at risk. Roger's statement below expresses this; he was interviewed in a shelter, and although only 15 years old he has lived in more than ten institutions.

Interview with Roger, 15 years old.

Roger: It's like this, I was a dealer too, I've been part of a drug gang. But I lost the package, marijuana package, so I had to pay. If I didn't pay, they said they'd kill me. But I've already paid half of it, I have to pay the rest. So if I go round there, I can only turn up with the money.

The place of the drug dealer in the imaginary of many youngsters living in the *favelas* and low-income communities has for authors like Zaluar replaced more traditional and acceptable role models and offers an attractive alternative to employment (or unemployment). This fascination is exerted by the symbolic power and the prestige that the gangs confer within the community (Zaluar: 1994). We consider the role of drug trafficking gangs in the imaginary of some of these youngsters on the street, akin to Zaluar's analysis. We also note that the street is another market where some of these boys and girls sell drugs .

"Cheio de marra"- "all cocky": slang

Another important issue that reveals something about a claim to an identity of being "different" refers to the way children and adolescents communicate on the streets. As regards the communication skills of many of those we interviewed, it was clear that they where blessed with a creative linguistic capacity. Although many of the boys and girls interviewed had dropped out of school early on, many showed themselves to be very versatile in their speech, also showing a great ability to acquire resources for their survival through "*papo*"[99] – "the talk" – as well as possessing an accentuated sense of humor. For youngsters who literally possess nothing but their bodies and speech, this latter becomes a crucial instrument of survival on the street. A question that is worth exploring in this context is in what way projects and initiatives can develop these potentialities shown by children and adolescents on the street.

This linguistic ability leads to another aspect of identity we observed in the field that can be said to be laying claim to an identity of "difference", also referred to by other authors, that is the great amount of slang and gestures that these youngsters use and which are, very often, impenetrable to the outsider (Fenelon, Martins & Domingues: 1992). This kind of language, as these authors understand it, is a way of constituting a social identity, that is, a form of identifying with other

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[99] *Papo* is Brazilian term that literally translates as talk, or chat but refers to the linguistic cunning, or persuasion, like bargaining or haggling but not necessarily with money involved.

members of the group who speak the same language. In this way this is not a specific street phenomena but something common to youngsters of all social classes. The terms more commonly used on the street, though, do say something about the collective experience of the group. The terms that frequently come up include; "*esculachar*", "*maldade*", "*judaria*" and "*xisnovar*"[100] all of which indicate the violent, prejudiced and stressful climate in which these boys and girls live.

The question "if you where president of Brazil what would you do?", generated interesting answers which say something about the values adopted by these boys and girls. Of the 30 interviews that touched on this question, 23 said that they would help other "street children" or other excluded groups, which indicates a degree of solidarity with other people that live in the same environment as themselves. Interestingly, four replied that they would "take the police away from the streets".

Despite symbols, practices, and language claiming an identity as "different", the group identity of children and adolescents on the street is not as clearly defined or expressed as say, in the gangs of Los Angeles, where arduous initiation, group symbols and a strict code of loyalty to other gang members and to the locality are all present (Vigil: 1988). Unlike North American gangs these groups of children and adolescents on the street are not based on an identification of ethnicity, though they are comprised in their majority of black or brown youngsters. The group serves different functions and is structured differently for youngsters found on the streets of Brazil. As we have seen, groups of youngsters on the streets in Brazil serve as references for identification that unite excluded young people and they serve as an entity that transmits knowledge about how to survive on the street. In this way groups on the street are similar to North American gangs, for, as Vigil's study of Chicano groups in Los Angeles points out, the gang creates what he terms a sub-cultural style as an answer to the challenges of the street, offering support, direction and rules to all its members (Vigil: 1988).

In Brazil, as well as the protecting more grown-up figures mentioned in the previous chapter, some groups have leadership figures such as "*mães de rua*", "street mothers" as their leaders, girls who are not necessarily older and who take responsibility for the well-being of the group and create links to the locale and with people who might help the group. But even here the "sons" are in constant flux between this and other groups and associations. Gregori notes that even if leaders do exist, the children are reluctant to admit this because of a particular independent and autonomous self-image they wish to construct (Gregori: 2000). Other groups may emerge temporarily to protect members, or to carry out activities such as work or stealing related to survival on the street.

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[100] "Dissing", "nastyness", "treachery" and "grassing" or "telling", see Glossary for other terms.

The ambivalence the stigmatized may have towards her/his own group was already noted by Goffman. As a girl mentioned in an interview "grouping up can cause problems". The stigmatized individual can at times adopt the attitude that "normals" take toward him and direct it at others he perceives as more stigmatized than himself. For instance, as Goffman writes, the hard of hearing see themselves as anything but deaf persons, and those with defective vision as anything but blind. In our interviews we often witnessed this ambiguity towards full identification with the group. The group then oscillates between being "them" and "us" in the discourse of the child and adolescent. One further significant instance of this is the way children and adolescents on the street feared becoming "bums". Many expressed their dread at staying on in the street and turning into an adult homeless beggar. This population, though at times showing links with youngsters in day-to-day life, was often held in ridicule by children and adolescents. That this particular group should be stigmatized by youngsters on the street reinforces the view that their identity of being "on the street" is a temporary one and linked with being underage, even if many do, in fact, attain majority on the street.

Identity and Subjectivity: orientating oneself on the street
Identity and Subjectivity have to do with the way in which we orient ourselves in the world and how we understand our place within it. Together with these boys and girls who have made the street their primary space of survival, we tried to understand how this orientation manifests itself: in the ways in which they interacted with others, particularly in reference to their strategies for maintaining their self-esteem, in their values, and their dreams for the future. This orientation is then reflected in the representations they identified with.

We saw that the street offers for these children and adolescents the possibility of protection, release and freedom when contrasted with what they say about their family and community, which they described as repressive, full of conflict, violent and characterized by fractured affective ties. This picture reflects circumstances which make it impossible to offer the child and adolescent the affection, space and opportunities that youngsters need for their wholesome development. We also saw that the strategies adopted on the street generate certain kinds of subjectivity as seen in the way in which boys and girls communicate among themselves and with other adults, and also in the multiplicity of styles and practices learnt on the street.

We also found that for some youngsters their identity is conceived of as addictive-not to drugs - as not every youngsters indulges, but to life on the street. A common expression about street life was; "*quando a gente acostuma, é um vício*" – "when we get used to it, it becomes an addiction". The language of addiction is interesting in as much as it removes a sense of agency from the

youngster, whereas those who left the street generally attribute to will-power the key ingredient for being able to leave the street. It is also interesting to note that akin to what is said about many forms of addiction, like cigarette smoking or drinking alcohol, the individual becomes addicted to the social and psychological context of where and how the substance is consumed as well as to the substance itself. The same can be said of the street. Whether or not drug addiction is present, it is the social context of the street that youngsters become addicted to; the "freedom to" and "freedom from" they so fondly speak of; the relative ease through which they learn to obtain resources for survival and pleasure; and significantly, the friendships and solidarity they find with other youngsters in the same predicament. As we can see this is a very paradoxical "freedom", which is not just a representation but also a set of competencies and practices. The paradox is that this "freedom" in many ways ends up imprisoning children and adolescents in a lifestyle where, with increasing age, opportunities for their wholesome development and for their integration into society (in particular through formal education and the labor market) became ever scarcer.

If freedom on the street is paradoxical in as much as it imprisons the child and adolescent within a set of competencies that s/he learns on the street, the same can be said of the group. The group both liberates and imprisons the individual. It is through the group that youngsters learn the practices of how to "get by" on the street, and find the comfort and solidarity of belonging to a "moral community" that share many experiences. However, membership, or perceived membership in the group, places the individual within the realm of the stigmatized. As such s/he will suffer the same stigma as the group and will have to learn other practices for coping on the street and avoiding the repression that the group as a category experiences. Furthermore, as part of the group, the individual also inherits the struggle between being at the same time stigmatized or "different", and "normal".

We shouldn't think of the formation of these identities in a reductionist way. As Lucchini (1996), Stoecklin (1999) and Gregori (2000) have all pointed out, to live on the street does not mean to be permanently fixed to an open and public space, but to be constantly in transition between the home, the community and the distant street, which is composed of a wide spectrum of places, squares and various institutions (Gregori: 2000, p.101). We can say that what unites these children and adolescents, coming from different family environments and entering the street for what can be quite diverse reasons, is that they find themselves in an environment where they lack the supervision and attention of a responsible adult who really cares for them. We could say that these boys and girls share an experience of poverty, exclusion and prejudice, that they live in precarious circumstances where the lack of affection, of the feeling of protection, security and solidarity probably pushed them away from their home and community. As a consequence, they

moved from the nucleus of the family to an urban space in search for survival, protection, leisure and freedom.

What needs to be emphasized is that the life trajectories that they follow often progressively decrease their chances of security and affection.

How can we strengthen these fractured links in their places of origin? How can projects, policies and initiatives for children and adolescents who live in poverty go from working within spaces restricted to children towards empowering the relationships and support networks already at work in these communities? How to increase the opportunities for development of these youngsters in the context of their own lives, preventing them from growing up as "street children"?

We saw in the interviews that the journey to the street means that the lives of these boys and girls are always close to danger, fear and violence. We outlined above various factors that are associated with this kind of life, in particular emphasizing the experience of growing up predominantly without the care of an adult who is really concerned with one's life. In this way we heard, with sadness, that this trajectory left many boys and girls without a perspective for their future, without being able to remember anything good that had happened to them in their life…

On the other hand, we witnessed, with much hope, the examples of solidarity, creativity and the ability to overcome difficult situations shown by the boys and girls. United through the experience of discrimination which they encounter daily, a large number of those interviewed showed a strong desire to be considered "normal", that is, like any other child or adolescent. In their quest for acceptance by those who are indifferent, or who despise or belittle them; the passer-by, the police, the shop-keeper, society in general, the boys and girls related many ways in which they maintain their self-esteem. This manifests itself in how they take care of themselves, how they dress, what they eat, in the way they conduct their affective relations and in what they dream for their future.

To conclude we say that with or without support these boys and girls are there, living and challenging a destiny that appears laid down. They live on, making use of an unmatched capacity to adapt to the most diverse situations; making use of a multitude of reorganized relationships, territories and routines, as a way of not only staying alive, but also of asserting themselves as subjects.

Nota Geral: acho que sempre deveria ser indicado se o respondente e menino ou menina; para quem nao for Brazileiro nao e sempre evidente…

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Chapter 10; Change on the streets

For a while now there has been much talk about a change in both the profile of children and adolescents who are on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, as well as in the situations that they face living away from their families. Have there been changes? Of what nature? How do the children and the educators experience this change? What has remained the same since the 1980s?

These are difficult questions for youngsters on the street to answer because of the way of life they lead on the streets, making it hard to reflect upon and perceive the changes that have occurred in their surrounding. The input from street educators was crucial in our attempt to answer these questions.

In this chapter we use statements from 31 educators collected through individual and group interviews, as well as the statements of 23 children and adolescents who raised the subject of change on the street during the interviews.

The educators with whom we worked had a lot of experience and many have been working for more than 20 years on the streets of Rio de Janeiro and other states. Amongst the educators, eight of them started working with youngsters from 1995, ten began in the first five years of the 1990s and 13 of them since the 1980s. The experience of children and adolescents of the streets varied between a few months and 12 years.

The context of the changes

According to the educators 20 years ago in the city of Rio de Janeiro children and adolescents in a street situation did not have systematic institutional support. Those who began work at this time mentioned having many difficulties, including being exposed to violence, fear and ignorance by those who, in their opinion, should have been part of the solution to this issue. Many statements by educators referred to this lack of support and acknowledgement of their actions with marginalized groups of children and adolescents. In a certain way, this statement also applies to those working with impoverished populations in Brazil.

According to Sposati, the history of this practice has been,

The focus of heated debates by government figures, politicians and intellectuals; of TV and newspaper headlines; and the target of a number of studies both serious and superficial; the target of numerous governmental projects; focus of macro-actions with little effect; fertile ground for

grandstanding politicians, and in the final analysis, the destination of scarce and badly allocated and controlled resources (…) (Sposati et al: 2002. p.1).

For the author, poverty has become a banal phenomenon, naturalized as part of the "furniture" of daily life of a Brazilian.

Based on national and international studies, including one conducted by the World Bank (Bird: 1988), Sposati concludes that state expenditure does not always benefit the poorest families – particularly since it is not often considered that poverty results from a form of production that engenders exclusion and inequality – and because the cost of services are high because of inefficient bureaucracy. On the other hand, there has been a growing recognition of the fragility of the sense of citizenship and of inequality amongst Brazilians. The state is not the fundamental pillar of social security for the most impoverished. The main source of support for the most destitute is the solidarity network of civil society that has been gaining strength since the 1980s (Sposati: 2002, pp.2-3).

As mentioned in chapter 1, through the struggle for the rights of children and adolescents through the 1980s and 1990s there has developed an understanding that their presence on the street results from an excluding socio-economic order. Today many segments of society recognise that these children and adolescents are in this situation because of a social structure marked by inequality.

There are many children and adolescents living in poverty in Brazil. Of the total population between the ages of 0 and 17 years of age, around 60 million (57%) are between the ages of zero and six and live with families with a per capita income of less than the minimum wage. More than a third survive with a monthly income of less than half the minimum wage (IBGE: 2000).

Veja, a Brazilian weekly news magazine, in a special January 23 rd edition, asks: "how can we understand the perseverance of poverty in Brazil, a sore that dates back to the colonial period?" The article goes on to point out how, despite the socio-economic transformations the country has undergone over the last 25 years, poverty and social inequality still persist. According to the article, if we compare the situation in 1977 with the country today, we see another country:

…during this period the gross domestic product has gone up 85%, the number of houses with TV sets has gone up 150%, the number of houses with telephones has trebled as has the number of vehicles on the road. Brazil is today the richest country in the world with the largest indices of poverty. What is called social injustice. (…) …the Brazilian economy is amongst the ten biggest

in the world and in 2000 attracted 30 billion dollars worth of foreign investments. Almost half of internet users in Latin America are found in Brazil. (…) In research listing the most enterprising people on the planet, Brazil often comes amongst the first. (…) A study by IPEA (Institute for Research in Applied Economy (quem e' IPEA?) shows that if five years of schooling were guaranteed for the whole population, poverty would drop by 6%. The same guarantee for ten years would reduce it by 13% (Veja, 23/01/2002, p.224).

According to a joint publication by Fase, Fórum Nacional de Reforma Urbana (FNRU) and the Caixa Econômica Federal, regarding the Statute for the City (Federal Law 10257/01), the main reason for social inequality in Brazilian cities is an investment model that has, since the 1930s, promoted the development of industry. This has resulted in an intense and accelerated urbanization process. The result is the disorganized growth of cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Today in Brazil eight out of ten people live in urban centres. This situation is the result of the expulsion of rural workers and of large state investments in industry, little of which ends up in the new districts created by workers who arrive from rural regions without technical qualifications.[101]

Even if over the last 20 years Brazilian cities have had a lower population increase (due to reduced employment opportunities), so that the expelled rural population migrate to other areas, the number of families in low-income households (*favelas*, irregular or illegal settlements, slums) has increased in all cities. Housing and infrastructure are precarious and lack basic services like health, transport, school, sanitation, leisure and crèches.

The change in support structures

Though not part of our original research focus, in our interviews with educators we tried to establish what changes have occurred in how the state and the non-governmental sector have cared for children and adolescents in a street situation over the last two decades in Rio de Janeiro. The educators point out that the greater visibility of this issue has provoked a greater concern with the creation and implementation of policies. State and society have struggled to meet their obligations enshrined in a series of legislative acts guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents.

According to educators, the transformation of this legal paradigm, in particular through the ratification of the Children and Adolescent Statute (ECA) and the emergence in the media of leading figures in the rights movement, have been the main causes for this shift. The state took

over a key responsibility for the support of these youngsters. One significant development has been the creation of 'Triage centres' responsible for gathering information about vacancies available in public shelters, which in turn have increased in numbers.

According to the educators we interviewed, the government and the NGOs have shown more sensitivity in understanding the crucial importance of re-establishing connections with the family, as recommended by the Statute. Some interventions ~~initiatives~~ have then stopped being an end in itself becoming instead part of a broader process that is necessary for a more adequate support of youngsters in a street situation. ~~(nao entendi, quer dizer que antes muitas iniciativas tiveram um focus estricto, e agora sao direcionadas a um nivel mais amplo?)~~Work carried out in the day-centres, where children and adolescents go to eat, have a bath and carry out a range of activities, are examples of actions that highlight the importance of the 'rites of passage' that are required for youngsters to strengthen their ties with their families through work that is carried out with them and their families.

Also in shelters and homes, work is being carried with an awareness of the state's provisional role, and of the necessity of fostering autonomy in the individuals it caters to. Even in the socio-educational institutions that are often denounced in the media as having a series of problems, there are individuals seeking to implement the actions envisaged by ECA. These include proposals for actions that would maintain some continuity beyond the institution, seeking a variety of partnerships and a showing a concern with their socio-educational condition, respecting the status of the child and adolescent as a developing person who is in conflict with the law (according to the basic premises of ECA). These are strategies that, in short, guarantee the basic rights of children and adolescents in the family, institutions and the community.

Today, according to the educators, there is no longer a place for the discourse based on a model of "pathogenesis" where children were to be dealt with severely, as occurred in the past. Most of them believe that the majority of the population no longer endorses a repressive way of dealing with these youngsters. Today the children and adolescents themselves display knowledge of their civil rights. Since they constantly circulate between institutions they end up appropriating the discourses found there, using them when needed.[102] Yet for both youngsters and educators, there still persists a stigma making children and adolescents feared and rejected, contributing to the current banalization of the violence to which they are subjected. Roberto[103], an educator,

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[101] In 1960 the urban population stood at 45% of the Brazilian population. Today this stands at 81%.
[102] The appropriation of the discourse of the educator or of the institution can be seen, for instance, in the way some of the youngster's statements point to the need for an education and the importance of school, yet they do not practice this conviction.
[103] Like the children and adolescents, the names of the educators are fictitious.

makes the following statement: "a people without culture, without education, without citizenship, without awareness of their rights and duties is an easier prey for oppression, of banalization and alienation".

Have the motivations for going to the street changed?

Like the increase in children and adolescents working on the streets, the educators also pointed to an increased number of families living on the streets, seeking better living conditions.

The fragile affective ties that commonly occur in the lives of the youngsters interviewed, created primarily because of the absence of one or both parents (separation, death, prison) and because of struggles with step-parents, were also noted as the factors contributing to adults and youngsters leaving to the streets. The street then offers an alternative to the ruptures within the family and community.

But it is the economic factor, the educators argue, that is the strongest bond between this population and the street. As the educator Dirce puts it: "these are impoverished families, without any family and community support, and on the whole these are female-headed households". Lair, another educator, adds this: "illiterate, semi-illiterate, unemployed, they are at a disadvantage in the labour market, making their inclusion in it improbable. They have no opportunity for intellectual growth or in the exercise of their citizenship". These statements lead us to reflect upon the growing percentage of the Brazilian population facing these conditions.

Going to the streets is a gradual process for children and adolescents, whose parents are, mostly, workers submitted to the contingencies of precarious employment without any welfare protection. They are mothers and fathers who, as a rule, have very little support for raising their children, making them even more socially vulnerable.

The report produced by Claves (1992, p.25) states:

With absolute values, using the poverty line of half the minimum wage per capita, in 1989 there were 10,7 million in poverty in the metropolitan regions of the country, with three million in Rio de Janeiro, 1,9 million in São Paulo and 1,4 million in Recife. During the 1980s there was a population increase in all metropolitan areas except Belém and Brasília, where it remained the same.

According to the report, poverty affects youngsters more intensely than it affects adults, and affects female-headed families more than those with both parents. It concludes that in the social backwardness of the country in terms of poverty and income distribution, and of the losses

made in the previous decade, it becomes crucial to guide policy towards these more impoverished groups. Children and adolescents, undoubtedly the group that has suffered the most from the current unequal income distribution and the high level of poverty in Brazil, should be the privileged beneficiaries of such policies.

Generations of families perpetuate the cycle of birth, raising children, and dying on the street. The educators mentioned that there are cases when even the family, friends or neighbours motivate children to go to the streets for they believe that the youngsters will have more chance of being seen and therefore helped. The migration of youngsters to the city centre and the Zona Sul from the peripheries and from poor municipalities in other states continues, attracted by the greater purchasing power of the resident population. As we already mentioned, the old migration in pursuit of "freedom", of leisure, food, the satisfaction of consumer needs, of everything that they do not find in their community of origin, continues. Dioga, ten years old, shows his frustrated expectations: "I imagined that I would be playing in the parks, that I would play in a field." André, 15 years old, was also faced with another reality: "I thought the street was different, that it was better, that I would walk around always well-dressed, with new clothes, that I would get everything easily".

According to the anthropologist Rosilene Alvim,

To live on the streets is also a refusal to passively accept the perspective that surrounds their lives in their family and neighbourhood. To come to the streets after a series of stages means, in the majority of cases, something hopeful. The street has for many youngsters this side of adventure marked by danger. Many of them expect some kind of way out through the street (1995, p.23).

According to the author, the definition according to space – the street – prevents us from defining who these children and adolescents truly are:

In turning a moment in the trajectory of these boys and girls into a fixed point to define the social group, prevents us (…) from seeing that they are not a uniform social group, even if their stories can show similar motives for coming to the streets (1995, p.10).

Change in the appropriation of the space of the street

Two decades ago large groups of children and adolescents circulated through the city. These groups remained cohesive and unaltered for many years in more or less the same spots in the city. Though such groups were few, they drew attention because of the large number of its

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"members", who generally remained in the same groups. According to the educators, each group followed a leader who imposed her/himself through intelligence (ability to orchestrate thefts, for instance) or force (physical aggression). The groups acquired the characteristics of this leadership.

Today the large groups have dispersed and have become more geographically mobile, as we have seen through the statements of boys and girls interviewed. The groups now are smaller and more heterogeneous. They are constantly on the move. This movement occurs for a number of reasons: police aggression, death threats, the possibility of going to shelters on their own initiative, or being removed to correctional facilities.[104] According to Daniel Stoecklin, the unpredictability of the street makes difficult the construction of routines by boys and girls. And without a routine, life is less secure, there is a feeling of anxiety which prevents the development of more elaborate strategies for survival, as well as for socializing with others.

In this sense, we can note a more individualistic posture on the street, with concerns centred around individual survival and security. The bonds of complicity and solidarity appear to be weakening, emerging only at certain moments of collective interest. "The children today are more worried about protecting themselves from the dangers of the street" – says the educator Alédio.

It is still possible to note the existence of leaders, even if the circulation of youngsters through and between groups means that such leadership becomes more "democratic", without the respect and admiration that comes from years of staying in the same group. To understand this question, particularly when it deals with adult leaders, is a delicate and difficult task. The leader offers protection to the members of the group, but also exploits and intimidates them. Those interviewed treated questions about these aspects of the adult leaders with mistrust because of the risks related to the divulging of any information.

Educators explain the appearance that there exists an increase in numbers of youngsters on the street despite their actual decline in numbers as attributable to these new street dynamics.

The street today in the voice of children and adolescents

The children and adolescents who mentioned having learnt something on the street, referred to learning to: "steal" and "use drugs". We mention again the Claves report which states:

To live on the streets is to touch on the fringes of legality. It means learning to deal with this issue [legality] in a particular way and make full use of this learning. In sum, life on the street is

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complex and multifaceted. The task of learning of its nuances is a challenge for those who live and work on the street. A greater challenge is presented to their parents, who are forced by circumstance to see their children there. Poverty, fear and crime combine in the space of the street, as do virtue and vice, dream and reality, making the limits that the cultured and educated world invented meaningless (Claves: 1992, p.73).

Today there is a greater connection between these children and adolescents with the drug trafficking world, an activity which continues to exercise fascination because of the power it confers and its effects on self-esteem, even if these are only short term gains. The visible growth of the drug trafficking gangs, however, does not mean that there is no controversy concerning the remuneration it offers. High or low, there is a great variety in the level of remuneration at different locations in the city. It is important to remember that the income offered by drug trafficking to these youngsters is difficult to match by any other means. These children and adolescents are the most exploited segment in the hierarchy of the drug trade, with which they maintain a relationship alternating between protection, exploitation, income and addiction.

According to Luís Antônio Machado[105], what constitutes the basis of the organization of the drugs trade in Brazil is the lack of legitimacy of the Brazilian state, which is not absent but is present in a different way in impoverished communities. This situation means that – for youngsters, their parents, friends, neighbours, that is, all inhabitants of the *favela* - they are subject to a double subordination; in the sphere of the social order, and in the violent socialization surrounding them and end up becoming "accustomed" to a complete submission. Fear prevents communication between those affected, leading to perverse consequences: the population continues to live "normally", prevented from enjoying a dimension of their lives.

Agreeing with Machado, the current National Secretary of Public Security, Luiz Eduardo Soares, states that the drug trade operates in two levels, which he terms "wholesale/international" and "retail". It is in retail that youngsters die in the theatre of war operations. It is in retail that the stigmatised "invisible youngsters" reside. The adolescent inhabiting this "retail" space passes by unseen, carrying the weight of not being socially recognised. He receives a weapon from the gangs, and, with this weapon, provokes a feeling of fear from society, thus finally attaining visibility.

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[104] For more details see the chapter on "mobility".
[105] Academic from Iuperj and IFCS/UFRJ, in communication in the seminar *Metrópoles: entre a coesão e a fragmentação, a cooperação e o conflito,* August 2002, Rio de Janeiro.

Soares argues that we only exist when the other gives us some meaning, positive or negative. In this way, he points out, if we want this youngster to have a positive meaning, we have to offer her/him opportunities for her/him to really exist, meeting her/his needs not only economically, but also subjectively in an affective relationship of recognition as a human being.

The Child and Adolescent Statute is sometimes accused of encouraging children and adolescents to go into the drugs trade. This misinterpretation of the statute argues that because of the legal impunity of the "minor", the legal age of responsibility should be raised. This argument becomes meaningless for, as mentioned in other parts of this book, the statute has a series of socio-educational provisions for youngsters who are in conflict with the law. In order to reverse this misinterpretation of the statute, it must be made more accessible and its provisions, its rights and duties better explained.(Acho este parafo e suas sentencas sem contexto e explicacoes adequadas...)

Pacifiers of hunger, solitude and pain, drugs have always been present in the day-to-day of these children and adolescents. The growing number of children and adolescents in a street situation who are using drugs, connected to an increased number of thefts, also means more police repression.

Of all the changes cited by those interviewed, the most marked was the increased number of police and municipal guards on the street and their inhuman and disrespectful actions. Far from new, police aggression has been repeatedly denounced over the past twenty years. NGOs and some newspapers have in the last two decades reported the torture of youngsters with truncheons, kicks and cigarette burns. The interviewed youngsters made clear their need to denounce such activities. "The police take advantage of us when we are sleeping to come and beat everyone up" – tells Naiana, 15 years old. "I'm scared of going to sleep and ending up dead" – completes Samuel, also 15.

During the end of the 1980s, the murder of children and adolescents became visible as a form of extermination that culminated in the Candelária Massacre in 1993. The majority of victims had families who worked primarily in the informal sector. Massacres like this still happen, though on a smaller scale, and continue to make victims of children and adolescents all over the country.

Connected to the violence by those who should be protecting these youngsters, there is also the violence of the private sector, represented by security guards hired by shopkeepers. The fear of being beaten up or raped at night, and of death (based on real death-threats) describe the vulnerability and the risk these youngsters are faced with when they end up in the space of the street.

Such insecurity is reflected in their day-to-day relationships amongst themselves. The educators point to the use of violence by youngsters as a defensive manoeuvre, a way of "presenting oneself as dangerous". Girls, who are even more vulnerable, adopt other strategies: dressing up as boys, shaving their heads.

Only one girl interviewed claimed that things on the street had improved: Sandra, 15 years old, said that people were more generous to children and adolescents in a street situation now. In contrast, other youngsters pointed to the growing numbers of "bad people" on the street and a perception of a growing hostility by some segments of society.

For citizens and professionals with sensibility and a critical spirit, paying attention to changing our day-to-day behaviour, even if these appear to be of minor significance, can in a short period completely change the current attitudes and paradigm of public policy with respect to social support, and is our greatest challenge. The state, in particular, must meet, efficiently and democratically, its role as executive and mobilize resources and local social forces.

Final Reflections

Chapter 11; Children and adolescents on the streets: evitable trajectories

We began this book with the question about the inevitability of the life trajectories of the children and adolescents on whom we based our analysis. In these last pages we return to this question by stating: we believe that their lives could have taken other routes. What can we do to guarantee that these children and adolescents have the chances to develop their potential? How can support be given to those who care for these youngsters?

These are questions whose answers involve many dimensions of analysis and many different choices in the actions and social policies to be undertaken. In this book we worked with some of these dimensions to understand the trajectories of children and adolescents we interviewed. In terms of a conclusion, we will here focus on the points which appear essential for proposals that result in increased opportunities for development of children and adolescents who find themselves in similar circumstances to the youngsters we portrayed in this book.

First of all is important to point out that the problems we are referring to are connected to a number of others that are equally complex. We know that there are no easy and quick solutions to improve the living conditions of a large percentage of the population who survives facing a number of difficulties. Secondly, it is important to point out that the economic question, which though directly connected to the issues in this book, by itself will not resolve all the problems. As Amartya Sen claims, the Indian economist who revolutionized some ideas in the economic field, reducing poverty is not a sufficient condition for people to live their lives in plenitude (Sen: 1999)[106]. However, an improvement in this area, reflected in dignified conditions of work and income, as well as in policies and practices that reduce the current social and economic inequalities in the country, certainly would remove a great number of children and adolescents from the streets, from marginality and from precocious work.

Beyond questions in the macro-structural field, we must also mention some direction for policies and practices that could impact in a positive and relatively quick way the lives of many children and families[107]. For this proposal we depart from the premise that if the adults responsible for raising children who were here depicted had found support in this, they would have had more chances of offering their children what they needed in order to have a healthy

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[106] Sen, A. *Development as Fredoom.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
[107] On top of the data obtained in this research, we base our reflections on the search for alternatives in the experiences of the team at CIESPI, with projects connected to the area of community development, mainly:

upbringing. But how can we promote this support? Which individuals, collectivities and institutions should be involved? What roles should each play and what should the priority be?

With these questions in mind, we suggest some reflections and actions that could contribute to our collective search for alternatives:

(a) Put these questions on the agenda of national policy priorities.

It makes little difference if we are convinced that the life trajectories portrayed here are inevitable and involve a great waste in human and social capital for the whole country, if these questions are not made a national policy priority and the are resources mobilized to deal with it. Clear measures that seek to increase opportunities for children and adolescents in low-income communities and support mechanisms for adults who have in their hands the responsibility to take care of these youngsters must be stipulated, creating the right conditions for their implementation.

(b) An effective participation in the search for solutions.

Going against the Brazilian historical tradition of paternalism, assistencialism and centralisation of power for the allocation of resources for the well-being of the population, it is currently recognised that it is fundamental to involve and listen to various actors for the identification and prioritising of problems in search of solutions. The establishment of participative processes in the identification and management of questions that concern certain groups and localities is a tendency that is being valued in Brazil and internationally. How, for instance, can we involve the different actors in the sphere of the family and the community, in the search for solutions of problems related to raising and education their children? This means taking seriously individuals who have historically never been heard, like the parents, the children and adolescents. It is not an easy challenge. Facing it implies a change of attitude and of authoritarian practices that have been present in the country for centuries. However, this is a growing tendency globally that has been opening up new forms of participation.

(c) Using research and accumulated experience to inform actions.

It is important not to underestimate what is already known and to consider the accumulated experience in the country to decide how to face the problems considered a priority. All available information must be used, as well as the reflections and analyses of a number of professionals who know the problem. For instance, which children are most likely to migrate to the street?

Projeto Bases: fortalecendo as bases de apoio familiars e comunitárias para crianças e adolescentes (in partnership with the Promundo Institute) and the Project *Rede Brincar e Aprender.*

Which families have the greatest difficulty in keeping their children? What are the causes? How to support them? What other alternatives need to be created or multiplied to prevent children going to the street? What resources already exist in these communities that could contribute to their feeling of belonging?

(d) Formulating and implementing policies and practices.

Based on applied research, involving participation of a number of actors, the possibility of formulating and implementing effective policies that address the identified problems is greatly increased.

Whatever the questions may be, and however they are answered, there is no escape from establishing directives for a broad policy that promotes the holistic development of children and adolescents.

In concluding this book we would like to state that we have had a number of reasons to pursue it, but the guiding motivation was the feeling that the youngsters we met on the street did not have to be going through what they were going through. Who would be brave enough to say that their trajectories could not have been avoided?

Glossary~~LOSSARY~~

abordagem	approximation, approaching or 'approachment' - referring to the work of street educators with youngsters on the street.
asfalto	asphalt, slang term to describe the distinction between the *morro* (the hill where the *favelas* are) and asphalt surface where the rest of the city resides.
alemão	enemy, outsider, rival faction (drug trafficking gang).
bagulho	joint, marijuana cigarette.
bagunça	a mess or a disorderly place.
baile funk	funk dances or balls, occurring for decades in the *favelas* and attracting thousands of youngsters.
bairro	district
bocas de fumo	drug sales points, primarily in the *favelas*, where cocaine and marijuana are sold.
bonde	group of youngsters in action, an expression of unity.
cadeia	prison, referring to the socio-education institutions.
camelôs	street hawkers selling a wide range of goods
caminho errado	the wrong path.
Candelária Massacre	massacre in which 7 children and a young adult were murdered in 1993 by the Candelária church in the heart of Rio's business district by an extermination group partly composed of off-duty police.
Cariocas	residents of Rio de Janeiro
CIESPI	Centro Internacional de Estududo e Pesquisa sobre a Infância – The International Center for Study and Research into Childhood – a research organization in Rio de Janeiro.
cola	glue.

comandos	drug trafficking gangs. The main ones in Rio being the *Comando Vermelho* and the *Terceiro Comando.*
conscientização	critical consciousness, Paulo Freire's term referring to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire 1993 [1970]).
Copacabana	one of Rio's most famous bairros or district.
CV	Comando Vermelho, main drug trafficking faction.
dando mole	slang term that can be loosely translated as 'letting your guard down'
donos	literally 'owners' referring to the bosses of the drug trade.
donas	madams.
educação	education, or more specifically, a moral conduct or upbringing.
Educadores Sociais de Rua	Street Educators.
esculachar	slang term translated here as 'dissing' short for disrespecting – used to describe a form of violence that can be physical, symbolic or moral.
ECA	*Estatuto da Criança e Adolescente* - Child and Adolescent Statute passed in 1990.
favela	hill-side shanty-town or squatter settlement common in Rio from the beginning of the 20[th] century.
favelados	*favela* residents.
FEBEM	Fundação Estadual para o Bem Estar do Menor - The State Institution for the Well Being of Minors or youth correctional facilities.
FIA	Fundação para Infância e Adolescência – The Foundation for Children and Adolescents.
força de vontade	will power
gringos	foreigners
indigente	beggar
judaria	treachery or betrayal
mães de rua	street mothers – girls, who though not necessarily older, take responsibility for the well-being of the group on the street and are seen as a moral authority and chief organizer.
malandros	trickster, knaves
maldade	nastiness, evil
maloca	the term refers both to the group as constituted by its members on the street as well as the place where the group rests.

maloqueiro	has come to designate the member of one of such gangs or more specifically a 'street child'. Street children are sometimes referred to as maloqueiros, particularly in the northeast of Brazil, a term which they have themselves sometimes embraced when referring to each other.
mau caminho	bad path
mendingo	beggar
meninos de rua	street children
menores abandonados	abandoned minors
moleque de rua	street urchins
moleques	urchins, the term originally referred to the children of slaves who became apprentices.
morro	literally, hill. Term that is often used instead of *favela*
movimento	literally 'the movement'; this is how organized drug trafficking is often referred as. With the implication of both a movement in goods and services, a trade, as well as a political and social force.
MNMMR	Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua, the National Movement of Boys and Girls on the Street created in 1985.
não alugação	not lecturing or 'being a drag'
papo	banter or linguistic cunning.
param	slang term meaning literally 'stop' referring to the process of 'hanging out' together or staying in a space for a while.
Pedagogia de Rua	Street Pedagogy.
pista	the street
pixado	slang term, literally, tagged, as in graffiti speak, referring to an area that becomes tainted or spoilt by antagonizing local shopkeepers or the police.
playboys	middle and upper class youngsters.
pó	cocaine
Rede Rio Criança	Network Rio Children, network of NGOs and government agencies working in the state of Rio.
revolta	rebellion, revolt or inner rage.
sambista	musician, composer or dancer of samba.
SMDS	the Municipal Secretariat for Social Development
suburbios	urban peripheries.

teto preto	advanced state of torpor through drug consumption.
Terre des Hommes	Swiss NGO which funded the consolidation of the Rede Rio Criança.
thinner	pronounced 'tchiner', literally thinner, a solvent-based paint-stripper.
traficante	drug trafficker.
tráfico	drug trade.
vapor	individual responsible for carrying drugs.
viração	translated here as 'getting by', or 'making do', a colloquial term that refers to the obtaining of resources for survival particularly through informal means.
xisnovar	to tell on others, betray others.
zoar	to fool around, have fun.
Zona Sul	South Zone. Area lying alongside the coast where the upper middle-class districts are to be found.
Zona Norte or -Zona Oeste	North and West Zones. Areas associated with the peripheries of Rio where the poorer districts are to be found.

About the authors

Alexandre Bárbara Soares is a psychologist, with an MA in Social Psychology from UERJ (Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro). For many years he has worked in *favelas* in the city of Rio de Janeiro helping to forge links amongst local social action networks in these communities. Alexandre Soares is a researcher with CIESPI (Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisa sobre a Infância) where he coordinates part of the fieldwork in the project *Support Networks*, a partnership between CIESPI and Promundo Institute. Recently he participated in the production of the video "Parallel Dreams, Different Worlds" and of the book *A rua no ar: histórias de adolecentes.* He is one of the authors of a book edited by CIESPI and Promundo Institute. *O social am questão*, from the Social Work Department at PUC University Rio de Janeiro. He represents CIESPI in the *Rede Rio Criança.*

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Daniel Stoecklin is a sociologist from Fribourg University (Switzerland). He works in programmes related to children and adolescents in a street situation in Terre des hommes – Lausanne. Between 1987 and 1989 he worked in the area of demography in China. He developed a research project between 1993 and 1996, interviewing "street children" in the city of Shanghai. Since 1998 he has worked in Fondation Terre des hommes, were he develops capacity building programmes and follows the organization's work in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Stoecklin teaches at Fribourg University where he seeks to integrate his practical and theoretical experience. Amongst his main publications are: *Enfants des rues en Chine* (Paris: 2000); *Les vagues aveugles; A la recherché des enfants des rues* (1998).

Irene Rizzini is a professor and researcher at PUC- Rio and director of CIESPI. Graduate in Psychology, Social Work and Sociology – from the University of Chicago and IUPERJ (Rio de Janeiro). In the international sphere, she is president of an international research exchange network in the area of childhood (Childwatch International Research Network, Oslo, Norway) and co-editor of the journal *Childhood*, Sage Publications. Irene Rizzini has coordinated many national and international projects. Amongst her main publications are: *O século perdido* (1997); *A criança e as leis no Brasil: revisitando a história (1822-2002); Desenhos de família* (co-author, 2001); *Children and globalization* (co-author, Kluwer, New York, USA); *From street children to all children: improving opportunities of low income urban children and youth in Brazil* (co-author, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2002).

Paula Caldeira Graduated from UFF (Rio de Janeiro) in Social Science and specialized at post-graduate level in Urban Sociology at UERJ and in Domestic Violence Against Children and Adolescents at LACRI/USP. Paula was part of the team who published the book *A rua no ar: histórias de adolescentes*, and of a research project on shelters for children in Brazil (UNICEF). Currently she is part of the project *Family and Community Support Networks for Children and Adolescents* (CIESPI and Promundo Institute), coordinating activities in the *favela* Santa Marta.

Riccardo Lucchini is professor of Sociology and head of the department of Social Sciences at Fribourg University, Switzerland. His most recent publications are on Sociology, as well as on the question of children and adolescents in a street situation in Latin America and their relationship to drugs, on the theme of the violence of men against women in the context of Central America, and in the field of the sociology of politics (on fascism and national socialism). Lucchini has worked with a number of non-governmental organizations in programmes for children and adolescents in many countries. Some of his publications include: *Femmes, violence at identité. Le cas de l'Amerique cetrale* (Paris, 2002); *Carreira, identidade e saida da rua: o caso da criança da rua, infância e juventude* (Lisbon); *Niño de la calle. Identidad, sociabilidad, droga* (Barcelona, 1998); and *Sociologia de la supervivencia. El niño y la calle* (Mexico, 1998).

Udi Mandel Butler is an anthropologist and researcher with CIESPI, he received his Social Anthropology doctorate from Goldsmiths College, London University. Udi has been researching the theme of boys and girls living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro for a number of years. He has published a number of articles with Irene Rizzini including: 'Young people living and working on the streets of Brazil: revisiting the literature' (Florida, 2001); and 'Life trajectories of children and

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