EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT – RESILIENT SPACE: CHILD IN FAMILY DIFFICULTY

Priscelle Andeme Ngui Valandro[1i],
Loïc Chalmel[2]
[1]PhD Student,
Laboratory LISEC,
Department of Science of Education,
University of Haute Alsace,
10 rue des Frères Lumière,
68100 Mulhouse,
France
[2]Professor, Laboratory LISEC,
Department of Science of Education,
University of Haute Alsace,
10 rue des Frères Lumière,
68100 Mulhouse,
France

Abstract:
This article aims, first of all, to analyze emotional detachment for a child victim of domestic violence. Then, it presents this emotional detachment as a gateway to a space that allows the development of internal resources known as mature resilience. The resilient space is to be considered in our approach under a systemic approach. This approach focuses our gaze on the "resilient space" system as well as all the elements that interact for the same purpose. Emotional detachment and the creation of a resilient space are two complementary and important steps in building a resilient path. We postulate that in order to build resilience, a child who has suffered trauma in a family environment needs to first make an emotional detachment from insecure family attachments and then create a place of revival for his or her neo-development. In view of the strength and delicacy of the ties that unite family members, emotional detachment (which is not a family rejection) and the creation of a resilient space are therefore a chain that conditions the child who has suffered emotional clashes. They allow the child to move on while maintaining the family bond.

Keywords: child in difficulty, violence, trauma, attachment, emotional detachment, resilience, defense mechanism

[i] Corresponding author e-mail: vpriscelle@yahoo.fr, priscelle.valandro@uha.fr

1. Introduction

"The child has appeared to be loved and educated (…) it is around the child that the modern family has been constituted as the basic unit of society (…) the family has been founded around the child" (Flandin, 1964).

Reading these words, we imagine that the spotlight of family love shines on all children in all families. Unfortunately, other realities attack this affirmation: children victims of family violence. These children are those for whom the family nest is unfortunately enameled with various forms of violence ranging from physical abuse to psychological violence. These treatments alter their psychological development and cause trauma. Although healing is not possible with regard to trauma, however, neo development is possible from the unconscious defense mechanisms developed by a person exposed to traumatic shock. (Cyrulnik, 2012) explains that there are defense mechanisms that participate in triggering the resilient process, they are said to be mature. Other so-called immature defenses aggravate suffering and prevent resilient development. Our work concerns children who have developed immature or bad defense mechanisms. That is to say, very fragile children with problems that are inter and externalized because of the traumas that result from family violence. Our work also concerns children who want to be part of a resilient process. To this will, we ask ourselves how to make resilience in a context as complex and delicate as the family? Our work proposes emotional detachment as a way to become part of a resilient process. It (create) is done in three parts. In the first part, we come back to violence and the different consequences to which children can be exposed. Then we discuss the notion of emotional detachment and finally the creation of a resilient space.

2. Child in difficulty in a family context

Talking about the child in difficulty in a family context means talking about the family violence to which children are exposed, as well as the consequences for the victims. Family violence against children occurs when the family system no longer provides the child with living conditions, but with survival. To define violence, let us refer to (Bovay, 2008) for whom *"violence refers to physical behaviour and actions: it consists in the use of force against someone with the damage that this entails"*. Thus, a child who is a victim of domestic violence is a child to whom their family system offers conditions of survival, moreover, enameled with violence. Without combing through all the types of violence to which a child can be exposed within a family, let us take a look at what some common types of violence can look like.

Domestic violence is part of the phenomenon of child abuse. According to Vasselier - Nolli & Heim, (2006 pp. 185-207), children are objectified, commodified and instrumentalized during conjugal conflicts, whatever the nature of the violence might be. The author explains that the child participates in marital conflict in three stages. First, they are a spectator and are dumbfounded as an object. The spectacle of violence is

inflicted on him without any consideration or protection. The author specifies that these moments are also very painful. In the second stage, the child serves as a support to the victimized parent; the parent neglects their role as a parent and makes the child their confidant and the receiver of their complaints. The child is therefore emotionally overwhelmed. The third stage is the child's active entry into the fight. The child uses violence as a conflict resolution tool. They become irritable and anxious, is distracted and weary, assaults his classmates as well as his siblings because he identifies himself in action with the adult whose actions they disapprove of in words, basically they become violent in turn.

We count physical violence in the mix, too. For (Chiland, 2018), it is the exercise of physical force in such a way as to inflict harm, or cause harm to a person (...) it is a treatment tending to cause bodily injury.

In addition, sexual violence: in order to broaden the sexual violence that some people limit to sexual acts without consent, let us refer to the definition of (Bergheul & Fernet, 2018). Which, moreover, takes up the definition of the (OMS[ii] 2012), *"these are acts that can vary from verbal harassment as well as very varied forms of coercion ranging from pressure, social intimidation to physical violence and forced penetration"*. To these three types of violence, we also keep in mind, without developing them, abandonment / rejection, serious neglect, prettification.

2.1 The consequences of violence

Exposure of children to violence can affect many areas of their lives and jeopardize their development and well-being. One of the physical characteristics of children from families where violence reigns is aggressive behavior, stresses (Fortin 2011): they break objects, display aggressive behavior and borrow verbal violence (insults, coarse vocabulary...). For (Cudré-Mauraux, 2012), verbal aggression: threats, insults, insults... attack psychological integrity. Still talking about domestic violence, (Savard & Zaouche, 2011) point out that children's exposure to domestic violence leads to disorganization at the level of their attachment. Also, children's exposure to violence has traumatic consequences.

2.2 Trauma

For (Cyrulnik & Jorland, 2012 p. 175), the word trauma is derived from the Greek word meaning "action of hurting" and "injury". The author explains that the word transposed to psychopathology has retained a similar meaning and connotation. He goes on to explain that psychological trauma is the consequence of a shock exerted by an external agent that causes psychopathological changes within the psyche. The author takes again, in this respect, above on p. 7 of the same book Jaret and Freud who express "the idea that an external impact can tear the envelopes of the self and durably alter the intimate psychological world. ». Psychic trauma is the whole of the psychological and physiological damage resulting from an event undergone, where any form of violence

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[ii]OMS: World Health Organization.

experienced physically or morally varies individually, being linked to personal history. (Pourtois, Humbeeck, & Desmet, 2012 p. 8) underline that the notion of trauma refers to the way in which trauma, in the form of a violent shock or a lasting ordeal, produces a psychological intrusion in the subject as soon as the shock or the ordeal is metabolized into a representation that exceeds the tolerance threshold of his psychic apparatus. The trauma thus alludes to a shock, a tear that destroys you internally. (Cyrulnik & Duval, 2006 p. 88) on the subject of trauma think that it can be due to an accumulation of aversive events or repeated serious deficiencies, that can be of a traumatic nature (example: The causes of trauma are diverse, multiple and varied, ranging from the loss of a loved one, rape or other sexual abuse, moral harassment, violence, conjugal violence, humiliation, verbal aggression, serious neglect...). It should be noted, however, that each individual reacts to violence in his or her own way, through mechanisms developed unconsciously that are specific to them.

One speaks about traumatism when the self is submerged by an emotional intensity that exceeds the possibilities of psychic integration, when the mobilizable defense mechanisms are no longer sufficient to preserve the subject, (Anaut, 2002), when the mobilizable defense mechanisms are no longer sufficient to preserve the subject. These authors show the unfortunate consequences of violence on children exposed to domestic violence, especially the way in which the ordeal produces psychological damage on these children. This raises the question of how to overcome or at least overcome these psychological shocks in view of the delicacy of the child-parent bond. Before therefore tackling the notion of detachment, let us return to attachment in order to see more clearly the parent-child bond: its definition, the different types and how it operates between the actors concerned.

3. Emotional Attachment/Detachment

3.1 Attachment

Before discussing emotional detachment, let's first look at attachment. (Le Camus, 2013 pp. 201-211) describes that attachment is the expression of a need considered universal, irreversible and above all not derived from other vital needs. It fulfils the function of protection: the need pushes the young child to seek the proximity of their mother (or the one who takes her place) and proximity guarantees their survival. From childhood, emotional bonds are forged between the father and/or mother (or the person providing maternal care) and the child. These persons, sometimes called primary object, have a so-called primary attachment bond with the child. Attachment corresponds to a social need that develops through relationship and interaction. There is another type of so-called secondary attachment that the child can also weave with other members of the family or the peri-family emotional environment, explain (Cyrulnik & Jorland, 2012 p. 74) using Bowlby's terminology. Attachment can therefore be defined as the emotional bond that develops between the child and the parent. It ensures, through care, the physical and psychological survival of the child. The bond of attachment is an individual's link to the attachment figure. It involves the behavioural system of attachment. It is different from

the affective bond which is characteristic of an individual and requires a representation in the internal organization of the individual. The essential aspect of an affective bond is the desire to maintain intimacy with the partner (Ainsworth, 1989) cited by (Prior & Glaser, 2010). Note, however, that the affective bond is not a relationship because it is durable while the relationship is transitory. To better understand the importance of this bond, we need to understand the different types of attachment, the evolution and the impact of this bond on young children's development. Ainsworth's work, reported by Boris Cyrulnik, identifies different types of attachment: secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure-ambivalent attachment, and insecure-disorganized-disoriented attachment. It should be noted, however, that attachment is not synonymous with love or affection, according to (Prior & Glaser, 2010). These authors believe that the equivalent relationship between the child and the attachment figure is a caregiving relationship.

If attachment can be seen as an emotional bond that develops between the child and the parent, as we wrote in the previous lines, then how could emotional detachment occur?

3.2 Emotional detachment

We propose within the framework of the resilience of a child victim of family violence the emotional detachment as a factor of creation of a resilient space. To this end, the definition of detachment has just been recalled before we look at how it can be conducive to the creation of resilient space. According to Bowlby quoted by (George, 2007), the development of the attachment process is coupled with the process of detachment that enables the child to tolerate separation. If attachment is through the child and his/her attachment figures, so is detachment. Detachment is a process of emotional separation. The type of detachment is defined by the type of attachment between the attachment figure and the child. It is also and above all defined in terms of the psycho-affective context in which the attachment is deployed. It is a matter of mourning the consequences of traumas caused by family violence, which is accentuated by the transformation of one's emotions, one's feelings. In this phase, the child is preoccupied with questions of transformation. They try to redefine their relationship with the insecure attachment figure. The process of detachment or change involves a change in the representation of the child's self. In this stage or in these moments, there is a process of inviduation that takes place. They can then begin to exist as a full-fledged individual and especially free of the type of bonds that caused his trauma, free of the different types of violence that they have suffered. There is in this process a dialectic separation - individuation. To separate in order to exist as an individual. (Pine, 2004) quoted by M. (Delhaye, 2011-2012) in his doctoral work explains that the process of separation - individuation begins in early childhood and continues throughout life and influences empowerment. He explains that this process is not linear, i.e. the child does not leave a phase of dependence for a phase of independence. Separation-individuation is influenced by the individual but also by their environment according to Kroger (1998) cited by Delhaye, 2011-2012). Based on the case of the adolescent Delhaye defines individuation as an intrapsychic separation from

the family of origin, (Koger, 1998). He continues his reflection considering that it implies an emotional separation and differentiation. This process allows young people to establish a new type of balance in their relationships with their parents. The author explains that through this process, adolescents must distance themselves from internalized representations of their parents (separation), the goal being to be able to develop a more mature sense of themselves (individuation). However, as we have postulated, emotional detachment and the creation of a resilient space are complementary. Therefore, the child who has more or less succeeded in detachment can therefore claim to be entering the resilience phase.

4. Resilient Space

First, let's quickly go back to the concept of resilience. Resilience, as (Cyrulnik, 1999) expresses it, is the ability of an injured subject to bounce back, to hold on and to resume a psychic evolution after a trauma. For (Cyrulnik & Jorland, 2012 p. 8): *"it is a biological, psycho-affective, social and cultural process that allows a new development after a psychological trauma"*. Delage, pp. 269 to 287 specifies that it is an individual process that allows someone to demonstrate extraordinary abilities, abilities that seem to reveal themselves, to grow, to develop, because of the very fact of going through the trials. Resilience, in a broad sense, is assimilated to a process of growth; it consists of capacities potentially present in each of us and as such likely to be shared within a group, a community. (Pourtois & Desmet, 2002) specify that resilience is an active and not a passive process. Resilience is dynamic and takes place over time. The authors emphasize that resilience is a complex process, an outcome, the effect of an interaction between the individual and his or her environment. The different approaches to resilience refer to the process by which the subject will mobilize internal potentials, supported by external supports, to confront and overcome adverse and possibly traumatic circumstances, (Anaut, 2002). How is the resilient space built by a resilient person?

4.1 The constructivist approach to resilient space
The creation of a resilient space results from emotional detachment. It is assumed that in a constructivist approach, reality is a construction. It (reality) is initially non-existent and is made up of perceptible elements (Kern, 2015). This space is thus constructed during the taking of distance, which we have developed by evoking the concept of detachment, which the resilient subject carries out in the face of the figure of insecure attachment. It is a taking of distance which may not necessarily be physical, but psychological, affective… according to the internalized resources of the resilient. The space in question is not to be confused with the isolation that encloses the subject in socialization. The resilient space in a systemic approach is a system put in place by the subject who builds his or her resilience path. For (Kern, 2015), the notion of system is very complex; it is a hypothesis of reality and can be constructed by the subject at the same time as their or she bring into contact with elements that will be related. Thus considered, the resilient subject constructs his space when he takes distance. This type of distance does not disinherit the

link with the figure of attachment (the mother always remains the mother...). On the contrary, it is a time that generates questions, even doubts, a share of solitude, a space of freedom, of creativity. The freedom in question is about growing up and creativity is about gathering, starting and continuing. It is a question here of a distance from the facts of the trauma, of the insecure type of attachment figure without denying them. This distance is necessary for the experience of the bond. In this resilient space, the subject allows themselves to be, to live, to develop, to exploit, to value themselves. Or even allows themselves to enhance their resources for self-affirmation or positive existence.

4.1 Resilient space: place of development of its resources

The need to create a resilient space lies in the development and implementation of resources to make resilience happen. Marie Anaut, quoted by (Cyrulnik & Jorland, 2012 p. 64) points out that building resilience depends on intrinsic and extrinsic resources. It (resilience) is based on internal factors (personal particularities, cognitive abilities and skills, personality elements, defensive modalities, etc.). The resilient space operates in the confrontation of past traumatic affects and the ambitions of a better life. (Cyrulnik, 2005 pp. 25-44) believes that *"Resilience results from the interaction between the individual himself (...), between the imprints of his past life and the context of the moment"*. It is therefore a place for highlighting the positive side, for acquiring autonomy: a space created for oneself and by oneself, insofar as taking reality and experience into account is not appropriate. From then on, it is possible to evolve towards another self by relying on mature defense mechanisms.

(Cyrulnik, 1999) expresses that an injured subject has the ability to bounce back, hold on and resume psychological development after a trauma. Let us take (Cyrulnik & Jorland, 2012 p. 118) on defense mechanisms: *"Defense mechanisms include all the unconscious operations implemented to reduce or avoid what could endanger the peace of the self"*. They distinguish two types of defense mechanisms: mature and immature. The so-called mature ones are those that participate in long-term resilience, i.e. they help the subject who wishes to build resilience to follow or pursue a neo development. Because of the distance taken from the insecure attachment object, the resilient subject exploits his defensive capacities.

5. Conclusion

At the end of our work, we can respond favorably to our hypothesis that child victims of domestic violence who have developed so-called mature defense mechanisms can become part of a resilient process through the establishment of a detachment that creates an emotionally resilient space from the effects caused by maltreatment. The analysis of emotional detachment as a factor in the creation of a resilient space has allowed us to envisage that it (emotional detachment) allows us to take a transcendental look at the traumatic affects caused by the figure of attachment of the insecure family type. This detachment is important insofar as it launches the resilient subject towards a resilient construction.

The resilient space, under a systemic approach, is seen as a space of transformation and change because it offers the resilient subject the opportunity to take hold of them and move towards his neo development. In this stage, not only does the child, to return to our audience of study, shed the affects that have altered his or her life, but he or she also represents him or herself as a true self. They finally acquire the freedom and autonomy that propels him towards his new being. Detachment is an impulse, or even better, a departure flight.

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