Medical Anthropology and Ethnography.

An approach to a case study on immigrant health conditions in Spanish society

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Introduction

The present study is part of a current investigation: "*From the Migratory Itinerary to the Therapeutic Itinerary: Health, Illness, and Health Care among Senegalese and Gambian Immigrants in Catalonia*." The account is divided into two parts. In the first, the phenomenon of immigration is presented, as well as the contextual variables, which make its explanation a problem.

In the second part, some of Medical Anthropology's methodological and conceptual starting points are presented and such aspects as health, illness, and health care processes are analysed in the specific social group discussed here, that is, the Senegalese and Gambian immigrants residing in Catalonia.

Part I

1. Ethnography as a qualitative perspective in approaching a specific reality and phenomenon

From a relational stance, it is important to compare the different points of view of the players ("emic" aspects) within a holistic framework that assumes the dialectic between micro- and macro-social levels [1]. In this way, the "anthropological glance" will focus on recognising and explaining the cultural implications that exist in the distinct social groups and their practic-

es, within the framework of the processes of broader socio-cultural interaction. It will also characterise and deepen the knowledge of little-known complex realities, which the dominant culture may attempt to eliminate [2].

Ethnography should begin from the acknowledgement of "not knowing" [3], and begin serving (and not self-serving), giving voice to those who have voices, but are not heard, acting in this way as a vehicle, bridge, or mechanism in the communication of knowledge from other, distinct realities. If we adopt as an axiom the fact that science as a social product is never free from values and prejudices, we will find that the very act of comprehending involves an interest in transformation. All of us assume a stance, an ethical, political, and/or human role, when faced with the reality being studied and the people with whom we interact. In ethnography, the researcher considers him/herself to be the instrument, par excellence, with all that this implies (ideology, subjectivity, etc., as conditioners for his/her interpretations regarding the reality or the phenomenon being studied). In addition, the flexibility of the qualitative investigation's design is a distinctive element. Because the researcher is often going to study an unfamiliar reality, the design should be open and circular, in this way allowing constant redefinition of objectives, hypotheses, and other components of the project, including intuitions.

As researchers, we carry out numerous journeys through time and space, from the field to academia and from academia to the field again (as well as other places). It is in this sense that "the field" is redefined. It ceases to be simply a place or a population, and it becomes confined and defined in terms of the power relationships, which are demonstrated within the distinct spheres of interaction. For this reason, the field is not limited to the mere activity of displacing oneself to a determined site in order to carry out a study; rather, it is to be found throughout the investigative processes. C. Katz (1994) proposes the concept of "intermediary space" to designate the varied spaces occupied simultaneously by the researcher. We are never totally inside or outside the research area, and power relationships exist in all areas. Moreover, it is important to analyse the different journeys that we make strategically throughout our investigations [4].

In the ethnographies based on alternative paradigms [5], the criticism of positivistic viewpoints, the quality of social actions and the demonstration of their heterogeneity and their relational logic, expressed in words, images, narration's and observations is extremely important. The information is obtained through such techniques and procedures as participant observation, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions and others. Moreover, the discourse and its significance is rel-

evant to qualitative approximations. Finally, the reconstruction and the analysis of the life trajectories of the players [6] is effective at gathering information about the reality of the subjects and the group studied. Likewise, photographic and motion pictures materials and equipment can improve the investigation.

2. Several starting points for the analysis

A) It is important to approach knowledge about the subjects' way of life by starting from the contrast provided by the explanation (the *emic* point of view). This is essential, in itself, in any social research. It is even more essential if it deals with "labelled" human beings, "stereotyped" or "stigmatised" as a specific group by the State and its institutions (medical, police, political, etc.). In this case, they are "immigrants" or "foreigners," a label which marks their existence within their multiple dimensions and decisions.

B) The modern/urban/post-industrial society that is studied is culturally diverse and heterogeneous (different cultural concepts and meanings attributed to actions, things and/or phenomena). It is also dual in its socio-political aspects: formed by exclusion and yet integrated in the system. The importance of this last point lies in the complexity of analysing the problem within the conflictive context where inter-cultural relationships are developed. At the same time, it must be pointed out that the group of State institutions tends to retransmit and interject the hegemonic, cultural values that support them into the studied subjects. These, many times, are in conflict with those values that correspond to sub-alternate sectors, which belong to different socio-cultural realities [7]. In this sense, as I shall attempt to discuss later, the phenomenon of immigration can become a "problem" and, as such, be subject to control and stigmatisation by the State and its institutions (including the mass media), along with the socio-political consequences that this causes. In the case of migrations, stigmatisation

> «is unleashed in those situations in which 'the other' is presented as a dangerous rival in the fight for the limited basic resources available to the group (at an economic level, public administration, etc.). It is also so in the fight for the preservation of their very identity. That is to say, it is like a smokescreen (or a "Judas goat"), used to divert the responsibilities of many of society's evils towards the outside.» (Romaní, 1999: 120) [8].

C) The current migrations being analysed are understood to be consequences-manifestations of the unequal development of the world capitalist system, which in its contemporary stage is defined as neo-liberalism. Also involved are elements of another type, such as the possible expectations of

the individual to better himself, the dynamics of social control, etc. Immi-gration will be approached in the studied context as a "total, socio-cultural phenomenon," which has originated and has continued to reproduce and historically transform itself, within the framework of material and symbol-ic processes, throughout the world (economic, political, cultural, social, etc.).

D) Research which has theory as its central issue tries to give a conceptual analysis of the dynamics of the migratory lines and networks [9], on the one hand, bettering the static, abstract, and simplified approaches, which only consider macro-structural variables. And, on the other hand, it tries to refute the neo-classical theory of immigration that regards migratory proc-esses from an exclusively individual perspective (Malgesini, 1998).

E) In my case, as a migrant researcher – a Latin American resident in Europe – I approach the problem of a population's journey through its burden of everyday life, which on repeated occasions the European-cen-tred discourse makes completely obvious. At the same time, it is essential to analyse the interaction among the issuing countries, as well as the strat-egies generated by the migrant workers themselves, within their distinct receiving contexts.

3. Globalisation, the European Union, and the flux of workers

Globalisation is the current stage of the world's capitalist development, which economically involves expansion of the market, the hegemony of finance capital, and a war among the two hundred most powerful transna-tional companies on the planet to conquer new markets and territories. The ideology that supports this process is neo-liberalism, which tries to infiltrate in a uniform and global manner all of the spheres of social, polit-ical and cultural life within today's societies.

On one hand, the unification of the entire world into one single market and neo-liberalism operates under a process of «destruction and depopu-lation» and on the other hand the "reconstruction and reordering" of re-gions and nations, in order to open new markets and modernise those markets which already exist (insurgent sub-commander Marcos, 1996).

Within the European Union, economic globalisation has managed to erase the borders between rival states (enemies for a long time) and has required them to meet and consider political union. Political "unification" produced by neo-liberalism is economic. It is the unification of markets in order to facilitate the circulation of money and goods. In the gigantic world hyper-markets, merchandise circulates freely, but people do not. They try to elimi-

nate the first who try to circulate, if not controlled. The people who do not circulate "legally" or "with their papers" are pursued.

In each phase of the capitalist process, the "New World Order" organises a flux of workers, both specialised and non-specialised, to go where they are needed. Much of the international politics of different countries has adjusted to this analysis. (This includes, as part of those political wars and ethnic conflicts, regional hyperinflation, high indices of evacuation, the "dollarisation" of economies, etc.)

It can be said, then, that the migratory politics of neo-liberalism is more oriented towards destabilising the world's work market than towards stopping immigration. The work markets, as such, are more and more defined by migratory fluxes. Close to home, for example, we have a great flux of migrant workers arriving in Spain. They come from countries where the economic and social work situations are becoming more and more untenable as a consequence of the settlement plans of the FMI and the World Bank, within the relevant neo-liberal models.

4. *Current migrations as part and consequence of this process*

At the beginning of the nineties, it became clear that global migratory movement was increasing, fundamentally from peripheral countries towards central countries [10]. The structural situation in many peripheral countries is characterised fundamentally by the inequality in the distribution of income, the majority of the young population (a good part of the active economic population) without work or under-employed, and a high percentage of the population with its basic necessities unsatisfied. From a strictly economic point of view, the phenomenon of immigration refers us to the process of re-accommodation of the work force into the new globalised market of world employment. So-called "rural modernisation," which international financial markets demand for those countries determined to be "Third World" [11], has a great impact on traditional, social and economic relationships (e.g., family, community, co-operative, etc.) As in wartime, this provokes a mass exodus into the cities from the country. Upon the disappearance of local and regional markets, small and medium-sized producers see that they are unprotected and cannot compete with the transnational companies. The companies go bankrupt, and the workers end up unemployed. Meanwhile, in the urban areas, the work market becomes over-loaded, and the unequal distribution of income is predominant. All of this establishes a critical situation, which offers a propitious framework for looking for better conditions of life in more developed countries.

"World War Four," with its process of destruction/depopulation and reconstruction/reordering, provokes the displacement of millions of people. Their destiny will be to wander, with their nightmares on their backs. They will threaten the job stability of the employed workers in different nations, and will be considered an enemy, to replace the image of the employer. They will be a pretext for giving sense to the unjust racist, who has been created by neo-liberalism (insurgent sub-commander Marcos, 1996: 24).

In the case of the European Union, the political factors, which interact in the control of migrations (through the Schengen Treaty), correspond to a perspective of repressed contention. It is «a coherent politics, with a complete line-up of orientations, regimentation and actions, that have been developing in the European democracies since the mid-seventies. They outlined the dilemma, 'Liberty-Security', and they have chosen the second «(Romaní, 1999: 126) in the world "without borders," in the "global village.» Millions of people suffer xenophobic persecution, job instability, and the loss of their cultural identity of origin, political repression, hunger, prison, and death. With different names and under legal differentiation, sharing a miserable equality, migrants or refugees or the displaced people from all over the worlds are "foreigners" who are either tolerated or rejected [12].

5. Context for the rise in the "problem" of immigration in Spain

The fact that immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in this country is reflected in the progressive change in status from a "country of emigration" to a "country of transit" and then, later, to a "country of settlement." Also to be noted is the deficient administrative and institutional handling of the rise in immigration, treating it as a "problem." This is reflected in the few investigations, which have been carried out from a socio-cultural point of view, oriented towards knowledge of the migrant populations, their specific processes, and their perceptions as players. Information is given about the central elements of each collective, such as its lifestyles, the codes and cultural guidelines that sustain them and affect their migratory networks, as well as the ways in which they insert themselves into a receiving society. Also included is the way in which they carry out the process of reconstructing their identities. All of this is contained in the framework of a current socio-political context, unfavourable for the integration of extra-Community immigrants, into a Europe, that day by day continues to reinforce its legal and real fences.

The discussions about extra-Community migration began to deepen when Spain became a member of the European Union in 1986. This act as-

signed to the Peninsula the role of the "Southern Frontier", the intended "European Fortress," with its principal cities built up to be cities of global or Metropolis status. In this framework, Spain receives vast contingents of Latin American (principally Andean and Caribbean), African (mostly North African and sub-Saharan), and Asian immigrants (from Pakistan, China, and other countries). Nevertheless, we can find literature which has brought interesting lines of analysis to the subject of immigration in Spain [13].

As mentioned earlier, from the mid-eighties and above all, once the nineties began, the situation changed: Spain has become a country of immigration. Since entering the European Union, the process of making the economy international and encouraging its economic growth has turned Spain into the Spanish-speaking country with one of the highest consumer levels in the world (based on set, macro-structural indicators). At the same time, it experiences intense, international migration processes, although these occur on a smaller scale than in other more industrialised European countries (Pumares: 1998).

Like all other European governments, the Spanish government has actively intervened in order to preserve its national, as well as its private, interests. It has instituted a sort of protectionism that is far from the established metaphor set forth in the hegemonic discussion (such as "the laws of the free market"). The same thing is happening with the idea of "freedom of circulation," which is limited to capital and merchandise, and which excludes people. The powerful states have demonstrated direct action, among other measures, through legislation and regulations (expressed in laws regarding aliens), in an attempt to regulate the movement of the population, in direct function of the needs of its work markets.

In this sense, the politics of the European governments are eloquent. The political powers mean to orient the discussion towards a more open vision of Europe, with respect to the arrival of extra-Community migrants, and in this way try to change the image of the "European Fortress". However, in contrast, the recent tendencies continue to support the European-centred concept, in favour of preserving the "state of well-being" of the old continent. This "well-being" is accomplished through the provision of migratory flows, due to the ageing European population. But, from this point of view, neither the economic nor the political situations of the countries generating these population migrations is questioned.

Particularly among the North Africans, the sub-Saharans and the Latin Americans there are factors which favour these population movements to

Europe especially to Spain. Among these factors are proximity, previous colonial relationships or historical ties, frequent contact, and knowledge of the language and of the social networks, which have been functioning for many years in various Western European countries. However, these characteristics, which have always been obvious in population movements, have been encouraged within the context of globalisation, thanks to the constant spread of information, the lowering of transport prices, and the increasingly dynamic functioning of the Mafiosi, dealing in the illegal trafficking of immigrants.

As is occurring in the rest of the countries in the European Union, all of which are moving towards the Post-phase – "Fordist" and Industrial –, the demand for workers in Spain is beginning to be concentrated towards rather unstable work positions. This may be due, perhaps, to the fact that they have to do with traditional sectors, where drastic cost reductions may be required, in order to continue functioning. Or perhaps this is due to the fact that they are productive sectors, which have a large demand for workers. A certain irregularity in immigrants is tolerated, because in this way there will always be a group of cheap workers, willing to work, who do not make even the most minimal demands for good working conditions, legality, or work security.

In addition to seeing them as competitors for work positions («they don't even pay taxes...») the rejection of immigrants is partly due to the fact that they are usually poor, and so they arouse greater fears (since they may eventually "cause complications"). The *chabolismo* (shantytowns) among the Moroccans, for example, negatively affects the stigmatised image which is held of the Moroccans. This image also affects their hygienic habits, their health, and the performance of their children in school, and no one has ever said anything about this. The communications media in Spain have been rather irresponsible in how they have dealt with information regarding immigrants, who little by little install themselves in the system and become a part of it.

5.1. The "problem" with the communications media

«The new Law on Immigration will come into effect on the 23rd of January» (*El País*, December 27, 2000)

After that date, informed the biggest-selling Spanish language newspaper on the planet, those immigrants whose requests for regularisation had been rejected could be expelled from Spain. These foreigners received letters in which they were advised, «... you must abandon Spanish

territory, for which you will be given a total of 15 days, effective as of the day after the date of the notification of this decision.» With this law, those who did not leave Spain within the ordered time limit would be sanctioned with a fine. However, when the reform became effective, they could then be expelled. The text established that to find oneself in the country, with no papers, or a Visa that had expired more than three months before, or if you were working without permission were sufficient causes to be expelled [14].

To give an idea of the migratory situation in a city such as Barcelona, for example, this province had the highest number of immigrants presenting petitions for regularisation (and which were rejected for "various" reasons – in many cases, no reasons were given). During the year 2000, 34,982 people were denied residency (71% of the cases resolved (49,271)), 14,042 petitions were granted, and 247 were put on file [15].

From the time of the institution of these regulations, foreigners with no legal documentation only had access to the obligatory health assistance and education facilities. The rest of their rights (reunion, association, public participation, unionisation, or striking) were restricted only to those people whose situation was legal. On the other hand, in the "most important act of the year 2000," according to the Sunday magazine in *El País*, dated 12/31/2000, the problem also appears.

Referring to the "national sphere" that is to say, the Spanish state (which actually is not a "nation" but rather a State, which includes such other nations as Euskadi and Catalonia, to name only a couple), *El País* headlined one of its feature articles with "The Challenge of Immigration." This provides an idea of how complex and worrying this phenomenon is, and about which we are now permitted to speak of as, "the problem" (along with "terrorism"). For this newspaper, linked to the opposition PSOE party, Aznar's government, "showed itself to be incapable of assuming the consequences of the largest wave of immigrants of this century. (This is)… a problem, which has just begun, …and which could turn into the principal problem of the 21st century".

Some complementary facts presented in *El País* are:

–   The Pro-Human Rights Association affirms that «more than 200 people have died, drowned off the coast of Spain, trying to cross the straight (and the figures for the deaths caused by police violence, racism, xenophobia, etc., are not included).»

–   20,000 people were intercepted and imprisoned in "sports centres" (read into this term, "centres of detention" [16] or "concentration camps").

According to this newspaper, Spain is the country in Europe with the third largest number of illegal aliens ("illegal," "irregulars," "refugees," "displaced people," etc.).

6. *A new enemy to combat: the figure of the "illegal immigrant"*

«A general discussion began. The strange part is that the possibility that I was a Dinosaur was not taken into account. The blame which was heaped on me was that I was Different, a Foreigner, and therefore, suspicious. And, the point which was being debated was to what degree my presence increased the risk of an eventual return of the Dinosaurs.» (Italo Calvino. *Memoirs of the world and other Cosmicomics*. Madrid: Siruela, 1994, p. 76.)

Many of the analysed factors, summed up, damage the immediate integration of migrants into the general context of Spanish society and, here and there, favour the explosion of social conflicts. Some racially violent incidents are being noticed, such as the one that occurred at the start of 1999 in Premià de Mar, a town north of Barcelona. Close to 100 skinheads turned up to march against immigration. These skinheads came from various Spanish and German cities, brought together by the neo-nazi pages on the Internet. There is also a more worrying incident, which took place in February of the same year in El Ejido, in the province of Almeria. As a consequence of the alleged murder of a woman at the hands of a «Moroccan undergoing psychiatric treatment,» a wave of uncontrolled, xenophobic violence, that did not appear to be a completely spontaneous reaction, was unleashed against immigrants principally of Moroccan origin. The result was: 58 wounded, immigrant houses burnt, *Chabola* neighbourhoods completely destroyed, persecutions and the lynching of immigrants, as well as other racist-based actions. The police acted in a delayed and passive fashion. A good number of the Moroccan immigrants in the region fled, fearing the threats and attacks (in the style of the Ku Klux Klan), which were aimed at them.

«Some fled to the mountains, where they keep guard all night long, afraid that groups will arrive with shotguns and sticks,» explained Mohamed Beyuki, of the Association of Moroccan Workers and Immigrants in Spain (AMWIS), referring to the true witch hunt against the "Moors," which began that Sunday in February.

They say that discrimination and racism are the children of fear and ignorance. The rise in xenophobia against immigrants in Spain is also the result of the lack of historical memory of its people, in addition to causes of socio-economic, cultural and political nature. It is sufficient to recall that

(not counting the invasion of the American continent and the Colonial period) between 1840 and 1924 alone, 4.5 million Spaniards arrived in America, fleeing the poverty and hunger that plagued a good part of the old continent. In addition, between the years 1950 and 1975, some 2 million Spaniards emigrated to more industrialised countries in Europe, above all, to escape Franco's dictatorship, and also due to the little chance they had of bettering the quality of life back then.

Once again Europe appears on the threshold of fascism. "Skinheads" attack immigrants in Germany, England, Holland, and Spain [17], but the renewed fascism does not always wear a shaven head, nor does it always cover its body with tattooed swastikas. And even so, this does not cease to be a sinister reality [18].

With a modern mask, the fascist right has taken on neo-liberal theology with amazing ease (resulting in "neo-liberal fascism"), insisting in its electoral campaigns on themes of public security and employment, and warning against the immigrant "threat" [19].

Immigration as a socio-historical phenomenon is intimately related to the processes and situations described above. In the various spheres of society an infinite number of incidents of exclusion, complaints, marginalisation, and censorship are put into practice [20] for individuals, who due to their "otherness," or being different, strangers, foreigners, etc., become "Judas goats," used to justify, reproduce, and reinforce a particular social order.

Part II

1. How to approach a study on health and immigration in the studied context through an investigation guided by a theoretical framework-the methodology of Medical Anthropology

One of the objectives I have pursued within this current investigation has been to contribute to the knowledge of a concrete process, that of health, illness, and health care within a specific group, the Senegalese and the Gambian immigrants in Catalonia.

In what manner are the notions of health and illness formed among the Senegalese and Gambian immigrants? What "values" do they assign to health, the situations of "getting ill" and their connotations? In what ways do they respond to the complaints, uneasiness, and suffering that they experience? How do the Senegalese and Gambian immigrants perceive

health, illness, and their care (although, as in all societies, there are many answers in the self-care domestic and micro-group circles)? In what way do these latter representations and biomedical practices differ from essential health care, and what elements do they incorporate into it? Will we be able to find and differentiate between types of "suffering of origin" and types of "suffering founded in the context of the receiving society"? Which of them and how many of them can be codified, interpreted, diagnosed, and cared for (and in what manner) by Spanish doctors? And will they be accepted, perceived of as illnesses, incorporated into their own medical knowledge?

In spite of the fact that Gambia and Senegal are different countries, Sene-Gambia can be considered a single unit of analysis. Definition of the area of Sene-Gambia, as a geographic region (or "geographic unit"), can stand up to such factors as space, population, and environmental conditions, among other things. This natural region also coincides with an ethno-linguistic area, which shares historical origins, cultures and nomadic people: the *peul*, *fula*, and *tekrur* (*tucolor*). In addition, they have the old, Medieval empires in common: from Mali (the *Mandingas*) and from Ghana (the *Saraholes*). The *wolof*, *djolas*, *akus*, *manjakos*, *bambaras*, and the fishing villages of the *serer* also live together in the region (Kaplan, 1998).

This does not signify that the Sene-Gambians approach a static unity. On the contrary, I will try to analyse them from a similar point of departure in their migratory processes, which share a certain way of organising their networks and migratory lines. These reproduce, somehow, a certain community of origin "lifestyle," while the strategies for insertion into the receiving society change and both collectives adapt to the context in distinct manners (through different jobs, and as a function of their specifications). For example, most immigrant Senegalese reside in Barcelona, because there is work available in street sales, an activity which a good number of them were "already practising before their emigration". Those who dedicate themselves to street sales usually stay in Barcelona for a while and then go to the coast. They stay there, preferably, from summer to Christmas (when they sell the most); later, they go back to Senegal for no less than four months at a time, in order to be with their families, and then they return to Spain again.

The Gambians, on the other hand, look for wage-earning work, with more secure and permanent contracts, which will allow them and their families to settle in towns with diverse, productive activities (construction, agriculture, etc.). They settle principally in the Maresme and in the province of Girona, where they represent a high percentage of the immigrant population.

It is necessary to point out that Sene-Gambian migration abroad is mostly Muslim (as well as being asymmetric in terms of type), since the role of the emigrant within the society of origin has traditionally corresponded to the man (Kaplan, 1991). In this sense, the adult population of Kaplan's study (1998) is mostly male – almost 70%. This confirms for the author

> «a characteristic, migratory trajectory in sub-Saharan Western Africa. The men emigrate alone, and once they reach a certain work stability, both legal and residential, allowing them to send money back to their countries of origin (while still paying the expenses of moving, housing, and maintenance at their destination), the regrouping of the family can begin.» (p. 99).

Kaplan (1988) started off by

> «considering Girona to be a province which fulfils certain, positive and fundamental conditions that favour the establishment of a migrant population, along with its relationships with distinct institutions and with the same autochthonous population ... These economic and institutional variables are taken into account, as are others such as migratory tradition, civil society etc.» (p. 81).

In the first approach to the fieldwork, I will analyse this valuation, keeping in mind, as one of the relevant variables, the increase in racist and xenophobic incidents which have occurred in the last two years in some of the towns in the province. The change in location, by Kaplan, from the Maresme to Salt, with the objective of increasing the representation of the resident collective in this new site (121 people), is relevant to my research. Through the European programme, "Project ECOBAZ: Bazaar Economy in the Euro-Mediterranean Metropolis," in which I have been an investigator for two years, I began to work with Senegalese immigrants who earned their living from street sales in an informal underground economy within the city of Barcelona. After the first approaches in the field, and once I had begun to investigate the area of their processes of heath, illness, and health care practices, I was able to confirm the difficulty of analysing those aspects which were related to their mechanisms of self-care. Within their new context they did not group themselves in domestic family units as they did in their places of origin. For this reason, and with the intention of improving the analysis, I made the area of study broader, including the Gambian families which inhabited the province of Girona, especially those living in Salt.

The characteristics that support the representation in Salt for Kaplan (1998) are:

– «The presence of domestic units comprised of men only and of families;
– The diversity in the areas of origin of the Sene-Gambians: both rural and urban;

–   The specific ethnic groups to which the majority belong (*Mandingas*, *fulas*, and *saraholes*);
–   The different years of arrival in Spain; and,
–   The variety of work activities which they perform (agriculture, services, construction, etc.)» (p. 82).

In addition to the characteristics listed above, the conditions in which the Sene-Gambian population access the local health services are of vital importance to this study. The technical and the human characteristics of the health care personnel (with respect to the construction of medical relationships between patients or users) are also extremely important. These conditions are vital in determining Salt to be an appropriate unit of observation.

2. Starting points or assumptions of the investigation

A) Logic, rationality, and the dynamic of health, illness and health care processes must be looked for within the system of relationships that shapes them (and not only in the players themselves and the information they may hold).

B) Any system of medical attention (no matter how magic it may seem) not only possesses techniques, but also efficient ways of dealing with health problems. Moreover, any system of medical attention contains a series of elements that carry within them a particular concept of the world (it could be said more simply: of socio-cultural values) which give it structure.

C) The micro-group or the studied subjects possess organised knowledge, either conscious or unconscious, regarding the processes of health, illness, and health care. At the same time, the social groups practice syntheses, perhaps a series of healing and preventative beliefs and knowledge, with respect to illnesses, suffering, and/or the unfortunate problems that tend to worry them. These practices are dynamic and are transformed and combined along with other practices which are modified and which then tend to disappear (Menéndez, 1987: 31). This is significant in all historical societies and human groups.

D) All societies, through the subjects that comprise them, create epidemiological schemes within the population for dealing with the principal health problems, which affect them. This product is necessary to face these ailments, which, along with death, are of great importance to any group. They are so important that representations and practices are constructed around them (these vary from group to group).

E) The appearance of an organic anomaly in one of the members of the family group is "objectified" (made symbolic, classified, and categorised) from an ethical and moral perspective in order to becomes a health matter. The symptoms of the problems which arise in the biological order are "interpreted" through a "descriptive order" (symbolic), which has been adopted as the representation of the family, community, and socio-cultural order. This explains why not every organic anomaly or complaint of a subject (e.g., an immigrant) is perceived to be so by the hegemonic culture, as well as the inverse. Why the culture perceives to be an organic anomaly (and categorised to be an "illness") is not necessarily what it appears to be.

3. Some theoretical and conceptual elements

In the first place, it is important to point out how important the existing connections between life conditions are in this investigation (social, economic, political, etc.). They characterise the immigrant subjects within the context of a receiving society as well as their situation regarding health, illness, and health care processes.

Various authors present the idea of a relationship between health, illness, life conditions, and social reproduction (Almeida Filho, 1989, Laurell, 1986, and others). E. Menéndez (1994) is the author who gives us a definition which best fits the proposed analysis. For this author, the health, illness, and health care processes constitute a given, which structurally operates throughout the society, as well as in all of the social groups that make it up. Illness, complaints, and suffering health problems are part of a social process within which subjectivity is collectively established. That is to say that the subject, from birth, makes up and sets up this framework, based on the process mentioned above.

The "social answer" to the incidence of illness, suffering, and health complaints constitutes an "everyday and recurring" matter, which represents a necessary structure for the reproduction of any society. That is to say that health complaints and their resolutions are structural processes in every system and every social group. These not only generate representations and practices, but also structure the specific knowledge necessary in order to treat these health problems.

For the final part of this project, and in keeping with Menéndez (1983), it is ideal to approach the problem of health, illness, and the health care processes of the studied subjects from one of the analytical models that this author proposes: *The Self-care Model*. The self-care model corresponds to

the realm of first aid, the first level of real care given within the micro-groups (domestic, occupational, etc.). Its structure is based on healing and preventative functions and, above all, carries out its socio-economic functions. According to Menéndez, the basic characteristics that define the self-care model are always pragmatic efficiency, the idea of health as a user good, and the tendency to perceive the illness as a kind of merchandise. Also listed are the structure of symmetric and homogeneous participation, group and community legitimacy, understanding based on experience, the tendency towards the micro-group's appropriation of the medical practices, the tendency towards synthesis, and the tendency to assume subordination, induced with respect to the other models.

Self-care is always based on the frequency, recurrence, and continuity of illness, suffering, and health complaints or problems. These affect the members of the primary groups differently from the domestic units, and these groups need to take immediate action, providing a solution as soon as possible (Menéndez, 1983). In any case these episodes, whether acute or chronic, are a constituent part of everyday life.

Self-care permeates the structure of all society and it is the first real level of health care. This is based on diagnosis and preventative health care, which may be provided by the person himself, or by the people belonging to his immediate family group (and/or to different community groups). For this type of care, a professional healer does not directly intervene (among other reasons, this is why they say that they are dealing with non-professional health care). In Menéndez's words, "self-care assumes the 'conscious action' of not doing anything, while on the way to finding a cure. This can include the use of a system of a particular grade of complexity" (Menéndez, 1983). Therefore, it constitutes a social practice, structured and direct (and/or indirect), to assure biological and social reproduction at the level of the domestic, family units. If self-care is a structure that cannot really be eliminated, at least it can be limited [21]. In this sense, it is necessary to recall that the Hegemonic Medical Model [22] needs to impose its dominance. It needs to be *the* scientific and ideological reference, and to be considered the legitimate model for actions to be taken against illness (even when it can only be used by a relatively small part of the population).

Health self-care and self-attention allude to the personal or domestic dimension, where the most elemental care is administered for the promotion and repair of health. They also serve to prevent illness, which makes them the nucleus of any system. According to the distinct evaluations made,

more than three quarters of reported symptoms are resolved in the home (Zola, 1966). In any case, self-care and attention make up a number of irreducible instances which are always present, not only in any process of assistance, but also in everyday life, which is developed at the domestic family level.

Notes

[1] The relational stance makes explicit the recognition that every human act, such as the processes of health, illness, and heath care, operates within a framework of social relationships, though beyond the valuation of these. These relationships assume transactions and are always being modified. The processes of hegemony/sub-alternation among the models discover in the term, "transactions," the concept with which the group of relationships, which are potentially operating, can be described and explained.

[2] To demythologise and reveal non-evident or underlying social facts tends to question from the start the instituted order. Questioning a person or studying a specific socio-cultural group from its specific and subjective vision, instead of assuming it to be homogeneous and able to be generalised, contributes to its resistance in the face of the neo-liberal, dominant culture's desire to make it uniform.

[3] The researcher should make explicit what he/she knows (at the start of an investigation) regarding the knowledge that the subjects possess; this is necessary because the investigation always involves a relationship between the individual and the others.

[4] Qualitative research is comprised of a process which goes from abstract theory to concrete facts in order to later reformulate the theory (as the dialectic proposes). However, it does not hesitate to return to the field and then to academia, as often as necessary, in order to fuel this process.

[5] For these alternative paradigms, the social reality is a construct and not something natural or logically given. However, other forms of societal organisation are accepted (and also other ways of understanding the world and living life). Reality is holistic in nature and cannot be grasped in fragmented form, even when the sum of its parts may explain everything.

[6] The "trajectories or life stories" which are used in this investigation are a suitable resource for the information that they provide about the past and, above all, for the importance which this information plays in the analysis of the reality of the studied subjects. In this respect, Miles and Crush (1993) hold that personal narratives should be looked at and interpreted as interactive texts, since they make up a product from a complex series of interactions, among themselves (as researchers) and among the researchers and the population being studied. The interactive text is created through the dialogue between the interviewer and the person being interviewed. However, the researcher, in his task of ordering and making the narration coherent, constructs, in one way, his own interpretation of the interview. This is where the matter of "intermediary space" surfaces, the same as the researcher's stance, at the time of choosing which of his/her subjects interviewed brings most facts and valid information to the objectives of his/her project.

[7] Romaní sets apart, as one of the faces of the "process of modernization" (that has existed in Spain since the sixties) what is defined as processes for the "normalization" of the social life. «...Some of these basic elements will be, at an economic level, that of consumption, and at an ideological level, it will be to advocate the existence of a generalized consensus around certain basic societal values. All of this is accomplished through several mechanisms of social control, among which there stands out the importance, which is acquired through means of social communication, as elements of permanent socialization.» (Romaní, 1999: 93)

(8) In this way, a relatively new phenomenon and in Spain still a numerical a minority (such as that of a determined type of foreign migration) forms part of several processes. These processes, influenced by social visibility and the intervention of formal, social control agencies (police and legislation, principally), end up producing social, marginalisation dynamics.

(9) Here, "migratory lines" is understood to be the transference of information and material support offered by family, friends, or countrymen to the potential migrants, so that they can decide, or eventually solidify plans for their journey. The lines make the process of departure and arrival easier. They may, in part, finance the trip, arrange documentation, employment, and acquire housing. They are also a source of communication for economic, social, and political changes that are produced within the receiving society and which could affect the potential migrants. As generally the arrival into a receiving society is downplayed, the migratory lines structure themselves on the strong presence of the ethnic group. (This presence is cultural, in the arrival place, which sometimes can limit the process of upward social mobility, or simply offer fewer possibilities for employment to those who have recently arrived.) (Goldberg and Pedone, 2000.)

(10) Through historical analysis I consider this conceptual distinction to be valid and relevant, – the politics of the development of capitalism. In particular, I cite the conditions of the international division of labour, in which there is an established dichotomy between countries, which are "industrialized, developed, and central" and those which are "not industrialized, in development, and peripheral." On the other hand, I do not believe the classification, frequently made between "rich" and "poor" countries, to be valid or real. Let's take the cases of Argentina and Brazil, two countries rich in varied natural resources (much richer than Switzerland and Austria, for example). The use of these natural resources is carried out in function of foreign interests, as much as for other countries as for multinational companies, due to the dependent or neo-colonial character of their governments.

Opposing the new proclaimed metaphors from the hegemonic discourse, García Canclini (1999) revives analytical categories, such as First/Third World, central/peripheral, etc. He outlines the contradictions generated in the "global cities," which should articulate both the local and the national in the light of globalisation.

(11) I don't refer here to the term, "Third World," frequently used in central countries and associated with a large region, often presented as homogeneous, and characterized by structural poverty and economic, political, social, and cultural under-development. As for the term, "Third World," and the cultural heterogeneity of the continents, countries, and regions which shape it, see A. Appadurai (1988) and G. Spivak and R.Guha (1998).

(12) The number of people who would be within the jurisdiction of the High Commission for Refugees of the United Nations (ACNOR) has risen disproportionately from a little more than two million in 1975 to more than twenty-seven million in 1995. It is impossible, then, to imagine how many people would qualify at present.

At the State level in Spain, the facts are confirmed in the reports put out by the Permanent Observatory on Immigration in Spain, but they are far from the reality described by the immigrants themselves, and the daily reality that can be seen on the street.

(13) Collective IOE (1992); Stolcke, V. (1994); Malgesini, G. (1996); Ramírez Goicoechea (1996); Bergalli, V. (1997); and, Martínez, Veiga (1997), among others.

(14) Relating to the theme of expulsions, it is worth pointing out that some European countries have laws which are complementary to their laws on immigration, and which reinforce their restrictive character. For example, in France, in addition to the sanction of expulsion, the Interdiction of the French Territory (IFT) is frequently attached. This consists of prohibiting entrance into this country for at least 10 years, when not definitive. The IFT dates back to the law of 12/31/70, and was related to narcotics infractions. However, throughout successive legislative reforms, its field of application has gotten considerably broader. The "Easter Law" of 1993 opened the way for its more extended application, for which only " a grave threat to public order" would be sufficient for this interdiction to be put into practice. There exist numerous cases of IFT expulsions (known in France as the "double penalty"), where the citizen, of French origin, has been expulsed to a country, where his parents were born and where he/she has never been (Faure, 1999). Neverthe-

less, there are other problems, such as the case of the sub-Saharans, for example, whose expulsion is truly impossible, since their countries of origin do not recognize them as citizens.

[15] Source: the Delegation of the Government on Foreigners and Immigration. (However, the present figures are sure to be worse, at least from the immigrants' point of view they are.)

[16] The Detention Centres for Foreigners in Spain (DCFs) were created by the Organic Law (7/1985). Later, no concrete arrangement was approved to regulate this specific situation. Due to the failure to carry out the regulatory mandate, there are no homogeneous criteria about how these centres should function, and they are still under the sole direction of each individual director. Their geographic distribution is completely unpredictable. Today, there are six centres in Spain (actually, six is the official number which has been made available to the public). They are to be found in Madrid, Malaga, Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia, and Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. The inmates are assigned to a centre independently of where they were detained, and where they may have their network of relatives and friends. Attorneys visit clients during a timetable which is even more restricted than in a prison, and they are always conducted under the visual control of the police. Only visits limited to a few minutes are permitted, and *vis á vis* do not exist. The maximum time limit of 40 days, established under the Law, when expulsion papers are to be processed, frequently expires. Also, there are immigrants whose nationality has not been able to be determined and whose country of origin does not recognize him/her as a citizen (this is the case with many citizens from African and sub-Saharan countries). These immigrants have often suffered successive internment, a situation that is legally prohibited. For more information regarding the DCFs in Spain, consult the following reports: 1) S.O.S. Racism (1998) *The Annual Report 1999: Regarding Racism in the Spanish State*. Barcelona: Icaria; 2) Stoop, Chris (1999) *'The Others': Deportation of the 'Without Papers' in Europe*. Barcelona: Bellaterra, among others.

[17] The leaders of these groups of skin-headed neo-nazis and their most active members belong primarily to the middle and upper classes, that is to say, they come from perfectly integrated families in European society. However, in recruiting, they have extended to peripheral neighbourhoods and sectors, hard-hit by the economic crisis and the instability of job security (as is the case in Spain). On the other hand, while for the European Parliament there are close to 1,300 racist and neo-nazi groups throughout Europe, which commit more than 500 aggressions daily, for the Spanish police, the offenders are simply individuals, who do not belong to any organization. However, there do exist organised, neo-nazi groups in 37% of Spain's cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants, and they are concentrated primarily in Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia (Source: Sánchez Soler, Mariano. *Decline in Fascism*. Madrid: Grupo Zeta, 1998).

[18] All of the European fascists, like their counterparts in the U.S. and Latin America, insist on classifying society at face value, with the respective migrations for different countries listed as a "social problem" and thus categorising the immigrants based on their differences ("Blacks," "Latinos," "Spics," "Moors," etc.). In their time, the Nazis, for example, only had to warn that the existence of the Jews in the Third Reich was a "social problem" and this act of identification and stigmatisation resulted in the beginning of the end. In the same way, the Israeli army and police fire upon Palestinian civilians, because they have been labelled a "problem" for the security of the terrorist Israeli State. These were exactly the same tactics used by the military (lamentably, for such examples are abundant and continue to flourish on the path of terror and death), which executed terrorism for the State, under the guise of dictatorships in Latin America during the seventies and eighties. In all cases, these actions were financed, directed and imposed by the United States of America (this period's successor to the Nazis). Here, the identification of the "social problem" was the "Red Communist Enemy," which brought about the disappearance, assassination, torture, baby robbery and countless other crimes against humanity, enacted against thousands of people all over that continent.

[19] Moral language is formed and developed through social practice. In ideological form, in conjunction with censorship, it is primarily expressed through the process of creating stereotypes. (This is occurring in the case of the immigrants without papers in Spain: they change, subvert, and question ideological, political, economic, religious, and cultural concepts, regarding the dominant neo-liberal capitalism in today's neo-Franco Spain of the Euro.) It is important to note the concrete historical significance of censorship, for example, with regards to the illegal aliens in Spain.

(20) Censorship has a clearly moral and political character. Given that it symbolically represents "correction and merit" when faced with "error and danger," it is at the same time a justification for repressive actions against violators. It is also an attempt to educate people in "desirable" habits and ways of life (one could also say, a "determined lifestyle"). The fact that it is often linked to moral principles gives it political potential, with regards to the fight for hegemony. "Moors," "Blacks," "Spics," "Illegal Aliens," and "Terrorists" (in the Spanish context) represent social censorship, which has the potential to mobilise the forces of order (that is, order and morale) against determined sectors of the population. Order, morale, values, lifestyle, and the concept of the world made up of dominant groups, tend to turn into institutionalized censorship within the discussions and practices of the State and its ideological tools (the media, courts, schools, etc.). Censorship takes on the general character of being internalized by people (Sumner, C., 1999).

(21) This is one of the points I analyse with respect to the subjects of the study and their arrival in this country.

(22) For its definition and development, see Menéndez (1989).

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