

Structured family, protective family

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Abstract:

Using a clinical approach, this research explores the role of a structured family in protecting adolescents who experienced potentially traumatic extreme violence during the 1990s in Algeria.

This research is based on the analysis of family representations of ten young adults who experienced terrorism during their adolescence. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the degree of structure within these families. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was also analysed in order to assess the subjects' defensive quality and intrapsychic adaptive capacity (by evaluating the coherence of the TAT narratives).

The analysis of the interviews and TAT protocols reveals a relationship between the degree of family structure and the psychological resilience of the subjects. In fact, subjects who come from structured families show resilience and the ability to develop defence mechanisms that contribute to adaptation.

On the other hand, subjects from unstructured families show significant psychological distress, leading to the use of defensive modes based on avoidance, inhibition or recourse to archaic mechanisms.

Keywords: Adolescence, family structure, psychological trauma, intrapsychic adjustment.

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Introduction:

Clinical psychology has often emphasised the role of the family in the emergence of various types of psychopathology resulting from the fixations encountered during the stages of child and adolescent development. At the same time, it has considered the family as an essential support system for the successful passage of the child and adolescent through these developmental stages. This study focuses on the latter aspect by examining the salvific role of the family for young people who are victims of extreme violence.

In addition to the normal challenges of adolescence that they have to overcome in order to make a smooth transition to adulthood, the adolescents in this study have also been confronted with a

Structured family, protective family

crisis of a different nature. This crisis is a social one, manifested in the constant presence of unimaginable violence.

For this reason, this study examines the role of the family in the protection of adolescents facing a double crisis: the crisis of ontogenesis (individual development) and the crisis of phylogenesis (collective historical development).

1. Context of the research

It is important to note that this research is based on two complementary contexts: a practical context and a theoretical context.

1.1. Practical context:

During our clinical experience as clinical psychologists in a psychological support centre that provides assistance to young people who have experienced extreme violence, often as a result of the terrorism that struck Algeria in the 1990s, we came across young adolescents who were directly affected by this violence.

Years have passed since Algeria emerged from the "black period", when death reigned supreme and gave way to life. Although the inhabitants of the regions most affected by this violence have begun to reinvest in life and reclaim what was once abandoned, our psychological consultations continue to bring us young adults suffering from various forms of psychological distress. However, there are other young people who have experienced this violence and appear to be in good health.

The practical context of our work has highlighted the ongoing psychological challenges faced by these young people who have experienced extreme violence during their formative years. It has motivated us to explore the role of the family in protecting and supporting these young people, particularly in relation to their psychological well-being and adjustment. This research aims to shed light on the potential impact of a structured family environment on the resilience and adaptive capacity of adolescents who have experienced traumatic events.

Thus, based on our clinical observation, there were two distinct paths for these young people who had experienced extreme violence:

1. Those who did not overcome the traumatogenic situation, moving from health centres to psychiatrists and victim support associations, without being able to imagine a future or achieve social and economic autonomy. They became dependent on any form of assistance and security that could be offered to them.
2. Those who showed a remarkable ability to adapt to their new life. It was as if they had undergone a double mourning process: one for their childhood and adolescence, and another for the loss of loved ones (father, mother, etc.), material possessions (house, etc.), institutional assets (education, employment), and even a part of their own body or the physiological function of an organ. They reached adulthood, drew on their experiences to better understand what had happened to them, and sometimes even transmitted this knowledge to others, including their peers and their children.

Structured family, protective family

These different fates naturally raise questions for researchers and practitioners. Each wonders about the variables that have facilitated or hindered the implementation of salutogenic processes. Among these variables, we are particularly interested in the family.

The practical data derived from our consultations at the Psychological Support Centre, including the synthesis of clinical cases and supervision throughout our experience of the suffering of those who have sought help at the Centre, allows us, firstly, to raise questions about the different outcomes of a traumatogenic experience in adolescents. Secondly, it allows us to explore the relationship between the individual, their physical and mental health and their perception of the family.

Through our psychological practice we have discovered a link between the nature of the family, the degree of its structure and the positive psychosocial development of adolescents. While the practical context has allowed us to formulate a preliminary hypothesis, further examination of the theoretical context is necessary to understand the specific relational dynamics between the family and the adolescent.

1.2. Theoretical context:

Turning to the theoretical writings on adolescence, we find that most of them define it as a developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. It begins with the appearance of the first indicators of puberty, namely the first manifestations of secondary sexual characteristics (Jeammet, 2002). Psychologically, adolescence is a developmental phase that prepares the child for the transition from the family to society.

However, this stage of development - adolescence - which has attracted the interest of various disciplines studying human development, is the subject of considerable controversy.

The literature describes three different positions on adolescence:

- The first position considers adolescence to be a mere continuum in development, without significant meaning. It sees adolescence as a recent social construct, an artificial concept or myth that hinders efforts to help children become adults (Pagan-Reymond, Reymond, 2002).
- The second position ascribes crucial importance to adolescence, seeing it as equally important as childhood in shaping human development. Proponents of this position believe that adolescence emerges at a specific point in an individual's development, separate from childhood, with the purpose of creating or constructing the adult (Gutton, 2000).
- The third position defines this period as a constructive phase in which a reorganisation of the infantile phase takes place through a series of behaviours and symptoms that challenge social constructs and personal stability. It is seen as a necessary transition to adulthood. This perspective has led many authors, such as Dos Santos-Berengard and Benghozi (1993), Crochette (1993) and Marcelli and Braconnier (1999), to give it different names, depending on their definition, such as the adolescent crisis, the madness of adolescence or the problems of adolescence.

The term 'adolescence' does not have a significant meaning in Freudian thought, as S. Freud (quoted by Cahn, 1998, p. 73) only briefly discussed the phenomenon of puberty. A. Freud further

Structured family, protective family

emphasises that adolescence is the "poor relative of analytic theory, its Cinderella" (quoted by Cahn, 1998, p. 73).

However, other psychoanalysts such as Deutsch (1974), Dolto (1988), Marcelli and Braconnier (1999), Gutton (2000, 2001, 2003), Cahn (1998), Jeammet (1995, 2002), Marty (2004), among others, have attached great importance to this process and agree that it represents a major crisis that facilitates the transition from childhood to adulthood.

While authors such as Winnicott (1969), Spitz (1968), Mahler, Bion (1979) have emphasised the role of the family in the individual's progression through various childhood crises, other authors such as Lemaire (1995), Lebrun (1997), Gutton (2000), Assoun (2003) and Scelles (2003) have also highlighted the role of the family in the individual's passage through the adolescent crisis. This transition involves a shift from intrafamilial life to social life.

Thus, firstly, representations of relational moments and emotional experiences within the family can serve as a protective framework by facilitating the process of 'subjectivation' during adolescence (Gutton, 2000). Secondly, these cultural and familial representations can also influence the roles and positions an adolescent assumes within society.

It is at this point that the concept of "goal representations" as defined by Freud (cited by Laplanche and Pontalis, 1967) becomes particularly relevant. It refers to a sequence of thoughts (whether conscious, preconscious or unconscious) that are determined by privileged representations. These target representations exert a real pull on subsequent representations. Thus, the representations that a child has of its family experiences (where its first contacts with the outside world and its first perceptions took place) can be transformed into goal representations that define or even direct the entire perceptual and representational complex that develops in the future.

While the family plays a protective role against the various forms of violence encountered in life, it is important to note that not every family fulfils this role. Family experts speak of a structured family. The family structure is also complex in the sense that it comprises several sub-structures. Each member of the family, as a human being, is made up of several sub-structures (organic, intellectual and psychological). It is a true "complex structure". A family is the result of the meeting of these complex structures. This encounter, when it occurs, gives rise to three distinct substructures (or subsystems): the conjugal subsystem, the sibling subsystem and the parental subsystem, as described by Minuchin (1998).

According to Fontaine (cited by Benoit, 1995), a structured family is a healthy family that must, on the one hand, maintain a stable structure with coherent relationships. This refers to the synchronic cohesion that manifests itself in its living space at a given moment. The other fundamental aspect concerns growth and change, i.e. time. The dimension of diachronic development of the healthy family is reflected in the adaptive capacity of the family group (p. 65).

In order to achieve synchronic equilibrium and anticipate diachronic equilibrium, a family must have the characteristics of a system, including function, goals and rules. For these characteristics to be effective, there must be "coherent relationships", as Fontaine puts it, between the various elements that make up the family and between the family and the external environment.

Structured family, protective family

According to Scelles (2003), a relationship is defined by the presence of ties and boundaries, because a tie can only be perceived and defined as such in relation to boundaries. Federn (cited by Houssier, 2003) prefers to use the term "boundaries" rather than "limits".

Thus, there is a "psychic" envelope that separates the constituent elements of the same family, allowing each family member to define themselves as different from the others and to perceive the bonds they form with each other. There is also a "family" envelope that connects all the members of the same family, but at the same time separates that family from other families in the surrounding world, allowing them to perceive the bonds they form with other families.

According to specialists in psychic structure, this envelope should not be completely closed in order to allow connections, as closure leads to the cessation of relationships and exchanges, and ultimately to death by suffocation. This is observed in cases of mental deficiency (Perron, 1997). However, this envelope should not be too open as it raises the issue of boundaries and differentiation between self and non-self. This structure is vulnerable to loss and alienation in the 'other'. It is evident in the problems of individuation in major childhood pathologies such as infantile psychosis and autism (Perron, 1997). This means, to use Bachelard's expression, that "man is a partially open being" (quoted by Benoit, 1995, p. 65).

The aim of a family structure is to expand and occupy an increasing place in society without losing its balance, nature and uniqueness. This goal is achieved by each member establishing relationships with other family members and by the family as a whole engaging with society. To ensure that these relationships are coherent, it is necessary for each individual in the family to have a partially open envelope that allows for bonds and boundaries with other family members, as well as a partially open envelope that allows for connections and boundaries with the outside world.

Minuchin summarises the concept of a well-structured family by using the same term as Fontaine, "healthy family". He states that "healthy families are characterised by flexibility in their transactions with the outside world, while maintaining a sense of family identity. In these families, boundaries can be described as 'semi-permeable', i.e. open enough to allow exchange with the outside world, but closed enough to maintain the unity of the family" (quoted in the FAT - Family Apperception Test manual, 1999, p. 6).

The conditions for a well-structured family are therefore twofold:

1. The family establishes relations with the outside world by being either sufficiently open or sufficiently closed to it. This idea is echoed by authors such as Benoit (1995), who states that "for families, the boundaries that delimit the family system in relation to the outside world and internally between its subgroups will be both marked and negotiable, semi-permeable" (p. 65).

Therefore, a closed family is a system isolated from its environment and, according to Lebert (1993), "the most likely hypothesis for the evolution of such a system is that the processes of the system, disconnected from the environment, will mark the progressive general equilibrium. This overall exhaustion will lead to a loss of complexity and the establishment of an organisation that allows resistance to inevitable degradation. This degradation corresponds to a loss of overall organisation, which, by analogy with the description given by thermodynamicists, is referred to as an increase in the entropy of the system" (p. 20).

Structured family, protective family

In addition, families that are too open "may lose their family identity by easily integrating strangers or by losing members to outside commitments" (quoted in the FAT Handbook, 1999, p. 6), according to Minuchin.

Therefore, a family should not be closed in its relationship and exchange with the social environment. If it closes itself off, it risks suffocating itself and its members. It becomes incapable of transmitting the demands of society within the family context. Such closure hinders the unfolding of the "narcissistic contract", as Aulagnier (1975) concluded.

A family that is completely open to the social environment loses its ability to judge and transform everything that comes from outside (Scelles, 2003). By losing its envelope, which represents its boundaries, it loses its protective function and its ability to establish links with the outside world.

Furthermore, it is important to identify relationships characterised by ties and boundaries between family members. Referring to Minuchin, Benoit (1995) states that "family functioning requires clear and well-defined boundaries between participants in the family group. In general, the two parents form the 'executive subsystem' in relation to the sibling subsystem. These subsystems must be clearly defined: the function of boundaries is to protect differentiation within the system" (quoted in Benoit, 1995, p. 46).

Thus, "the absence of defined boundaries reinforces the child's behavioural problems and the abdication of parental authority" and, conversely, "the setting of strict or abusive boundaries can lead to children having problematic reactions to any rules set by adults" (FAT Handbook, p. 6). In both cases, the family loses its structure.

For a family to be structured, relationships within the family should follow the following guidelines:

- The existence of relationships within the "conjugal subsystem". This means that there are ideas that are discussed between the parents and others that are not. Each parent recognises that their partner may keep things from them that they do not feel comfortable sharing with their spouse.
- The presence of relationships within the "sibling subsystem". Each sibling makes connections with the other siblings, while recognising the existence of privileged relationships within the sibling group.
- The existence of relationships within the "parental subsystem". This includes relationships between parents and children. All siblings understand that parents may share things with one of their children without involving the other, just as they may seek the involvement of a sibling in one matter without involving them in another. Both parents also need to recognise that one of their children can share things with one of them without involving the other.

From this theoretical and practical perspective, a question arises. While the role of the family in protecting adolescents from pubertal crises and various life traumas has been demonstrated by the aforementioned authors, does this theory retain its relevance and effectiveness in a context where traumatising events are revealed through extreme collective violence?

Structured family, protective family

Although the account of my clinical experience suggests that the role of the family in helping its members to overcome traumatic situations is more or less confirmed, according to the laws of science, this experience alone is not sufficient to highlight the involvement of the family in protecting traumatised adolescents from this violence. Moreover, scientific data derived from clinical practice are approximate in the sense that the therapist focuses on the therapeutic process and considers the relationship between phenomena only as a therapeutic tool, whereas the researcher focuses on the relational process between phenomena and the demonstration of this relationship is an end in itself. This is demonstrated by Bourguignon (1986) when she states that "one cannot do research and therapy with the same subject at the same time" (quoted by Giami, 1999, p. 42).

In order to verify these data, it is therefore necessary to move from therapeutic practice to scientific research, which is more systematically organised and therefore more appropriate.

- Does the internalisation of a structured family help adolescents who have experienced extreme violence to show psychosocial adjustment in adulthood?

2. Methodological dimension:

2.1. The research group:

2.1.1. Inclusion criteria:

The most important criteria for recruitment are the age of the subjects, their gender and whether they have experienced traumatic situations.

Age:

The research subjects experienced the traumatic events during their adolescence, i.e. they were between twelve and eighteen years old. Considering that these events took place between 1991 and 2000, these subjects must be between twenty-two (minimum age) and thirty-three (maximum age) years old at the time of the research.

Gender:

Although terrorist events have affected both women and men, this research focuses only on male subjects. It is the different paths taken by these young people after the events that have attracted the interest of their families and mental health professionals, and it is around these paths that the research question revolves.

The story:

Traumatic events in life are numerous and varied. Trauma depends not only on the reality of the event, but also on the personal history of the subject, the ego defences and the state of the ego at the time of the event. However, as mentioned in the theoretical section, everyday events do not have the same characteristics as the violence and massacres inflicted upon humanity. Such events have an extremely high potential for traumatising, to the point that the probability of trauma for individuals who have experienced them is very high.

Structured family, protective family

Therefore, our sample consists of people who lived in regions heavily affected by terrorist events in the 1990s, regardless of their place of residence after the events or at the time of the research. People who moved to the region after the events are excluded from our study, unless they also experienced the same atrocities in other regions during those years.

2.1.2. Composition of the research group:

The group that makes up this study consists of young adults who experienced violence during their adolescence. They were all victims of violence: Ahmed (24 years old), Mourad (33 years old), Farid (30 years old), Madjid (28 years old), Sami (29 years old), Ali (22 years old), Toufik (33 years old), Salim (27 years old) and Khaled (28 years old), all unmarried. Nassim is 33 years old, married and has a daughter.

Ahmed, Mourad, Farid, Madjid, Sami, Ali and Toufik were recruited by the teacher from the Sidi-Moussa centre (near the capital), while Salim, Nassim and Khaled were recruited from the "Djazairouna" association in Blida.

All the subjects involved in this research live in large families with an average of seven children (both girls and boys).

It is important to note that all these subjects have experienced terrorism and have lost either friends or family members in the following ways:

- Ahmed witnessed bomb explosions and massacres and lost many friends and neighbours.
- Mourad witnessed attacks and terrorist operations.
- Farid witnessed several assassinations, including that of his father.
- Madjid witnessed a massacre in which he lost friends and classmates.
- Sami witnessed massacres and lost family members (cousins).
- Ali was present at the Ben Talha massacre (Algiers). During the night, Ali was among the terrorists and his family and neighbours believed that they had killed him.
- Toufik witnessed bomb explosions and massacres and lost many friends.
- Salim was a victim of a bomb blast, held captive by the terrorists and witnessed several massacres.
- Nassim worked as a patriot, he was constantly threatened and he took part in operations where he saw dead bodies and mutilated bodies.
- The terrorists attacked Khaled's neighbourhood, burned his house, killed his grandfather and sister and wounded his brother. He also lost his uncle in another attack.

2.2. Research techniques:

We used two different research techniques. The first technique involves semi-structured research interviews aimed at assessing the level of family structure as perceived by the research subjects. The

Structured family, protective family

second technique involves the use of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) to reveal the psychological functioning of the research subjects.

2.2.1. Research interview:

The research interview consists of five axes organised according to a temporal perspective and ontogenetic temporality.

2.2.1.1. Axes of the research interview:

The first axis focuses on the subject's family representations before birth, exploring what they have learned from their parents about the lifestyle of their ancestors. This type of narrative provides insights into the origins of the subject's family narratives. It also sheds light on the ability of family members to integrate and transmit family characteristics to others.

This is the subject's first family representation, which has been passed on to them by other family members through their experiences and interactions.

The second axis concerns the subject's family representations during their childhood: their childhood memories. This period forms the basis of internalisations and family representations. It involves the child's early relationships with parents and siblings, which are later internalised as representations. This type of representation provides insights into the nature of the family in which the subject was raised before the onset of events. It also allows a comparison between the subject's representation of the family before and after birth.

The third axis focuses on the subject's family representations during adolescence, which coincides with the period of terrorism. This period is marked by events that caused significant damage to the family structure by attacking the bonds within the family. The subject's representations shed light on the extent of the impact on the family structure and the family's resilience during these events.

These representations help to capture the subject's ability to maintain continuity in relation to what they express in the previous two axes.

The fourth axis concerns the subject's current family representations, the 'here and now'. This axis represents the culmination of all the representations described in the previous axes, as it represents a compromise between what is currently observable and what is potentially engraved in the subject's preconscious and unconscious. These representations provide an understanding of the current state of the family and the subject's ability to reconstruct their representations after they may have been destroyed by events.

The fifth axis focuses on the subject's future family representations through their projection into the future and their conception of their own family. In this axis the subject is asked to imagine their separation from their current family and to imagine themselves in another family that they will build. This last axis makes it possible to verify what the subject has expressed about their family by comparing their past and present experiences with their projected future. It makes it possible to assess the degree of homogeneity and concordance between their representations.

Structured family, protective family

2.2.1.2. Analysis of the interview:

The analysis of the interview is based on two complementary modalities: content analysis and form analysis.

Content analysis of the interview aims to assess the degree of family structuring by identifying the nature of relationships within these families and the degree of openness or closure to the outside world, as well as their processes and effects.

The form analysis of the discourse, on the other hand, is based on Vica Schentoub's (1990) analysis grid for the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). This analysis helps to determine the nature of the defences employed in response to family representations that potentially threaten the equilibrium of the three systems of the psychic apparatus. Thus, if the defence is rigid, impoverished or archaic, it indicates a poor form of discourse (poor legibility), whereas if the defence is varied and consistent, it indicates a good form of discourse (good legibility).

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is a projective technique. In clinical psychology, projective techniques have been used in both practice and research for several decades. Most of these techniques consist of material in the form of more or less structured cards. This material serves as a stimulus for the individual to project their personality based on their perception of reality and their emotional experience in response to that reality.

Most of these techniques can be interpreted and analysed according to different theoretical models: phenomenological, genetic, characterological, experimental, sociological, psychiatric and psychopathological approaches can be applied to them (Chabert, 1997).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the projective situation is "an invitation to the subject to find a balance between reality and fantasy. This balance is within the realm of normality when it is achieved through flexible mental functioning, combining the realisation of intellectual potential, the expression of fantasy without disruptive overflow, adaptation to reality, social integration, without excessive repression of the affective life and without reduction of creative capacities" (Marcelli and Braconnier, 1999). The ego therefore uses defence mechanisms and disengagement to achieve this kind of balance.

The TAT is one of the most commonly used projective techniques in clinical practice. It is also one of the tools used in this research to examine the defence mechanisms and disengagement of the subjects in the research population. Once these mechanisms are identified, the readability of each protocol can be inferred. This gives an idea of the subject's intrapsychic ability to adapt to reality.

In the context of this research, the analysis of the TAT serves purposes previously determined by the researcher, rather than diagnostic and therapeutic goals in clinical practice.

According to Chabert (1995), "the psychoanalytic interpretation of projective tests, primarily the Rorschach and the TAT, has indeed contributed greatly to promoting their use as investigative and evaluative instruments in a diagnostic approach, as well as metapsychological tools in research in clinical psychology and psychopathology" (p. 96).

Structured family, protective family

The aim of this analysis is to identify the healthy psychological functioning of the subjects, which indicates a good defensive response to trauma. This indicates the presence of an internal predisposition to adapt to different situations in daily life. The TAT helps to determine whether subjects can use flexible and evolving defensive modalities that enable them to demonstrate resilience after being exposed to traumatic situations.

Thus, in this research, the TAT does not aim to achieve the same goals as those of classical analysis, such as protocol issues and structural hypotheses. Instead, it focuses on the quality of the subjects' discourse elaboration, specifically its readability. This readability provides an indication of the adaptive quality of the defence mechanisms used by the subject.

The readability of a protocol refers to:

- The presence of disengagement mechanisms and the different types of defence mechanisms used to elaborate the discourse.
- The arrangement and the way in which all these mechanisms interact to construct the discourse.

3. Presentation and interpretation of research findings:

3.1. Family structure (interview analysis):

3.1.1. Presentation of results:

The results of the interview analysis provide insights into the characteristics of the families of the study participants and the degree of family structuring. These findings are summarised in the table below.

Table Structuration of Families

Subjects Concerned	Family Structuration
Madjid, Khaled, Nassim, and Farid	_Content analysis of the interviews of these four subjects reveals a structured family. _Form analysis reveals a well-constructed discourse and above-average readability.
Sami, Salim, Mourad, and Ali	_The content analysis of the interviews of these four subjects reveals an unstructured family. _Form analysis reveals an illegible discourse.
Toufik	_Content analysis of Toufik's interview reveals a structured family. _Form analysis reveals an illegible discourse.
Ahmed	_Content analysis of Ahmed's interview reveals a structured family.

	_Form analysis reveals a legible discourse.
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Source: Author's research results

3.1.2. Interpretation of the results:

Of the ten families analysed, four families are classified as structured, while six families are classified as unstructured.

A) Structured families:

At first glance, these four families appear to be structured, as they exhibit the criteria of structuring identified in this research. However, when analysing the factors that contribute to their structuring, we can attribute it to the role played by the father. Thus, these four families are led by a present, flexible and understanding father. Effective leadership in these two families allows each member to find his place and to contribute actively to the development of the family. These two families are mostly well constructed internally, with the capacity to open up sufficiently to the outside world. The discourse through which these subjects present their families is generally coherent and readable.

B) The unstructured families fall into two categories:

- First, there is Toufik's family, which demonstrates an ability to engage with the outside world in order to seek further enrichment. The relationships within this family are generally of good quality. However, despite its apparent structure, this family's discourse is characterised by a number of ineffective processes, resulting in poor legibility.
- Next, the families of Salim, Ali, Mourad and Sami are unstructured due to excessive openness to the outside world. This lack of boundaries between the outside world and family dynamics leads to their deconstruction. In these families, the father is completely absent and unable to fulfil his structuring role. The discourse of these subjects is often dominated by archaic processes that make it illegible.
- Ahmed represents an unstructured family due to excessive closure to the outside world. In this family, the father is overly strict and leaves no room for openness for fear of losing control over the family members. The mechanisms of avoidance and inhibition prevent Ahmed from opening up.

3.2. Psychological functioning (TAT analysis):

3.2.1. Presentation of results:

The TAT protocols provided by the research subjects can be summarised as follows:

Table 2 TAT analysis Analysis of TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

Research Subjects:	Madjid, Khaled, Farid and Nassim	Toufik, Sami, Ahmed and Ali	Salim and Mourad
Summary of TAT Protocols	Average readability	Poor readability	Very poor readability

Source: Author's research results

3.2.2. Interpretation of the results:

These results indicate that the problem with these subjects lies in their psychological functioning, which seems to be the most affected.

However, the same results show differences between the subjects in terms of their readability and adaptation. Three levels can be distinguished:

First level:

Madjid, Farid, Nassim and Khaled. The four subjects show a readability close to the average, indicating a psychological functioning supported by various defensive processes. These processes show flexibility in their defensive work.

However, the protocols of Madjid and Khaled are more legible than those of Farid and Nassim. This difference in readability is due to the more frequent use of archaic defensive processes in Farid and Nassim's protocols, which affects their relationship to external reality. However, the presence of such processes has not completely affected the protocols of these subjects and the overall readability remains close to the average, indicating a psychological functioning that is more or less adapted to external reality.

On the other hand, in Madjid's and Khaled's protocols, the use of archaic processes is less frequent, even negligible, which makes their discourse slightly more readable than that of Farid and Nassim, although the overall readability of all four protocols remains close to the average.

Second level:

The readability of Toufik's, Sami's, Ali's and Ahmed's TAT protocols tends towards mediocrity due to the absence of disengagement processes. In addition, Toufik and Sami show inhibition and an overwhelming presence of primary processes. Ali's psychological defence seems to be blocked by phobic processes and strongly influenced by primary processes. On the other hand, Ahmed's discourse is hindered by inhibition processes with a few rare archaic processes followed by some tentative attempts at disengagement.

Third level:

This includes Mourad and Salim. Both show very poor readability in their TAT protocols due to the blockage caused by inhibition and the overwhelming presence of primary processes affecting their discourse. In addition, both subjects have considerable difficulties in adapting to external reality.

Structured family, protective family

Conclusion:

It is clear that it is difficult to emerge unscathed from extreme violence, regardless of the support and protection provided. As evidenced by the results, none of the subjects showed good reading ability, which is an indication of healthy psychological functioning.

However, the subjects who came from structured families showed greater resilience to the invasion of internal and external dangers. They tried to build up a specific defence against these dangers, avoiding the rigidity of inhibition or avoidance, while at the same time avoiding excessive flexibility and detachment from reality.

It is worth noting the role of family structure in the lives of these subjects. In all families, whether structured or not, the role of the father or mother is significant. With the exception of Ali's family, where the father is not mentioned at all, Madjid's family, where the older brother plays an important role alongside the father, and to a lesser extent Khaled's family, where the grandfather is often mentioned, the father occupies a central position in the other families. He is seen as the organiser or disorganiser of the family.

On the other hand, the mother does not seem to play a decisive role in the development of the families. Apart from Farid's family, where the mother is present and plays an important role alongside the father in protecting the family, in the other families the mother has a peripheral and secondary role, often assimilated to a horizontal character, receiving orders and instructions from the father.

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