The moral revolution

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Quality of life has been a very well spoken matter of the contemporary period. It is associated with day-to-day life's satisfaction basis and seems to be linked with high technology. Most available products found in the global market are associated, directly or indirectly, to quality of life. For instance, several types of research and the training of doctors, builders, technicians, as well as in services as such restaurants, boutique, markets and so on, are offered in a way to facilitate living and increase free time to enjoy life. Governments around the world are standing for human rights in such a way that the quality of life of citizens could ideally be granted all over the world. Sewer and transport systems, drinkable water, industrial food and a proper environment have been in focus to reach high levels of quality of life, increasing the life's satisfaction of their citizens.

However, what are people thinking about when they think of quality of life? What are the common sense ideas about life's satisfaction? What would be essential for well-being and quality of life according to peoples' ideas? Is there a common global thought about what would be essential for the quality of life? To answer these questions, I am presenting here a brief result of the analysis of contents (Bardin, 1999) of three different communities in three different continents, about quality of life and environment made on 2005. I know, it seems to be a long time, but it illustrates what people were thinking at that period in a way that you can re-think about your own quality of life experience and evaluate by your own if the answers gotten at that time have yet sociocultural valoues to think about our human condition or not.

The communities that participated of this intercultural insight are Vassouras, Brazil; Dieppe, Canada; and Bucharest, Romania. The analysis was made by the answers given from forty people from each country. The instruments applied in Brazil are directly linked to their quality of life and were developed at the University of Illinois, by Diener et all. (1997). These instruments are the *Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)* and *Scale of Positive and Negative Experience(SPANE)*. These instruments are available through the internet, where they can be verified, downloaded and permitted to be used the authors. On Bucharest and Dieppe, however, open questions were made regarding to the quality of their environment, for instance: "What do you think about the property of the urban space"? "Are you satisfied with the green areas around your home?" "What would you do to increase your quality of life?"

All instruments used allowed us to make qualitative categories regarding their own ideas about their *modus vivendi*. For example, responding to "what do think about the property of the urban space", one said "it's not excellent, but it's ok. Of course, if it was more pleasant, I would stroll more around with my kids on Sundays". This example show that the environment is "ok" (which is a neutral value for environment conditions, or "not bad nor good". There is, however, a condition to profit if it was better: the pleasure to spend time with kids, then kids are under the category of "family". So, a positive affect arises as the family being meaningful for enjoying quality of life and/or environment.

Thus, the method to organize data was to get all the answers together into categories of countries, and then into cultural/ individual values. Values were summed in order of appearance, underlining their importance by high number of frequency as a category. The frequency of semiotic values emerged from simple heuristics cues. No correlation between answers and context in which those populations live in was in perspective for the analysis of the data found. However, a simple picture of their urban demographic reality is given bellow for general appraisal and for the readers comparison.

The communities in perspective
Barretos, Brazil
Brazil life expectancy rates 70 for men and 73 for women (2013). 49 % of Brazilians live in urban centers. It is told that Brazil increased its population to10 million people between 2000 and 2004. The IBGE (the Brazilian institute responsible for demographical studies) estimates that the Brazilian population is around 180 million and will be around 260 million in 2050. Such a population increase even in a huge country like Brazil, may be seen as a threat to quality of life, considering that a rapidly increasing of population is associated with disorganized urbanization and many negative effects over the environment. Also, a rapidly increasing of population associated with aging and poverty can be correlated to economic risks to the public health. The high fertility rate amongst poor people and a high real estate speculation contributes for 35 million Brazilians living without a sewer system. 22 million Brazilian live in misery.

Vassouras is a small university village situated on the mountains of the Rio de Janeiro's State. Vassouras' population is estimated in 34 thousand people (2009). Most of its economy depends on the university jobs, its hospital and public service offered in that area. There is no industry in Vassouras. Pollution is not high in Vassouras given to this fact. Public garbage collection, water contamination and other problems are present though as a university town, Vassouras increases continuously its population with outsiders' who come to find any type of job directly or indirectly shaped by the local university.

Barretos and other small communities around Vassouras, like Cavalheiras, Buraco Quente and many others, live this contextual reality. The members of these communities are very close to each other like a family. They are organized and years ago, with the idea of ecology and environment, the community decided to recycle the garbage left in their surroundings. A recycle community centre was officially established. For more than 20 years now, members of that community collect, separate and sell recycle material. All work is done by volunteers who say that the money made is reverted to "the community improvement".

Bucharest, Romania
In contrast to Brazil, Romania has population growth rate of -0,26 per year (2000-2005). 55 % of its inhabitants, estimated in 19,1 millions (2011), live in urban centers. Life expectancy in Romania rates 69 for men and 76 for women. According to preliminary data from 2011 census, around 1.600,000 inhabitants live within the city limits.

In 2005, in Bucharest, there were two prevalent types of pollution: soil and air pollution. These two types of conditions together produce a favorable circumstance for diseases and damaged urban ecosystems. Both problems were giving an image of dirtiness. Bucharest has an old style buildings that indicate histories from the southeast european area.   After communism fell, people from Bucharest faced many environmental problems in town as 1) garbage collection (very small cans for the volume of garbage); 2) high taxes for collecting waste left on the streets; 3) vehicles parked everywhere; 4) sidewalks and streets in bad conditions; 5) unfinished construction of buildings.

Despite all problems found, people living in Bucharest say that Bucharest is a city of the opportunities. People explained the waste left on the streets by many reasons associated to poverty. The majority of the population showed desire to get better education, jobs, tranquility and health and suggested many ideas to enhance the city. They also say that they would be glad to participate actively for sustainable urban development.

Dieppe, Canada

Canada is a bilingual country with around 35 million of inhabitants (2002). 79 % of its population are found in urban centers (2001). Despite the rate of life expectancy of 80 years for man and 84 years per women, in Canada, immigration and relocation are continuously needed for economic growth. Francophones are a minority group. Quebec is the only Francophone province in the country. New Brunswick, where Dieppe is situated, is the only officially bilingual canadian province. All other provinces of Canada are officially anglophone.

Dieppe is situated in one of the nests of the Francophone cultures, a region called Acadie. Nowadays, Dieppe can be seen as the French suburb town of Moncton. On the other side of the Petit Codiac River can be found Riverview, the anglophone suburb town of Moncton. Both Dieppe and Riverview depend on Moncton's economy. As a bilingual town, Moncton public service is given in both English and French. However, the majority of anglophones are not able to speak French. Otherwise, Francophones were historically obliged to speak English and for this reason they are usually bilingual. 80 % of inhabitants of Dieppe are Francophones. Almost half of its population are under 35 years old. Dieppe itself is a young town that has been developed vary fast these last years. Most of its citizens came from the New Brunswick Francophone north area for working and studying in the Université de Moncton, the only French university of the whole area. Therefore, Dieppe population is made of families that were not born there. They came to town looking for job opportunities and better quality of life.

Dieppe's government and its population consider the environment as an important issue for quality of life. There are many program of urbanization that has been built with the Université of Moncton instructions in a way of following high standards of ecological and environmental matters. The town of Dieppe has nowadays around thirty parks and open green spaces, including 20 kilometers of pedestrian paths.

The idea of quality of life according to peoples' answer

Before peoples' ideas of quality of life are introduced, it is important to underline that, in this study, no difference of sex, age, education or status was taken into consideration. It was not a concern to classify "types" of people but their ideas about quality of life. It was sought, however, to find out what would be the gist for the quality of life of communities geographically situated so far to each other with no sociocultural or economic link between them. Despite their physical, historical and cultural differences, the only concern when analyzing data into categories was to find out if and what could be the common idea about what quality of life means to local people.

The data gathered from these three communities of Brazil, Romania and Canada indicates that categories as family and friendship are the most important values for having quality of life. In other words, social capital is more important than environment is not much important for living. Environmental preoccupations stand on the backstage of quality of life. People social net that reinforces friendship in a way of spending time to share social satisfaction is appointed as the most important value for their quality of life. For instance, to respond "What do you do to increase your quality of life", people answered common spaces for public communion like, visiting family, drinking with friends, playing games going to churches and clubs.

The waste found on the streets and the lack of sewer systems and drinkable water are seen as unpleasant conditions. However, people are more concerned about getting along with their families and friends than whatsoever. The idea of having social contacts connected with peers as it happens having family, friends, religion, club association and so on, is highly presented within the data of the three communities. Regarding consumption, even housing was as a place to enjoy family life. Activities for getting social *status* and economic wealth weren't either in the first place in terms of frequency. Studying, working and traveling popped up as category always associated with the pleasure of belonging to a group and/or sharing a good time with peers.

Whatsoever environmental conditions are, people are primordially looking for changing experiences of positive affections and live the best way they can. Even though communities are concerned about ecological conditions, people get familiar with their own environmental problems and organize solutions according to their ways, cues and ideas derived from common sense.

Some views based on answers found

It clearly seems that people are looking for changing affinities independently of what type of identity they construct on. The reality of getting life's satisfaction before quality of life seems to be, though, much more linked within the need for emotional affection than environmental conditions. Material conditions and its advancements - as technology - may derived from the social pleasure of getting emotional satisfaction with peers. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Facebook and other social nets are intensely used all over the world.

In our times, most of all communities in the planet have been producing and maintaining human living by the same global economical system. Governments and NGO's have been spreading universal acknowledgments highlighting environmental education. However, it seems that understanding each human being on Earth as peers belonging to the same race has been missing as an important ethical matter that could evolve the secular moral issue towards promoting cultural and individuals' acceptation world widely.

As "*Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live*" (Arendt, 1998, pg.8), humans are conditioned based upon cultural background and upbringing.

A democratic point of view may support citizens to feel free to make choices, since some secular values about environmental issues and respecting diversity are well set. This political point of view, however, stakes in which in turn may tolerate one predisposed to prejudice, stereotype and discriminate. Under the ethical matter of our times, tolerance is an acceptable social protocol in front of cultural differences since you don't manifest it concretely. Therefore, tolerance and acceptance are symbolically very different. Tolerance may indicate scorn depiction. It could be said that tolerance could be reviewed as not agreeing with and being indifferent to someone's diverging point of view, but still allowing silently "the different" to have opinion; while acceptance would go beyond allowing different opinions: it would mean to embrace other person's different opinion as part of the realm of possible answers to a single question.

Would that lead people to increase quality of life producing (not simply reproducing) new perspectives for human living?

The thought that the economy changes the relationship between human beings and nature is very well known (as referred in Arendt, 1958). However, as it has exhaustedly been observed many times in positive psychology, the satisfaction found on partnerships is perhaps the gist for the quality of life and subjective well-being. That means that to the social capital, to impose economical rules to introduce new ways of maintaining the world in its production quite differs to welcome manners of creating ways of living based on positive emotional aspects derived from acceptance in front of the unfamiliar.

Human life depends upon permanent exchange of goods, resources, ideas and affection. Under the rule of the global economy, consumption and its all system based on trading market has been largely diffused in stocks, profits, welfare and its environmental results. Human being is not apart of the ecology; human being belongs to a great dynamic part of the ecological process that is happening on nowadays Earth and perhaps, the highest known expression of emotional behavior presented on the planet.

Meanwhile Science, throughout technology and education, has been evolving important ideas about quality of life within global communities - as air and food chain pollution, global warming and so on. Common sense keeps people living the best way they can, defending common interests for their life's satisfaction. Science and common sense, however, are mixed according to the communities material and emotional immediate needs. Thus, acceptance may be one of the most important ethical values for life's appraisal, increasing the needed tension in society to discuss satisfaction in the human intercultural process.

> *"The ethical point of view is to struggle against the temptation to allow an existing code of authority to dominate the field of ethics entirely; the ethical idea is to maintain a crucial tension of a congealed code of authority and justice and a more porous fund of critical responsiveness that might be drawn upon to modify it in the light of the contemporary injuries it engenders and positive possibilities it ignores"* (Connelly, 1995, p.127).

In these terms, acceptance may be crowned as a human goal to reach a high standard for quality of life. It is, in fact, an old known matter very well referred in all times with intense tension. For instance, in Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliette would die if their parents would accept their love attraction? Shylock, the villain of the Merchant of Venice, would ask for revenge if his emotional needs were understood and accepted before any type of contract? Still, Otelo would distrust Cassio if their friendship were accepted as a stronger value over any type of jealousy? Please, do not tell me that's all just about natural human tendencies. We are beings that have shown capability to understand and change reality around us. It is therefore perfectly possible to understand and change ourselves.

We are all at the stake to get to know what a global family is like. To install acceptance for a higher quality of life, I would call a revision for moral values. Through ethics, I would evoke a moral act; I would call it "a Moral Revolution", in which acceptance of human life (and its emotional dimension) will be more important than any tolerance that still persists in our global economy days to promote destruction, prejudices, diseases and death.

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