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## Researchers' Reflections on Focus Groups with Unaccompanied Migrant Youths

**Abstract:** One of the main objectives of the research project “Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue to Promote a Culture of Peace among Young People and Unaccompanied Migrant Minors in Barcelona and Melilla” (RTI2018-095259-B-I00, MCIU/AEI/FEDER, EU), was to make the situation of migrant minors in Barcelona and Melilla visible. Five focus groups were held with unaccompanied minors from fostering centres in Barcelona, and two with minors living on the streets in the same city. The purpose of this article is how the researchers' reflections, as a component of the analysis of the focus groups, yielded emerging categories that doubtlessly both complemented and influenced the analytical process, such as: the impressions of participants' private feelings; the influence of

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authority figures present during the interviews, mainly educators; the difficulty of talking about and sharing some experiences, especially those regarding the migration process; participants' relationships and previous knowledge of each other; their emotions and non-verbal language; communication and linguistic issues; and interview participation. These topics were identified as factors that needed to be taken into account in the final conclusions and as aspects to reflect on when evaluating techniques used during research with unaccompanied minors.

**Keywords:** unaccompanied minors, Barcelona, focus groups, researchers' impressions

## **Refleksije raziskovalcev o fokusnih skupinah z mladimi migranti brez spremstva**

**Izveček:** Eden glavnih ciljev raziskovalnega projekta »Medkulturni in medverski dialog za spodbujanje kulture miru med mladimi in mladoletnimi migranti brez spremstva v Barceloni in Melilli« je bil osvetliti položaj mladoletnih migrantov v Barceloni in Melilli. Izvedenih je bilo pet fokusnih skupin z mladoletniki brez spremstva iz rejniških centrov v Barceloni ter dve z mladoletniki, živečih na ulicah tega mesta. Namen članka je pojasniti, kako razmišljanja raziskovalcev, kot sestavni del analize fokusnih skupin, vplivajo na vznik kategorij ter tako nedvomno dopolnjujejo in določajo analitični proces vključno z: vtisi zasebnih občutkov udeležencev, vplivom avtoritete prisotnih med intervjuji, predvsem vzgojiteljev, zadržanostjo glede določenih tem in do deljenja izkušenj, zlasti tistih, povezanih s procesom migracij, medsebojnimi odnosi in predhodnim poznavanjem udeležencev, njihovimi čustvi in neverbalno komunikacijo, komunikacijskimi in jezikovnimi izzivi ter sodelovanjem v intervjuju. Te teme so opredeljene kot dejavniki, ki jih je treba upoštevati pri končnih sklepih, in kot vidiki, o katerih je

treba razmisliti pri ocenjevanju metod, uporabljenih v raziskavah z mladoletniki brez spremstva.

**Ključne besede:** mladoletni migranti brez spremstva, Barcelona, fokusne skupine, vtisi raziskovalcev

## Introduction

This article forms a part of a wider RDI research project (RTI2018-095259-B-I00, MCIU/AEI/FEDER, EU), whose principal overall objective is to make the situation and experiences of migrant minors in Barcelona and Melilla visible (Vilà et al. 2020). Seven focus groups were held with young people who had migrated unaccompanied by adults. Focus groups are a qualitative research technique that enables participants to interact and develop a discussion in a friendly and relaxed setting (López 2016), where varying points of view can be compared and contrasted, thus giving rise to a new discourse on the situation being studied (Martín 1997). Focus groups also allow us to gather more information with less interviewer intervention (Mayorga and Tójar 2004). In this part of the research, this then becomes the methodological core of the article's discussions.

Qualitative research is an action of interpretation produced through interaction with the social world (de la Cuesta 2011). The knowledge yielded by a qualitative study is constructed by means of the decisions and interactions taking place during the research process (Mruck and Breuer 2011). Throughout this process, a key factor is the attitude of the researcher (Folgueiras et al. 2022), who needs to have a particular intellectual, affective, ethical and philosophical approach that will enable her or him to overcome the main obstacles that she or he will come across (Ayala 2017; Kumar 2012; Wilson 2012). Acknowledging the constructed nature of knowledge involves critically examining how we, as researchers,

actively affect our interactions with participants and the study as a whole. It is reflexivity that enables us to make this critical assessment (de la Cuesta 2011). Researchers can become aware of their practice through turning it into a written product, which will then also feed back into the research process (Finlay and Gough 2003). Thus in this study, the researchers' impressions were recorded in the form of reflexive narratives that were then analysed jointly with the focus group transcripts. This process yielded emerging categories, also of a reflexive character, which undoubtedly both complemented and further conditioned the interview analyses. The categories gave form to content and topics that the researchers perceived and defined as the focus groups unfolded, and which complemented the words of the youths themselves: specifically, emotions transmitted either individually or collectively and factors that may have influenced development of the groups as a data-gathering approach.

This article, then, centres on the researchers' impressions and other factors identified while carrying out the focus groups in Barcelona; factors which, in particular, are relevant to the dialogical practice of interviews and/or focus groups in complex contexts.

## Method

A qualitative descriptive-comprehensive study was performed using the interview as the technique to gather the opinions of minors who had migrated unaccompanied to Barcelona. Seven focus groups were held, with a total of 42 participants; five took place in centres belonging to the Directorate General for Child and Adolescent Care (*Dirección General de Atención a la Infancia y la Adolescencia*, DGAIA), and two were carried out with youth who were not catered for by the DGAIA. The focus groups held in the DGAIA facilities took place in two reception centres, two emergency social

care centres and one supervised flat. Only one of the groups included participants from different African countries, both of these in the DGAIA centres. Mainly Moroccan youth participated in the remaining groups.

The interviews and the research project in general were carried out with the approval of the Bioethics Committee of the University of Barcelona. Also, at the time of conducting the interviews, an informed consent document was given, read and explained to the young people, which stipulated the conditions under which the interview would be conducted. Among these conditions it is worth mentioning that they would not receive any type of economic compensation; that the information provided would be used exclusively for academic and research purposes; the explanation of the purposes of the project and the opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts regarding the interview and the project in general; the possibility of ending the interview and abandoning the project when deemed convenient without having to give reasons and/or explanations; and that the principal investigator and the research team would be responsible for any consequences that might affect them as a result of their participation in the interviews.

Four researchers participated in the interviews with the young people, three of them with long experience in the development of research on interculturality and inter-religious dialogue. The categorization of the interviews was carried out in pairs of researchers to ensure consensus and the analysis of the results was carried out jointly with the entire team of researchers (10 in total). Previously, the researchers did not know the participants, the results obtained were part of a single group interview or focus group. The decision was made to do this type of interview because of the language difficulty, since most of the young people

in the centres are recent arrivals and speak very little Spanish or even English or French. It was also decided that they would be accompanied by their educators, since they knew them and there was already a pre-established link that would allow for dealing with complex issues.

Each group transcript was complemented by the interviewers' accounts, taking the form of free narratives reflecting on the experience of research and written after completing the group process.

The system of analytical categories for the focus groups and researchers' reflections are comprised of five general dimensions, namely: the migration process; the young people's needs; the resources available to them; their competencies, perceptions and expectations; and lastly, an emerging category encompassing the researchers' impressions and other factors. The present article centres on this last dimension of impressions, further subdivided into the categories shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1. Analytical categories**

Ref.	Category
E1	Migration processes and private feelings. Harshness and silence.
E2	Meaning and significance of the educator's presence: authority, focus group conditions.
E2.1	Settings.
E2.2	Relationships among the youth and prior knowledge of each other.
E3	Emotions during the interview. Atmosphere.
E4	Ease/difficulty in conducting the interviews.
E4.1	Communication issues.

A literal transcript of the focus groups and researchers' impressions was made, and the resulting data was analysed descriptively using Nvivo v.12 PRO software.

## Results

The results encompassed a number of categories (Table 1). Firstly, the researchers recorded their impressions relating to the migration process and participants' private feelings, harshness and silences. Perceptions regarding authority figures, the conditions in which each focus group took place, and the meanings of the educators' presences during the interviews also emerged. Two further categories were defined relating to the physical setting of the interviews and the relationships among participants and their prior knowledge of each other. The last categories referred to researchers' emotions during the focus groups; the ease and/or difficulty of carrying them out; and communication issues emerging during the process.

### Migration and Private Feelings, Harshness and Silence

Broaching certain topics and asking certain questions in the focus groups led researchers to note that "there are really dramatic stories. There are questions that are hard for them to answer, and you see that because there's a lot of non-verbal communication. There are things that are really hard for us to capture on an audio recording" (e.1, bcn2, ref1).

When asked about their migration projects and journeys, the young people's expressions, silences and the briefness of their responses afforded a glimpse of how difficult they were both to remember and, even more so, to verbalise:

*I feel that I'm intruding on a private, painful, really vulnerable area. I see this in the scarceness of their words and their grim looks. The first questions are the most delicate and personal: the migration process. Their eyes speak volumes and show the how hard these processes have been, still undigested, their gazes meet, they all understand, open wounds. We*

*don't have the courage go any further into questions that might give words to these looks that conceal experiences we feel were really hard and still unhealed. We don't go any further. (e.1, bcn1, ref1)*

Thus, the harshness of these experiences, and of the migration process in particular, was also perceived through the difficulty the researchers had in being able to or wanting to go further into them. As they commented: "It's difficult to tackle life experiences, and especially the migration processes they've had, since they tell us of extremely harsh situations that have affected them deeply, so following on with further questions after some of these answers would feel extremely cold" (e.1, bcn1, ref3). Therefore, while it was necessary to enquire into these topics, the researchers could not persist with any deeper questioning out of respect for the young people, their emotions and their privacy. As one explained after facilitating a group of youths not catered for by the DGAIA:

*Personally, I felt very comfortable with the group, but at the same time I didn't dare ask certain questions because I felt I was invading a private area they didn't want to bring to light. (e.1, bcn7, ref1)*

How to ask questions in order to explore young people's intimate and maybe traumatising experiences, is a question we can ask ourselves for future research. In this way, we will be able to manage the pain of the recreated experience and turn it into a thread that allows us to extract more information sensitively.



## Authority and the Conditions of the Focus Group, the Meaning and Sense of the Educator's Presence

Normally, when arriving to carry out a focus group, the researchers would be received by a member of the centre staff, who would then accompany them and introduce them to the young people taking part. Once everyone was present the interview started. That is to say, this was the first time that the researchers had direct contact with the participants.

*As usual at the beginning of any interview, participants were less forthcoming, but as the questions progressed, they began to engage more and speak with more confidence: "At the beginning the kids were a bit inhibited, but by the middle of the interview they were a bit more relaxed and opened up more."* (e.2, bcn1, ref2)

While the group experience was different in each centre, at least two overall situations were identifiable. In the first, the young people seemed to be comfortable and at ease in the centre. One such was the supervised flat:

*They were all happy with the flat, they knew they were privileged. They've all passed through other centres, which they call prisons. The educator (older and Moroccan) is present and they're aware of that. They refer constantly to this.* (e.2, bcn3, ref3)

During other encounters, however, the situation was quite different. The young people were noticeably ill at ease and it was much more difficult to develop dialogue among them. These two distinct situations were clearly explained by one of the researchers who had facilitated a range of different types of groups:

*[...] [Y]esterday, they came out with a lot of ideas, like that they helped and supported each other, and you could really see that*

*they were like a family; today, though, here in the room at least, they were a set of isolated individuals. Maybe there were two who seemed to be more like friends or mates, but the rest were isolated individuals. Most were Moroccan: out of eight young people, five Moroccans and three boys from the Gambia. The boys from the Gambia seemed to be friends but they all said their own thing, and several times their experiences didn't coincide and this led to little arguments. One said one thing and the other said, "But what are you talking about, brother, it's not like that." They were a bit like, sensitive. (e.2, bcn4, ref2)*

One common aspect of most of the interviews was the presence of an educator or a staff member during the group discussion. In some cases this was constant, i.e. the person was present for the entire time the group lasted; while in others he or she was only there at the beginning and then left. This situation undoubtedly affected participation, and was perceived as such by the researchers undertaking focus groups in one emergency social care centre and in the reception centres:

*The whole time the interview lasted there were centre staff present, which may have influenced the kids' initial attitudes, since they were a bit nervous and anxious, answering with shorter responses. (e.2, bcn1, ref2)*

*The young people were much less participative. I think that having educators in the room really influenced them in this sense. (e.2, bcn3, ref1)*

*The fact that the educators were there didn't help a lot, in fact there was a moment when one even intervened, saying that all opinions were valid and they could say whatever they were thinking. They were inhibited. (e.2, bcn4, ref2)*

The presence of the educator, apart from influencing the participation of some of the young people, especially hindered discussion of topics relating to the centre itself, its characteristics and how they felt in it:

*At the beginning they had difficulty letting go and speaking, but as the interview went on and particularly after the guy in charge and the other person who received us left, they started to say and explain more things, especially to do with the characteristics of the centre, its rules, what they were and weren't allowed to do, and how they felt about that. (e.2, bcn1, ref3)*

*When the educators leave the kids talk more and open up about what's lacking at the centre, their anxiety about their lack of future, getting papers, prohibitions, strict rules, the prison they feel they're living in, and so on. (e.2, bcn1, ref1)*

While the educator's presence could make the young people feel uncomfortable and hence affect their participation, in two cases a closer, more trusting relationship was observed between participants and educator. This arose in the centres where researchers felt that the youth were most at ease. In one reception centre, where the educator was present but seated outside the discussion circle, the researcher's perception was the following:

*In general, we observed that the kids were fine in the centre, with clear ideas about their future, receiving different kinds of training and giving us positive feedback on their experience in the centre. The relationship with the educator was also seen to be good, a close, respectful relationship, with trust between them. (e.2, bcn5, ref3)*

This situation, also observed in one other group, allows us to glimpse that, luckily, in some cases the educator is seen as a sup-

portive figure. Her presence did not inhibit the youths during the interview, as this extract from the supervised flat illustrates:

*Researcher: Do you feel you're getting help in the flat?*

*Answer: Yes.*

*Researcher: Yes?*

*Answer: With the educators we have, sure.*

*Researcher: Really?*

*Educator: You can tell the truth, eh? Even though I'm here (laughter). Seriously, even though I'm here you can tell the truth, right? (laughter)*

In this case, we can also interpret the “good relationship” between an educator and the participant as an obstacle by itself, because it might as well illustrate the opposite, that the participant is inhibited and just spells out what the educator forces this participant to say.

## **Settings**

It is well known that the setting is essential for creating a favourable atmosphere and a relaxed dialogue among participants and researchers. Thus, another factor influencing the focus groups was the physical space where the interviews took place. It is important to note that they were carried out during the pandemic, which involved other factors such as social distancing and the use of facemasks:

*And then when I went into the centre, it seemed to me it was an environment that was a little more hostile. It seemed a colder environment than the one we were in yesterday. The centre [yesterday] was like being at home. We went to an area that was like a café, where we sat on sofas, etc., with a little table in the middle where we put the audio recorder, and participation was really relaxed. (e.2.1, bcñ3, ref1)*

*Something else that might have had an influence was that the acoustics weren't very good. There was background noise (like some kind of heating) that made it difficult to hear properly, and on top of that we were all wearing masks. (e2.1, bcn5, ref1)*

Thus, it is clear that the friendliest, most welcoming settings facilitated the best possible development of the interviews. In contrast, when the groups were held in more impersonal, less welcoming places, with distracting factors such as background noise, the interview was more difficult to carry out.

### **Relationships and Prior Knowledge among the Young People**

The relationships between the young people taking part were another important feature of the groups. In this area, different situations were encountered. On the one hand, in some groups a close relationship among the participants was noted, with interviewees helping and supporting each other. There were affectionate, familiar ties between group members. On the other hand, there were also groups where this comradely relationship was much less evident.

These diverse group dynamics and different ways of relating to each other may partly be due to the characteristics of the young people, who, although they were in the same focus group, had come from different centres and therefore, apart from not sharing their daily lives, had also experienced distinct situations. This also underscores the complexity of defining and homogenizing their experiential journeys:

*The kids were isolated from each other. There were five who came from the CRAE and five from reception centres with experiences that were completely different and even opposite. I mean, really what tended to happen was that every time I asked a question, apart from downplaying it - because they thought it was stupid and really*

*obvious – when one answered, what another would do was constantly argue against what the first one had said. (e.2.2, bcn4, ref1)*

*In contrast, in another group from a reception centre, it was clear they had good relationships among them, but at the same time it didn't seem like a really close relationship. They helped each other, but they never once referred to each other as brothers, more as friends or as people they lived with and respected. (e.2.2, bcn5, ref1)*

Amongst the participants who were not under the aegis of the DGAIA, the researcher was able to observe that they not only supported each other, but that they had also travelled part of their migratory journey and lived their lives in Spain together, and that therefore they had shared experiences for some time. This was “a group of two boys and two girls. The two boys were always together and the two girls too. They'd known each other since they were in the centres in Melilla, and from there on they'd been together” (e.2.2, bcn7, ref1). Thus, they explained that “they'd had and still have quite the parallel lives” (e.2.2, bcn7, ref2).

### **Emotions during the Interviews**

Emotions also played an important role in the encounters. Similarly to other impressions recorded by researchers, many such feelings were expressed through non-verbal language and in the attitudes shown as the interview unfolded.

As we have already noted, one of the first impressions was of differences in terms of participation. Likewise, some participants were seen to be more relaxed while others tenser:

*There were four kids who participated more than the others. One of them practically didn't speak, since he was new in the centre and*

*didn't speak much Spanish. There was one boy in particular who laughed a lot during the interview. It seemed to be a nervous laugh, which distracted the other kids at some points. (e.3, bcn1, ref1)*

In this same group, the researchers observed that “when they were talking about unpleasant memories, the replies were shorter and it wasn't something they liked to have recorded on audio. Once one of the kids, who was telling his story, wanted to stop and said that he didn't want to keep talking about it” (e.3, bcn1, ref2). As noted above, certain aspects of their lives were associated with harsh experiences and memories, which was shown less in what was said than in the silences or the briefness of their responses, while at the same time indicating that these were parts of their life stories that they preferred not to touch on. In these situations, the researchers chose not to pressure participants or go any further into those areas where they expressed their discomfort, directly or indirectly: “In this context, while they're questions that have to be asked, we think it's not necessary to keep pressuring them or to go into any great depth” (e.3, bcn1, ref2).

A similar experience was reported by one of the researchers who facilitated a group of youths outside the care of the DGAIA; she commented that

*the look in their eyes when I asked some questions went deep into my heart and my whole body. My first impulse would normally have been to get up and give them a hug. My feeling was of the lack of affectionate contact they have, made worse by the pandemic. There's a really big emotional block that one of the educators also mentioned to me. (e.3, bcn7, ref1)*

In addition, “Some questions gave rise to more feelings of unease and anger, particularly relating to documentation and the rules for

getting papers” (e.3, bcn1, ref2). It was essential for the young people’s future in Spain to obtain and regularise their documentation, and this was a factor creating a feeling of impotence and uncertainty amongst them. Researchers observed

*very different levels, but the only one who had reached the age of 18 was the most reluctant to answer our questions and was obviously the most ill at ease. He’s negative and shows that he’s deeply worried about his immediate future, outside the system that protects minors. He creases the informed consent form he has in his hands, without noticing that he’s doing it. His words are always the hardest.* (e.3, bcn3, ref1)

The researchers also observed emotions of satisfaction and positive evaluations among the young people participating, also with regard to the overall development of the discussions: “In general the feedback was good [...] In fact, they came up with really positive evaluations” (e.3, bcn2, ref1). In another case, it was observed that they were “very polite. There was only one who understood Spanish with difficulty. They were very respectful to me and amongst each other” (e.3, bcn7, ref1). Also, their “tenacity in achieving their objectives” was clearly noted (e.3, bcn7, ref1).

### **Ease and/or Difficulty of the Interview**

Broaching certain topics and asking certain questions was easier in some cases, more difficult in others. An important factor was the young people’s participation. In groups in which they were motivated to take part, the interview ran more smoothly overall. As one researcher who facilitated an interview in a reception centre explained, the youth were “really nice, actually. Pretty participative group. There were even some who raised their hands” (e.4, bcn2, ref1).



Some questions facilitated participation and were in general better understood: "Talking about their education, what they like to do, what they do well and what they hoped for the future was easier for them, as they seemed to be clearer about those topics" (e.4, bcn1, ref1). Thus, enabling them to express their ideas, reflect on them and go into greater depth was very positively valued both in general and in the context of particular questions.

On the other hand, as we commented above, the content of some questions caused more difficulty; for example those related to the migration process, since they called up memories and experiences that participants preferred not to touch on. This is illustrated by the following extract from one of the groups held in the supervised flat:

*Researcher: What were your reasons for leaving? People have mentioned economic causes, some cultural ... Were there any other reasons?*

*Answer: Not many people will reply to that question.*

*Researcher: Why not?*

*Answer: I don't know why, but they won't answer.*

*Researcher: Is it an uncomfortable question?*

*Answer: I don't know. (e.4, bcn3, ref1)*

There were also questions that presented greater difficulty, due less to the subjects they broached than the way they were formulated or how the dimensions and areas aimed at were conceived: "On several occasions they didn't understand the question very well, not so much because of the language, but because of the way it was framed or what we were asking about" (e.4, bcn5, ref1). Hence, linguistic, cultural and generational differences were factors that showed themselves indirectly, through lack of understanding of the question or criticism of it. This was noted by one of the researchers carrying out interviews in the emergency care centre and the reception centres:

*Some questions were more difficult to ask and explain, like for example those about spiritual needs. Others were more difficult to explain, and the way some others were framed seemed a bit absurd at the time. Specifically the question “Do you need money?” got the rather obvious reply, “Who doesn’t need money?” and laughs all round. (e.4, bcn1, ref1)*

*I’ve just come out of a focus group [...], and, as for impressions, well, there’s a phrase one of the kids said that’s stayed with me. He said, “What weird questions you’re asking,” which made me rethink the technique even [...] of the focus group, the type of questions, etc. (e.4, bcn4, ref1)*

## **Communication Issues**

Lastly, there were further clear difficulties in the area of communication. These were essentially due to two closely related factors: participation and linguistic comprehension, in this case of Spanish: “As the interview went on, some started participating more, but it was hard for those who spoke less Spanish to participate. Even when we directly addressed them, they were reticent and unsure of themselves” (e.4.1, bcn5, ref1).

These communication issues were also visible in their body language. This was shown very markedly in one of the focus groups held in a reception centre. The researcher involved explained:

*And maybe on a physical level [...], they were all sitting on chairs, but there were some with their arms crossed, their legs crossed, who practically wouldn’t participate. They had quite a lot of problems with the language, specially compared to those from the CRAE that they were with in the reception centre. You could see that the ones from the reception centre were uncomfortable and their experience was really, really recent – obvi-*

*ously – and that meant that their answers were more abrupt and it was much more difficult to understand what they wanted to say. (e.4.1, bcn4, ref1)*

## Conclusions

Another category was the difficulty of speaking and sharing some experiences, especially those related to the migration process. This emotional impact of the migration process is confirmed by prior studies among young people migrating to Europe, the USA, and Australia, amongst other destinations (Lopez-Reillo 2011; Menjívar and Perreira 2017; Miller, Irizarry and Bowden 2013; Perazzo and Zuppiroli 2018). Thus we can affirm that, regardless of the individual migration process and life story, the real common denominator amongst these young people is that they have lived through extremely harsh and difficult experiences in the course of their journey, which have affected them emotionally, including when they have reached their country of destination or been taken into a reception centre. The strength of this impact can be perceived not so much in their speech, but mainly through non-verbal language: their gestures, their tone of voice and manner of speaking, their silences and gazes; different ways in which the harshness of these experiences is expressed.

The conditions in which the focus groups were carried out were broadly similar: researchers arrived at the centre, introduced themselves to the young people who were to participate, and then carried out the interviews in a room where they could all sit and see each other's faces. One common factor was the presence of the educators during the interviews. When the researchers reflected on the impact of their interactions with the participants (Finlay and Gough 2003), they noted that the presence of the educators

affected the course of the focus group and became a source of authority present during all interviews. In some interviews, this factor affected participation or the content of what was said; in others this was not the case, since there was a visible relationship of trust and mutual respect between the youths and the educator that did not hinder their self-expression. Both situations were found across the different types of centres.

The conditions and characteristics of the setting in which the groups were held were also factors that researchers registered. In some cases, the setting was more appropriate, since a larger and more welcoming room was used and the interview unfolded with greater ease, while in others there were factors hindering the interview, such as background noise, excessive heat and the use of facemasks, amongst others.

Regarding the relationships and previous knowledge amongst the youths taking part, it was observed that relations among them were closer and more familiar in some groups and more distant in others. The length of time participants had spent in the centre and the experiences they had shared may have influenced relationships among them. Apart from this, the differing relations amongst themselves and with their educators also arose from and made visible the wide disparity between the different types of centres and services.

Addressing a harsh and devastating reality such as immigration requires an exercise of conducting interviews with groups of people who have gone through similar situations. This will allow us to not fall into the formulation of questions with answers that do not allow us to weave a thread worthy of being analysed in depth. As researchers, the challenge is to see the critical side of the meta-level of the study and to be able to build around it a new way of approaching the reflexive methodology we have ventured into in this article.

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