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Approaches to the Concept of Educational Community, From the Perspective of School Coexistence: A Participatory Dialogic Study¹

Jonathan Andrades-Moya

Universidad Católica del Maule

ORCID No: [0000-0001-5371-9412](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5371-9412)

jandradesmoya@gmail.com

Eugenio Pérez Álvarez

Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano

ORCID No: [0000-0002-1295-8692](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1295-8692)

quenoperez@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to characterise the elements and components of school coexistence that contribute to the construction of the concept of educational community, from the knowledge carried by the members of a research community. The study was carried out through the dialogic methodology, *kishu kimkelay ta che* [no person knows or learns by themselves], which opts for the collective, participatory, and dialogic development of each stage of the research process. For the collection and analysis of empirical data, collective dialogue and *Az kintun* [to look according to the intention of searching or finding something together with others] were used. Among the results, a link between school coexistence and educational community was identified because both concepts interact systematically. On the one hand, the educational community is interpreted as the substantial, theoretical, conceptual, and epistemic basis through which people combine their perspectives towards common actions. And, on the other hand, school coexistence is seen as a process through which people build their interactions and interrelations. Therefore, if people agree to form an educational community based on community cohesion, then school coexistence could point towards a construction of interactions and interrelations with a collective focus. In conclusion, school coexistence is considered the process that favours the construction of the educational community according to the epistemic and gnoseological basis of such process.

Keywords: school coexistence, interpersonal communication, school community, research groups, participatory research, Chile

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Introduction

School coexistence is usually related to the interrelational dynamics that occur in the school context. Such dynamics are diverse and generally arise from the interactions (Khanal & Guha, 2023) carried out by the people who make up an educational community. Thus, school coexistence is characterised as a phenomenon that is constructed on a daily and collective basis (Sainz et al., 2023)—it is a product of the interactions and interrelationships carried out by the people in a given school context.

By considering school coexistence as a collective phenomenon that is specific to an educational community, it offers the possibility of deconstructing the classical view of it. In other words, it allows us to advance from an interpretation of school coexistence as a broad and complex phenomenon (Sainz et al., 2023), to one with epistemic, gnoseological, and methodological qualities that opts for the co-construction of experiences and knowledge.

In order to build school coexistence on a daily basis, it would be essential to give an active and leading role to all the people who make up an educational community. In this way, communication can be enhanced to a perspective centred on understanding and the generation of agreements (Habermas, 1985). However, we encounter an immediate barrier, namely, the scarce theory found in the literature on school coexistence in relation to the concept of collectivity and, even, of educational community. In view of this, authors such as Essomba et al. (2023) have emphasised the need to opt for a sense of community—understanding it as a collective that shares time, space, and an awareness of belonging. Indeed, if school coexistence refers to the process in which these people relate to each other, then it is linked to community matters. Oliveira et al. (2023) indicated that the literature introduces four main spheres: a) physical, social, and emotional safety, b) quality of teaching and learning, c) relationship and collaboration, and d) environmental structure. These dimensions address issues that allude to systemic aspects consistent with Essomba et al. (2023). Therefore, the educational community emerges, possibly, as a phenomenon associated with school coexistence.

The literature consulted did not provide evidence of a relational approach or description between school coexistence and the educational community. It was limited to mentioning it within its characteristics, but then did not concern itself with deepening questions such as: “What is understood by educational community?” “Who makes up the educational community?” “What roles do they play and what epistemic, gnoseological, or methodological basis do they share for their collective/individual development?” “Is there a connection between educational community and school coexistence?” “What aspects or characteristics allow these issues to converge?” “What is their relationship?”

Regarding these questions, the literature consulted alluded to who makes up the community. An example of this is found in the National Policy on School Coexistence, issued by the Ministry of Education of Chile, which specified that the actors of an educational community are "students, teachers, education assistants, directors, parents, guardians and support staff" (Ministerio de Educación de Chile [Mineduc], 2019, p. 9). The Mineduc (2019, p. 9) added that school coexistence can also be observed in the dynamics that occur between inter- and extra-school organisations such as the "organisations of the environment in which it is inserted." Along with the above, the same institution further added: "All social facts that are part of human relations constitute modes of relationship that community members put into action in the daily life of educational establishments" (Mineduc, 2019, p. 9).

On the one hand, there are conceptual positions in the literature that situate school coexistence as an interaction between people in an educational community (Bosacki et al., 2023). On the other, the literature on school coexistence defines it as a set of interrelationships that occur between people in the same context (Ramazan et al., 2023). It is also defined as the quality and character of school life (Sousa et al., 2023). In addition to the above, there is another theoretical current that positions school coexistence as a process in which people in an educational community build their relationships based on experiences (Yu et al., 2023)—from participation in decision making (Benbenishty et al., 2023), from the same values framework (Jefferson et al., 2023), from attitude, feelings, and involving psychological well-being (Miller et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023), from their relationship with violence (Benbenishty et al., 2023), or from an association with healthy student development (Yu et al., 2023).

In accordance with the above, another conceptualisation of school coexistence detected in the literature presented it as peaceful coexistence. This implicitly includes all the people who share a given school context. As an example, McChesney & Cross (2023, p. 789) stated that "the term school climate encompasses 'virtually every aspect of the school experience,' including aspects related to safety, community, academic climate, and the institutional environment." This excerpt shows the appearance of the concept of educational community; however, it can be seen that the article added information alluding to educational community, but did not develop more in-depth aspects.

The phenomenon is transversal, which is to say, it is not only observed in conceptualisations of school coexistence, but is repeated in the different sections of the scientific articles consulted. As an example, the following quotes are included:

Putting these components in place while ensuring alignment with the values and needs of the school community can be difficult for schools with fewer resources. (Calvert et al., 2023, p. 1)

Hence, intervisitations contribute to promoting a culture of learning among the entire school community. (Cascio, 2023, p. 228)

Specifically, school climate refers to the social relationships between students, teachers and professional staff, and it also addresses academics, values, approaches, and norms shared by the educational community. (Gálvez-Nieto et al., 2023)

Development of greater collaboration and professional exchange of ideas among teachers, a greater sense of collective responsibility for student development, and improvements in the school–community relationship before stakeholders can expect to see improvements in educational outcomes. (Khanal & Guha, 2023, p. 620)

In short, school coexistence is associated with the educational community as long as it is considered that the people who are part of it are the ones who carry out the interactions and interrelations that, ultimately, result in school coexistence. Therefore, how the people—protagonists of their realities— build their interactions and interrelations, would be the result of the same. But for this, it is necessary to understand a central aspect focused on what is the common basis through which people orient their practices.

With respect to common ground, the literature on school coexistence suggests that it is optimal to reach agreements that allow the consolidation of guidelines that regulate or direct the actions carried out by people (Benbenishty et al., 2023; Cascio, 2023; Sainz et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, in order to achieve these agreements, and as Habermas (1985) pointed out, communication becomes a transcendental aspect. In this line, Jantzer et al. (2023) highlighted aspects such as collaboration and communication, for example, in teachers to favour school coexistence.

In the preceding paragraphs, arguments have been put forward that allow inferring the existence of two problems: 1) How is the educational community associated with school coexistence? and 2) What concept and characteristics could be constructed on educational community, from the perspective of its protagonists?

The present article addresses these two problematisations, taking as a basis the two arguments presented above. For this purpose, research was carried out together with a group of people from an educational institution in the central-south zone of Chile. This research was framed within the doctoral thesis of the first author of this article (Andrades-Moya, 2022). The method used was based on the participatory paradigm (Gayá-Wicks & Reason, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997) and on the dialogic methodology, *kishu kimkelay ta che* [no person knows or learns by themselves], of the Mapuche people (Ferrada & Del Pino, 2018).

The aforementioned methodology is characterised by the co-construction of knowledge as a way of transforming the reality that, together with the people, one wishes to transform (Ferrada & Del Pino, 2018; Ferrada et al., 2014). According to Ferrada and Del Pino (2018), the term of the methodology is used to symbolise the intercultural combination and the respective co-construction of knowledge from such cultural interaction. Semantically, *kishu kimkelay ta che* implies that no person knows and learns by themselves but rather, in conjunction with others and based on their historicity (Ferrada et al., 2014). This article responds to the following research objective: "To characterise the elements and components of school coexistence that contribute to the construction of the concept of educational community, from the knowledge carried by the members of a research community."

Methodology

The research was carried out under the considerations of the participatory paradigm and the dialogic methodology, *kishu kimkelay ta che*. According to authors such as Gayá-Wicks & Reason (2009) and Heron & Reason (1997), this paradigm focuses on the co-construction of the research process. That is, it transmutes the passive role that is usually given to people in a study context into an active role in which people actively participate (Wood et al., 2023) in the design and development of the process.

In relation to the dialogic methodology, *kishu kimkelay ta che*, its characteristics are congruent with the approaches outlined above because it stands for co-research and for carrying out consensual processes in a dialogic manner (Ferrada & Del Pino, 2018). To this end, it goes to the context with the purpose of inviting people, protagonists of their realities, to participate as co-researchers of the study. This group of people is called the community of research (CoR).

Formation of the Research Community

The CoR is a heterogeneous group of people who assume the role of researcher. According to Ferrada & Del Pino (2018), it is convenient that the CoR is made up of people with different characteristics such as age, gender, schooling, and culture, among others. The purpose is to foster the richness of perspectives and favour the co-construction of a deeper knowledge that allows a greater understanding of the phenomenon or reality to be studied. The CoR is an active protagonist because together and dialogically, they agree on all the parameters of the research. The CoR considers the problem to be investigated, the research questions and objectives, the procedures to be developed to collect the empirical data, the analysis of the empirical data, and the evaluation of the continuity, or not, of the process.

In the case of this research, in September 2019, the formation of the CoR began in a school in the central-south zone of Chile, which agreed to participate voluntarily. The school is characterised as being of

municipal dependence and presenting a vulnerability index of approximately 97%. In addition, the school is characterised as having diverse cultural characteristics because it has people from different contexts. People from urban and rural contexts attend and, as a result of the migratory phenomenon, there are students and families from Ecuador, Haiti, Venezuela, and Argentina.

The CoR was made up of 58 people: 26 students belonging to the school itself, from 7th grade to 4th grade; 11 family representatives or guardians of the institution; 12 teachers who taught various courses: mathematics (1), language (1), religion (2), music (1), special education (2), basic general education (3), preschool (1), history (1); six education assistants (technical professional) who support the teaching of preschool and elementary school; two representatives of the management team (head of the Technical Pedagogical Unit and Head of School Coexistence); and the researcher. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed to hold online meetings using the Zoom platform, and to divide the CoR into four groups (CoRA, CoRB, CoRC, and CoRD—see Image 1) distributed randomly. In the case of CoRB, CoRC, and CoRD, the number of people was not intentional, but fortuitous.

Image 1

Characteristics of Research Community Members

(Adapted from Andrades-Moya, 2022)

CDI	Persons	Features
CORA	13	2 students, 2 education assistants, 2 members of the management team, 1 representative of parents and family, 5 teachers and the researcher.
CORB	15	7 students of different ages, nationality, gender and schooling; 2 teachers of different ages, gender and specialization; 4 proxies of different ages, gender and schooling; 2 education assistants of different ages and specialization.
CORC	15	8 students of different ages, nationality, gender and schooling; 1 teacher; 3 parents of different ages and schooling; and 3 education assistants of different ages and specialization.
CORD	15	9 students of different ages, nationalities, genders and educational backgrounds; 3 teachers of different ages, genders and educational backgrounds; and 3 parents of different ages and educational backgrounds.

Situated Problematisation

Situated problematisation corresponds to the phenomenon or thematic axis that the CoR agrees to investigate with the purpose of promoting a transformation of reality, or for its understanding (Ferrada et

al., 2014). Situated problematisation obeys epistemic and methodological decisions that place people as co-constructors of knowledge (Ferrada et al., 2014). In the case of this research, between October and December 2019, we discussed within the CoR several aspects that negatively affected their daily dynamics, hindering optimal and adequate intra- and interpersonal development. Among these issues, the following were raised:

- The dissociation of collaborative work among the various strata that were part of the school.
- A lack of common purposes, which affected the identity vision of the school.
- Disciplinary problems.
- Communication problems that were accentuated in line with the generation gap.
- The diffuse observation and manifestation of both a sense of belonging and a consolidation of educational community.
- An individualistic vision of school coexistence.

In relation to the last point, the CoR agreed that not working collectively in the construction of school coexistence could lead to divisions between people.

The critical issues identified converged in two questions: 1) “How is the educational community associated with the school coexistence?” and 2) “What concept and characteristics could be built on the educational community, from the perspective of its protagonists?” The objective was to characterise the elements and components of school coexistence that contribute to the construction of the concept of educational community, from the knowledge carried by the members of a research community.

Knowledge Construction Procedures

These correspond to a series of processes that are carried out for the construction of knowledge, and which allow the transforming or understanding of the situated problematisation (Ferrada & Del Pino, 2018). The dialogic methodology, *kishu kimkelay ta che*, raises several procedures that allow the development of research such as, dialogic conversation (carried out between two people), collective dialogue (group conversation), and dialogic perception (focused on observation; Ferrada et al., 2014). Among these procedures, and given the group character, collective dialogue was selected with the CoR.

Collective dialogue corresponds to an instance in which people share their intersubjectivities in order to generate knowledge to, on the one hand, understand the topic to be investigated and, on the other hand,

transform the reality that wishes to be transformed (Ferrada et al., 2014). Collective dialogues enjoy flexibility both in the temporal extension, and the directionality of the subject matter. This flexibility responds to the dialogic nature of the research process whereby the participants decide how long it will last and what topics will be addressed. In addition, it is necessary to point out that collective dialogues do not have the presence of a moderator.

In the case of this research, it was decided to carry out a collective dialogue with the CoR for each specific objective and with each group. To achieve the objective reported in this article, five collective dialogues were held between September 2020 and August 2021. The dialogues lasted one hour each and were conducted through the Zoom platform, given the health contingency for COVID-19. The topics discussed in the dialogues revolved around questions previously constructed with the CoR, namely:

- 1) What do you understand by educational community?
- 2) What characteristics could our educational community have?
- 3) Within the aforementioned characteristics of the educational community, how could I identify myself within our educational community?
- 4) In what ways could we contribute to the construction of our educational community?

The collective dialogues were recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis. It should be noted that all participants in the CoR signed a commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, along with informed consent and assent.

Knowledge Analysis and Validation

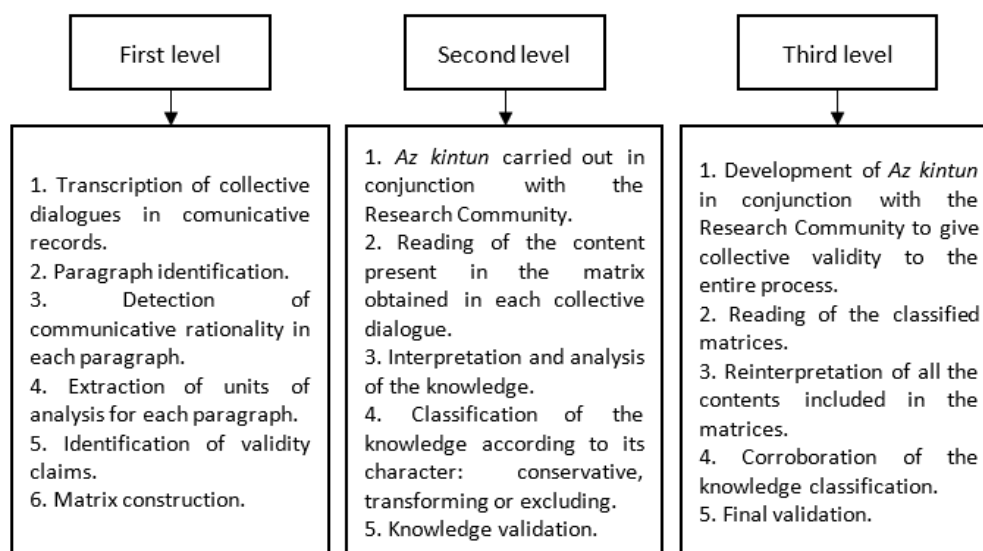
The knowledge generated through the collective dialogues was transcribed into a primer using Microsoft Word processing software. In total, four transcriptions were obtained, corresponding to the collective dialogues that were carried out according to the aforementioned objective. The transcriptions are called the communicative register (Ferrada et al., 2014), and were used to select those paragraphs that enjoyed communicative rationality, that is, those that were not subject to the interference of power roles (Ferrada, 2010). For this reason, it was vital to identify those paragraphs that showed evidence of coercion in order to not consider them in the analysis and validation.

The communicative records were subjected to a cyclical analytical process that was divided into three levels of validation (Ferrada, 2010). Each level presents a series of characteristics that stand out for the collectivity of the analysis. The path followed can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Analytical Process According to the Knowledge Validation Levels

(Andrades-Moya, 2022)



The procedures used according to each level of validation were carried out in conjunction with the CoR. Therefore, each process was discussed and agreed on. In this way, active participation was privileged during the analysis of the results and, above all, a contextualised reading. This was because the protagonists of their own reality were consulted. Therefore, they could carry out an individual and collective reading, interpretation, and analysis resorting to the experiences and knowledge they built personally and as a group. Finally, this also made possible a constant validation and reinterpretation of the results—a product of the cyclical attribute of the processes. In other words, analysis of the empirical data was carried out at different times, leading to constant revision.

Ethical Aspects

The development of the research process was reviewed and approved by the Scientific Ethics Committee of the Universidad Católica del Maule, Chile, on June 5, 2020. In the submitted report, the informed consents for adult participants, the assents for students, and consents for their respective representatives were included. Also, the confidentiality letter for the people of the CoR (to safeguard the information given by those people) and the acceptance letter issued by the participating school were included. In addition, anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, as well as the freedom to leave the research at any time.

Results and Discussion

The main findings constructed during the research process will be presented using extracts that correspond to comments made by members of the research community. After these comments, a systematisation of the constructed knowledge will be made. These will be organised, firstly, through a matrix that compiles the knowledge related to the educational community and, secondly, an image whose purpose is to graphically represent the general ideas on this subject. Based on this, the content associated with the educational community and school coexistence will be complemented.

Conceptualisation of Educational Community

In the collective dialogues, the people who made up the CoR presented their perspectives on what they understood by educational community. Among these, the mobilisation of knowledge stands out, beginning with general preconceptions that became more specific as the collective dialogues progressed. Among the conceptualisations mentioned by the CoR, the following stand out:

They are people who are united by education, who are interested in education. So, I believe.
(Family 1, CoRD)

It is a grouping, in union, of all those who participate in one way or another in the establishment, students, fathers, mothers, parents, guardians, assistants, teachers, directors, DAEM, for educational development. (Education Assistant 1, CoRA)

Well, for me, the educational community is not so much the school, but also the family. For me, the family is also part of the educational community, since we know that the family is the first educator, in this case of the children. (Family 2, CoRB)

I understand by educational community that it is a group of people working together for something in common. For a common goal. And community. . . . I understand it as people working for something in common. And educational, I imagine it is for purposes, as the word says, right? That's what I understand. (Student 2, CoRC)

An educational community is when, for example, there is a group of people who are always two or more, hopefully always more, who share a common vision. That share and I do not know if ideas, values, ways of functioning on a daily basis and the question is only community right? Without education. As a general idea, right? (Teacher 1, CoRA)

I understand identity . . . by educational community, community many, several people. Union. And educational, it is a learning environment. So it's a . . . several people learning, educational community. Well, whoever wants to talk, let them talk. (Student 1, CoRB)

For the construction of the concept, the CoR groups used the knowledge presented in the previous dialogue as a basis. The purpose of this was to read again the proposed concepts and analyse which aspects most represented the collectivity. The interpretation made, converged in a "definition" of educational community extracted from the conjugation of all the comments made by the members of each CoR group.

In short, what was sought was a deconstruction of the concept of educational community that the people had. This deconstruction made it possible to identify relevant aspects for the people and, based on them, to begin a reconstruction of the concept itself. The process culminated in a proposal, which was again analysed and validated by all the people in each group of the CoR. Likewise, in the same process, it was agreed whether the concept corresponded to a transformative, conservative, or exclusionary category. The aim was to categorise knowledge and visualise whether new strategies needed to be defined in order to a) achieve the transforming category, b) maintain the conservative category, and c) understand the exclusionary category for its subsequent transformation. Image 2 presents a summary matrix with the concepts on educational community proposed by each group of the CoR.

Image 2

Concepts of Educational Community Proposed by the CoR Groups

Categorization	Definition (Constructed knowledge)
<p>Group: CORA</p> <p>Category: Educational community</p> <p>Character: Transformer</p>	<p>The educational community is a united group of people, namely students, parents, guardians, assistants, teachers, administrators and the Municipal Education Administration Department (DAEM), who relate, interact and connect affectively with each other, sharing ideas, values, ways of functioning and an educational vision or goal. In addition, they have different personal characteristics, roles and functions, but maintain a common focus or essence. Together, and in a dialogical, democratic, participatory, collaborative and value-based manner, they work to achieve the educational goals proposed, built and present in the institutional educational project.</p>
<p>Group: CORB</p> <p>Category: Educational community</p> <p>Character: Transformer</p>	<p>It is a dynamic group, made up of different people (students, family, teachers, educational assistants, management team, local educational authorities and support network) who are linked for educational purposes (formal and informal). Together, and constantly, they learn, teach, share and apply curricular, technical, experiential, professional, value, affective, social and cultural knowledge. As a result of this dynamism, there is a constant flow of knowledge that can be considered for the enrichment of educational processes. Therefore, each one of them contributes from their knowledge and experience. From the experiential, they interact their knowledge, learning both from successes and from personal or group mistakes. This knowledge is transformed into theoretical knowledge that becomes available to other people.</p>
<p>Group: CORC</p> <p>Category: Educational community</p> <p>Character: Transformer</p>	<p>It is a group of people (students, family, parents, teachers, education assistants and management team) who are linked, respect, support and work, from their roles and functions, in an integrated and collaborative manner, towards common educational goals and for the welfare and learning of those who are part of it. As a whole, the people present, as well as those who graduate or enter, share their knowledge and experiences on a daily basis to promote learning that allows them to work and participate in institutional decision making, for example, the Institutional Educational Project. Therefore, through reciprocal learning and recognizing the importance that each one has in this process, they share their experiences and realities in order to privilege the knowledge of the other and enrich education. This also makes it open to the community. That is to say, it supports the development of national and/or community activities, providing a service to society. Such characteristics give the community an identity that distinguishes it from others.</p>
<p>Group: CORD</p> <p>Category: Educational community</p> <p>Character: Conservative</p>	<p>The educational community is a group of people (students, teachers, parents, families, management team and any person who performs a function in the school) who, feeling part of it, share a common interest or educational goal. From their roles and/or functions, they contribute, participate and work, in a committed manner, to achieve objectives focused on reciprocal learning, mutual human growth and education as a possibility of personal change. Although this work is centered on the student, it also extends to the other people who are part of the school.</p>
<p>Group: CORD</p> <p>Category: Community diversity</p> <p>Character: Conservative</p>	<p>The educational community recognizes that there are different types of communities. For example, religious, insect, organism, animal and microorganism communities. These are similar in that they work together to achieve common goals, but differ in the type of goal. In the case of the educational community, its interest is education.</p>

As shown in Image 2, the four CoR groups carried out communicative processes that gave rise to different conceptualisations of educational community. The definitions present a series of coincidences that are consistent with aspects associated with school coexistence. Among them are the specification of the

people who make up the educational community, the construction of the process, collectivity, the transversality of education, and reciprocity.

The Specification of People

The CoR, in a crosscutting manner, stated that an educational community is constituted by all those people who interact with the school, namely, students, families, parents/guardians, education assistants, teachers, management team, technical staff, and support networks. This description presents similarities with the one provided by the Mineduc (2019), however, the CoR specified that, in the support networks, not only organisations external to the school should be considered (for example, the Municipal Education Administration Department, or health centres), but also the circle of support available to the families. In other words, those people who act as facilitators or who support students, families, teachers, education assistants, management team, and technical staff.

Construction of the Process

The CoR considered school coexistence a process in constant construction that is determined by the interactions and interrelationships that people carry out. This coincides with what was stated in the literature on school coexistence as a construction (Sainz et al., 2023). In addition, there are authors who have indicated that this construction can focus on characteristics of school coexistence such as the framework of values (Yu et al., 2023), on the generation of knowledge (Cascio, 2023), and on fostering student citizen participation (Sainz et al., 2023). In this regard, the CoR agreed that the educational community opt for the construction of the school coexistence, considering value, educational, and political aspects. However, it added that it was essential to reflect that these interactions and interrelations consider an affective aspect, and that their interests, goals, or purposes should be the result of a collective process. Therefore, the educational community was granted an autonomy characterised by dialogic and communicative agreements.

Collectivity in the Generation of Knowledge

The CoR agreed that every person could contribute from the knowledge they carry, and that none of them can be discarded or excluded for reasons related to power roles. In this sense, the CoR advocated the construction of knowledge through the exchange of knowledge and as an opportunity for community and personal growth. However, while CoR appreciated that the educational community enjoyed this autonomy, it also assumed the importance of not closing itself culturally and internalising itself in a bubble that prevents intersubjectivity. For this reason, the CoR incorporated openness to society within the

concept of educational community. This presents a certain relationship with Fals Borda (2015), who pointed out that it is not convenient to ignore the knowledge coming from other cultures, nor to assume them dogmas; rather, it is optimal to approach them critically.

For the CoR, the combination and exchange of subjectivities were framed in communicative processes such as understanding and agreement. The CoR approaches were in line with some ideas related to Habermas' (1985) communicative rationality because it was expected that people could participate freely and without coercion. The purpose of this is to construct meanings that are common and shared by the members of the educational community. In addition, if necessary, a new communicative process can be chosen in order to re-signify those aspects, concepts, phenomena, facts, or situations that are necessary.

Transversal Educational Process

The CoR considered education a multidirectional, transversal, and horizontal process that can contribute from the pre-theoretical (Zemelman, 2005). In this sense, the CoR assumed an epistemic and gnoseological perspective that places education as a phenomenon, which breaks the classical and hierarchical structure. Epistemically, it was inclined towards the co-construction of knowledge that could contribute to their daily practices and enrich the school culture. Gnoseologically, it eradicated the exclusivity of knowledge, so that the teaching staff were not the only ones to transmit, in a vertical way, theory to the students. Rather, it opted for a praxis in which knowledge enters a constant flow of exchange, generation, and rethinking—the educational community shares the tasks of teaching and learning in addition to the generation of knowledge.

Reciprocity

The CoR opted for the reciprocity with which people in an educational community carry out interactions and interrelationships. This reciprocity is transversal, so it can be manifested from those actions with a value, affective, or normative tendency to those oriented to the educational process. For the CoR, it was important that there was a reciprocal valuation and validation between people, which was not determined with individualistic purposes or with the interference of power roles. Likewise, it was important that they got to know each other in order to favour bonding. This is similar to certain approaches of Honneth (1997) in relation to recognition. According to the same author, people initiate a process of reciprocal knowledge focused on the constitutive characteristics of each person, which, in addition, allows a link with the collective. In this way, people can orient their actions according to the other as a partner in action.

Reciprocity becomes a key element because it fosters identification with the other. This triggers people to get to know themselves in the other (Honneth, 1997), and induces a collective identification through intimate reflection.

Together with the above, the CoR introduced elements of the school coexistence such as affectivity, common agreements, reciprocal respect, valuation, mutual support, and solidarity. These are also related to Honneth's (1997) approaches in relation to the patterns of intersubjective recognition proposed by the same author, namely, love, right, and solidarity. Nevertheless, the concordances skim the surface and introduce a series of concerns, for example, what similarities exist between the construction of the educational community and community identity? Do people consider the other in their action plans? To what extent does reciprocity lead to recognition in the spheres of love, right, and solidarity? Is there an intention to opt for self-knowledge as a form of collective knowledge?

As can be seen, the conceptualisations of educational community constructed with each group of the CoR present a series of concordances that made possible a conceptual fusion. The result of this fusion was carried out in the *Az kintun* [to look according to the intention of searching or finding something together with others] method of the Mapuche people, in which a conceptualisation of the term educational community was constructed based on the elements and components of school coexistence mentioned above:

The educational community is a united and dynamic group of people (parents, guardians, family, students, teachers, education assistants, management team, local education authorities, the support network, and anyone who plays a role in the school) who, feeling part of it, relate, interact and connect affectively with each other, sharing ideas, values and bonds focused on common educational goals. Together, and in a reciprocal, dialogical, constant, democratic, participatory and collaborative way, they work both for the achievement of the educational purposes they propose and for mutual human growth, and for the recognition and well-being of all people. (Andrades-Moya, 2022, p. 172)

Characteristics of the Educational Community

The conceptualisations of the educational community that emerged from the dialogue with the CoR made it possible to identify other characteristics consistent with the school coexistence. These included participation, the value-affective base, commitment among people, and collective work, among others. These characteristics can be observed in the following accounts shared by people from the CoR:

Well, as we were saying about the educational community, that in the end we all form the educational community. Also, what . . . said, that sometimes we tend to . . . not to associate, to decompose, so to speak. That teachers are teachers and students are students, and the house is the house. And one blames the other. And there goes the little ball, bam bam, bam bam. And no, in the end, everything is a community because the teachers . . . I missed the idea. I'm sorry. (Student 1, CoRB)

You were saying something very interesting. That you can't separate one from the other, nowadays, right? Today we are all one, if one of us . . . we act almost systemically. If the family is not there, we are going to have problems. If the teachers are not committed, we have problems. If the students have some attendance problems, we are not complete either. (Teacher 3, CoRB)

I agree with what he says . . . that although some types of values come from the family, we have to unify them based on the seal of the establishment in this case, on what we want to be identified as an educational community. So, in that sense, we have to discuss them, talk about them, reach a consensus, emphasise them and promote them. I believe that it is not something very spontaneous, but that we have to mediate so that they are established and become part of the life of each one of the members of the community. (Education assistant, CoRA)

I think that also, we are there, we feel like participants in that educational unit. When we are asked for our opinion. . . . Because nothing is done that way, that is imposed. I believe that everything is asked, even the colour of the classrooms, everything, everything is asked. So we are participants in that, that we are all building together. (Teacher 3, CoRC)

To form a kind of trust, to talk more with each other. . . . To get to know each other more, so we can form trust and express ourselves freely. (Student 3, CoRD)

As can be seen in the above excerpts, there are a number of elements, which are consistent with the characteristics present in the literature on school coexistence. These characteristics can be presented graphically through a figure included in Andrades-Moya (2022), which the author called Arboreal Representation (see Image 3). The semantics behind the title focuses on the growth of trees in an analogy with the process of transformation. For the same author, the roots represent the nourishment and growth of a tree, which is why he linked this phenomenon to the conservative character of knowledge. The trunk of the tree, given its development characteristics, he related to the construction process that is expected to be achieved. As for the foliage, given its nature of energy production used within the whole life cycle of

a tree for growth purposes, the author related it to the transformation expected to be achieved. And, as part of the tree's life cycle, there is the replacement of leaves, a phenomenon that he compared with all knowledge classified as exclusionary. One last point to highlight is that the author emphasised that the creation of the design of the Arboreal Representation was not his authorship. He specified that the content is the intellectual property of the CoR, of which he was a member, but the design belongs to Gabriela Rojas-Andrades (in Andrades-Moya, 2022) who, at 10 years old, was the creator of it.

Image 3

Arboreal Representation of School Coexistence and Educational Community

(Content: Andrades-Moya, 2022; Graphic representation design: Rojas-Andrades, as in Andrades-Moya, 2022).

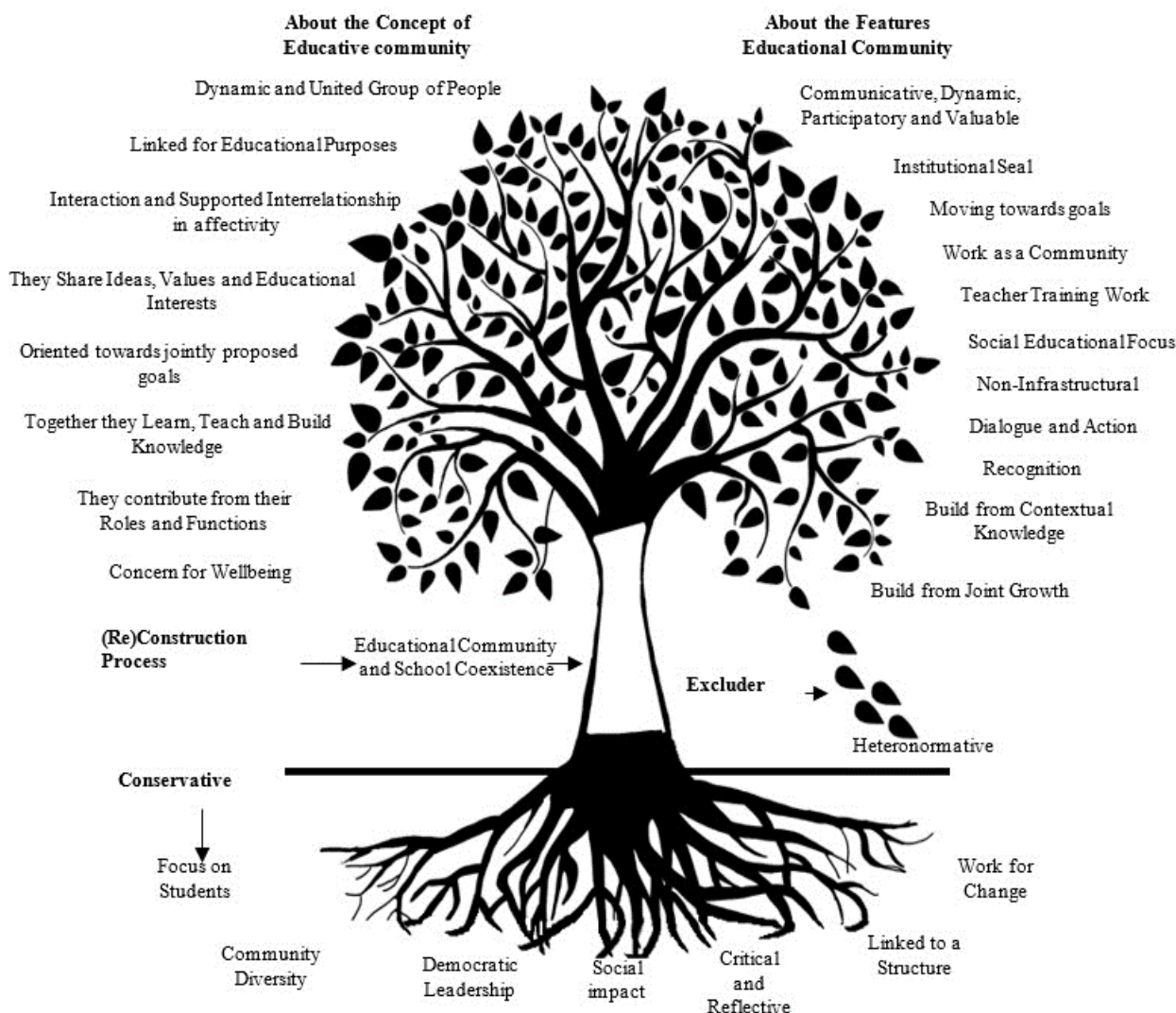


Image 3 shows a series of characteristics that include conservative, transformative, and exclusionary knowledge. However, for the purposes of this article, only the transformative knowledge included in the column "About the Concept of Educational Community" will be considered.

The characteristics emanating from the concept present a close link with school coexistence such as, for example, that both phenomena are evidenced in the set of interactions and interrelationships produced by people in a given context. Authors such as Jefferson et al. (2023), Bosacki et al. (2023), and Oliveira et al. (2023), have indicated that the interactions and interrelationships typical of school dynamics are closely linked to school coexistence given that it is through them that school coexistence is constructed. However, there is no characterisation of these interactions and interrelationships. At most, they are described in the literature as positive (Bosacki et al., 2023; Jantzer et al., 2023; Miller et al., 2023). In contrast, the CoR added that these interactions and interrelationships are determined by the way in which people submit their perspectives to exchange, and the processes in which they (re)construct the meanings attributed to the phenomena specific to their context.

However, the literature indicates that interrelationships and interactions, on the one hand, favour the generation of bonds between people (Jefferson et al., 2023) and, on the other hand, that these should be oriented towards positivity (Miller et al., 2023). However, there is no approach to linkages. In the case of the CoR, it proposed that these links are affective, value-based, and based on aspects, goals, and purposes defined collectively and dialogically. Therefore, it appealed to people to identify themselves as an important part of a collective—a collective that, at the same time, recognised and validated the constitutive characteristics of each member, showing concern for their well-being. Likewise, this collective identified itself with people in a mutual connection, supported by epistemic and gnoseological processes of (de)structuring social phenomena, and from a communicative praxis oriented towards community cohesion.

For the CoR, teaching, learning, and knowledge generation were constituted as a merged and transversal phenomenon in which all people had roles that adapted to contextual needs. The dynamics that originated converged in an agglomeration of experiences and knowledge, leading to a (re)signification, (re)structuring, and (re)construction of school coexistence. In short, the CoR reconstructed its understanding of school coexistence, advancing from a crosscutting work towards a school coexistence considered as:

A process of permanent and systematic construction that is evidenced in the daily interactions and interrelationships that people build, in relation to the agreements they jointly define, and the epistemic and theoretical bases with which they sustain the elements, components and planes that constitute it. (Andrades-Moya, 2022, p. 179)

It is necessary to emphasise that this concept was obtained from a larger analysis, proper to the doctoral thesis of the author in question. For this reason, there are characteristics such as the school coexistence plans, which are not addressed in this article. Having clarified this point, it is important to indicate that for the CoR, there was an intrinsic link between the concept of educational community and school coexistence. The connection was focused on the fact that, depending on the intersubjective construction made on the concept of educational community, so would be the way in which the school coexistence manifested itself, and vice versa. However, it is important to emphasise that educational community and school coexistence are not synonymous because:

The school coexistence focuses on a construction process that focuses on what, how, when, for what and why that group of people carried out, carries out or will carry out its socio-educational praxis. On the other hand, the educational community is positioned as the characteristics, elements or components that are evidenced in the interactions and interrelations that a united and dynamic group of people carried out, carry out or will carry out, which is also identified as a cohesive collective that works together towards common goals. (Andrades-Moya, 2022, p. 186)

In this context, the CoR opted for community cohesion under the characteristics presented here (affectivity, recognition, values, communication, among others). For this reason, both the concepts of school coexistence and the educational community are built with this connotation.

Conclusions

The intersubjective process carried out through the collective dialogues and the *Az kintun* produced a series of knowledge that allowed addressing the two problems indicated in previous sections. As for the question of how the educational community associates with school coexistence, the empirical data collected here allows us to point out that it provides a theoretical/epistemic basis for the construction of school coexistence. Thus, if the educational community is considered as a group of people who share a base based on values, affectivity, dialogue, collective/individual development, recognition, and well-being, then the interactions and interrelationships that people carry out will be built from those supports. Conversely, if the educational community is constituted for individualistic purposes, it is very likely that the school coexistence will assume that essence.

The aforementioned association can be presented through a chain of levels. At the first level, people choose to form an educational community. At the second level, they assume their collectivity, which favours the consolidation of common criteria to carry out the first level. At a third level, people deconstruct the interpretation of shared phenomena. At a fourth level, people share their reading of reality, making

available a series of meanings. At a fifth level, the meanings of each person are combined for a reconstruction of the phenomenon. At a sixth level, the meanings and actions are agreed on and coordinated, allowing achievement of the agreed concept of educational community. At a seventh level, a collective work is carried out to build the interactions and interrelations and, ultimately, the school coexistence.

However, even if there is such an association between the two concepts, this does not mean that one reduces the other. In other words, each has its own particularities that distinguish it. The educational community is characterised by the meanings that people attribute to the phenomena they share and, in addition, by the social basis they assume to interpret reality and coordinate their actions. School coexistence corresponds to the process through which people construct their interactions and interrelations, resorting to the meanings constructed collectively. In view of the latter, a methodological approach to school coexistence can be introduced given that it becomes a process that is carried out according to decisions, guidelines, processes, purposes, actions, analyses, and evaluations made by the people who are the protagonists of their contexts.

Moving on to the second problem—what concept and characteristics could be built on educational community, from the perspective of its protagonists—it can be pointed out that concepts depend on the explicit and implicit agreements that people build. This is closely related to the way in which agreements are reached. In other words, if a concept is constructed through coercive processes, it is very likely that the conceptualisation does not enjoy legitimacy and does not reliably represent intersubjectivity.

In the case of this research, a non-coercive, dialogic, and participatory process was chosen. As a result, a concept was obtained that situated the educational community as a united and dynamic group that considers all those who have some participation in formal and informal educational processes. Among the characteristics are, affectivity, reciprocity, values, collaborative and collective work, mutual human development and, finally, recognition.

The knowledge that people share about the concepts of educational community and school coexistence introduce characteristics such as participation, dialogue, co-construction, collective agreements, interactions, interrelationships, values, and affectivity. Each one of these is based on aspects associated with community cohesion; therefore, the characteristics they assume are developed under collective eyes.

The CoR invited collective participation involving all the people who belonged to an educational context—especially those who were generally invisible. This was in order to enrich the construction of knowledge, opting for an exchange of subjectivities that enhanced the interaction between cultural, theoretical, experiential, scientific, and social knowledge.

Finally, it is recognised that research of this methodological nature brings with it both strengths and weaknesses. In the first place, it enhances the understanding of the phenomena by relying on the worldview of the people who are the protagonists of their realities. Secondly, by opting for intersubjectivity from a perspective of co-construction of knowledge, it favours a mobility of knowledge and, as a result, a (re)structuring, (re)interpretation, or (re)definition of the meanings attributed by people to their reality. And, thirdly, it is assumed that research of this nature presents weaknesses associated with the communicative processes in relation to the fluency of the dialogues. Along with this, a resistance to dissent is observed because this was considered a negative axis of communication, and not as an opportunity to generate knowledge.

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