

Narratives of Victims of Economic Kidnapping. Constructed Meanings and Effects of the Kidnapping

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The objective of this study realized in Mexico was to identify the constructed meanings of kidnapping and the repercussions of this crime on survivors of economic kidnapping. Sampling was by opportunity, having as a criteria of inclusion to have been a victim of economic kidnapping. We worked with nine Mexican citizens; two women and seven men; one participant was under-age. The period of time that they were kidnapped was between 3 and 5 days, two exceeded this time: the under-age was kidnapped 21 days, and another male about two months.

As a method, the multiple case study was used (Stake, 2013) and as data collection technique the production of narratives. For the generation of narratives, Chase (2015) was followed who suggests framing this type of interview with an open and general question so the subjects elaborate a story; In our case, the initial question was: can you tell me what happened (about the kidnapping)? and later, also with open questions, it was deepened about what the person narrated. These stories were audio-recorded and transcribed, making some modifications for better understanding but retaining the original meaning of the story. With the support of the Atlas.Ti software, a holistic and phenomenological analysis of the narratives was carried out. At all time the welfare of the participants and compliance with the ethical principles of research with people was observed.

With the holistic analysis, stable, regressive and progressive narratives were identified. Stable narratives are those in which the trajectory of the story or the person remains without significant changes; in the regressive, the valuation that the person makes decreases, the story goes in continuous decrease or deterioration; In progressive narratives the movement of the evaluative dimension increases with the passage of time, growth and improvement are observed (Gergen and Gergen 1983). All people interviewed meant the kidnapping as "terrible act" and "the worst that can happen to you", however differences were identified between other meanings contained in the regressive and progressive narratives. In the regressive narratives, meanings with negative connotations predominated, such as "punishment of God" and "event that destroys your life"; and in the progressive narratives, meanings with positive connotations predominated, such as "proof that I surpassed", "a new opportunity", "event where I showed spiritual strength". The effects identified were associated with the constructed meanings, in such a way that effects such as search for new personal goals, self-affirmation and empowerment were related to positive meanings and effects such as isolation and loss of interest in living, were associated with meanings with negative connotation.

The narratives we build are full of meanings about ourselves, our experiences, the world and our context. These meanings may or may not favor our development, in such a way that we must favor the construction of meanings that favor our full development, particularly in people who have experienced high impact situations such as kidnapping. Allowing people to freely construct a narrative of their experiences allows us to identify the meanings they have constructed, providing elements for interventions. In the end, meanings can be deconstructed and reconstructed.

Keywords: Case study, Narratives, Phenomenological Analysis, Kidnapping.



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