

Study of Cases (Spain)

Personal data

First case

This 32-year-old man stopped living in a family context 22 years ago. At the time, he went to live on his own for a year. When his father died he moved to a monastery with a monk, relative of his, for another year. Finally, he moved to a residence for disabled people, where he is living now. These days, he hasn't got any close relative left. He shares a room with another two people.

He enjoys certain autonomy, but he admits that he needs some supervision. He knows how to take decisions by himself, but he often asks his supervisors for advice. Nevertheless, he is on many occasions easily suggestible.

With regard to legal and financial regulations, and due to being legally incapacitated¹, he requires in all the circumstance the intervention of his supervisors in order to approve his decisions. He receives financial resources from the public administration, from a rented property, and, on some occasions, he also receives some money for some work done. This income allows him his daily maintenance (meals and clothes), to pay part of the residence's costs, and to cover certain personal expenses and pocket money (newspaper, drinks, cinema, and other leisure activities).

Second case

This 26-year-old man has never lived in a family context He has always lived in an institution. When he was born, he was moved to an orphanage. Later, he lived in two residences for disabled persons. These days, he shares a room with two other people. He hasn't got any relative and he doesn't know who their parents are.

He has got quite lot autonomy and claims little supervision. He is legally incapacitated and, consequently, he requires the approbation of his supervisor in all his legal and financial decisions. He knows how to take decisions and can reflect about all their consequences.

With regard to his financial situation, he receives a retirement allowance from the public administration, and whenever he has labour contract he has got a salary. This compels him to drop his retirement allowance. These resources allow him his daily maintenance (meals and clothes), to pay part of the cost of the residence, and to cover part of his personal expenses (mobile phone, occasional drinks, tobacco, cinema, and other leisure activities)

¹ In Spain, 'incapacitation' is a legal situation, contemplated in the current legislation that is assigned to certain disabled persons in order to protect them. This situation brings about the assignation of a guardian, physical person or an institution, which is in charge of those aspects that determined the 'incapacity' of the person.

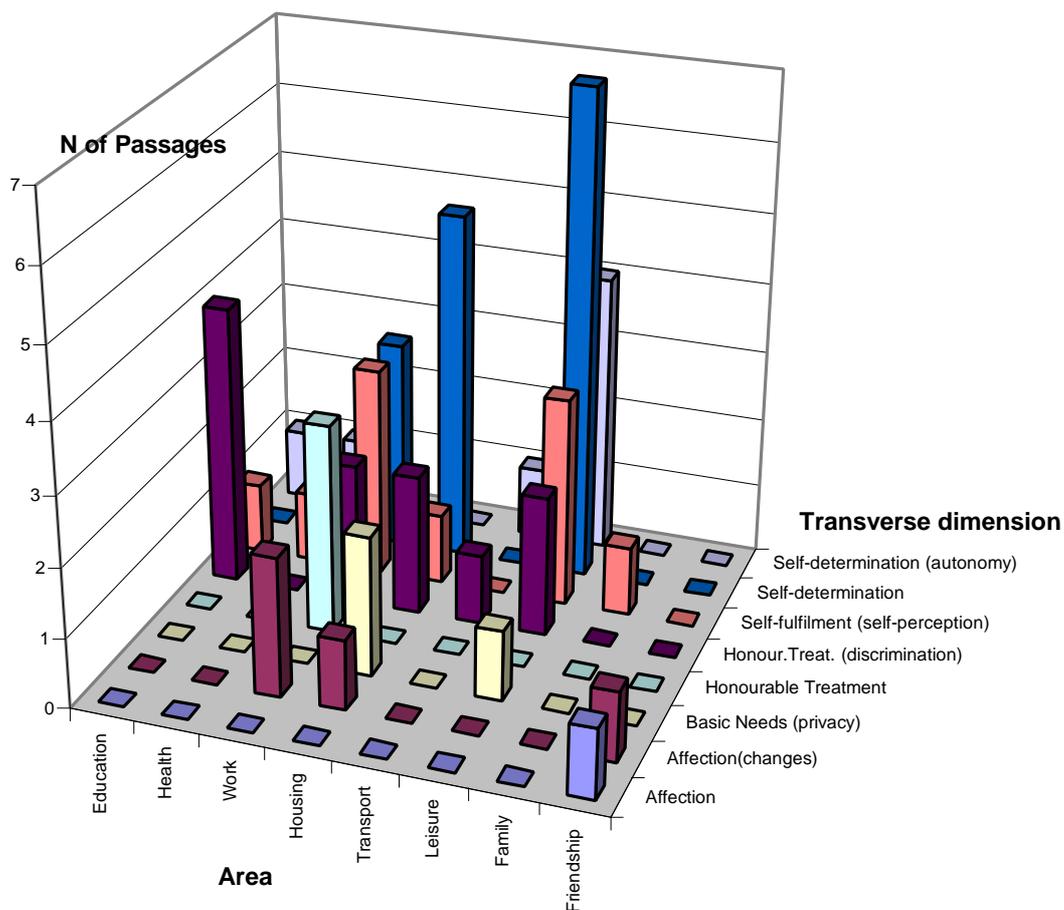
Issues to study

In order to analyse the interviews (all in all, 13 hours) we have used the categories suggested by the research group. We have added the following ones:

- ?? A new sphere (**friendship**), and
- ?? Three transversal dimensions (affection / **changes**, honourable treatment / discrimination and self-determination / **autonomy**).

This enlargement has been made in order to gather the different nuances aroused in the analysis itself.

We show below a first global approach (see graphic) in which we can observe what transversal dimension outstands in each field, considering the code passages and the transcriptions of the interviews.



Education

In this field, it outstands, - in the case who attended an ordinary school - the perception of discrimination in the treatment received by their schoolmates. On the contrary, it didn't happen the same in the case of the person who attended a specialised school.

Health

With regard to health issues, there is only some comment on some aspect related with the differentiated perception that one has got depending on the type of health record the patient has. "Those people who have a retired health record are not people 'like me" - one person interviewed comments, talking about another disabled person with a higher degree of disability - and depending on the fact that they have to go to the doctor's with someone else or not.

Work

In this field, there are some comments, like:

- ?? There is no sign of discrimination at work, in the sense that in this context 'nobody is pulled the leg'. Although this situation is common among workers who show certain sensitiveness with the disability matter.
- ?? On the other hand, though, there is a certain feeling that they are treated in a discriminatory way when they are not given any reason for the differential treatment between them and no-disabled persons (for example, the disabled person is not told why he /she cannot use a certain machinery)
- ?? At the same time, they comment that this is a matter of equality of rights and duties about very basic issues, for example: prohibition of smoking or having permission to go to the toilet.
- ?? Another instance, which shows certain differentiated treatment, is when the disabled person decides to quit the workplace. He / she is asked not to do so.
- ?? Apart from that, the disabled persons are absolutely aware of not having always enough trust from their working place superiors.

- ?? They are highly aware of
 - the relationship existing between work, salary and spending power,
 - the difficulty to find a good job (this implies a constant change of the workplace) and
 - without a good job nobody can aspire to a 'flat' (this implies to become independent and leave the residence)

Housing

One of the most commented issues regarding housing has already been mentioned when talking about work. They are very aware of the fact that without a good job nobody can aspire to have a flat, something that most of them are looking forward to.

On the other hand, there is a strong incidence on aspects related with the coexistence in environments, sometimes so much overcrowded, like residences: The need to follow rules, sometimes very strict rules), lack of personal areas, lack of intimacy, the fact of having to accept the majority's decisions (TV programmes or what activities to carry out).

One of the cases is also remarkable for the great number of changes of residence has been obliged to do during his life, with the consequent difficulty to create personal bonds.

Finally, there is the perception that living in a specialised context, such as residences, ensures a minimum honourable treatment from the professional people and their colleagues.

Transport

Given the degree of autonomy of these two cases studied, there has not been any trace or sign of discrimination².

Leisure

With regard to leisure there are some outstanding aspects:

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- ?? On many occasions, leisure is organised by the same institution (residence, educators' plans and programmes...). In some places, though, the disabled people are consulted and their opinions are listened to when it comes to organise some activities.
- ?? The fact of living in a residence, as we commented above, makes sometimes difficult to have a room to personal leisure (listening to music, watch a certain TV programme, and so on).
- ?? The degree of autonomy of these two cases studied makes them easy to participate in a wide range of leisure activities.
- ?? Generally, they participate in leisure activities specialised for persons with disabilities (either because they are carried out in a special designed environment. This guarantees them an honourable treatment.
- ?? In one of the cases studied it surprises the high degree of perception when it comes to deal with issues related with leisure: he recognises that there are differences for

² The local authority provides all the disabled people a special card to accede to any means of public transport. Depending the degree of disability this aid is applicable to a person to help him / her.

reasons of disability: 'Football teams were composed of people who are 'bad', one of the persons interviewed commented, referring to the members of the rival team. He also recognises that sometimes some leisure activities finish with some problems ('hooliganism, alcohol...).

Family

We can verify the consequent difficulty derived from not having a family: Whether they lack relatives or these leave far from them, they cannot ask for advice or help, they do not have anybody to listen to them or they are not able to know who their ancestors are. And they need this kind of help to reassure their own identity.

Relationships: Couple / Friendship

In this field, there are some comments made by the persons interviewed which deserve a few lines:

- ?? They notice the negative experience of stabilising and breaking bonds among their colleagues, friends, and monitors. What is more, they find very difficult to keep relationships out of the residence.
- ?? They see the need of a steady relationship with a couple, as 'adult people' do , with respect and reciprocal attention, as well as the possibility of sharing experiences.