

The role of communicative acts in the Dream process: engaging Moroccan migrants in a community development initiative in urban Spain

The present article offers relevant insights into how the evidence-based community-development initiative known as the Dream process has had a positive impact on the inclusion, participation and leadership of a marginalized community of Moroccan immigrants in urban Spain. More specifically, we analyse how the commitment to promote dialogic communicative acts and reduce power communicative acts during the process have attenuated some of the race, gender and class barriers that hindered the community's involvement in dialogic and decision-making spaces aimed at improving their living conditions. In this article, we first introduce the state of the art using studies that have examined the role of interaction and deliberation in community development processes in disadvantaged contexts. Then, we briefly refer to the deterioration of the living conditions of the Moroccan immigrant population in Spain. Finally, we present the main results obtained from the qualitative case study research carried out through the implementation of the communicative methodology. This case study provides both theoretical claims and practical orientations to examine how dialogic approaches can contribute to community development processes in contexts severely affected by racial segregation and poverty.

In recent years, the field of community development has witnessed an increasing interest in the role of public deliberation and social interaction in solving local problems (Heller and Rao, 2015; Dai, 2016). This interest has arisen within an understanding of human development in which public debate and critical discussion among citizens are essential for identifying inequalities and for the collective construction of fairer realities (Sen, 1999). Within the framework of this field of study, the present article offers relevant insights into how the evidence-based community development initiative known as the Dream process has had a positive impact on the inclusion, participation and leadership of a marginalized community of Moroccan immigrants in the Montserrat neighbourhood (northeast Spain).

The Dream process aims to overcome social problems in various social areas (e.g., social and political participation, labour, and education) through two key elements: (I) the identification of the *dreams* and necessities of the community members affected by these problems and (II) the establishment of a dialogical process that brings together various social agents through the notion of the Dialogic Inclusion Contract (DIC). The DIC is based on an informal agreement through which end-users, researchers, policy-makers and other local agents recreate evidence-based successful actions in their context through the opening of dialogic spaces (e.g., assemblies and working committees) in which an egalitarian dialogue is promoted (Aubert, 2011; Flecha, Soler-Gallart and Sordé, 2015). Specifically, the present article raises two objectives: (I) to analyse which strategies have allowed the involvement of the Moroccan immigrant neighbours of Montserrat in each stage of the Dream and (II) to identify the role of communicative acts in relation to the promotion of the participation and leadership of the Moroccan neighbours in this process.

Social interaction in disadvantaged contexts

This article draws on the theory of communicative acts, which contemplates language and dialogue as a medium through which social action is coordinated. These studies delve into the nature of people's interactions (Searle and Soler, 2004), identifying two main types of communicative acts: (I) "dialogic communicative acts", which seek consensus and understanding, and (II) "power communicative acts", which are based on power and coercion. Specifically, the studies are focused on the analysis of the type of communication that leads to dialogic relations in which—without denying the existence of pretensions of power—some or many power interactions are replaced by dialogical interactions aimed at obtaining consensus. This approach is also grounded in the concept of *speech acts* provided by Austin (1975) and Searle (1969) but extends the analysis of the factors involved in the interaction, considering both verbal and non-verbal language. In addition, it is based on Habermas' conception of communicative acts (1985), which recognizes all individuals' capacities for language and action. However, this theory differs in different aspects from Habermas' approaches. For instance, the theory of communicative acts identifies the Habermasian reductionism that privileges the Apollonian dimension and relegates the Dionysian dimension of human reality (Sordé and Ojala, 2010). Therefore, not only are arguments and values taken into account in the analysis of interactions, but also the roles of feelings and desires are considered.

Furthermore, we have attended to the studies that focused on the limitations that theories of deliberation can present in real practices in the contexts of extreme poverty and racial segregation. These analyses have emphasized how factors such as social status, ethnicity, religion, race, gender and other characteristics may alienate the deliberation of an exchange between free and equal individuals (Fung, 2009;

Mansbridge, 1983). Some of the *pathologies* of deliberation identified focus on the tendency of groups with more resources and power to impose their opinions or benefits on disadvantaged sectors of the population, on the impact of manipulation, and on processes and contextual elements that hinder the exchange of views on an equal basis, among others (Stokes, 1998). Furthermore, authors such as Young (1996, p.123) argue that ‘the norms of deliberation are culturally specific and often operate as forms of power that silence or devalue the speech of some people.’ Despite the progress experienced in the field of deliberative studies with class and race perspectives, the literature that analyses the difficulties of the deliberative engagement of immigrants in their host countries is scarce, especially if we focus on the collective that we refer to in this study: Moroccan immigrants in Europe.

However, research conducted in the field of community development has identified serious barriers to the inclusion of migrant communities in civic participation and decision-making processes. One main limitation that constrains their participation are language barriers, as having a lower command of the local language makes communication free of coercion more difficult to achieve (Gele and Harsløf, 2012). Other factors that hinder their participation are a limited formal education, poor health conditions, and lack of information or mistrust regarding the available organizations or public services (La Kosic, 2013). Likewise, the economic and social marginalization of immigrants as well as their representation as “others” or as a threat in the public debate makes participation in these spaces less appealing to immigrants (Vellenga, 2008). In the next section, we will take into account the barriers that affect the Moroccan immigrant community in Spain and that negatively influence their capacity to be involved in dialogic and deliberative processes oriented towards the development of their communities.

Social exclusion of Moroccan immigrants in Spain

Following the economic crash of 2008, Spain has seen a significant decline in per capita income and employment, which has resulted in severe material deprivation and increased risk of poverty among the population. These increasing inequalities have particularly affected vulnerable collectives such as Moroccan immigrant residents, the second most numerous migratory group in Spain (Ballester, Velazco and Rigall-I-Torrent, 2015). The crisis has emphasized the situation of discrimination towards immigrant Moroccan workers already present in the Spanish labour market, where Moroccan workers face more precarious conditions, such as low wages, lack of social benefits, and job instability, than Spaniards (Marrero, 2005). Moroccan immigrants also find themselves with very restricted professional opportunities usually limited to agriculture, construction and domestic service.

Residential segregation, impermeable community services, and politically conservative receiving communities maintain asymmetric power relations between natives and immigrants (Paloma, García-Ramírez and Camacho, 2014). In this context, Moroccan immigrants and their descendants are particularly vulnerable because they are more prone to discrimination in Spain than immigrants from other nationalities (Agudelo-Suárez *et al.*, 2009). Self-reported victimization is also higher among Moroccans (12%) than among other minority groups in Spain such as Latino immigrants (6.5%) (Colorado-Yohar *et al.* 2012). Furthermore, the isolation and exclusion of Moroccan immigrants in the neighbourhoods where they live is worse than that of other immigrant groups, a situation that is related to greater probabilities of suffering mental health issues (Pasquetti and Picker, 2017). Discrimination is maintained through essentialized racial and gender categories that present Moroccan men as dishonest, criminal, oppressive, and lazy (Rogozen-Soltar, 2012). Moroccan

men are also considered less able to adapt to the Spanish culture than immigrants from other nationalities, and following the 11M terrorist attacks of 2004, they are also depicted as a foreign threat (Marrero, 2005). In turn, Moroccan women are represented as oppressed and as victims (Rogozen-Soltar, 2012). In these controlling images, Europe is presented as a non-Muslim space and Islam is intensively racialized, which affects Moroccan immigrants' forms of self-representation, precluding their access to community resources and their participation in dialogic spaces.

The present article will address how the type of communication and the strategies implemented during the Dream process help to reduce some of these barriers that hamper the participation of Montserrat's Moroccan immigrant neighbours in dialogic spaces.

Introduction to the case study

The present case study was conducted in Montserrat, a neighbourhood with high rates of poverty and racial segregation in the outskirts of the city of Terrassa (northeast Spain). The case study of the Montserrat neighbourhood has been previously studied in depth due to the successful educational and social inclusion of Moroccan immigrant neighbours achieved by the transformation of the local school into a learning community (Flecha, García and Rudd, 2011). These previous studies provide some preliminary evidence on how dialogic dynamics have been transferred from the school to the broader community. However, this is the first research to study the neighbourhood Dream process in depth.

Montserrat was created as a public housing project in the 1960s to cater to the arrival of waves of immigrants from rural southern Spain and stop the construction of shanties. At the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, Montserrat also started receiving

a non-European immigrant population, mainly from North Africa. Demographic data shows that in 2013, six hundred and eighty-nine residents out of the 1,654 residents of the neighbourhood were non-European immigrants, mostly low-qualified workers and in 2014 Moroccan immigrants represented 41.65% of non-native residents in the neighbourhood (Municipality of Terrassa, 2014). In this context, the relations among the Spanish neighbours and the Moroccan families had been characterized by tensions and racist attitudes towards the migrant group. Communication was also hampered by the lack of fluidity of most Moroccan families in the region's official languages of Spanish and Catalan. Furthermore, racial tensions had been identified between Arab Moroccan residents and a minority group of Moroccan Berber neighbours¹.

In the described context, the consequences of the economic crash of 2008 produced an unprecedented increase of unemployment and poverty among the Moroccan residents. For this reason, some immigrant neighbours, supported by local professionals and volunteers from the local school, came together in 2012 to seek solutions to the deterioration of their living conditions. This initial group sought advice on how to articulate a community process from CREA, a research group from the University of Barcelona. CREA researchers provided neighbours with the scientific knowledge to develop the Dream process, based on the successful experience of implementation of this process in two of the most deprived and racially concentrated neighbourhoods in Spain: La Estrella and La Milagrosa (Brown, Gómez and Munté, 2013).

Method, data collection and analysis

¹ The Berbers are an ethnic group from North Africa who have suffered serious marginalization and exclusion in different countries, including Morocco. In addition, relations between Arabs and Berbers have historically been marked by racial tension and conflict.

This study has adopted the communicative methodology (CM) (Gómez, Puigvert and Flecha, 2011), which advocates for an egalitarian dialogue between researchers and end-users by removing the interpretative and epistemological hierarchy that often favours academic researchers over research participants. In CM, new knowledge emerges from the intersection of scientific knowledge, provided by the researchers involved in the dialogue, with the knowledge of the life world provided by the subjects experiencing social inequalities. Thus, the CM goes beyond merely diagnosing situations of inequality and identifies successful actions that can overcome social problems. In view of its results, the CM has been recognized by the European Commission (2011) to have a significant social and political impact on European social systems.

To create the adequate conditions necessary to achieve the intersubjective relationship required by the CM, the researchers took into account race- and gender-based power differentials in the fieldwork planning. For instance, interactions with Moroccan women were carried out by female researchers and in the presence of a female translator from the neighbourhood with whom the participants were acquainted.

Data collection

To carry out this study, three research techniques were used: communicative daily life stories (N=6), communicative observations (N=21) and a focus group. Six communicative daily life stories were collected in 2013 in partnership with key social agents in the *Dream* process. This technique consists of a reflective dialogue between the participant and the researcher about the participant's daily life. It focuses on the present moment and on the interpretations that the narrator makes of his/her life, rather

than on biographical aspects. Thus, the stories aimed to identify the relevance assigned by the participants to their involvement in the Dream process and the extent to which this participation was perceived as influencing the resolution of specific problems in the participants' everyday lives.

Apart from the stories, twenty-one communicative observations were made during each of three years: 2013 (N=7), 2014 (N=11) and 2015 (N=3). In contrast to conventional observational techniques, communicative observation involves the researcher and the end-users engaging together in the interpretation of actions, meanings and nonverbal language during real situations of participation. Thus, the traditional interpretative and epistemological inequality between investigator and investigated person is compensated by obtaining consensual interpretations of the object of study (Gómez, Puigvert and Flecha, 2011). The observations were made in assemblies, meetings, working commissions, and training sessions related to the Dream process. Data collected were registered in proceedings, fieldwork notes, and – in some cases where participants gave their explicit consent – in audio recordings.

Finally, a communicative focus group was conducted in the Neighbourhood Association's headquarters. The aim of the focus group was to capture, in a real interaction, the perceptions of participants regarding the type and quality of the interactions that have emerged during the Dream process and to collect information on the communication established among the participants. In the communicative focus group, the researcher is integrated with an actual group of participants but maintains his/her role as a researcher and contributes to the discussion by providing scientific knowledge about the object of study. This knowledge is combined with the collective interpretations of the participants coming from their daily life experiences. To carry out this technique, a sample was intentionally selected based on the criteria of diversity of

points of view. A total of five key informants were involved: two Moroccan neighbours, a school principal, the president of the Neighbourhood Association and the manager of a cooperative for job placement in the neighbourhood.

Findings

In what follows, we present the main findings obtained from the fieldwork. Specifically, we respond to the two research objectives posed above: (I) to analyse which strategies have allowed the involvement of the Moroccan immigrant neighbours of Montserrat in each of the stages of the Dream, and (II) to identify the role of communicative acts in relation to the promotion of the participation and leadership of the Moroccan neighbours in this process. For this purpose, we have divided the results into two sections. In the first section we discuss, on the one hand, some of the barriers that have hindered the involvement of the Moroccan neighbours in community responses in the Montserrat neighbourhood and, on the other hand, we identify some of the preconditions that have facilitated the inclusion of Moroccan residents in dialogic spaces before and during the Dream process. In the second section, we focus specifically on the analysis of the role of communicative acts in the integration of Moroccan residents. Furthermore, we highlight some of the impacts generated by this dialogic process on the Moroccan participants, such as the overcoming of isolation and the emergence of a dialogic model of leadership.

Overcoming antidialogic barriers

In this section, we first present the barriers identified in the case study that have hampered the involvement of Moroccan residents in initiatives and social interventions launched with the aim of improving their living conditions. Then, we discuss some of

the preconditions and strategies that have facilitated the involvement of the Moroccan neighbours in the community process known as the Dream.

During the interviews, several interviewees criticized the impersonal and merely service-focused way in which professionals from the State's Social Services addressed Moroccan neighbours. In addition, the analysis of the results has determined that, on many occasions, the interactions established between social intervention professionals and immigrant residents relied on power communicative acts and that social plans in the neighbourhood have often followed top-down models. The following quotation from Javier, the president of the Neighbourhood Association, recreates a conversation between a social worker and a Moroccan woman from the neighbourhood. As shown in the quotation, the interactions between these two people are perceived as a bureaucratic process that is not oriented towards understanding or towards the joint search for solutions to this family's social emergency. As a result, many Moroccan neighbours have perceived the social workers' interventions as controlling and shaming, which in some cases has led them to take defensive positions against the intervention of the public administration.

Well, when [Moroccan] neighbours go to the Social Services the interaction is, "So-and-so, how is it going? Bring me the documents. How many children do you have? What is your situation?" "My husband doesn't have a job, I don't have a job, nobody is employed in our house." "How much money arrives to the household?" "We get nothing." "All right, take this for now and come back in two months-time". "But listen, I've got nothing to eat". "Listen, I can't do anything about it." And until two months later she won't be received. (Javier, Neighbourhood Association's president)

Another exclusionary element that has hindered the articulation of community processes is communication problems between Moroccan and native residents and between migrant residents and native local professionals. The next quotation from the Councillor of the District refers to some factors that have contributed to the emergence and development of social conflicts in the neighbourhood. For example, the quotation highlights the communicative difficulties experienced by some immigrant families, as they do not speak fluent Spanish or Catalan (the official languages of the region), as well as racist prejudice against Moroccan neighbours.

It is sometimes seen as a clash between cultures [...]. However, we should obviously talk the same language and talk about the same topics. And it's very difficult. [Moroccan] people who come from the countryside have not lived in communities of neighbours. They don't know that if they throw a paper to the ground, it upsets other people. And these little things slowly generate more conflict, bad coexistence. Because part of the native population sees these acts as neglect of the others, as if they [Moroccan residents] didn't want to collaborate...and I'm sure that it is just due to ignorance. (Councillor of the District)

As for transformative variables, the analysis of communicative observations, interviews and life stories has made it possible to identify the key role of the interactions promoted in the local school and how they have facilitated the involvement of Moroccan neighbours, professionals and volunteers in the launch of the Dream process. Since the transformation of the public primary school into a learning

community in 2001, the centre has launched specific programmes aimed at improving the communicative skills of the migrant community, such as free courses in Catalan and Spanish or Dialogic Literary Gatherings (Alvarez *et al.*, 2016; Llopis *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, the Moroccan neighbours have seen the school as a place of peaceful coexistence, dialogue and community involvement. Based on these previous developments, the school staff has used its influence not only to bring together a wide diversity of professionals, local entities and volunteers but also to compensate for interactions based on power or the inclination of some professionals to exercise excessive control over the community process. In the following quotation, Marta, the school's principal, refers to the first actions implemented during the launch of the Dream process, which consisted of conducting various meetings at the school with the aim of creating spaces for dialogue, where interactions based on power and isolation were reversed through discussion and the inclusion of the voices of Moroccan community members:

The topic of control is common among professionals, so going directly to the Dream caused them some insecurities. Thus, we had to have another meeting with the professionals to say: "Let's organize how we will do the Dream," right? This concern, saying: "We'll directly call an assembly at the square of the neighbourhood and make people dream". They didn't see that clearly, ok? They said: "No, we have to prepare it", "No, we have to organize it", "No...". And, well, it's ok. If there are also these reservations, more explanations may be needed. Let's give them! (Marta, school's principal).

The data obtained from communicative observations have also enabled us to synthesize the main phases of the Dream process, paying especial attention to the strategies that have been implemented to enhance the participation of Moroccan residents and to compensate for the communicative inequalities that they suffer.

I. *Opening of dialogical spaces.* In 2012, a promoter group organized two meetings through which they managed to involve a wide range of professionals and public services leaders to implement the Dream process. The purpose of those meetings was to eliminate some of the resistance professionals had expressed towards the idea of launching this community process. These meetings differed from previous ones in that they occurred with the assistance of natural leaders from the Moroccan community. Thus, all the proposals provided by the professionals were contrasted by the views provided by Moroccan representatives. The first interventions of the Moroccan neighbours were characterized by insecurity and distrust, but as they verified that their contributions were incorporated, these feelings started to fade.

II. *The dream of Montserrat.* A general assembly was held on June 2012 called Montserrat's Dream. It was carried out in the main square of the neighbourhood with the aim of broadening community participation and collecting the neighbours' *dreams* – their most urgent needs–. The assembly was managed by Moroccan and non-Moroccan local leaders, such as the school principal, the president of the Neighbourhood Association and the Imam of the mosque. To ensure that the Moroccan residents could understand the debates, all the interventions were translated to Amazigh, the mother tongue of a large proportion of Moroccan residents. After the interventions, several volunteers – who were previously trained to adopt listening positions– worked in small groups with neighbours to collect their dreams.

III. *The Dream commission.* After the collection of the neighbours' demands and necessities, a commission was created to classify the *dreams* by social area: education, housing, labour, and environment, among others. Two Moroccan neighbours, the school's principal, the president of the Neighbourhood Association and two volunteers formed the commission. As a result, posters were created with all dreams and were hung in the school so residents could identify the community's expectations. In addition, the commission was responsible for explaining the dreams orally to the non-literate neighbours.

IV. *Assemblies to set the community's priorities.* On February 2013, two assemblies were held with the aim of identifying the main actions to be undertaken, taking into account the neighbourhood's priorities. To avoid the low turnout that had occurred in previous initiatives, the participation of Moroccan neighbours was promoted through the implementation of different strategies. One of them consisted of involving students of the local school to bring invitations to the assemblies to their parents. During the assemblies, participants sought to achieve a consensus on which dreams to prioritize. Although the participants showed different points of view about the most urgent needs in the neighbourhood, they decided to prioritize dreams that they all agreed on: generating employment opportunities and getting specific training in this area to compensate for their low educational levels.

V. *Training on successful cooperativism.* In response to the community's demands, in 2013, a group of researchers provided them with scientific training on successful cooperative actions (Flecha and Ngai, 2014). In this training, the role played by dialogic communicative acts in overcoming feelings such as lack of self-confidence or distrust was highlighted. The analysis of the communicative observations shows how researchers not only provided scientific knowledge but also involved participants in

discussions on how to recreate the actions in their own context. Although some participants were initially intimidated by the presence of researchers, their mistrust and lack of self-confidence diminished as they realized that they did not evaluate nor judge the participants' observations but just provided quality information that allowed residents to make better proposals. Thus, the promotion of dialogic interactions and the scientific advice obtained helped overcome feelings that had paralyzed collective action, such as insecurity, fear, and distrust. As a result of these discussions, the participants decided to open two lines of action: creating an organic community garden and a women's sewing cooperative.

VI. *Working Committees*. To continue working on the development and discussion of these lines of action, two committees were established: one formed mainly by Moroccan men, and another formed by Moroccan women. The two groups counted on the support of school staff and volunteers to moderate the assemblies and to provide them with information when they asked for it. The participants themselves decided the schedules, venue and other organizational aspects of the meetings, while the volunteers exercised a facilitator role. For instance, the members of the women's group demanded that the facilitator would be a woman and that the assemblies were held in Arabic. The construction of a single-sex and culturally respectful space helped Moroccan women to feel comfortable to attend and to participate actively.

As a result of this process, at the end of 2013, Montserrat's residents succeeded in obtaining permission by the City Council of Terrassa to use a plot for the creation of an organic community garden. In 2016, five unemployed Moroccan neighbours managed the garden, which provides job skills for the participants and free organic food to many families in the neighbourhood. Regarding the second line of action – a women's sewing

cooperative – in 2014 a group of residents obtained their own space within the school's facilities, where they offer free training in sewing to unemployed Moroccan women.

The role of dialogic communicative acts in the Dream process

In the following section, we focus on the role of communicative acts in relation to the inclusion and leadership of the Moroccan residents in some of the phases of the Dream process previously mentioned. First, we show how dialogic communicative acts have contrasted with interactions based on the low expectations and patronizing attitudes shown by local professionals during the launch and the process. Second, we identify strategies and mechanisms that have been specifically implemented to promote the emergence of dialogic spaces where the validity of arguments has prevailed over power claims. Furthermore, in this section we cite some of the benefits generated by the interactions established during the process, such as overcoming isolation and the emergence of a dialogic model of leadership that has promoted the inclusion of Moroccan residents in the community process.

First, communicative observations in the meetings held during the first phase of the process show that both Moroccan neighbours and the people who supported them promoted dialogic communicative acts to achieve a consensus on the need of launching the Dream process. Such interactions contrast with those based on power and low expectations that several native neighbours and professionals had about the Moroccan neighbours' capacity to articulate a response to poverty. The following quotation, obtained from the first assembly, exemplifies the point of view of one local social educator concerning the likelihood of successfully implementing the Dream process. According to him, encouraging the neighbours to *dream* and letting Moroccan residents make decisions in this regard was dangerous, as he considered that they would not be able to reach their goals and would, therefore, get frustrated.

We must proceed with caution so that we do not generate false expectations. If they [Moroccan neighbours] dream and then the dream does not come true, we will create frustration (Daniel, district social educator)

In contrast, we have identified that the participation of the Moroccan neighbours in this dialogic space counterbalanced the pessimistic, patronizing and even racist attitudes shown by some of the professionals and collaborators. The next quotation corresponds to the response given by Faysal, an unemployed Moroccan neighbour, to the intervention of the social educator presented above. It shows the way in which these neighbours, despite being conscious of their limitations, had great expectations on the launching of the Dream process. Faysal's intervention marked a turning point for several attendants at the meeting, since the inclusion of his point of view opened the possibility for different assistants to join the neighbours' initiative and to seek consensuses to coordinate their action, instead of joining the pessimistic forecasts of the social educator.

We should not put limits [to our dreams]. If I have a dream but I am not able to reach it, if there are many of us, surely, I will be able to reach it (Faysal, Moroccan neighbour)

Dialogic communicative acts have also been identified in the second phase of the process of Montserrat's Dream. These interactions have not usually emerged spontaneously. In fact, on many occasions, specific strategies had to be implemented with the aim of promoting their emergence. In the following quotation, Nuria, the

president of the families' association of the school, refers to the way dialogue was articulated in Montserrat's Dream, which more than two hundred and fifty people, most of them Moroccan residents, attended. In this general assembly, after presenting to the attendees a general explanation of the initiative, small groups were created to collect the *dreams* of the participants. Each group had a trained volunteer whose role was to promote communicative equality among participants – especially those traditionally excluded, such as Moroccan women, the elderly and children – and to generate a dialogical climate in which the validity of arguments prevailed regardless of the hierarchical positions of the speakers. For instance, volunteers collected the dreams as the participants formulated them, without making interpretations or interfering in their demands. As indicated in Nuria's quotation, promoting this dialogic climate allowed Moroccan neighbours to identify their community's most pressing challenges.

Within those groups there was no hierarchy. There was a person who wrote down the ideas, but there was not a hierarchy like saying: "I am in charge and this idea is ok and this one isn't." No, no. Everything was written down. On the contrary, I think that people said the first thing that came to their minds: jobs, jobs. "What would you like?" "Having a job." (Nuria, president of the families' association)

This process in itself had a positive impact on overcoming the social isolation of several Moroccan women. As indicated in the following quotation from Fatima, thanks to her participation in Montserrat's Dream, she had new opportunities to establish personal bonds with other women in the neighbourhood with whom she had not interacted before.

Before participating [in Montserrat's Dream] I knew some women, just their faces. But since the day I participated, I know them by name. We greet each other, we talk. (Fatima, Moroccan woman)

Furthermore, the focus on dialogic interactions during the development of the Dream process has been associated with the emergence of a dialogic model of leadership in which native people previously identified as leaders – such as the Neighbourhood Association's president or the school's principal – have worked side by side and equally with the Moroccan community members. The data indicate that this model of leadership is associated with a perceived reduction of racial tensions and the improvement of the coexistence between Moroccan and native residents and between Arabic Moroccan and Berber Moroccan neighbours. One example of this integration is provided by the following quotation from Marta, the school's principal. Marta reflects on how the involvement of Moroccan women in the dialogic spaces generated in the school has allowed them to exercise leadership roles, positions they had never exercised. Furthermore, the quote exemplifies the impact generated by dialogic leadership on the Moroccan women who had suffered the most from isolation and exclusion within the immigrant community: Berber female housekeepers who had never before taken part in community initiatives, neither in their country of origin nor in the host country.

We have a peaceful coexistence because neighbours have worked on it with the leadership of the people involved in the Neighbours Association and with other leaders who are more invisible, but who we also know and work well with. For instance, those women who participate a lot in the school and who know some

mothers who are Berber. Thus, we explain things to this mother so she can transmit the information to this group of women, right? It's word of mouth, but taking into account who are the individuals who can lead the others and, therefore, make the others participate. We really take that into account. (Marta, school's principal)

Thus, the dialogic leadership model is contributing to change the perception of Moroccan women in the neighbourhood, from being perceived as passive subjects secluded in the domestic space to being perceived as active agents capable of promoting the participation of the most powerless members of the community. In addition, these women are contributing to the emergence of new relationships between Arabic and Berber neighbours, who have left behind historic confrontations to begin working together with the goal of achieving the community's dreams.

Conclusions and Discussion

The case study analysed here has allowed us to respond to some of the main questions raised in studies on interpersonal interaction and deliberation as way of generating solutions to severe local problems (Mansbridge, 2003). Through the case of the Montserrat neighbourhood, we have provided specific guidance on how to create spaces that encourage the emergence of dialogic communicative acts even in disadvantaged contexts in which the participants are strongly conditioned by race, gender and class inequalities. In addition, this case study has exemplified how studies that move beyond the theoretical claims to examine the impact of these dialogic approaches can contribute to community development processes in imperfect contexts where racial segregation and poverty are present.

Throughout this article, we have identified some elements that have made it possible to generate community responses to the consequences of poverty and isolation suffered by Moroccan immigrant families (Ballester *et al.*, 2015). This has been possible through the opening of dialogic spaces that have promoted the inclusion of the very affected populations. The incorporation of the Moroccan residents of the Montserrat neighbourhood into the centre of decision-making has promoted the emergence of new dialogic interactions oriented towards building consensus and coordinating the community's actions against the deterioration of their living conditions. Such interactions have contrasted with interactions based on power, racial prejudice or low expectations regarding the capacities of the migrant community members. In addition, through the Dream process, native professionals and collaborators have identified communicative inequalities (Stokes, 1998) suffered by Moroccan residents and have implemented mechanisms to compensate them. This has been associated with the emergence of a dialogic model of leadership (Redondo-Sama, 2016), through which people considered leaders by their community have demonstrated their commitment to include the voices of the migrant neighbours throughout the process.

In addition, scientific advice has allowed native and migrant residents to build interactions based on thorough knowledge. Through an egalitarian dialogue, residents have been able to contrast this knowledge with their reality and have identified opportunities that had not been previously contemplated. In addition to these cognitive changes, dialogic interactions have been associated with emotional changes. This has helped them overcome feelings that restrained their collective action, such as insecurity, fear or distrust. Thus, although the Dream is an ongoing process, in this article we have provided relevant insights into how this process has helped Moroccan residents to move

from *extreme situations* to find effective ways of collaborating to advance together towards the *untested feasible* (Freire, 1993).

References

- Agudelo-Suárez, A., Gil-González, D., Ronda-Pérez, E., Porthé, V., Paramio-Pérez, G., García, A.M., and Garí A. (2009) Discrimination, work and health in immigrant populations in Spain, *Social Science & Medicine*, **68**, 1866–1874.
- Alvarez, P., García-Carrión, R., Puigvert, L., Pulido, C., and Schubert, T. (2016) Beyond the walls: The social reintegration of prisoners through the dialogic reading of classic universal literature in prison, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 1-19. Doi: 10.1177/0306624X16672864
- Aubert, A. (2011) Moving beyond social exclusion through dialogue, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, **21(1)**, 63-75. Doi:10.1080/09620214.2011.543854
- Austin, J. L. (1975) *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press.
- Ballester, R., Velazco, J. and Rigall-i-Torrent, R. (2015) Effects of the great recession on immigrants' household consumption in Spain, *Social Indicators Research*, **123(3)**, 771-797. Doi10.1007/s11205-014-0760-1
- Brown, M., Gómez, A. and Munté, A. (2013) Dialogic processes of social services planification: The process of change in the districts of La Milagrosa and la Estrella, *Scripta Nova: Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, **17(427)**.
- Colorado-Yohar, S., Tormo, M.J., Salmerón, D. and Ballesta, M. (2012) Violence reported by the immigrant population is high as compared with the native

- population in Southeast Spain, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, **27(16)**, 3322-3340. DOI: 10.1177/0886260512441260
- Dai, H. (2016) From personal ties to village welfare: changing community bonding in post-socialist rural China, *Community Development Journal*, **51(4)**, 517-533.
Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsv048>
- European Commission (2011) *Conclusions of the “Science Against Poverty” EU Conference*, accessed at:
http://www.scienceagainstpoverity.es/Publico/Resultados/conclusiones/_Recursos/Draft-Conclusions_summary.pdf (29 November 2013).
- Flecha, A., García, R. and Rudd, R. (2011) Using health literacy in school to overcome inequalities, *European Journal of Education*, **46(2)**, 209–218.
Doi:10.1111/j.1465-3435.2011.01476.x
- Flecha, R. and Ngai, P. (2014) The challenge for Mondragon: Searching for the cooperative values in times of internationalization, *Organization*, **21(5)**, 666-682. Doi: 10.1177/1350508414537625
- Flecha, R., Soler-Gallart, M., and Sordé, T. (2015) Social impact: Europe must fund social sciences, *Nature*, **528(7581)**, 193–193. Doi:10.1038/528193d
- Freire, P. (1993) *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York.
- Fung, A. (2009) *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy*, Princeton University Press.
- Gele, A.A. and Harsløf, I. (2012) Barriers and facilitators to civic engagement among elderly African immigrants in Oslo, *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, **14(1)**, 166-174.

- Gómez, A., Puigvert, L. and Flecha, R. (2011) Critical communicative methodology: Informing real social transformation through research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, **17(3)**, 235-245. Doi: 10.1177/1077800410397802
- Habermas, J. (1985) *The Theory of Communicative Action. Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Vol. 1), Beacon Press, Boston.
- Heller, P., and Rao, V., eds. (2015) *Deliberation and Development: Rethinking the Role of Voice and Collective Action in Unequal Societies*, World Bank Publications.
- La Kosic, A. (2013) Migrants' civic participation: The European scenario, *Studi Emigrazione*, **50(189)**, 82-102.
- Mansbridge, J. (2003) Practice-thought-practice, in A. Fung and E.O. Wright, eds, *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, New Left Books, London, pp.175–199.
- Marrero, I. (2005) The implications of Spanish-Moroccan governmental relations for Moroccan immigrants in Spain. Spanish-Moroccan governmental relations and Moroccan immigrants, *European Journal of Migration and Law*, **7**, 413–434.
- Municipality of Terrassa (2014) Anuari Estadístic 2014 [Statistical Yearbook 2014], accessed from <http://www2.terrassa.cat/laciutat/xifres/A2014/index.php>
- Llopis, A., Villarejo, B., Soler, M. and Álvarez, P. (2016) (Im)Politeness and interactions in Dialogic Literary Gatherings, *Journal of Pragmatics*, **94**, 1-11.
- Paloma, V., García-Ramírez, M. and Camacho, C. (2014) Well-being and social justice among Moroccan migrants in Southern Spain, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, **54**, 1-11. Doi: 10.1007/s10464-014-9663-1
- Pasquetti, S. and Picker, G. (2017) Urban informality and confinement: Toward a relational framework, *International Sociology*, **32(4)**, 532-544. Doi: 0268580917701605.

- Redondo-Sama, G. (2016) Leadership and community participation: A literature review, *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, **5(1)**, 71-92. Doi: 10.17583/rimcis.2016.1998
- Rogozen-Soltar, M. H. (2012) Managing muslim visibility: conversion, immigration, and Spanish imaginaries of Islam, *American Anthropologist*, **114(4)**, 611–623. DOI: 10.1111/j.1548-1433.2012.01518.x
- Searle, J. R. (1969) *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Searle, J. and Soler, M. (2004) *Lenguaje y Ciencias Sociales: Diálogo entre John Searle y CREA* [Language and social sciences: Dialogue between John Searle and CREA], El Roure, Barcelona, Spain.
- Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Oxford Paperbacks, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Sordé, T. and Ojala, M. (2010) Actos comunicativos dialógicos y actos comunicativos de poder en la investigación [Dialogic communicative acts and power communicative acts in research], *Revista Signos*, **43**, 377-391. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-09342010000400008>
- Stokes, S. (1998) Pathologies of deliberation, in J. Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy (Vol. 1)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Tellado, I. (2017) Bridges between individuals and communities: Dialogic participation fueling meaningful social engagement, *Research on Ageing and Social Policy*, **5(1)**, 8-31. Doi: 10.4471/rasp.2017.2389.
- Vellenga, S. (2008) The Dutch and British public debate on Islam: Responses to the killing of Theo van Gogh and the London bombings compared, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, **19(4)**, 449-471.

Young, I. M. (1996) Communication and the other: Beyond deliberative democracy, in
S. Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference*, Princeton University Press,
Princeton, NJ, pp. 120 – 135.