



An Organisation for Promoting
Understanding of Society

LISTENING POST

Peru at the Dawn of 2019

PART 1: THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part, the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experiences in their various social roles, be they: in work, unemployed or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood, voluntary or leisure organisations; or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives': the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

PART 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2, the aim collectively was to identify the major themes emerging from Part 1.

Theme 1. Non-belonging and mental helplessness.

The members of the group expressed concern about the absence of a sense of belonging, as the loss of a resource that would allow them to connect with others ("If I throw out the trash, it's because the street isn't mine, it's not my house, but it's your city, or it's not my neighborhood. How much there is a sense of belonging that allows any individual who can call himself Peruvian to feel that he can be an agent of change because that's also his, because if it's not mine then I don't belong"), this would be reflected in the disappearance of a common task and the separation of its members ("In Lima, in some moments it seems that these are irreconcilable or that it is not possible to work together in a common purpose, that can be as different as asking someone -hey don't do- and they answer you with an insult. How is it that, at that moment, demanding a society in which we can all live peacefully cannot happen, that it happens in the other bubble, that it happens in the other person, in this other group, that for a while we are all together, but we are so separated"), thus generating the need for individual survival ("they must all at some point have a common task, if they don't have a task in common, then the system moves, but depending on something, on a purpose you identify with, perhaps the universal could be that of survival"), and the fear of giving up that which gives us meaning, even if it makes us suffer or ends up being something negative for others ("I am in the motorcycle system, I'm not going to renounce certain things, I don't belong to the other system, to the cars, and I'm not going to renounce my freedom that I can have on the motorcycle, that survival or no exclusion is because I don't accept to renounce, and I'm confronted against the one who wants to change me that", "the

human being is made to belong, to be with something, even if it is to suffer", "when the system tries to throw you out you still try to be there, but you can't do the positive you end up belonging doing the negative, but you belong as an unhealthy part of that system but you're still part of").

The discussion led the group to recognize the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion as a source of tension and contradiction between social systems ("about this theme of the inclusion of the excluded, who are outside the system, today I listened to an interview that they did in the U.S. about the wall, and have found that there are areas that are vast deserts, and what they do so that the people don't die is to put water in ranches that accept this, and that whoever comes, they have a water source so that they do not die there or so that they die later"), and discrimination as a result of this tension ("I was thinking about discrimination, is a word that we have not said and that I believe is behind exclusion and how people is included").

Finally, the group explored the relationship between abandonment and the loneliness of individuals feeling abandoned by the larger system ("Peru's first central train station is called abandonment - Desamparados-, I wonder what makes our first station behind the government palace be called that,, we start from homelessness, which connects us with homelessness, abandonment that comes as part of systematic exclusion and discrimination", "The idea of abandonment is linked to loneliness, absence, you have no shelter, there is no one to support you, and the themes that are emerging speak of levels of helplessness, and that I finally join with the helpless like me, in a scheme of deficiencies and in a context of uncertainty"), what would be causing a mental helplessness ("I think of it as a mental helplessness, that absence that someone thinks with you, I put on my hat or not, step or no step, I complain, I do not complain, that you are alone in thinking, that it is a situation that is as terrifying as good, because for the mind some other is necessary, to help you think, to support you, to see what you cannot see, since your mother, to sustain your vulnerability, to see it, to appreciate it"), thus generating the inability of the person to reflect on his own life, to look for resources and to exclude themselves ("we are Venezuelans we have nowhere to sleep or anything to eat, my body shivered because I had seen them working, with good roles, but now they were in a desperate situation and perhaps helpless, as if they had gone through the self-exclusion of their own system, and now they were in a situation of total helplessness, they had resources but I saw them as helpless"), losing the ability to explore alternatives and be able to come out of the abandonment ("from the other, in a safe way, that it's okay, that you can try, that you can experience, and that something will welcome you, when you don't feel that trust that there is a link with an entity or an object that will sustain you on your way to investigate and explore, you don't obviously explore, you have to take care and protect yourself, because survival becomes the subject's primary task, to survive").

Theme 2. Violence in inaction: Hypocrisy, apathy and resignation.

The group explored the contradiction between what people and organizations say they do and what they actually do ("The company has to show what they are doing, the story can be magnificent, the photograph that accompanies the story can be better, but they are simply texts, photographs and images that don't necessarily account for the regular and habitual practice that companies have, and I am concerned because there is a very large dissociation to how this is carried forward, the commitment of the company", "I feel it has to do with the inconsistencies of society, with what is said to be done and with what is done afterwards, how can you make an effort to invest so much in, for example,

that Odebrecht has these reports that work perfectly, but you don't mind driving against 10 blocks, as you can be so incoherent in giving a speech about one thing, and then when you have to move out of work you can do another one like that which goes further behind, by hypocrisy, by handling things lower, by corruption, by the perversion of certain social links, which may have been seen as handled in a clearly unhealthy way", noting also that this contradiction is recognized and declared as such by these actors, but they do nothing about it ("I ask you if you work with the OSD, the objectives of sustainable development, he looked at me for a while, remained silent and told me, - I think we should work, but we do not work-, and yet they declare that they are because the OSD are fulfilled, there is no awareness of the lack of commitment nor is there an assumption that commitment implies action that corresponds to what they say", "It is a kind of complacency for doing nothing, it is a statement of concern that I am concerned about, but at the same time I recognize that I am doing nothing, I am not transforming my lack of occupation despite the concern that I manifest to have, it is very complex and difficult to disarm"), and if somebody complains about these acts or by their inactions, the answers are usually violent against the one who asks for explanations ("If you ask them to think about what they have just done, they send you where you came from (insult), you can with good vibes complain about something you have the right to say to him, listen but you have not realized that you have done such a thing, out! they yell at you, they want to fight, I don't understand what's behind it, what they can feel, what makes them react that way, what they want to protect, defend"), finally generating more social unrest ("what happens to the state, what happens to the public or the private, they are entities that function with totally different brains, as it has not been possible to promote those values, that common sense that is basic to be able to live calmly, this is a society in which you do not live calmly, all the time looking over the shoulder, there is a quantity more than healthy of paranoia").

The conversation led the group to reflect on how questioning something is automatically understood by the other person as a critique of them ("But we are not used to questioning, questioning is understood as criticizing, when questioning is more like - thinking about it", "It's seen as an offense, I'm like that so why I'm going to change. How one educates without pretending to be I am better than you, I am the one who knows, then you have to listen to me"), or that the person feels that they are being judged for asking "why you did it" ("like when I ask her why?, I think she feels, and we all feel, that we're judging her, it's not common this idea if I ask you to reflect on something or asking why, it's a reason to think together, it's not a critique, you don't have to defend yourself"), which would end up avoiding discussion, the debate of ideas and rethinking things ("in another country one can discuss and then have a beer and the people assume that the ideas were discussed, they are not associated with people, it is not that this idea is you, this idea came from you, but it's not you, here it is not like that, here the ideas are against us and we already fought, I put a cross on you and you put a cross on me"), so that one would eventually seek to accommodate, to abide by what the other responds ("One important thing is the little space given to the message, when questioning, when asking, a psychoanalyst speaks of revolts as making a revolt. Here we see the revolt as a rebellion, something negative, she poses it as rethinking things, questioning, I think the lack of this makes one to allow things, to fit", "It seems to me that saying what you don't want to hear, is also something that if it touches me, I was relating it to a courtesan society, of kings, that you don't have to question the crown, you can't say what you don't want to say").

Finally, the group explored the need for awareness, to be able to witness one's actions and act consistently ("I told him if you film people doing what they don't usually admit,

suddenly they might realize it, because sometimes you don't do it in bad faith and not because you want to hide something but because you don't realize it, those who have a more honest view of their ignorance of the barbarities they do may suddenly be an important element in the awareness that could eventually modify the way we bond", "when you see yourself in the video you are doing things totally different from what you imagine you are doing, and it's a possibility that this happens without there being a camera, if you have developed the mental capacity to can look at yourself from the outside, you can also understand the other from his shoes", "we forget about our role, and for example what you do I also do, but I am aware that there is something, because I already realized and what I can do is say is - check it out"), as a first step to be able to question and explore the uncertain in a safer way ("it also needs something more basic that is a secure link that allows you to develop creativity and to explore, if you have this capacity of mentalization you will see the world as a place that you can explore, in which you can learn, you can learn by questioning, learn to expand, but you have the capacity of mentalization that comes through a bond, that gives you security"), and if this does not happen, the person ends up resigning, repeating the status quo and abandoning the possibility of learning and the capacity to feel empathy with the other ("It is the resignation that I see in Lima, and the inability to realize that it is one who has to begin to act, I see a resignation for decades that the things are this way and they are not going to change", "when one has this capacity to realize where I come from is when I can say, Ya! I like it, because I don't have a negative impact on anything or anyone, and I this I realize that I never liked it, and I've done it automatically, by default", "surely you're going to learn to survive, or you're going to learn by default, it's a much more concrete learning, much more limited, and this other learning that can take place in safe contexts, In that sense this is generated by repetition a learning, this always happens, things are always like this, things are not going to change, what I am going to do is to respect myself, and empathy is cut off").

Theme 3. Gender and the invisible.

The group discussed how deeply rooted gender roles were in society ("in clubs, for example, there were men's dressing rooms, women's dressing rooms, girls' dressing rooms, and mothers and baby dressing rooms, but if my daughter was pooped, I have to change her because my husband cannot enter the mothers and baby dressing room, or having to take it to the boys' room where all the men are in a towel and the girl is afraid to enter", "there was a boys' room, I thought it was for boys and girls, come in with my daughter, and they told me that here only boys and men come in, girls change with their mother in the women's room, but if my husband comes with her where she goes, where he changes her....these things make my blood boil"), and how difficult it is to question within the same group the roles assigned to men and women ("there was the chat of the moms, which is a disaster, was called moms of something, I saw the name and began to boil, I told my husband what I do, I was writing and erasing, I didn't want to be the annoying people, and at the end I sent my message - hey why we didn't include the daddies - and I didn't have an answer, nobody ever answered me until today, then someone commented - don't bother them - but they can bother me").

The group explore the extent to which guilt, fear of error and convenience may be behind this lack of questioning ("It is that our education punishes error, it is a wrong education, I don't know anyone who was born knowing everything, how do we learn? From the error, but we consider that this is bad, we are engrained that anything that is a mistake is not a learning but is a fault, that's why it has that strength", "it's not necessarily that it allows those differences, it could be that it wants them or has a gain

from these differences -my husband helps me- and so I don't want to work and hide the fears of being self-sufficient or of being independent, I think it's much more complicated what we allow or don't allow"), what would be generating a relationship of power and submission between both genders ("the other is not to be a protagonist of things, it is as she says, women who behave like this are victimizing themselves and are giving power to another person, and others decide, because I do not have the right to enjoy my moment as well as others, because it is going to be an imbalance, both are parents, they both have the same responsibility", "what we've been talking about is to allow, that maybe there's no underlying among other elements that something allows that to happen, for example, if the majority of women thought like they wouldn't allow what happens, that they think the father does a favor, is that the majority thinks it's not a favor, that it's up to him").

Finally, the participants related the conversation with a constant denial of the other, as if these were invisible people ("The few times I take public transport and say thanks to the collector and he stare at me. The only explanation is that nobody thanks him, the normal thing is that they don't recognize him, you are invisible), and how this affects the need to see oneself in the other in order to be able to develop as an individual and as a society ("Food is important, it is basic because the organism without this does not develop, but the fact that there is a teacher who see you as a human being, not only as a student, who sees you as an individual, who recognizes you as such, very apart from the fact that you can have the organic materials for you to develop, but the emotional material, the link that allows you to be, learn, feel safe", "mentalization, which is the possibility of seen oneself from outside and looking at the other from inside, which is a basic principle for living in a society that works").

PART 3: ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In Part 3, the participants were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here, participants were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world: their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

Analysis and Hypothesis 1.

Analysis: The group is experiencing a general feeling of loneliness, feeling that they are part of a minority that observes how others present contradictory behaviors and violent responses, whether of rejection or inaction, even when help or advice is offered. When asked - Where is the common purpose that allows the integration of the members? - the answer would be - looking for the protection of a greater system (state, companies, family), This allows the development of a sense of common belonging, but that ends up generating dependence, feeling of abandonment, and finally, a patterns of behaviour that reflect the search of an individual survival.

Hypothesis: Due to apathy and resignation as a result of feeling discriminated and excluded from larger systems, members of our society experience mental

helplessness (not being able to reflect and think with others), which increases the feeling of loneliness and lack of opportunities for exploration, resulting in contradictory and hypocritical behaviors, and violent responses when these behaviors are questioned, because it would reveal the abandonment and helplessness suffered.

Analysis and Hypothesis 2.

Analysis: The concern in the group about the lack of questioning of traditional gender roles in our society would be showing either, the fear of questioning social patterns that give a sense of belonging, even if they are victimized, relegated or harm those who assume it, or selfish conveniences that seek to avoid conflict in order to maintain the status quo, through courtesan patterns of conduct to those who hold power. This lack of questioning would be motivated by the impossibility for members of society to become aware of the role they are assuming and their resulting actions and impacts on others, either because they have made them invisible as they are not part of their system (excluded/discriminated), or because they are not capable of looking at themselves from the outside (mentalizing and being empathetic).

Hypothesis: Due to the inability to see others and the different as a resource for learning about new things, members of our society invisibilize others, as a mechanism for defending the identity of the system that gives them meaning and is threatened by this different other, resulting in a self-exclusion from other systems that recursively reinforces and deepens this inability.

Convenor: Jorge Mendoza