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Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2022, vol. 79, pp. 70-85

<https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.79.5>

Published by:
Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,
Department of Sociology and Social Work
and
HoltIS Association

Resilience among Unaccompanied Foreign Minors

Jhandy MOHAMED-ABDERRAHMAN¹, Francisca RUIZ-GARZÓN² & Ruth VILÀ-BAÑOS³

Abstract

This paper deals with resilience in unaccompanied foreign minors (referred to as MENA in Spanish) who are in Melilla, either in reception centres or in a “street situation”. The presence of these young people in Melilla has been increasing significantly since 2014, becoming a major problem for a city of only 12.3 km², a population of approximately 87,000 inhabitants and bordering Morocco, the country from which most of them come. The aim of this study is to identify and analyse the behaviours or elements that favour resilience in MENA. To this end, a quantitative methodology has been chosen, using a questionnaire with a sufficient degree of validity and reliability aimed at identifying the MENA with the greatest number of resilient indicators. The sample consisted of 148 MENA, chosen by probability sampling. The results show that most of them have migrated for work. Almost all of them are from urban backgrounds and come from large families. More than half have a good family relationship. They have been in Melilla for up to 12 years, are multilingual, more than half feel Moroccan and many are not in school. In 10 years’ time, most of them imagine themselves married, with a stable job and living in another Spanish city. Young people in a “street situation”, who are the most resilient, prefer to be on the street rather than in a reception centre. Three clusters corresponding to MENA profiles with different levels of resilience were identified through a two-stage analysis.

Keywords: minors, foreigners, immigration, resilience.

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Introduction

The arrival of MENA is a topical issue, both at regional and national level. According to Agreement of the Assembly of Melilla announced on 18 February 2019, the presence of these minors has been growing significantly since 2014 to become a relevant problem, especially in Melilla where the situation is critical, due to the number of MENA, the small size of its territory (12.3 km²), the population (around 87,000 inhabitants) and the border situation with Morocco, the country from which the vast majority of MENA come.

They have been given different names in our country in recent years, such as MNA -unaccompanied minors - (Save the Children-Spain, 2003), MMA - unaccompanied Moroccan minors - (Jiménez and Izquierdo, 2013), MENA -unaccompanied foreign minors- (Fuentes, 2014), MINA -unaccompanied immigrant minors- (Bermúdez, 2004), MEINA -unaccompanied undocumented foreign minors- (Capdevila and Ferrer, 2003), MMNA -unaccompanied migrant minors- (Quiroga, Alonso and Soria, 2009), etc. All these concepts refer to the same group. In this paper, we will use the term MENA, as it is the one used by the governmental institutions of the State. It is also the most widely used in most of the specialised literature on this subject (Giménez and Suarez, 2000; Berganza, 2003; Ararteko, 2005; Senovilla, 2007; Unicef, 2009).

At EU level, according to Article 2, paragraphs (k) and (l), of Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted (Directive 2011/95/EU), an unaccompanied minor is understood as: “A third-country national or a stateless person below the age of 18, who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her, whether by law or by practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such an adult; it includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States” (Directive 2011/95/EU, p 13).

The Autonomous City of Melilla (CAM), considered in geopolitics as a “border city” due to its location on the border with Morocco, favours exchanges of all kinds with this country, be they commercial, human, cultural, etc. In the case in question, this fact allows the MENA to see the possibility of accessing our city. They see it as the means, the door to achieve their dreams (migrating to the Peninsula in search of work and a better life) and “although by law they have the right to be protected by the public care system, many of them are on the streets” (Suárez 2004, p. 37), waiting for illegal access to a boat bound for Malaga, Almería or Motril, from where they can start their new life. Their dream is to obtain “papers”, a “compulsory” condition to be considered full citizens in order to be able get a

moderately dignified job. Suárez (2004) states that these minors are Moroccans who have entered Spain in an irregular manner, hidden in the lorries that cross the border. Although most of the MENA who pass through Melilla are from Morocco, not all of them come from there. They also come from other countries, such as Algeria, Mali, Nigeria and the Republic of Guinea (Bravo and Santos, 2017).

At present, MENA foster care is carried out in the Centres and Homes that exist in Melilla, managed by service companies or NGOs, and their work is supervised by the General Directorate for Minors and the Family of the Autonomous City of Melilla. These centres and homes are the following: “Fuerte Purísima” Shelter Centre, “Gota de Leche” Welfare Centre and “Divina Infantita” Shelter Centre.

Why are some MENA who live through adverse situations able to achieve or recover a normalised life and others are not? From the point of view of traditional psychology, it is considered “normal” that, if a subject lives a traumatic experience, he/she will develop some pathology with respect to that experience, that is, the human being is considered a passive subject who reacts to environmental stimuli (Carretero, 2010). In contrast, Cyrulnick considers that the fact that a subject has had an adverse childhood/adolescence does not necessarily determine the existence of behavioural and personality pathologies in their subsequent development (2002). According to Masten (2001 in Carretero, 2010), various studies show that resilience is a common phenomenon among people who face adverse experiences and that it arises from normal human adaptive functions and processes. Thus, Positive Psychology considers the individual as a resilient subject by nature.

From authors such as Luthar (2003), Masten and Powell (2003), Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), Carretero (2010), Duque (2012), Lázaro (2014), Santos (2015) and González Arratia (2016), we can conclude that MENA are resilient if they have or have had the capacity to successfully face adversity, understood as the whole traumatic process (risk factors experienced) suffered from childhood-adolescence (in their home, country of origin, migratory route or even in the country they have chosen to settle and improve their lives) to the stable settlement in the host country. This entails avoiding all the negative life trajectories associated with the risks inherent in being a MENA (travelling, crossing borders irregularly and alone, living on the streets, going hungry and cold, etc., especially as children).

For resilience to occur, there must be both risk and protective factors (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). According to Becoña (2006) and González Arratia (2016), risk factors experienced by these MENA include traumatic experiences (such as the death of a loved one), poverty, family conflicts (such as divorce, parental rejection, abandonment...), continuous exposure to abuse, unemployment, social injustice, etc. Regarding protective factors, from the work of authors such as Manciaux (2003 in González Arratia, 2016) and Rodríguez-Piaggio (2009), it can be extracted that resilient MENA are those who possess skills and facility to communicate (they manage even if they do not know the language), to establish relationships, to solve problems (they look for alternative solutions), are independent (from a very

young age), have impulse control, self-esteem, initiative, security, self-confidence, empathy, intelligence, temperament, sense of humour, positive attitude, self-regulation of emotions, expectations for the future, clear goals and motivation to achieve them, faith in a better future, belief that God protects and helps them, ease of adaptation to the host country and at least one adult (in the host country or country of origin) who offers emotional support.

The aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the behaviours or elements that favour resilience in MENA, with the following specific objectives: (1) To analyse the conditions of arrival and the situation of these young people in Melilla; (2) To identify the expectations they have for the future; (3) To analyse the resilience profiles of these young people.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population is made up of a significant and representative number of the MENA sheltered in the protection centres currently operating in Melilla, specifically, the “Fuerte Purísima” and “Gota de Leche” centres, as well as those MENA living on the streets of Melilla. Therefore, we have worked with the MENA living in a “street situation”, those from “Gota de Leche” and those from “Fuerte Purísima”.

According to what the Vice-Minister for Minors and the Family declared on the radio station COPE Melilla, on 25 April 2021, there are less than 50 MENA living on the streets of the Autonomous City of Melilla. As for the number of minors hosted in the “Gota de Leche” Welfare Centre, as of 20 July 2021, there are 120, according to the “Collaboration agreement between the Department of Districts, Youth, Citizen Participation, Family and Minors and the Melilla Welfare Centre for the development of a programme for the reception and care of unaccompanied and socially disadvantaged minors, for the year 2021”. With regard to the number of MENA welcomed in the “Fuerte Purísima” protection centre, as of 19 July 2021, this is 300, according to the news published by Europa Press.

Our sample consists of 148 MENA: 42 minors in a “street situation”, 59 of the young people in the “Gota de Leche” Welfare Centre (30 girls and 29 boys) and 47 boys from “Fuerte Purísima”, chosen by probability sampling, considering a confidence level of 95% for finite populations (p and $q = 0.5$), which represents a margin of error of ± 0.068 .

The age of the young people surveyed ranged from 9 to 19 years old (mean = 15.094). Except for 7 young people who have just reached the age of majority and 2 who are 19 years old, the rest are all minors. As for the length of time they have been in Melilla, this ranges from 1 month to 12 years (average = 3.105 years). Regarding origin, 113 are from Morocco, 1 from Angola, 1 from Algeria,

1 from Ivory Coast, 1 from Gambia, 1 from Guinea and 1 from Mali. In addition, 145 consider themselves to be Muslim and 3 non-denominational. With regard to gender, we have been able to verify that there are no female unaccompanied foreign minors in “street situations” or in the “Fuerte Purísima” reception centre, only in “Gota de Leche”. As the presence of women is only found in “Gota de Leche” and in equal numbers to men, comparisons in terms of sex will only be made with regard to this reception centre.

Instrument

A questionnaire has been designed to identify MENA subjects with the highest number of resilient indicators: questionnaire to identify resilient profiles and behaviours in MENA sheltered in protection centres and living on the streets of the Autonomous City of Melilla. It is a structured questionnaire (Table 1) with closed questions and a resilience scale, which allows to determine the level of resilience and to analyse the resilient behaviours and elements of the participants, as well as other relevant data.

Table 1. Questionnaire specifications table

| Dimensions | Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--|----------|------------------|
| Socio-demographic data | 10 ítems | - |
| Migration data: reasons, access, length of stay | 3 ítems | - |
| Family data: relationship, frequency and means of communication, population of origin, number of siblings. | 5 ítems | - |
| Academic data | 2 ítems | - |
| Expectations for the future | 3 ítems | - |
| <i>Resilience scale</i> (González Arratia, 2011) | 32 ítems | 0.970 |

The resilience scale has been adapted from González Arratia (2011) with positive results, being a valid and reliable instrument (González Arratia, 2016). It consists of 32 items, with five-point Likert-type response options, divided into three dimensions: internal protective factors, external protective factors and empathy. The following score is used to calculate the total level of resilience (González Arratia, 2016): (1) Low resilience: from 32 (minimum score) to 74 points; (2) Moderate resilience: 75 to 117 points; (3) High resilience: from 118 to 160 points.

The entire questionnaire was subjected to a content validity test by a panel of experts. Six judges evaluated the instrument under the criteria of sufficiency, clarity, coherence and relevance. The reliability of the scale

was also considered using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (table 1). The instruments used presented a sufficient degree of validity and reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

We processed the data obtained using the "IBM SPSS Statistics 25" programme. A descriptive analysis of the data collected was carried out (frequencies, descriptive, cross tables, etc., defining sets of variables for multiple response cases, transforming variables, segmenting files according to sex, reception centre...) and, subsequently, an inferential or analytical analysis of that data (correlation, chi-square...), comparing means using parametric tests (T-Student and ANOVA) and non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H).

To answer the last objective, a two-stage cluster analysis procedure has been applied, which allows for the automatic selection of the optimal number of clusters (Bacher, Wenzig and Vogler, 2004).

Results and Discussion

Migration Processes and Family

62% of the cases indicate that they migrated to work. 43% of the cases indicate that they migrated to study, to help their family, to improve their lives or because they had no future in their country of origin. 30% migrated because they believed that life is better in Europe or because of their family's situation of poverty. 19% said they had migrated because others had done so before. 10% said they migrated to reunite with their family, because of family problems or because they were persuaded to do so by their friends. Less than 10% migrated because they had been orphaned, abandoned, convinced by their families, forced to work in bad jobs or mistreated by their parents.

With regard to the type of population of origin, 80% come from an urban environment, while 20% come from the countryside.

The MENA can access Melilla in three main ways: crossing the borders with the neighbouring city (Nador), through the coast or climbing the fence that separates Melilla from Nador, either by climbing it, breaking it or going through its access gates. It should be borne in mind that some MENA who have crossed the border have done so with their parents and with Moroccan documentation, which allows them access to Melilla. Once in Melilla, they enter the reception centres as MENA. Others who enter through the borders do so irregularly. Sixty-two per cent of those surveyed have entered Melilla by crossing one of Melilla's borders with Nador, 23 per cent by the coast and 15 per cent by climbing the fence. Most of the young people in a "street situation" entered via the coast and by climbing the fence, while 98% of those sheltered in "Gota de Leche" entered via the border.

Respondents have between 0 and 11 siblings, the average being between 3 and 4 and the mode 3. Only 11 participants are only children and very few have 8 or more siblings.

55% have a good relationship with their family, 21% have a normal relationship and 9% have a bad relationship with their family. On the other hand, 6% have lost the relationship and 9% say that they have no family. 15% talk to their family every day, 30% once a week, 17% more than once a week and 12% once a month. 17% of the participants do not talk to their family. Most of them communicate with their family by phone, either through calls (35%) or WhatsApp and social networks (30%). 11% are visited by their relatives in person and 15% have lost contact with their family.

Languages, Schooling and Sense of Belonging

The participants report being fluent in more than one language. The most frequent language spoken by these young people is Arabic (89% of cases), followed by Spanish (61%) and Tamazight (51%), with fewer cases of French (10%), English (7%) or other languages (1%). All the young people in “street situation” are out of school, as well as 17% of “Fuerte Purísima” (8 subjects) and 15% of “Gota de Leche” (9 subjects: 3 boys and 6 girls). A significant number of those surveyed (27) are enrolled in grades below their age-appropriate level, especially in Compulsory Secondary Education.

More than half (108 subjects) of the MENA respondents feel Moroccan. The length of time the respondents have been in the Autonomous City of Melilla ranges from 1 month to 12 years, varying according to the location of the subjects. The length of time young people from “Fuerte Purísima” have been in Melilla ranges from 1 month to 4 years, with a mean of 1.5 years and a mode of 3 years. As for “Gota de Leche”, the length of time in the city ranges from 1 to 12 years for both sexes, with different means and a mode of 9 years for boys and 1 year for girls. Finally, the length of time spent living in the “street situation” varies from 1 month to 10 years, with a mean of 1.5 and a mode of 3 months. These differences by centre are statistically significant ($F=47.469$, $p=0.000$).

Minors in a “Street Situation”

Young people in “street situation” have indicated that the main reason is that they do not want to be in a reception centre, i.e. that they prefer to be in the street than in a centre (27%). 14% said it was because they are treated badly; 13% because they are not allowed to enter because of the lockdown measures; 9% because they do not like the rules of the centre; 8% because they like to be free; 8% because they have been expelled from the centre; 6% because they do not like

the food; and the rest for other reasons. It should be borne in mind that some of the MENA who are currently in a “street situation”, were previously housed in “Fuerte Purísima”. They left without permission and are no longer allowed access because the centre is on lockdown due to COVID-19 outbreak.

Future Expectations

61% think that in 10 years' time they will be married, 24% think they will have a partner and 15% assume they will remain single. 79% of the participants imagine themselves having a stable job in 10 years' time, 5% working in an illegal job, and only 1% think they will be unemployed. Furthermore, 16% of these young people would like to be studying. Looking more closely at the gender differences of those surveyed in “Gota de Leche”, it can be seen that 67% of girls would like to be working in the future, compared to 31% of boys. Thus, 20% of the girls think that they will be doing illegal work, compared to 3% of the boys. On the other hand, 62% of boys prefer to be studying in 10 years' time, compared to 13% of girls.

As for the final destination where they would like to be in 10 years' time, 13% of those surveyed would like to stay in Melilla and more than half (52%) would prefer to be in another Spanish city. Almost a third of these children (32%) would like to be in another European country and only 3% would like to be outside Europe. None of the participants would like to be in their country of origin in the future. If we analyse these data according to the sex of the young people surveyed in “Gota de Leche”, we can see that 52% of the boys would prefer to stay in Melilla, compared to 7% of the girls. Thus, 63% of girls would like to be in another Spanish city, compared to 38% of boys. Furthermore, 17% of girls would like to be in another European country, compared to 10% of boys.

MENA Resilience

Overall, participants show moderately high scores on their level of resilience (*Table 2*). Specifically, the average of the participants is 130 (out of 160) on the total scale. According to González Arratia (2016), participants are at a high level of resilience (between 118 and 160 points). High scores also stand out in the dimension of external protective factors (with 45 points out of 55), empathy (with 28 points out of 35) and finally, internal protective factors (with 57 points out of 70).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and theoretical scores of the resilience scale

| Dimension | n | Lowest possible score | Highest possible score | Observed mean | Standard deviation |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Internal protective factors | 148 | 14 | 70 | 56.98 | 13.41 |
| External protective factors | 148 | 11 | 55 | 44.90 | 9.78 |
| Empathy | 148 | 7 | 35 | 28.30 | 6.99 |
| Total on the resilience scale | 148 | 32 | 160 | 130.18 | 28.44 |

These data on young people's resilience do not show statistically significant differences according to most of the variables in the questionnaire, with the exception of their current location, the type of education they are attending and their expectations for the future in terms of romantic relationships (Table 3).

Table 3. Contrast statistics of the resilience scale with respect to other variables of the questionnaire

| Dimension | In 10 years' time. how do you think you will be? | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--------|------|
| | Single Media | Couple Mean | Married Mean | F | Sig. |
| Internal protective factors | 49.04 | 60.77 | 57.53 | 5.871 | .004 |
| External protective factors | 39.26 | 46.34 | 45.78 | 4.802 | .010 |
| Empathy | 24.48 | 28.77 | 29.09 | 4.276 | .016 |
| Total scale of resilience | 112.78 | 135.89 | 132.40 | 5.615 | .004 |
| | Location | | | | |
| | F. Purísima Mean | Gota de Leche Mean | Vive en la calle Mean | F | Sig. |
| Internal protective factors | 42.89 | 60.66 | 67.57 | 92.859 | .000 |
| External protective factors | 36.70 | 46.54 | 51.76 | 43.786 | .000 |
| Empathy | 22.55 | 29.10 | 33.60 | 45.511 | .000 |
| Total scale of resilience | 102.15 | 136.31 | 152.93 | 76.107 | .000 |

| | Schooling | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------|------|
| | Primary Mean | Second. Mean | Non-basic Mean | No school Mean | F | Sig. |
| Internal protective factors | 59.28 | 56.38 | 48.03 | 62.53 | 11.337 | .000 |
| External protective factors | 47.00 | 45.47 | 38.74 | 48.02 | 8.620 | .000 |
| Empathy | 29.17 | 28.91 | 24.05 | 30.51 | 7.925 | .000 |
| Total scale of resilience | 135.44 | 130.75 | 110.82 | 141.05 | 10.961 | .000 |

Thus, the most resilient people are those who live in a “street situation”, who are not in school or who perceive themselves to have a partner in the future. These groups have a high level of resilience according to González Arratia’s (2016) typology. Conversely, the least resilient are the residents of “Fuerte Purísima”, who are studying non-basic education or who are perceived to be single in 10 years’ time. These groups have a moderate level of resilience according to González Arratia’s (2016) typology.

MENA Resilience Profiles

A two-stage cluster has been calculated with the resilience scale variable, together with the previous significant variables: future expectations, location of the young person and type of education. Three clusters with a good quality level are identified (*Figure 1*):

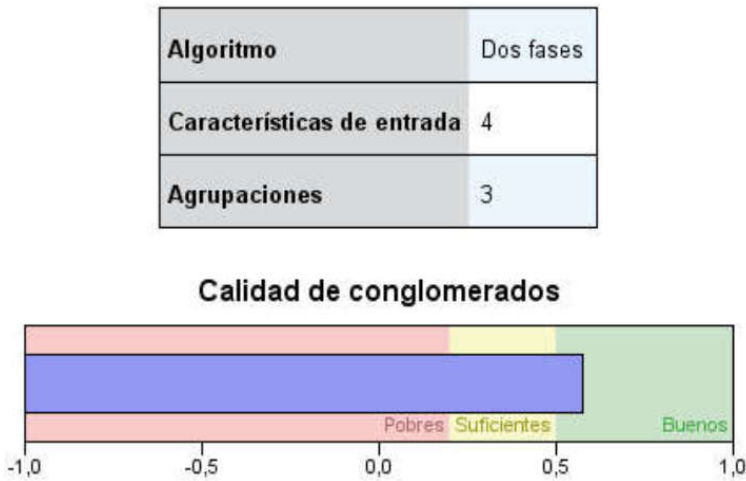


Figure 1. Conglomerate model generated with the two-stage cluster

These three clusters correspond to profiles of young people with different levels of resilience (*Figure 2*).

| Conglomerar | Etiqueta | Descripción | Tamaño | Funciones | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------------------|---------------|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Perfil 2 | Resiliencia alta | 39,9% (59) | Dentro de 10 años, ¿cómo crees que estarás? Con pareja (52,5%) | Localización Gota de Leche (100,0%) | Tipo de enseñanza ESO (33,9%) | Total Resiliencia 136,31 |
| 2 | Perfil 1 | Resiliencia moderada | 32,4% (48) | Dentro de 10 años, ¿cómo crees que estarás? Casado/a (77,1%) | Localización Fuerte Purísima (97,9%) | Tipo de enseñanza Enseñanzas no básicas (56,2%) | Total Resiliencia 101,35 |
| 3 | Perfil 3 | Resiliencia muy alta | 27,7% (41) | Dentro de 10 años, ¿cómo crees que estarás? Casado/a (92,7%) | Localización Vive en la calle (100,0%) | Tipo de enseñanza No escolarizado (100,0%) | Total Resiliencia 155,10 |

Figure 2. Characterisation of clusters in two-stage clustering

Specifically, when characterising the three clusters, they are identified as follows:

- Profile 1. A moderate resilience profile (48 young people). This group scores less highly on the resilience scale (101 points on average). The vast majority of these young people (98%) are from the “Fuerte Purísima” centre. More than half of them are in non-basic education. 77% of them perceive themselves married in the next 10 years.
- Profile 2. A high resilience profile (59 young people). This group scores high on the resilience scale (136 points on average). They are all young people from the “Gota de Leche” centre. Thirty-four per cent are in compulsory secondary education. 53% expect to have a partner in the next 10 years.
- Profile 3. A very high resilience profile (41 young people). This is the group that scores highest on the resilience scale (155 points on average). They are all young people living on the streets of Melilla. None of them are in school and the vast majority (93%) perceive themselves married in the next 10 years.

Next, we went deeper into the characterisation of the three resilience profiles, in relation to the rest of the variables in the questionnaire (*Table 4*). When we studied which characteristics were related to the profiles found, we found, in summary, that the following variables were significant: how they arrived in Melilla, their relationship with their family, where they lived, their expectations for the future of their work and their place of residence.

Table 4. Contrast statistics for the characterisation of the profiles with respect to other variables of the questionnaire

| Non-metric variables | Profile 1 | Profile 2 | Profile 3 | X ² | p |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| How did you get to Melilla? Crossing the Border | 48% | 98% | 27% | 58.72 | 0.000 |
| How did you get to Melilla? Along the coast | 31% | 2% | 44% | | |
| How did you get to Melilla? By climbing the fence | 21% | 0% | 29% | | |
| How is your relationship with your family? Good | 77% | 34% | 61% | 26.07 | 0.001 |
| How is your relationship with your family? Normal | 15% | 29% | 17% | | |
| How is your relationship with your family? Bad | 4% | 14% | 7% | | |
| How is your relationship with your family? No relationship | 0% | 14% | 2% | | |
| How is your relationship with your family? I have no family | 4% | 10% | 12% | | |
| Where did you live? In the city | 65% | 93% | 80% | 13.78 | 0.001 |
| Where did you live? In the countryside | 35% | 7% | 20% | | |
| In 10 years' time, how do you imagine yourself? Studying | 0% | 37% | 2% | 53.13 | 0.000 |
| In 10 years' time, how do you imagine yourself? Stable job | 100% | 49% | 98% | | |
| In 10 years' time, how do you imagine yourself? Illegal work | 0% | 12% | 0% | | |
| In 10 years' time, how do you imagine yourself? Unemployed | 0% | 2% | 0% | | |
| In 10 years' time, where would you like to live? Melilla | 4% | 29% | 0% | 37.8 | 0.000 |
| In 10 years' time, where would you like to live? Another city | 56% | 51% | 49% | | |
| In 10 years' time, where would you like to live? European country | 40% | 14% | 51% | | |
| In 10 years' time, where would you like to live? Outside Europe | 0% | 7% | 0% | | |
| Metric variables | Profile 1 | Profile 2 | Profile 3 | F | p |
| Internal protective factors | 52.54 | 60.66 | 68.59 | 117.29 | 0.000 |
| External protective factors | 36.35 | 46.54 | 52.54 | 54.83 | 0.000 |
| Empathy | 22.46 | 29.10 | 33.98 | 51.98 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Assigned age | 16.2 | 13.7 | 16.7 | 32.79 | 0.000 |
| Time spent in Melilla | 1.6 | 5.5 | 1.5 | 47.48 | 0.000 |

As shown in *Table 4*, the profile with a moderate level of resilience (profile 1) is characterised by being the one with the lowest scores also in internal and external protective factors and empathy. They have been living in Melilla for a short time and have an average age of 16 years. Almost half of them arrived in Melilla by crossing the border and the vast majority (77%) have a good relationship with their family, mostly of urban origin (65%). In ten years' time, they all imagine themselves with a stable job and more than half envision themselves living in another Spanish city.

The profile with a high level of resilience (profile 2) shows moderate or intermediate scores in internal and external protective factors and empathy, compared to profiles 1 and 3. The subjects in this group are those who have been in the Autonomous City of Melilla the longest, with a significant difference compared to the other two. They are the youngest as well, with an average age of 13 and a half years. Almost all of these minors entered the city through border crossings (98%), only a third of them have a good family relationship, and practically all of them are of urban origin (93%). Half of them perceive themselves as having a stable job and living in another Spanish city within ten years.

Profile 3, which is the one with a very high level of resilience, is also the one with the highest scores on internal and external protective factors and empathy. The young people in this group are those who have been living in the city for the shortest time and who have the oldest assigned age (16 and a half years on average). Around a third entered Melilla through the border, another third by climbing the fence and another third by the coast, the latter being slightly higher. More than half (61%) have a good relationship with their family, mostly of urban origin (80%). In ten years' time, half would like to find themselves living in another Spanish city and the other half in another European country, although practically all (98%) imagine themselves with a stable job.

Conclusion

In this study, we set out to identify and analyse the behaviours or elements that favour resilience in MENA, following authors such as Luthar (2003), Masten and Powell (2003), Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), Carretero (2010), Duque (2012), Lázaro (2014), Santos (2015) and González Arratia (2016), Lázaro (2014), Santos (2015) and González Arratia (2016), who have determined that, for resilient profiles to exist, two factors would have to be present: on the one hand, having lived through situations of risk and/or adversity; and, on the other hand, having protective factors.

Among the risk factors found in the profile of minors who have arrived in Melilla are the process of risking their lives by crossing the border irregularly, either by climbing the fence or accessing the coast; as well as traumatic situations of orphanhood, abandonment, abuse and/or mistreatment by family members.

Among the protection factors found in the profiles analysed, we find, on the one hand, the importance given by the children to the protection of an institution that supports them and can help them. Most of the subjects (106) in the sample are residing in a shelter, compared to a smaller number of children (42) who prefer to live without any kind of limitation.

Another factor we found to be emotionally supportive is the good relationship many children have with their families and the contact they can have with them.

The language most commonly spoken by these young people is Arabic (89% of cases), followed by Spanish (61%). Therefore, it can be seen that a significant number of these minors show interest in the Spanish language in order to be able to communicate and integrate into their host society.

On the other hand, they have a positive attitude towards the future that awaits them. 79% of the participants imagine themselves working in a stable job in 10 years' time or training for a good job. They also reflect their ease in seeking solutions and establishing relationships when considering other alternatives for their academic and professional future, seeking to travel to other cities in the world in order to help their family and improve their lives.

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