Chapter 12
New Settlement and Wellbeing in Oppressive Contexts: A Liberation Psychology Approach

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Abstract This chapter examines the role of community, relational and personal factors in the wellbeing of new settler populations, based on our research and experience with Moroccan new settlers in southern Spain for more than a decade. Taking a liberation psychology approach, wellbeing is conceptualized as a multilevel and value-dependent phenomenon, strongly related with power dynamics and values of social justice in the host society. At the community level, new settlers' wellbeing requires equal access to key resources such as housing, employment, income, community services and formal social support, as well as intergroup relations based on values of respect for human diversity. At the relational level, wellbeing is based on positive and supportive relationships with both compatriots and the host population, and equal opportunities for social participation. At the personal level, wellbeing relies on personal control, self-determination and positive identity. The liberation psychology perspective is proposed as a necessary and innovative framework for research and practice with new settler populations under oppressive conditions.

Keywords New settlement · Wellbeing · Power · Oppression · Liberation psychology

Abbreviations

CESPYD   Coalition for the Study of Health, Power and Diversity
OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
HLM   Hierarchical Linear Modeling

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International new settlement has become a defining feature of our current global-ized world; for example, 34.8% of total population in Luxembourg is foreign-born,[1] 24.1% in Switzerland, 19.8% in Canada, 13.0% in the United States, 12.9% in Sweden, and 11.9% in Spain (OECD, 2008). Motives for new settlement may vary from the desire to look for professional and career development opportunities, better salaries and working conditions, or a more favorable climate, to natural and man-made disasters such as war conflicts, dictatorial political regimes, extreme social inequalities, poverty, famine and the systematic exploitation of natural and human resources. Independently of the motives for new settlement, international mobil-ity has usually the aim of improving individuals' living conditions and wellbeing. However, these expectancies are not always fulfilled, particularly in host contexts where new settlers are relegated to the most precarious employment sectors and marginalized areas with limited access to community resources (Hernández-Plaza, Pozo, & Alonso, 2004; Martínez, García-Ramírez, Maya, Rodríguez, & Checa, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Soon & Fisher, 2005).

This is the case of Moroccan new settlers in Andalusia, the most southern region of Spain, and one of their main gateways to Europe. The main motive of Moroccan new settlement to this region has been the lack of employment opportunities and social inequalities in their home country, together with the strong demand of labor force associated with the economic development of Spain during the last decades (Martínez et al., 1996; Martínez Veiga, 1997, 1999). Moroccans are the second most numerous foreign-born group in Andalusia[2] (see Fig. 12.1), where they get the most precarious jobs in terms of hardworking conditions, instability and low salaries; they
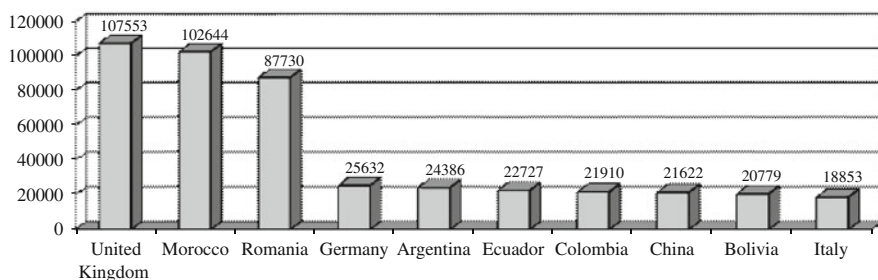
Fig. 12.1 Foreign-born population in Andalusia by country of origin (*Source:* OPAM, 2009. Information provided by the Spanish National Statistics Institute. Population census, 2009)

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[1] According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the foreign-born population of a country refers to all persons who have their usual res-idence in that country, and whose place of birth is located in another country (see http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1022).

[2] According to the official census of legal residents, nationals from the United Kingdom are the first foreign-born group of residents in Andalusia. However, when the number of illegal resi-dents is taken into account, Moroccans are the most numerous group, although the real size of this population cannot be gauged precisely (OPAM, 2009).

work in intensive greenhouse agriculture, as constructor laborers, or hotel workers, and usually live in isolated rural areas or marginalized urban neighborhoods, with limited access to basic community resources (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996). The proposal described in this chapter is based on our research and experience, over more than 10 years, with this new settler population in Andalusia. Our approach is not necessarily applicable to all new settler situations around the world, but it may be particularly relevant for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons who suffer disadvantageous and oppressive conditions in their receiving countries.

Wellbeing, Acculturation and Power

Since the work developed by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) in their classic study *The Polish peasant in Europe and America*, much has been investigated and theorized about the process of incorporation of new settlers into diverse contexts, from many different perspectives. Taking a liberation psychology approach (Montero & Soon, 2009; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), new settlement can be conceptualized as a process of ecological transition that involves the incorporation into a new physical and socio-cultural context, with important changes in prevailing norms and values, the social position of individuals, their labor and economic situation, their network of interpersonal relationships and their general living conditions. Proposed by the social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró in the mid-eighties (1986, 1994), liberation psychology tackles the underlying dynamics of power in human relations with the aim of transforming social conditions of inequality and oppression. One of the aims of liberation psychology is to identify, analyze and transform the ideologies of dominant and oppressed groups, expressed through attitudes and behaviors, which legitimate and sustain the status quo, and contribute to maintain and naturalize asymmetrical power relations amongst diverse social groups.

The liberation psychology perspective assumes an ecological view of the human being which emphasizes the dynamic interrelatedness of people and systems, with ecological factors influencing personal characteristics, and individuals in turn shaping their ecological environments. The ecological approach flows from the value of holism, suggesting that communities are open systems with many different levels and connections. Taking this perspective, we conceptualize wellbeing as a positive state of affairs across individual, relational and community domains (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2008). This ecological approach will allow us to examine the incorporation of new settlers into diverse settlement contexts in terms of asymmetrical relations between newcomers and host populations, based on dynamics of power and oppression, domination and subordination, privileges and resistance, at diverse ecological levels (Soon & Fisher, 2005). The liberation psychology perspective pays particular attention to environmental demands and contextual factors in the host society, as well as to the resources that new

settlers develop and mobilize in order to cope with the associated difficulties, and to resist and overcome oppressive conditions (García-Ramírez et al., submitted; García-Ramírez, Martínez, & Albar, 2002; Hernández-Plaza, Pozo, Alonso, & Martos, 2005; Hernández-Plaza, García-Ramírez, Herrera, Luque, & Paloma, 2009).

Taking this perspective, w*ellbeing* can be understood as a state of personal and social progress brought about by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of personal, relational and collective needs (Martín-Baró, 1994; Nelson & Prillestensky, 2005). We conceptualize wellbeing as an ecological and value-dependent phenomenon, strongly related with access to resources, and therefore conditioned by norms and values of social justice in the host society. Social justice can be defined as the fair and equitable allocation of burdens, resources and power in society, and it is considered an essential pre-requisite for collective, relational and personal wellbeing (Prilleltensky, 2008). The satisfaction of collective needs (sense of community, cohesion, economic security, access to health and community resources) requires social justice in terms of equitable access to public health, education, employment and other types of resources (e.g. transportation systems, opportunities for community participation, material and economic resources, etc.). Relational needs (e.g. identity, connection, acceptance, mutual responsibility) are guided by values of respect for human diversity and democratic participation in personal and social networks, based on social justice. Finally, the satisfaction of personal needs (e.g. health, protection, self-esteem) is sustained on individual values of personal growth, self-determination and the ability to pursue one's chosen goals in life, which are impossible to achieve without social justice (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005).

Nevertheless, for many new settler populations around the world, these ecological domains are characterized by unequal power and oppression. *Power* can be defined in terms of capacities and opportunities to achieve wellbeing (Foucault, 1979; Martín-Baró, 1994; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Some groups may use it in order to acquire privileges and establish oppressive relations with other groups, such as new settlers. *Oppression* is considered a state of domination in which the dominant group gains privileges over others, restricting their access to resources and limiting their capacity to respond (Fanon, 1963; Martín-Baró, 1994; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). At the community level, oppression is based on the economic exploitation of new settlers, ethnic discrimination in the housing and labor markets, unequal access to education, health and community services, and inter-group relations based on ethnic prejudice (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996; Martínez-Veiga, 1997, 1999). At the relational level, oppression rests on social isolation, lack of support and conflictive social networks (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996; Maya, Martínez, & García-Ramírez, 1999). At the personal level, new settlers can accept and internalize the dominant narratives of cultural superiority and ethnic prejudice, with feelings of personal worthlessness, lack of control, low self-esteem, and mental health problems (García-Ramírez et al., 2005; Hernández-Plaza, 2003).

The understanding and promotion of wellbeing in new settler populations requires an examination of the acculturation processes associated with intercultural contact in the receiving context (Berry, 1997, 2005, this volume; Rudmin, 2006; Sam & Berry, 2006). Acculturation has been defined as:

> the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioral repertoire (Berry, 2005, pp. 698–699).

At this latter level, two dimensions have been distinguished in the process of acculturation: a *cultural dimension*, which refers to the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills to live in the new society, and a *psychological dimension,* related with wellbeing and satisfaction with life conditions in the new context (Berry, 2005, this volume). Although some studies have shown that cultural adaptation leads to higher psychological wellbeing (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006, this volume), a considerable amount of research has described no relation between both dimensions, or even negative consequences of cultural adaptation in terms of acculturative stress, negative affect and less satisfaction with life in the receiving country (Rudmin, 2006).

Contextual differences could partly explain these inconsistencies. Despite general agreement regarding the key role of contextual factors in acculturation processes (Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Sam & Berry, 2006; Rudmin, 2006), surprisingly little attention has been drawn to the ways in which the characteristics of the local community impact the adaptation process (Berry, this volume). For new settlers and ethnic minorities, local conditions may be more important than national policies or general historical and cultural circumstances, due to the more proximal impact of personal experiences with racism, stereotyping and discrimination, and opportunities for friendship and social support in specific activity settings such as the neighborhood, the workplace or the school (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Verkuyten, 2000). In line with this, some investigations have shown that psychological wellbeing is influenced by the opportunities available at the local context for intergroup contact, social participation, culture learning, maintenance of own language and identity, and symmetrical power dynamics with the host population (Birman, Trickett, & Buchanan, 2005; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2009).

In accordance with recent recommendations in the field of new settlement and acculturation psychology (Asselin et al., 2006; Birman, 2008; Chirkov & Boski, 2008; Prilleltensky, 2008; Rudmin, 2006; Tseng & Yoshikawa, 2008), our approach emphasizes the need to consider the role of power dynamics and power inequities at the local context in both research and action with new settler populations. These insights have provided the foundation of our work for over a decade, examining the role of community, relational and personal factors on the wellbeing of Moroccans in Andalusia, where they are burdened with extremely asymmetrical conditions of disenfranchisement (see Fig. 12.2). The following section presents a study in which,

Fig. 12.2 A liberation psychology approach to the wellbeing of new settler populations under oppressive conditions
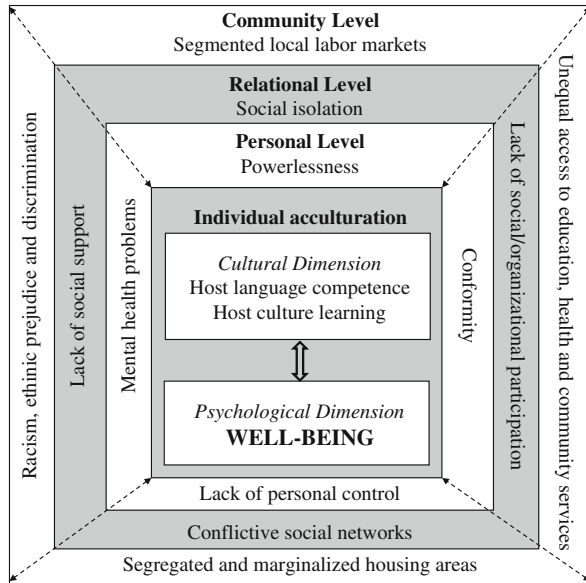
using hierarchical lineal modelling, we show how the relationship between cultural and psychological adaptation is moderated by contextual factors.[3] After this, taking a liberation psychology approach, we summarize our research findings and discuss their implications for practice with new settler populations under oppressive conditions.

Exploring the Relationship Between Cultural Adaptation and Wellbeing in Oppressive Contexts: The Case of Moroccan New Settlers in Southern Spain

Taking into account the asymmetrical conditions faced by Moroccan new settlers in Andalusia, we conducted an investigation that explored the impact of characteristics of the local context, at the community and relational levels, on the psychological wellbeing of this population. The general assumption of positive relationships between cultural and psychological adaptation was tested, considering that oppressive conditions may reduce the opportunities for new settlers to achieve a favorable psychological adaptation in terms of wellbeing. In line with this, we expected that

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[3]A preliminary version of this study was presented at the First Conference of Community Psychology (University of Puerto Rico, San Juan, June, 2006) included in thesymposium "Integration, assimilation and acculturation: What do they really mean?" with the title "Community integration of new settlers in asymmetric contexts: the case of Moroccans in Spain".

the relation between cultural and psychological adaptation would vary in degree and nature, depending on the specific characteristics of each particular context (Hypothesis 1).

More specifically, we expected that cultural adaptation, in terms of host language competence, would not necessarily increase psychological wellbeing, assuming that this relationship would be moderated by characteristics of the local context. The impact of two contextual factors was examined: perception of ethnic discrimination at the community level; and availability of social support at the relational level. Although there is empirical evidence about the negative consequences of ethnic prejudice and discrimination experiences on the wellbeing of new settlers at the individual level (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005; Liebkind & Jasinskaya-Lahti, 2000; Ryff, Keyes, & Hughes, 2003; Verkuyten, 2008), few studies have examined this issue based on the local context as unit of analysis (Berry, this volume). A similar situation can be described for the positive effects of social support, widely proven at the individual level (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005; Hovey, 2000; Hovey & Magana, 2002; Martínez, García-Ramírez, & Maya, 2001; Vohra & Adair, 2000), but to a lesser extent at the community level. In our study, we expected that host language competence would not increase psychological wellbeing in local contexts characterized by high levels of perceived ethnic discrimination (Hypothesis 2), assuming that this discrimination would be a strong barrier against opportunities to achieve wellbeing (see, UNDP, 2009), even for new settlers with high levels of host language competence. We also expected that the availability of diverse types of social support at the local context would moderate the relation between cultural and psychological adaptation (Hypothesis 3). Six types of support were examined: expression of personal feelings, social participation, positive feedback, guidance, physical assistance, and material support (Barrera, 1980).

The sample was composed of 298 Moroccan new settlers living in 12 different community contexts, including all the cities and villages with the highest presence of Moroccans at the time of the data gathering. Participants were surveyed in the 90s, when Moroccan new settlement started to become a significant and increasing phenomenon in Andalusia. Regression analyses were conducted in order to explore the relation between language competence, as an indicator of cultural adaptation, and satisfaction of life, as an indicator of psychological adaptation, throughout the total sample. Results showed that cultural adaptation favored psychological adaptation ($\beta = 0.442$, $p = 0.00154$, $r^2 = 0.02573$). Regression equations linking language competence and life satisfaction for each location are depicted in Fig. 12.3. In accordance with Hypothesis 1, results showed that a certain degree of host language competence did not guarantee an equivalent degree of satisfaction with life in all the local contexts under study. For instance, locations such as Granada showed no effect, while there was a very positive effect in some locations (e.g. Sanlucar, Cádiz), or even a negative effect in others (e.g. Níjar, Almería).

Taking into account these preliminary results, data were analyzed using Hierarchical Linear Modeling. HLM is an extension of regression models that constitutes a useful and powerful tool for capturing contextual variability in community research (Luke, 2005). It tests for links between variables across different
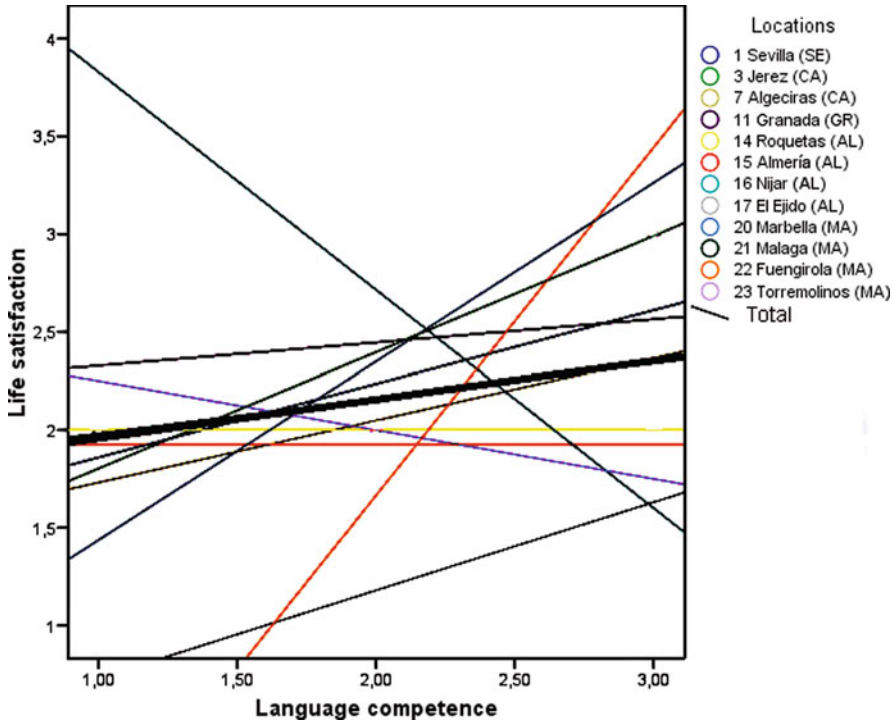
Fig. 12.3 Relationship between cultural adaptation and life satisfaction by locations

levels of analysis, including for example individuals, organizations and communities, instead of simply within them. HLM therefore assumes a multi-level structure of the real world, enabling for example the prediction of individual variables from contextual characteristics, and vice-versa. The first step in our analysis was a fully unconditional two-level HLM that yielded preliminary information about satisfaction with life in different locations. The component of variance among contexts had a significantly high value of 0.11566, showing clear contextual differences when psychological adaptation was considered. Then, we had to test contextual variables which moderate the relation between $(Satisfaction)_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{language})_{ij} + e_{ij}$ host language competence and life satisfaction; in other words, which variables modify the slopes associated with the different regression lines. The first-level regression model was[4]:

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[4]Equation similar to a typical OLS (ordinary least square) multiple regression, except for the *j* subscripts, that express a different model for each of the *j* second-level units (local contexts). Each local context has a different intercept and slope. Intercepts inform about the average life satisfaction in each local context for those people without any host language competence. Slopes show the effect of language on satisfaction.

The second-level variables were[5]:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{rejection})_j + \gamma_{12}(\text{emotional})_j + \gamma_{13}(\text{material})_j + \gamma_{14}(\text{guide})_j +$$
$$+\gamma_{15}(\text{feedback})_j + \gamma_{16}(\text{instrumental})_j + \gamma_{17}(\text{participation})_j + u_{1j}$$

Table 12.1 depicts the significant coefficients of the variables: perceived eth-nic discrimination, positive feedback and social participation. In accordance with Hypothesis 2, a greater perception of discrimination led to language competency having less effect on satisfaction with life. When the level of perceived discrimina-tion was substantial, the investment in cultural adaptation did not lead to greater psychological adaptation; indeed the relation may even be reversed (Berry, this volume). Regarding social relationships (Hypothesis 3), results showed significant coefficients for two different types of support: positive feedback and social par-ticipation. Feedback, typically obtained from compatriots, had a negative valence, meaning that the greater the availability of such feedback, the less positive influ-ence had linguistic competence on life satisfaction. In contrast, the positive valence

Table 12.1 Two-level linear regression of life satisfaction (psychological adaptation) on host language competence (cultural adaptation), adding community context explanatory variables

Fixed effect	γ	Standard error	t	df	p
For Intercept1, β_0					
Intercept2, γ_{00}	1.275	0.3299	3.86	15	0.002
For Language slope, β_1					
Intercept, γ_{10}	1.095	0.3798	2.88	8	0.021
Discrimination,	− 0.386	0.0098	−3.90	8	0.005
Emotional support	− 0.178	0.1233	−1.44	8	0.186
Material support	0.061	0.1436	0.42	8	0.682
Guidance	0.146	0.1576	0.93	8	0.380
Feedback	− 0.189	0.0623	−3.03	8	0.017
Physical assistance	− 0.011	0.1560	− 0.07	8	0.944
Social participation	0.226	0.0660	3.43	8	0.010
Random effect	Standard deviation	Variance component	df	χ^2	P
Intercept, μ_0	0.729	0.531	14	30.25	0.000
Language slope, μ_1	0.480	0.231	7	32.38	0.000
Level-1, R	0.907	0.823			

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[5]Given that we were mainly interested in identifying which variables of the local context explained the effect of speaking host language on life satisfaction, we dealt with the slopes, keeping the intercept fixed, with the random component due to contexts (u_{oj}); and create a new regression model where β_{1j} is the outcome variable, and the independent variables are the local context variables under study. Both equations β_{0j} and β_{1j} constitute the second-level variables. Then, we incorporated this second-level part into the first-level equation and solve the equation system.

of social participation demonstrated that the greater the availability of this type of support, the more positive effect had linguistic competence on life satisfaction.

Local contexts characterized by high levels of perceived discrimination may offer few opportunities for new settlers to improve their living conditions and achieve wellbeing, considering that ethnic discrimination may be a strong barrier for positive contact with the native population, and symmetrical access to employment, housing and community resources (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996). As a consequence, at these local contexts cultural adaptation does not necessarily lead to wellbeing. Under those circumstances, new settlers seem to obtain more positive experiences from contact with compatriots, using separation as a strategy to avoid the negative experiences associated with oppressive conditions (Berry, this volume). Social networks mainly composed by co-ethnics may have beneficial effects on new settlers' wellbeing, playing a key role as a source of opportunities for social participation and positive social interactions (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005; Martínez et al., 1996). However, they may also have negative consequences due to interpersonal conflicts, family pressures, emotional overload and limited opportunities for host culture learning (Maya et al., 1999).

A Liberation Psychology Approach to the Wellbeing of Moroccan New settlers in Southern Spain: Lessons Learned

In line with the previous study, in this section we examine some of the factors involved in the psychological adaptation and wellbeing of new settler populations under oppressive local conditions, emphasizing the role of contextual factors and power dynamics in the community, relational and personal domains. Taking a liberation psychology perspective, and based on the framework proposed by Prilleltensky, Perkins, and Fisher (2003), we revise our investigations and redefine the results obtained in terms of power and oppression dynamics, examining the impact of marginalization and social exclusion on the wellbeing of Moroccan new settlers in southern Spain.

Community Level

At the community level, oppression relies on the utilization of material, economic, legal and ideological barriers by dominant groups in order to gain privileges (Prilleltensky, 2003). In this ecological domain, key factors involved in the wellbeing of new settler populations are the opportunities and barriers associated with access to the labor and housing markets; access to community resources and formal social support; and orientation of the host population towards new settlers and cultural diversity. In this section, we examine the role of these community level factors on wellbeing.

The asymmetrical distribution of power through segmented *local labor markets*, that locate new settlers in the most precarious positions, and segmented *local housing markets*, that locate them in segregated and marginalized areas with limited

access to community resources, influence wellbeing by creating a structure of opportunities that limits new settlers' access to economic, material and psychosocial resources (Asselin et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Soon & Fisher, 2005). One of the most extreme examples of the oppressive conditions suffered by Moroccan new settlers is the case of Almería, an Andalusian province located on the Spanish southern coast, which has experienced huge economic, demographic and social changes during the last decades, due to the rapid development of intensive greenhouse agriculture, the most important basis of the local economy. Economic research has demonstrated that the success of this intensive productive system has depended, to a great extent, on the availability of an abundant and flexible labor force, able to accept extremely precarious working conditions (Aznar & Sánchez, 2001). This labor force has been mostly composed of new settlers coming from diverse parts of the world. It is the particular case of Moroccans, who work almost exclusively in the intensive greenhouse agriculture, with scarce opportunities to find a job in another sector, regardless of their level of education or professional experience (Hernández Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996). Their working conditions in this sector are extremely precarious in terms of low salaries, long working hours, instability, high temperatures, hard work, exposure to nocive chemical products, and legal instability due to the lack of labor contracts (see Table 12.2). Most Moroccans live in sub-standard housing such as warehouses, garages or shanties called *cortijos*, often made of plastic, many of them without electricity and running water. These sub-standard houses are often located outside the towns, in the greenhouse areas where most of them work (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996; Martínez-Veiga, 1997, 1999).

Table 12.2 Working and living conditions of Moroccan new settlers in Almería (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004)

Working and living conditions	Percentage of the total sample
Working conditions	
Type of contract	
Permanent	0
Temporary, full time	20.6
Temporary, part time	1.1
Working without contract	78.3
Working hours (per day)	
Less than eight	3.1
Eight	41.7
More than eight	55.2
Job stability (months with a job per year)	
0 months	4
1–4 months	16
5–8 months	50
9–12 months	30
Housing	
Type of housing	
House or flat	25
Semi-demolished house	22
Shanty ("*cortijo*")	42

Table 12.2 (continued)

Working and living conditions	Percentage of the total sample
Warehouse, garage	9
Homeless	2
Housing conditions	
Without running water	42.9
Without hot water	57.1
Without electricity	23.5
Without bathroom	50
Without shower	52
Without refrigerator	41.8
Housing access	
Very easy	0
Rather easy	1
Neither easy nor difficult	2
Rather difficult	3
Very difficult	94
Location	
In the centre of the town	5.1
In urban areas, outside the centre	19.4
In the outer suburbs	15.3
Out of urban areas, in greenhouse areas	60.1
Legal situation	
Legal condition	
With residence permit	60
Without residence permit	40
Type of residence permit	
Temporary, 1 year	55.4
Temporary, 3 years	35.7
Permanent	1.8
Family re-grouping	1.8
Married with a Spanish citizen	5.4
Perceived ethnic prejudice	
No prejudice	2
Very little prejudice	0
Little prejudice	5
Indifferent	11
Some prejudice	12
A lot of prejudice	14
Totally rejected	56

N = 100

Note: This table has been extracted from a needs assessment conducted by the first author. A detailed description of this needs assessment can be found in Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004).

Research conducted with Moroccan new settlers in Andalusia, using both qualitative and quantitative methodology (mainly qualitative interviews, focus groups, structured interviews and surveys), has shown that precarious working and living conditions are related to negative consequences across diverse ecological domains

(see also, Carr, Chapter 7 this volume; Maynard et al., this volume; Podsiadlowski & Ward, this volume).

At the personal level, they have been found to be associated with difficulties for the acquisition of the host language (Hernández-Plaza, 2003); scarce opportunities for integration (Berry, this volume) as a psychological acculturation strategy (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2009); low professional self-concept and passive job search styles (García-Ramírez et al., 2005); physical health problems (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2009); high levels of depression (Martínez et al., 2001); and extremely low levels of psychological wellbeing in terms of life satisfaction (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2009).

At the relational level, they are related with reduced and insufficient social support networks (García-Ramírez et al., 2002; Martínez et al., 2001); scarce opportunities for social support provision among family members due to problems for family regrouping (Hernández-Plaza, 2003); limited opportunities for contact with natives and scarce presence of host society members as sources of informal social support (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005, 2009; Martínez et al., 1996); and lack of social participation in the receiving society (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996).

At the community level, they are associated with negative attitudes towards new settlers and increased ethnic prejudice among the host population due to perceived threats associated with marginalization and social exclusion (Hernández-Plaza, 2003). Precarious working and living conditions are also related with problems of *accessibility to community resources* such as education, health services and *formal social support* provided by social workers, social mediators and other social intervention professionals, as a result of: (i) incompatibility with working hours; (ii) social and spatial exclusion in segregated neighborhoods with scarce community resources, or isolated rural areas with no public transport facilities; (iii) lack of basic resources such as running water or electricity, that make it difficult to attend Spanish courses or use other formal resources after work, due to the impossibility of maintaining adequate hygienic conditions; and (iv) lack of confidence, particularly in the case of illegal new settlers (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996). In line with these difficulties, a marked underutilization of formal social resources has been described in the Moroccan population, which contrasts with the extreme severity of their needs (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 1996).

Other barriers that may explain this reduced utilization of formal resources are: (i) language difficulties; (ii) perception of ethnic prejudice and lack of cultural competence in social intervention professionals; (iii) insufficient knowledge about available programs and services; (iv) low perceived efficacy; (v) authority, lack of reciprocity and unequal power in the relation between new settlers and social intervention professionals; and (vi) bureaucratization and problems in creating an appropriate climate for the expression of needs and the understanding of new settlers' perceptions and experiences (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2004; Hernández-Plaza, Alonso, & Pozo, 2006; Martínez et al., 1996).

One of the contextual factors that has received the most attention in the field of new settlement and acculturation psychology is the one related with the *attitudes of the receiving society towards new settlers and cultural diversity*. Diverse authors and theoretical conceptualizations have emphasized that positive cultural and psychological adaptation can only be successfully achieved in host contexts characterized by a multicultural ideology, low levels of prejudice, and positive mutual attitudes among ethno-cultural groups (Berry, 2005; Birman et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Ideology and attitudes towards new settlers and cultural pluralism are strongly related with power dynamics involved in intergroup relations. Discourses of racism, ethnic prejudice and discrimination contribute to sustain, justify, legitimate and promote intergroup relations characterized by asymmetrical power, dominance and oppression (Van Dijk, 1996; Wetherell & Potter, 1993). Based on this assumption, local community contexts characterized by asymmetrical power relations between new settlers and the host population are expected to show high levels of ethnic prejudice and discrimination that maintain, justify and strengthen ethnic segregation, marginalization and social exclusion of new settler populations.

Moroccans are the most rejected new settler group in Andalusia (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996), where negative attitudes towards this population are characterized by extreme manifestations of hostility, hate and explicit rejection (Rebolloso, Hernández-Plaza, & Cantón, 2001). Perceptions of threat are a central element in discourses of ethnic prejudice towards Moroccans, strongly related with the illegal situation of many of them, and their precarious living conditions in marginalized areas (Hernández-Plaza, 2003). In accordance with this, Moroccans have reported high levels of perceived ethnic prejudice (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996), particularly in certain areas such as Almería, where this perception of rejection has been related with a reduction of the protective effects associated with social support and low levels of subjective wellbeing (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005), and a decrease in the benefits of host language competence, as it was shown in the study previously described in this chapter.

Relational Level

In this section, the role of interpersonal networks, social support and organizational participation will be examined, emphasizing the impact of relational level factors on the wellbeing of new settler populations. There is wide empirical evidence about the positive effects of *interpersonal relationships and social support* on health and wellbeing, both in general populations (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988) and in the particular case of new settlers (Hovey, 2000; Hovey & Magana, 2002; Vohra & Adair, 2000). From an ecological perspective, interpersonal networks and social support are conceptualized as complex dynamic structures and processes, which evolve and change depending on the availability of opportunities for social interaction and support at the settlement context (Garcia-Ramírez et al., 2002; Hernández et al., 2005; Vaux, 1990). In Andalusia,

the precarious living and working conditions of Moroccan new settlers often lead to limited opportunities for contact with the host population in the neighborhood and the workplace, and lack of social participation in the receiving society. Moreover, perceptions of rejection associated with ethnic prejudice and discrimination often generate feelings of fear and avoidance of contact with the local population. In accordance with this, qualitative and quantitative investigations with this new settler group have shown a predominance of social support networks mainly composed by co-ethnics, and a very scarce presence of host society members as sources of support (Hernández-Plaza, 2003, 2005; Martínez et al., 1996, 2001).

In opposition to this predominant pattern, the presence of both natives and co-ethnics in new settlers' social networks seems to be a necessary condition for their cultural and psychological adaptation (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2005, 2009; Martínez et al., 1996, 2001). On the one hand, natives are essential sources of information about the receiving society (e.g., employment and housing opportunities, sociocultural norms and values, etc.), provide opportunities for host language acquisition and culture learning, and facilitate the development of a sense of belonging to the receiving context, avoiding feelings of segregation and marginalization through social participation. On the other hand, co-ethnics are a fundamental source of multiple types of resources (e.g., material support, information and advice, emotional support, instrumental aid, etc.) during all the stages of the new settlement experience, and play a key role in the maintenance of a positive ethnic identity. Moreover, social networks play a key role in collective experiences of resistance to oppressive power relationships, allowing new settlers to gain control over their lives, build personal and collective resources for self-determination and collective empowerment, and gain capacities to respond as active agents of community change for the promotion of collective wellbeing (García-Ramírez et al., submitted; Hernández-Plaza et al., 2009; Paloma, García-Ramírez, De la Mata, & Association Amal-Andaluza, 2009; Soon & Green, 2006).

Although most research has emphasized the positive, protective and strengthening role of social networks, they may also have important debilitating effects, particularly under oppressive conditions. Structural (e.g. high ethnic density, excess or lack of family contact) and functional characteristics of informal social support systems (e.g. family pressures, overload, conflicted relationships, tolerance of violence) have been shown to play a negative, debilitating role, increasing personal and social vulnerability, and reducing wellbeing (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 2001; Maya et al., 1999). Social networks with high density of compatriots and family members can play a key supportive role for newcomers, but they also have negative effects in the short and long term, impeding the host language acquisition, the insertion in non-ethnic employment sites, and the achievement of integration as psychological acculturation strategy (Hernández-Plaza, 2003, 2009; García-Ramírez et al., 2005). Debilitating effects can also be observed in social networks with a scarce presence of compatriots, such as loss of cultural identity or reduced protective potential, due to the lack of close ties and emotional support (García-Ramírez et al., 2002). Contrasting positive and negative effects of social support were also identified in the study described previously in this chapter,

where social participation was shown to increase the positive effect of host language competence on life satisfaction, while an opposite pattern was found for feedback obtained in interpersonal contacts, mainly with co-ethnics.

In this ecological domain, *organizational participation* is another essential requirement for new settlers' wellbeing in contexts of asymmetrical power relations (UNDP, 2009). Involvement in organizations such as labor unions, community associations in the neighborhood, new settler associations, and other types of organizations plays a key role in the promotion of collective wellbeing through the empowerment of oppressed new settler groups, the development of resistance movements, and community social action oriented to achieve a more equitable distribution of power and resources (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2006, 2009: Paloma et al., 2009).

Personal Level

Oppressive conditions have been associated with psychological dynamics of subordination that interiorize disadvantaged positions in asymmetrical power relations, through a lack of personal control, attitudes of conformity, fear, obedience to authority and violence tolerance (Martín-Baró, 1994; Prilleltensky, 2008). All these elements are included in the concept of *powerlessness*, referring to the psychological dynamics involved in conditions of permanent power inferiority, where individuals and groups accept their disadvantaged position, becoming passive and incapable of making decisions and initiating actions oriented to change asymmetrical power relations. This way, powerlessness contributes to perpetuate oppressive conditions, marginalization and social exclusion, usually leading to illness and lack of wellbeing (Prilleltensky, 2008). A clear expression of powerlessness in the Moroccan population is the low level of organizational participation reported by this new settler group in Andalusia. Extremely low levels of participation have been observed in diverse types of organizations such as trade unions, new settler associations and other community organizations, particularly in leadership and active participation roles (Hernández-Plaza, 2003; Martínez et al., 1996).

Socio-political control represents the opposite psychological dynamics, defined by the belief in one's abilities to participate in collective actions, influence community and political decisions, assume leadership roles, organize community members and promote effective changes in the social and political systems (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). Under oppressive conditions, socio-political control may play a key role in the promotion of collective wellbeing and social justice, through the active involvement of new settlers in resistance movements and community social actions (UNDP, 2009, pp. 61, 101).

The cultural and psychological adaptation of new settlers has also been related with other individual-level factors. According to Kosic (2006), these factors may be classified into two broad categories: (i) self-orientation factors, referred to the experience of reflexive consciousness by which an individual is aware of the self, his/her personality and identity (e.g., self-esteem, motivation, coping strategies,

anxiety, need for cognitive closure, locus of control); and (ii) others-orientation factors, which include skills and attributes that assist in the development and maintenance of relationships and effective communication in the receiving context (e.g. self-monitoring, extraversion, social skills). Research in this field has provided inconsistent findings on the relationship between personal factors and psychological adjustment (Kosic, 2006), possibly due to the embeddedness of the individual into broader relational and community structures that play a key role in the conformation of new settlers' self and identity (García-Ramírez et al., submitted), and determine their capacities and opportunities to achieve wellbeing.

Implications for Practice and Directions for Future Research

In this chapter, we have emphasized the need to explicitly examine the role of power and oppression dynamics in the analysis and promotion of wellbeing in new settler populations. Since the initial stages of the mobility process, the decision to leave the home country often takes place in contexts characterized by limited opportunities to achieve even minimum levels of wellbeing, under conditions of social inequalities, dictatorship and violation of human rights (Ager & Ager, this volume; also Miller, this volume). Although receiving countries usually offer better conditions to attain wellbeing, the incorporation of new settler populations is often produced under clearly disadvantaged conditions. Acculturation processes, and the associated cultural and psychological adaptation, are embedded in dynamics of power and oppression, domination and subordination, privileges and resistance. In consequence, failure to examine the role of power and oppression in the relation between new settler populations and the host society leads to theory and practice that contribute to maintain the *status quo,* often characterized by asymmetrical inter-group relations and lack of social justice (Carr, Chapter 7 this volume).

In opposition to power-blind theorization, research and practice, the perspective of liberation psychology is proposed as a necessary and innovative framework for the analysis and promotion of wellbeing in new settler populations. Taking this perspective, the need to examine power dynamics at multiple ecological domains is another recommendation for future research and practice oriented to promote the wellbeing of new settler populations. Failure to think and practice ecologically reproduces the dominant culture's emphasis on individualism and encourages the tendency to engage in "victim blaming" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). As psychologists dealing with problems beyond the individual, we need to de-psychologize psychology in order to work in different and more effective ways (Fisher & Soon, 2007; Smail, 2001).

A liberation psychology approach allows us to propose the following recommendations for practice with new settler populations under oppressive conditions: (i) emphasis on multilevel actions that take into account and connect all the ecological domains involved in wellbeing; (ii) emphasis on practices that promote the individual and collective empowerment of disadvantaged groups; and (iii) emphasis

on participative action-research and the use of community coalitions, as means to increase the applicability and relevance of acquired knowledge to the real practice of new settlers' wellbeing.

From an ecological approach, practice oriented to promote new settlers' wellbeing should be necessarily based on multi-level actions and interdisciplinary work. This has been the core of community psychology practice with disadvantaged groups (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). Taking, for instance, the case of practice in the field of physical and mental health with new settlers, it should necessarily be linked with issues of social justice and citizenship rights for new settlers, that guarantee equal access to health care and other community services (Ingleby, Chimenti, Hatziprokopiou, Ormond, & De Freitas, 2005). It should also be linked with actions oriented to reduce risk factors associated with the working and living conditions of new settlers, often in unhealthy environments (e.g. greenhouse areas with frequent use of chemical products), under conditions of isolation and lack of social support. Moreover, it would require actions oriented to reduce the barriers that often impede new settlers' access to health and community services, such as lack of knowledge, mistrust, language barriers, fear of being deported (in the case of undocumented new settlers), cultural barriers and perceptions of prejudice in health and social care professionals (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2006; Ingleby et al., 2005), usually related with oppressive working and living conditions.

Practice with new settler populations should also include an explicit analysis of the role of power and oppression in the problems under consideration, and should emphasize actions that encourage the individual and collective empowerment of disadvantaged groups. In line with this, the promotion of grassroots new settler organizations, as empowerment community settings, has shown to be a useful and necessary tool to bridge newcomers and the receiving society, their structures, resources and services, giving new settlers their own voice to resist and overcome oppression (Paloma et al., 2009; UNDP, 2009, p. 61). Participation in these associations promotes community development, encourages sense of community and positive identity, favors mutual help and the development of supportive networks, increases sense of control and reduces feelings of powerlessness (Maton, 2008; Paloma et al., 2009; Wandersman & Florin, 2000). Therefore, grassroots associations can play a key role in the promotion of changes in all the ecological domains, at the community, relational and personal level. Individual and collective empowerment should be the core of practice with new settler populations under oppressive conditions, oriented to change unequal structures, and strengthen citizenship and social justice (UNDP, 2009).

Recent criticisms in the field of new settlement and acculturation psychology have questioned the applicability of acquired knowledge to the real practice of new settlers' wellbeing (Birman, 2008; Chirkov & Boski, 2008; Rudmin, 2006). From a liberation psychology approach, we suggest an emphasis on participative action-research and the use of community coalitions in research and practice with new settler populations. Community coalitions are usually composed of researchers, key community members and practitioners (health care professionals, social workers, etc.), who work together collaboratively in order to carry out community-oriented

research aimed at understanding, denouncing and transforming situations of social injustice and oppression (see http://ctb.ku.edu for examples). The authors are now involved in the community coalition "CESPYD" (Coalition for the Study of Health, Power and Diversity), composed of an interdisciplinary group of researchers, key members of the Moroccan community in Andalusia (community activists and members of new settler grassroots organizations), and practitioners (health care professionals, social workers and volunteers in NGOs) that has begun to show positive outcomes in terms of individual and collective empowerment of the Moroccan community (see Paloma et al., 2009, for more details).

In conclusion, we suggest the incorporation of the liberation psychology perspective in current agendas on new settlement and acculturation research and practice, emphasizing the need to examine power and oppression dynamics at diverse ecological levels. Assuming that social research and practice are not value-free, our proposal is explicitly based on values of social justice and human diversity as necessary conditions for personal, relational and collective wellbeing.

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