

# Sociodrama: action mechanisms and directing strategies at two public events

*Sociodrama: mecanismos de ação e estratégias de direção em dois eventos públicos*

*Sociodrama: mecanismos de acción y estrategias de dirección en dos eventos públicos*

Anna Maria Knobel<sup>1,\*</sup>

Knobel AM  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1248-1174>

**ABSTRACT:** The author describes the origins of morenian Sociodrama, its action mechanisms, its practices and the Director's action strategies. She defines group, points to the existence of different focuses for directing: protagonist, spontaneous and relational, comprehensively showing the workings of the sociometric-relational model, which works through the affective forces of approximation, distancing or indifference of each participant concerning the other ones. It also shows that mutual choices produce group cohesion and discordant choices produce conflicting dynamics. She indicates that this type of practice holds its pillars: modes of interaction, shared goals and roles, relational structures and functioning group dynamics. The author uses as examples two public interventions on which the sociometric criteria were applied.

**Keywords:** Sociodrama; Group; Direction strategies; Relational structures; Group dynamics.

**RESUMO:** A autora relata a origem do Sociodrama moreniano, seus mecanismos de ação, suas práticas e as estratégias de ação do diretor. Define grupo, aponta a existência de diferentes focos de direção: protagonico, espontâneo e relacional, mostrando pormenorizadamente como opera o modelo sociométrico, que trabalha com as forças afetivas de aproximação, afastamento ou indiferença de cada participante em relação aos demais. Mostra que as escolhas mútuas produzem coesão grupal e as discordantes dinâmicas conflituosas. Aponta que este tipo de prática tem como pilares: os modos de convivência, os objetivos e papéis comuns, as estruturas relacionais e as dinâmicas de funcionamento conjunto. Dá como exemplo duas intervenções públicas onde o referencial sociométrico foi aplicado.

**Palavras-chave:** Sociodrama; Grupo; Estratégias de direção; Estruturas relacionais; Dinâmicas grupais.

**RESUMEN:** La autora nos relata las raíces del Sociodrama moreniano, sus mecanismos de acción, sus procedimientos y las posibles estrategias del Conductor de grupos. Explica lo que es el grupo, muestra las variadas formas de dirección del Psicodrama: con el protagonista, con la espontaneidad y con las relaciones, señalando con detalles como actúa el modelo sociométrico a partir de las fuerzas de atracción, de rechazo o de indiferencia de cada uno con los otros. Aclara que las elecciones mutuas producen la cohesión grupal y las no recíprocas, dinámicas de conflicto. Destaca que ese foco tiene como base los modos personales de convivir, las metas colectivas, los roles comunes, las estructuras relacionales y las dinámicas de actuación conjunta. Ilustra la teoría con dos intervenciones públicas en las cuales ese modelo de acción fue aplicado.

**Palabras-clave:** Sociodrama; Estrategias de dirección; Estructuras relacionales; Dinámicas grupales.

1. Instituto Sedes Sapientiae – Departamento de Psicodrama – São Paulo (SP), Brazil.

\*Corresponding author: amknobel@uol.com.br

Received: 29 Jun 2020 – Accepted: 15 Oct 2020

Section Editor: Clara Paz



## INTRODUCTION

This article addresses the origins and the theoretical foundations of morenian Sociodrama, suggesting a directing model centered on the evolution phases of relations within groups, discussed by Moreno in his book *Who Shall Survive?* (1934/1978). The proposed directing strategies allow a gradual and inclusive development of collective constructions through scenes and plots that, when enacted, unveil and work on latent interpersonal dynamics and emerging group themes. The goal in this theoretical-practical conjunction is to organize several sparse concepts that are merely implied in Moreno's practices, seeking the creation of an effective sociodramatic Direction capable of embracing and acting upon collective issues that exist within both private and social practice groups, as well as in large groups.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

Sociodrama is a method first used by J. L. Moreno over 100 years ago, in Austria, to reorganize a camp of Italian refugees during the First World War (1914-1918). At that moment, he followed his intuition that social maladjustments could decrease if those people lived close to who they already knew and cared for. On this task, he was assisted by clergy people that had been accompanying the migrants and helped him to analyze and redefine new groups based on affinity, lineage, or neighboring origin places.

In the United States of America, by the 1930s, he applied the sociodramatic method to understand and address racial conflicts, cultural and social tensions and collective crises. His goal was to allow each individual of a minority group to influence the practical course of their issues and needs through solutions co-built by themselves.

Therefore, one can say that Sociodrama is a liberating group procedure that uses the *action-research* method, through which each participant becomes an active member in/of the group. The sociodramatic process uses action techniques that can foster collective solutions "*in situ*" - i.e., on the spot - for conflictual events.

It is a particular method: it focuses on social roles and themes common to a group, seeking intermediate relations, reaching concrete goals and optimizing the functionality of a group (or between groups). It embraces and stimulates diversity of expressions, accepts each way of playing the same social roles, and amplifies singularities' consciousness, benefitting the acceptance of the different.

In its origins, sociodrama embraces and deals with the complexity of relationships, seeks non-violent communication and accepts the difference without stimulating unilateral actions or values.

A sociodrama director's actions must come from a *contract* established between them and the participants to assure this relational openness. This contract is often not explicitly formalized, but it is shaped by location, circumstances, and tasks that the group will undergo. It is defined between the coordinator and the group of people going through the conflicts and wants external help to solve them, and in some cases, by a hiring institution (such as a school or business company).

The contract authorizes and defines the set of social roles to be worked upon there and then. Other roles of the participants will not be the focus of that sociodrama. For instance, during an activity centered on the relationship between a manager and employees of a bank, family roles (father/mother/siblings) or economic status (wealthy, low, middle class) should not be the Director's focus, even if they appear as qualities of these professional roles. For example, a manager should not be seen as a



father for his employees, nor an employee's disinterest can be functionally justified because they lost their parents at a young age. Personal issues should only be addressed in other contexts, such as counseling or psychotherapy.

However, even if one limits the roles to be worked upon by/in the group, they present varying dynamics, either regarding individual differences or according to the group's culture and set of values. For example: a teacher/student relationship at an urban private school differs from one that takes place between student/teacher at a rural school. The same way that the set of rules between contestants/organizers of a science marathon in an average school in Brazil or Japan are specific to each content.

Thus, according to the social, ethnic or geographic belonging of the members and the Director in a group, different rights, duties and expectations are drawn, both at individual and collective levels.

## THE GROUP

Paradoxically, Moreno does not present any definition of a group. It is known that it is not a mere assemblage of people side by side, nor a collective defined only by a single shared characteristic, such as refugees, inmates, women, children, students. As a first outlook, one can consider the *group* as a specific type of human aggregation with different structuring and functioning forms that can be empirically observed. Several modes of coexistence are set up from a particular repertoire of roles and common projects. For example: at a school, there are the roles of student, teacher, colleague, Director, auxiliary staff, cleaning staff. However, the relationships between these youths and the staff members will differ according to their grade. Even though they all are students at that school, there will be differences depending on how far they are into their courses. High School or kindergarten students may share the same location, the school's identity, but distinct actions differentiate this common role.

Likewise, projects can vary: in the first year, the shared goal is to learn how to read and relate to many colleagues, with the teachers, with the collective rules. In the third year of the second cycle, the main project can be to enter a college, get a good job, or date someone. One can see that although the role is the same, there are differences in its sets of conduct, according to *what for* and *how* each one is a student.

Brazilian psychodramatists have been working for many years on theories about what is a group. I highlight two authors that present broad and clear theorizations.

In 1976, Milan already theorized about what makes a group, regarding it as an articulated totality of units

[...], defined by their relationships to others, according to a specific project elaborated within the intersubjectivity. Each unit of the group (one or more individuals) corresponds to a position in this structure and the group is a system of positions. Therefore, "it's not only through action that Psychodrama differs from other group therapies, but because it is anchored on a theory that looks at the Group and the individual, never disposing of one element, neither reducing one to the other" (Milan, 1976, p.3).

Nery states, from Moreno, that "the group can be understood as an assortment of people articulated by roles and by shared social goals, in which the individual's states (co-conscious and co-unconscious) will form their relational patterns and dynamics" (2010, p. 20).

Thus, the Sociodrama coordinator's action considers several pillars: modes of interaction, shared goals, relational structures, a set of roles and their collective function dynamics.



Through a coexistence structured by roles, by the set of shared rules, by valued forms of action and by collective values, people will gradually organize in groupings or interdependent bonding systems, that Moreno calls *sociometric networks*, palpable relational structures through which communication flows.

Metaphorically, the group can be considered a *social uterus* that feeds its participants and allows the development of a shared life. So, according to their acceptance and affinities, each member of the group gets to hold a *position* in these networks, places of more or less prestige and influence within the collective structure. On the opposite case, there are also positions where rejection and devaluation are predominant, those are the participants that are unable to present themselves as attractive or interested in the group dynamics, they are the *marginalized* ones that require special attention from the Director regarding their inclusion. However, this insertion often is not achieved, and the coordinator has to lead them into a situation of more support, whether in another group or with individual counseling.

In groups without significant conflicts, after some time, there will be individuals or sub-groups that will have a more substantial influence on the other members for a while or because of a specific task. Those are the *leaders* with which other participants tend to identify, providing them with representativity and power. When this validation runs out, new individuals that manage to conquer a position of influence within the group emerge.

To summarize, I understand group as a space that germinates both good and bad, and that is traversed by individual, social and cultural territories, and motivations, yearnings, projects, myths and values. It harbors *inter* (between) and *trans* (beyond) unique phenomena that create the *group atmosphere*, a field of different co-conscious and co-unconscious modes of existence. Akin to a living organism, the group can lead either to the empowerment or the devitalization of its members, which demands a careful intervention from the coordinator.

It should be noted that unlike other group work approaches, the psychodramatic methodology offers to shelter, address and mitigate persecution and angst, often present at the beginning of the activity, especially in groups created *ad hoc*, without shared relational historic and experiences, such as during free community activities, held in places of sheltering and reflection on issues of citizenship or elaboration of collective or traumatic situations.

Moreno (in the 1920s) propositioned this form of action to allow a spontaneous-creative movement for the participants, which, according to him, only takes place when the role-playing game is not based on a priori rules, but on a free collective production done by all. This freedom allows the initial grouping of people to gradually build a *groupness* experience, a specific state that is established and moves from its members' singularities and the actions of the coordinator who reads and works with the different meanings present in the group.

Psychodrama's methodological arsenal offers several forms of action: it can prioritize a personal drama. A member chosen by all produces scenes of their personal history that embody everyone's yearnings and dramas. It can work upon relational structures, with individual *status* within the group and its dynamics in the sociometric model, and it can prioritize as expression the Spontaneous Theater's art (*latu sensu*) with plots and spontaneous scenes that spread over onto the participants. Whichever the model, the coordinator's instructions should be clear, understandable and straightforward enough so that the participants can act spontaneously and to build the group territory.

However, a Morenian oriented group director knows that this type of regard that separates action models is only useful for a didactic understanding of the method's different *modus operandi*, since, in practice, the work on spontaneity, protagonist or relations operates on the same *continuum*. Therefore, the method's organicism is its trademark: whatever focus is prioritized by the Director, all of the remaining action modes will be simultaneous and complementarily present in that investigation.

In this article, I will attain to the relational/Sociometric angle of Sociodrama



## DIRECTING STRATEGIES

These are maneuvers chosen by the Director, in sync with the group, to translate, harbor and address significant issues for the participants in that context.

The sociodramatic Director's strategic actions should promote a sense of belonging, an egalitarian chance of expression, encompassing the largest number of participants. Their propositions offer communication paths both for affinities and to discrepancies and oppositions present within the group at that moment. To respect differences is in itself transformative, and the collective action can lead both to consensus and the mapping and validation of disagreements.

The sociodramatist starts with what is more evident: the motivations, the affections and the individual particularities that provide a unique colorfulness to the roles authorized by the contract, but he also seeks to highlight what is essential, but not necessarily visible or stated by the group's members.

This direction focus holds as premise the idea that the functioning of a group, named by Moreno as its *social reality*, derives from continuous adjustments between socially and culturally pre-defined forms of action for those roles, their *external reality* and the distinct ways in which each person plays those social roles, their *sociometric matrix* (Social Trichotomy– 1934/1978 – pg. 79).

More than investigating the content of present themes, this form of action aims to create relational conditions for people to approach freely collective and personal themes and scenes.

## SOCIODRAMATIC ACTION

Initially, the Director seeks to establish an environment that favors the spontaneous states of the participants. For this purpose, they promote *warming up* exercises using as reference what Moreno called *starters*: physical (what part of your body is tense? What is the rhythm of my breathing?), mental (what prior experiences can help me now? How do I face hardships?), affectionate (what am I feeling: fear? how do I face the unknown?)

At this first moment, the warm-up focus is individual, allowing each one to contact their emotions and mobilized sensations *here and now* in the group field. This allows the initial grouping of people to build some sort of *groupness* experience, a specific state that is established and moves from its member's singularities, common projects, and the actions of a coordinator who "reads" and works upon the different plots existing within the group. They should offer forms of expression that help the participants understand, display, and influence the group field.

Once the warm-up ends, the Sociometry focused Director starts to work according to the development phases of the group's relational structures.

Moreno has always been guided by thorough observation of relational facts on this research field, using the participant's testimonials regarding their insertion, comfort, and influence within the group. He has experimentally verified how the development of relationships according to age occurs by analyzing groups of babies, children, teenagers, and young adults, amounting to 1973 people. He perceived an interesting constant involving all age groups, stating that "the three directions or structure tendencies that we have described for baby groups – organic isolation, horizontal and vertical differentiation – are fundamental characteristics in the development of groups. They always appear, whatever the group's size or complexity" (1978, p. 202).

The analysis of several group directions that use this reference reveals its valid applicability as enabling and structuring for the sociodramatic group Coordinator's action.



On this model, there initially occurs a *moment of isolation*, when each one is with themselves, which demands a special emotional restraint from the coordinator since there frequently is a high level of anxiety and angst among the participants. They should centralize communication, facilitate recognizing each one's feelings, needs or expectations for that activity. For example, they can use simple spatial exploration games: how large is the room, how many doors are there, is the ceiling high. They can also ask each one to center their attention on their bodies: how does one usually walk, how does one feel when walking faster or slower, how is one's own breathing, how does it feel to change this pattern to fill the lungs and slowly empty them, etc. These actions usually tend to have a good effect on anxiety. For everyone to connect to themselves, this moment has to be introspection, calm and silent.

The goal is the mere introduction and mapping of singularities existing within the group and all forms of being are accepted and hold the same importance since the relations are symmetrical. Both equal and different are valid.

From those experiences, the Director can request the members to create groupings based on similarities (men/women, students/teachers, old/new at a job). Another research can be done through an emotional brainstorming technique, which makes not very specific emotional states visible, such as: discontent, agitation, wanting to leave, joy, highlighting more subtle shared affective territories that favors belonging and cohesion among participants. Many more criteria can be used in this organization of sub-groups by identity.

After several experiences, significant groupings appear, in which people feel good and spontaneity flows. Once cohesive sub-groups are defined, the Director asks each group to talk among themselves, sharing their ideas and feelings to determine, through a scene, the focus that unites them. This dramatization can happen through a character in a short plot, a *fluid sculpture* (a technique derived from a static sculpture that gains life and acts freely) or through a simple sentence that will be enacted theatrically. Each production is presented to the other members. At that moment, the environment tends to be joyful and full of complicity. This step exposes differences and similarities regarding individual motivations, shared yearnings and values within the group, organizing different sets of existences in the group, it is the so-called *moment of horizontal differentiation*.

During that phase, the sub-groups' creative expression is exposed to everyone, but the productions are simply juxtaposed, with no organization or hierarchy between them. If there are too many sub-groups, the Director can ask the ones that are more alike to conjoin by affinity, to reduce the number of presented scenes, a strategy that seeks to maintain dramatic tension and everyone's interest.

From then on, each sub-group chooses a representative to negotiate with the other delegates, which plots best encapsulates the group's production. Since they represent several people and each one has its own audience, a sort of fan-base that endorses their efforts to showcase the importance of their plot and sub-group. When doubts appear, the representative should consult with their sub-group to aid them in their decision. In the opposite case, their proposition must be endorsed by others.

Thus, the *moment of vertical differentiation* begins, defined by the emerging of leaders that propose solutions or take on attitudes that represent the aspirations of several sub-group members who identify with them. This moment is laid-back and dynamic, leading to everyone's empowerment.

Finally, the presented snippets are put on a logical sequence chosen by the group, going from juxtaposed scenes to a chain of those scenes, like a movie that always reveals the group through the series of its contents co-conscious and co-unconscious dynamic. Finally, one can request a title for that plot produced by all, which usually displays the group's themes and paths at that moment.

As seen, for this sociodramatic work model, what matters is the cocreated plot and not the individual project of each participant. To go through all these phases, there has to be a lot of negotiations between each one and everyone's desires and reasons. The more significant the amount of *Tele-spontaneity* (organic articulation between tele and spontaneity – Fava, 1997, p. 29) in a



group, the more harmonious, flexible and effective its functioning. Conversely, the more transferential relationships occupy the collective space, the more dysfunctional and rigid the performance, increasing discomfort and fragility of its members. Still, by traversing and configuring its themes, the group always is transformed.

The sociometric method of Sociodrama characterizes a specific workflow that aims to provide a voice to all forces in the group, seeking everyone's expression and autonomy, taking the maintenance of differences into account. It operates through consecutive identity movements and identification processes. It harbors both the equal and the multiple, which are never transformed into one.

## EXAMPLES OF THEORY IN PRACTICE

### IIIº Mediterranean Conference: A Bridge Called Mediterranean, Barcelona, 2008

During this conference promoted by the IAGP (International Association of Group Psychotherapy), two directors, a man and a woman, from different continents, directed one of the Ongoing Groups, a continuous set of activities throughout the three days of the Conference, always at the end of the workday for one and a half hour.

#### Day 1

A grouping of fifty to sixty people from various countries in the Americas and Europe is in the room. Two continents, many idioms, synthesized on the conference's two official languages: English, used by the headlining attendees, and Spanish. Translations were informal, done by the participants themselves, which created different levels of access to communication. In this group there was a simultaneous translation, provided most of the time by one of the directors and some participants. It was interesting to note that occasionally a person would start speaking Spanish, translated to English, and then would go on speaking English, which would then have to be translated to Spanish. A phenomenon always took as confusion, but that also displayed the existential dive into the concrete situation that the group was going through as a massive melting crucible in which the different elements of several cultures of the Mediterranean, named by the organization as *Bridge* between cultures, were combined,.

Initially, the Director verbally maps what each one wants to bring into the group. Testimonials and expectations appear. After that verbal warm-up regarding expectations about the Conference, the directors switch and there begins a dramatic mapping of the countries there. Many national groupings spread throughout the room, attempting to arrange themselves, as requested by the female Director, in a reasonably similar place as their geographical location on a world map would be. There emerges, there and then, a mirroring of national geography.

After that, each sub-group (or in some cases, individual) is asked to choose a typical song or proverb from their country to be enunciated or sung out loud to the others. Immediately everyone starts to talk at the same time, launching loud, creative chaos.

After some struggle, the directors make themselves heard and request that the communication be done in a sequential order to listen to the others. There is a joyful collective movement, somewhat discriminate and full of power. On that morning, in that same room, the Conference's attendees reception event took place, and banners of many shades of blue and silver (materializing ocean waves) were left in the room. Some of the sub-groups took them, creating a beautiful scenic effect to the presentations. Once the dramatizations ended, so did the Sociodrama, without the sharing phase.



Methodologically analyzing the occurrence, one can note that there initially was a *moment of isolation*, in which an introspective process allowed the definition and display of the different national identities. By being dramatically showcased through short plots, songs and proverbs, the participants experienced the *moment of horizontal differentiation*, in which everyone could cooperatively map, through a joyful and robust collective environment, the first differences with the group. The first group encounter provided an optimistic atmosphere regarding the power of transcultural exchange.

## Day 2

It starts with two focus: sharing about the large group's previous day experience and the discomfort resulting from the scientific daytime activities since one of the Ongoing Group's functions is to work as a space of resonance and further elaboration of lived experiences of the Conference itself.

There are intense mobilized testimonials of several participants, because of the day's plenary, concerning immigration to Europe. During that presentation, there had been shown photos of people in highly risky situations or even dead, as they attempted to cross literally or symbolically the borders between poverty and wealth, between hunger and abundance, between lack of citizenship and European belonging, seen by immigrants as able to provide the conditions for personal and economic growth.

There appears the Mediterranean Sea that separates, that is no longer the generous bridge between countries and continents, another abysmal space where death, humiliation and subjugation to foreign values lurk since to survive, the weak bows to the strong. There are many emotions of different hues: frustration, anger, sadness, unfamiliarity.

Who are the authors of this indignant-action<sup>1</sup>?

At that point, one of the participants claims to see ghosts and are angry because of a lack of action. What Psychodrama is this one that does not dramatize?

The directors investigate these *spirit* characters' complaints, taking them as a metaphorical expression of the co-unconscious trans-personal uneasiness that inhabited the group.

Materialized discomfort feelings within the group that are united by likeness in many forms of discontent.

Each group builds a sculpture from movements (fluid sculpture) to metaphorically express their experience, embodied by lacerating screams of anger, expressions of loathing, repudiation, but also ambivalence since in that context there were not only despicable elements, there were also good experiences that reconciled the themes both good and bad aspects.

This shaky and intense territory portrays evilness outside of the group. They subjugate, humiliate and kill, because we, present group members, have as a goal to offer room to the fight for rights, for ethics, for compassion for the have-nots. Our collective pact as sociodramatists is always to shelter the marginalized.

There appear those who feel like they do not belong to any of the presented categories and who did not wish to participate in the group plot. They rather stay out watching and assessing the collective production, creating what was named as the *disagreeing audience* subgroup.

Members of the disagreeing audience are given a chance to speak, and so they start naming their personal feelings regarding their experiences, echoed by the whole group in the same tone and rhythm in which they were expressed. The living and woeful resonance allow some symbolic and cathartic reparation of processes experienced by/in the large group.

---

1. Translator's note: originally spelt *indigna-ação*, as if separating the word indignation as *indignant* and *action* in Portuguese



Emotions are intense and the whole group becomes more united, building a unique plot that would form an ambivalent, obscure and multifaceted story of those crossings, both social and subjective ones revealed by the group dynamics.

With the possible affective inclusion, the group is terminated. There is sadness, power, fatigue since intense and unexpected co-unconscious territories were navigated.

To understand this group process, one can note that the mapping of the various emotional states and their expression gave a voice to that enormous collective discomfort caused by the contact with the ignoble, the anti-human, with pain and with death. The group's protagonist theme was revealed: the weak conscience facing a brutal and unfair social reality.

On the third day, near the end of the Conference, the Direction focused on spontaneous activities through more ludic and cathartic experiences of the emotions lived there, a necessary transition between the group context atmosphere and the social reality that everyone had to face after the conclusion.

### 9º Brazilian Congress of Psychodrama. Águas de São Pedro (São Paulo – Brasil) 1994

Another example, published by the Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama (Knobel, 1996), remains up to date for the didactic understanding of the Sociometric Direction model's stages and dynamics Sociodrama, since all elements previously discussed appear during this public session. This experience happened during the 9<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress of Psychodrama, which gathered around a thousand participants and was directed by Dr. José Fonseca, Supervising Professor at FEBRAP, who authorized his directing.

Those people were there because of their desire to learn, teach and exchange, sharing a familiar role: Psychodramatist. The place: a sports gymnasium; In its center: the psychodramatic court/stage, on the sides: crowded seats. Expectation and tension.

In the beginning, a man alone with a microphone on his hand starts to talk a little about himself, about the situation, and about his task of directing the closing Sociodrama. He limits the dramatic context while walking. After that, he asks the people who are interested in participating in occupying the court. About half the audience does. He then starts to explore different segments of the group: men to one side, women to the other; those who have already graduated and those who are still students; those who have been into Psychodrama for five, ten, fifteen years more. The groups are forms, displayed and undone.

Someone asks: who attended the 1970 International Congress in São Paulo? (5<sup>th</sup> International congress of Psychodrama/ 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Therapeutic Communities, held together at the MASP – São Paulo Museum of Art at a time of Military Dictatorship). The Director repeats the question and about twenty to thirty people present themselves. They are enthusiastically applauded by everyone else. There are strong emotions. Holding hands, they thank the audience with tears in their eyes. It is the living history of the Brazilian Psychodramatic movement right there.

The Director asks the people to group by another criterion: the regions of the Brazilian Psychodrama Federation (FEBRAP). There are South, São Paulo, East, North-Northeast and Center-West. Now each group presents itself and stays put.

Once again, a new proposition from the audience: people not associated with FEBRAP should be there as well. The Director gives room to this suggestion adding another group to the other five: the "non-affiliated". Politics is present. He also calls for foreigners: Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. Each group arrives and presents itself by singing typical songs. The others applaud or boo. The atmosphere is joyful, loud, laid-back. There are nine groupings, some very large, some very small. After the introductions, the Director asks each group to choose from six to eight people to be their representatives. Everyone else goes back to their seats. There are now in the court, turned into a psychodramatic stage, nine small groups.



New instruction: that each group showcases how they perform Psychodrama, allowing some time for the propositions to be structured. In each group, everyone assembles and speak in low tones so that their ideas are not exposed. They quickly decide what they will do. Each one performs. The audience applauds, doing a traditional “Mexican wave” from soccer stadiums.

One more proposition from the audience: the audience itself wants to be included as another sub-group (the tenth) in the performance. The spontaneous collective gesture defines the audience as an existing force. The Director consents to the suggestion once again. After each sub-group’s introduction, the choosing of a representative for all. The chosen group is the “non-affiliated,” which instead of presenting a symbolic image, showcased a scene with a production level that significantly overshadowed the other ones.

This scene tells a story of planting a seed that is watered, fertilized, nurtured, grows, develops and transforms into a big healthy tree. The scene is performed again, allowing the audience to participate spontaneously and, once again moves everyone, who applauds. The Sociodrama is closed among hugs and laughter, designing the abundant *plurality of Brazilian Psychodrama*, the phrase that named this meeting. Happy ending. A real game of forces and tensions present at the Congress. One can note that the Director starts as the center of attention, defines the goals and does several sociometric mappings of the group. He traverses through the moment of isolation/identities and follows through horizontal and vertical differentiation. Lastly, as a result of a long process of consecutive sociometric choices, the final scene condenses everyone’s desire into a unique focus of over a thousand people.

The incredible power of Sociodramatic action validated by the group’s laws crowns everyone’s effort and consecrates the Director who, with skill and artfulness, has followed the necessary theoretical steps to transform the collective energy into action and emotion of the group and the Congress.

## FINAL REMARKS

As it was noted on both interventions presented, the sociometric model of directing managed to give a voice to existing forces within the groups, either hegemonic or minoritarian, highlighting and organizing agreements and negotiating divergences. Their focuses were the shared social roles authorized by the *locus* and the participants’ goals suggested and accepted. It has proven itself a democratic and liberating methodology that rebuilds the matrixes of stereotypical dynamics and stimulates spontaneous and creative actions from everyone.

Thus, the group’s moments’ theoretical comprehension allowed the Directors to map the occurring subjective co-unconscious meanings, helping - in the first case - the awareness that the sincere desire for connection between cultures is just a first step towards changes wanted. In the second group, political inclusion possibilities were woven for participants who opposed the mandatory association to the national body holding the event, turning conflict into decisive cooperative action.

Therefore, by understanding and taking into account the moments of the evolution of relational structures and the groups’ functioning modes in each step, the Directors were able to do a subtle work that, by following natural phases of the groups, has guaranteed democratic expression, included the marginalized, mapped their potency, ambivalences and limits, while not seeking a happy ending, but new possibilities that were spontaneously cocreated by all.

It bares noting that this directing model can be applied to processual, community or multicultural groups, as well as to Psychodramatic Acts with Large Groups created during specific activities such as: openings and closings of Scientific Conferences, the assisting of people in traumatic circumstances, or the mapping of social demands. →

Since it reveals co-unconscious collective themes that affect relational dynamics, it tends to enhance the group's potency and capability. It is a Sociatric activity because it embraces and works on suffering, social maladjustments, yearnings, and shared demands. The number of participants may vary from small groups with around eight people to Large Groups gathering hundreds of members.

To sum up, it was shown that the suggested strategies arose from individual introspection and each one's expectations that once shared, unveiled the discomforts and yearnings *there and then*. In the next moment, the themes were grouped by similarity, addressed into smaller subgroupings, enacted and organized by everyone in a significant link that unraveled *protagonist plots* and proposed several different routes.

This concludes this theoretical-practical path, which regards the group as a shifting territory in which individual and collective expectations pulsate, and that has been unveiled and potentialized a hundred years ago.

Moreno was right...

## REFERENCES

- Fava, S. (1997). Os conceitos de espontaneidade e tele na educação. In Puttini E.F., Lima L. M. S. (org), *Ações educativas: vivências com psicodrama na prática pedagógica* (pp.25-31). São Paulo: Ágora.
- Knobel, A. M. (1996). Estratégias de direção grupal. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 4(1), 49-62.
- Milan, B. (1976). *O jogo do esconderijo - terapia em questão*. São Paulo, Livraria Pioneira.
- Moreno, J. L. (1978). *Who Shall Survive?* New York, Beacon House.
- Nery, M. P. (2010). *Grupos e intervenções em conflitos*. São Paulo, Ágora.