

# IS IT POSSIBLE TO GENERATE SOCIAL CAPITAL WITH GOVERNMENT ACTIONS? THE *PUBLIC SPACES RESCUE PROGRAM* AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN MEXICO

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## SUMMARY

This paper analyzes the Public Spaces Rescue Program -*Programa de Rescate de Espacios Públicos*- (PREP) as part of the federal government's strategy to generate or consolidate social capital within communities, areas or neighborhoods affected by problems related to violence and criminality, particularly in the municipality of Zapopan, Jalisco from 2007 to 2012.

First, the experience exposes that social capital is not a resource that can be generated by government intervention because it can exist or not prior to it. Second, social capital itself, is not a resource that eradicates violence and crime conditions in a determined social and geographical space and third, social capital depends as well on the group's interest to organize around a specific goal.

From the perspective of Durston (2001), trust, reciprocity and cooperation are infrequent social assets that are hard to maintain over time and require constant interaction.

*Social Capital, Public Space, PREP.*

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## **PREP**, THE POLICY TO GENERATE SOCIAL CAPITAL

The context of public spaces<sup>1</sup> in Mexico, and their state of abandonment or deterioration, are considered as some of the causes to generate and recreate urban violence and insecurity, especially in certain areas with higher marginalization.

Therefore, according to this situation, the Mexican government had impulse governmental intervention to provide security and urban facilities in those areas, through the implementation of promotion policies for quality public spaces that will thrust an intensive and diverse use of these spaces by citizens and that this contributed to an atmosphere of security and social cohesion in neighborhoods and cities.

Between 2007 and 2012, the Mexican government implemented a strategy entitled: “Vivir Mejor” – “To Live Better”- to contribute to the improvement and care of the environment. The strategy seek to encourage the construction of social capital through the Public Spaces Rescue Program (**PREP**), whose objective was to aid to the enhancement of the quality of life and public security through the rescue of public spaces that had problems of deterioration, neglect and insecurity, used by the population in poverty in cities and metropolitan areas. Such actions began in February 2007.

The main perimeter to work in was defined by urban localities integrated in metropolitan areas and cities with a population of 50,000 at least, giving priority to those zones having marginalization and insecurity issues and that could meet certain conditions. Such requirements are high population density, high crime rates, having adequate spaces that could lead to a development of projects allowing multipurpose facilities for sports, recreational and cultural activities, and above all, allowing the participation of a Board of Members to contribute to the operation, continuity of actions and maintenance of the public space (SEDESOL, 2011).

Among the objectives, it was contemplated that the benefits of the recovery of public spaces reach the

<sup>1</sup> Understood as a meeting place where anyone has the right to move around freely and it is characterized as an open space to and for the proper exercise of life in society. Represents the ideal place for the development of recreational, artistic and cultural activities for the use and enjoyment of the community (SEDESOL, 2010), since according to Segovia and Dascal (2000: 52), must meet three characteristics: its public domain, a collective social use and what kind of diverse activities can be developed in it.

population that was in a 400 meters radius around the space.

The improvement would take place through the construction or rehabilitation of mistreated or abandoned sport units, neighborhood centers, public squares, parks, median strips, cycling tracks, sea fronts and shores (in the case of the coastal areas), walkways, alleys and pedestrian infrastructure.

The program's operating rules established that the implementation would be based on an 'inter-institutional' approach, where the Federal, State and Municipal Government as well as the organized civil society were part of each of the stages.

It pursued the permanence of the benefits the program would give. The premise of the civil society taking an active part of the program, as well as being the fundamental one, implied the impulse and strengthen of solidarity and trust networks in the intervened areas, and thereby, fulfilling one of the main objectives of the program.

During the implementation period of the *PREP* (2007-2012), the program was executed in 18 municipalities in Jalisco that had urban, marginalization and insecurity characteristics, defined in the operating rules. In the case of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (*GMA*), it was applied in five of the largest and more important municipalities: Guadalajara, Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá and Tlajomulco.

For the government, relevant results were not associated with the resolution of problems related to safety and the impact on new social dynamics that may arise from better places of convenience, but on the form and the money spent on the program. In the particular case of the *GMA*, the important thing to note was the monetary amounts invested in the selected spaces intervened.

The prior statement came with a logic that could have "*electoral purposes*" in the sense that political decisions would appear to be motivated by the "*visibility*" of government actions and exercised resources, rather than on the true effects of politics to generate new social dynamics related to social or community organization, prevention of antisocial behaviors and gender equality among others. This can be observed in the *PREP*'s technical records of the Jalisco Delegation part of the Ministry of Social Development.

Table 1. Budget exercised by the PREP in the GMA (2007-2012)

Municipality 2007-2008			Years of Intervention					TOTAL COST	
			2009	2010	2011	2012			
Guadalajara	San Jacinto	San Jacinto Avenue Between Javier Mina Street And Gigantes Avenue. San Andres	X	x	x	x	x	X	<b>6,926,782.00</b>
Guadalajara	Paseo de la Selva Public Space	Paseo De La Selva Norte Ct. Paseo De La Selva Sur Ct. Plutarco Elías Calles Av. Santa Cecilia		x	x	x	x		<b>6,072,884.00</b>
Tlajomulco de Zuniga	Santa Fe Public Square and Sports Court Stage 13	Chiapas Street Between Valle De Los Carpeces St. And Oaxaca Ct. Santa Fe			x	x	x	x	<b>2,714,288.00</b>
Tlajomulco de Zuniga	Del Valle Community Center	Brasil Street Between Peru St. And Colombia St. Chulavista					x	x	<b>3,927,307.00</b>
Tlaquepaque	Santa Maria Tequepexpan Recreational Family Center	Independencia St. Between De Las Flores Avenue And Zaragoza Street Santa María Tequepexpan		x	x				<b>6,618,898.00</b>
Tlaquepaque	Santa Maria Tequepexpan Recreational Family Center	San Jose Street, Between San Isidro And San Odilon Col. Nueva Santa María			x	x	x		<b>4,481,722.46</b>
Tonala	Rafa Marquez Sports Center	Las Rosas Street Santa Isabel					x		<b>2,976,002.00</b>
Tonala	Rio De La Plata Park	Meteorologia Street Camichines				x	x		<b>3,061,488.00</b>
Zapopan	Lomas De Tabachines Sports Unit	Paseo De Las Manzanas Av. Lomas De Tabachines				x	x		<b>4,046,619.00</b>
Zapopan	<b>Laureles</b> Civic Plaza And Park	Miguel Gutierrez And Fernando Banda Streets Rodeo Blvd And Espuela Blvd C. Habitacional Laureles	X	x					<b>3,271,814.00</b>

Source: Selected data based on requested information to INFOMEX

As shown in the *Table 1*, invested amounts may offer little or no evidence related to the objectives of the program. So, to see how effective was to recover spaces to generate social capital attributes, another kind of research was needed, same as the one done for a specific case in the municipality of Zapopan.

## THE FORMATION OF TRUST, RECIPROCIDY AND COOPERATION FROM **PREP**

One objective of this study was to measure the generation of social capital from the implementation of a public program, as was the case of the *PREP*. To this end, it developed and carried out the survey<sup>2</sup> “*Building social capital through PREP*” on the *Sports Unit Lomas de Tabachines* (UDLT).

The survey was applied to actual users of the intervened public space and its purpose was, besides measuring the possible generation of social capital, to identify as well, issues related to the neighbor’s behavior expectations based on trust, reciprocity and cooperation and the type of interactions between users.

Additionally, the participation in groups and social networks was considered because during the research it was found that, at the time of implementing social programs, beneficiaries also used to recur to its “*capital stock*”<sup>3</sup>

The survey was accompanied by semi-structured, insightful interviews to UDLT users and the rest of the involved players. Their participation in the management process, design, implementation, participation and program evaluation, as well as social their activities would be fundamental, which would serve to identify whether the participation of the residents was related to the *PREP* intervention or due to other reasons. Both, the survey<sup>4</sup> and the interviews were carried out under the “*snowball*” technique, given the high costs to survey the population who should be the beneficiary in a 400 meters radius from the *PREP*.

<sup>2</sup> The design of the survey about generating social capital took as conceptual and theoretical basis Durston (2001) proposal regarding this subject and three other efforts taken to social capital made by Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan-Jones and Woolcock (2002), UNDP (2011) and the one designed by Serrano, Alarcon and Tassara (2006). This survey measured the content of certain social relations, trusting attitudes and reciprocity and cooperative conducts that made possible greater social benefits.

<sup>3</sup> This “*capital stock*” or assignation can be previously generated through non-governmental organizations and particularly catholic religious associations, since around them is common for people to come together to perform various actions and tasks with social impact, which are being carried out without government intervention.

The first aspect of the survey referred to the socio-economic characteristics of the users of the sports unit. There were identified aspects that had to do with the gender of users, age, education, occupation, number of years living in the neighborhood and the distance between their place of residence and the sports complex. Users answered about their knowledge of the *Public Spaces Rescue Program* as well their participation in it and their motivation for participating in the program and finally their perception about safety in the neighborhood. Some important facts about these features are: thirty people were interviewed, of which 43% were female and 57% male. Of these, fourteen were older than 30 years, ten were between 20 and 30 years, five of them were aged between 15 to 20 years and one was under 15 at the time of conducting the survey.

Educational level of respondents was mostly basic and pre-university (only two of them had completed a college degree at the time of application of the survey). Their educational level would seem to relate to their job performance since, according to the data, 47% were workers or employed by someone else.

Most respondents (24 out of 30) were people who had been living in the neighborhood more than 20 years on average. Regarding the distance between their homes and the intervened space, 17% lived one block away at most, 7% around 2-3 blocks, 13% at a distance of 3-5 blocks and 63% to more than 5 blocks away.

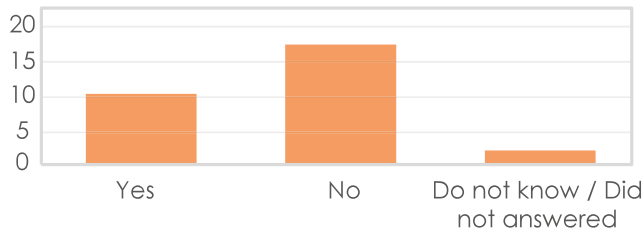
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4 Once finished designing the questionnaire, it proceeded to define the sample to be applied in the survey, which would have a closer look over the beneficiaries of the UDLT population (composed by the residents of "Lomas de Tabachines" community in a 400 meters radius around the sports unit, duly established by the rules of operation of the PREP). It considered those over 15 years (5,307 people) as '*target population*' for the implementation of the survey (defined itself by the complexity of the questions involving a research of social capital generation in a public space). Furthermore, waiting for a 10% response rate, we should get at least 537 surveys to achieve a statistically significant sample, but given the economic and time constraints of this work, we choose to define the sample using the one described and referenced by SEDESOL for the internal evaluation of the program. Therefore, 30 surveys were conducted (each one consisting of 34 questions) to users of the public space (26 of them were made intentionally and 4 by applying the sampling technique "snowball") for the period covering September 2013 to March 2014. At this point, it is quite relevant to highlight the difficulty of carrying out the surveys, as a minimum number of neighbors attended to the public space.

In addition to these basic features of the beneficiaries, it wanted to identify the level of knowledge, participation and involvement in the *PREP*.

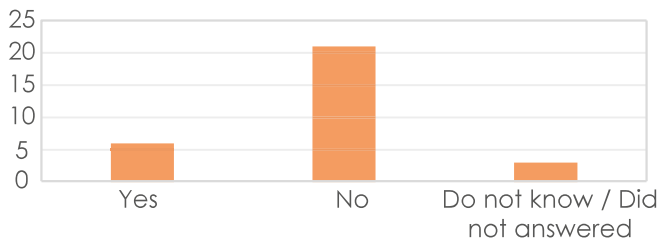
As noticed in the next charts, most of the respondents were unaware of the program (Graphic 1) and neither had actively participated in it (Graphic 2).

GRAPHIC 1. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS THE *PREP*



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

GRAPHIC 2. ¿DID YOU OR ANY FAMILY MEMBER PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

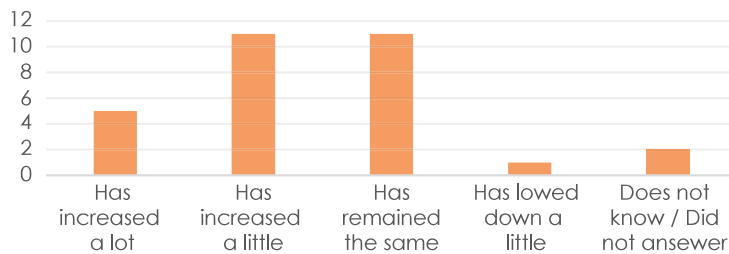
From those who participated in the program (6 out of 30 respondents), 25% said they took part in developing the detection of needs that defined the constructed project, 13% in planning activities, 31% in the workshops that were held 19% in the evaluation of the program and only 6% in the resources contribution. We may deduct that participation was not only poor but also focused on the services provided by *PREP*.

It is quite interesting to observe that for users, security had had small changes. Most respondents stated that there was a slight increase in security

within the Sports Unit perimeter: "The security level in this neighborhood has increased a few since the intervention in this park"(JL, interview).

Although, they recognized were able to pass through streets that in the past were merely impossible to do so due to the new lightning and sidewalks, so they no longer had to surround some streets to walk by safely. This minor change in the perception of the safety of neighbors was proven when 1 in 3 knew at least one person who had been a victim of a crime.

GRAPHIC 3. COMPARING THE NEIGHBORHOOD BEFORE AND AFTER PREP'S INTERVENTION, HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THE SECURITY LEVEL?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

Despite the low variations in perceptions of personal safety of users or neighbors, when questioned about their level of satisfaction 11% responded that the rehabilitation of areas had provided greater security because the land was no longer an empty useless lot.

The 23% replied that helped improve basic services promoting the construction of public spaces in the neighborhood and the 29% said the sports complex provided them of new spaces for recreation.

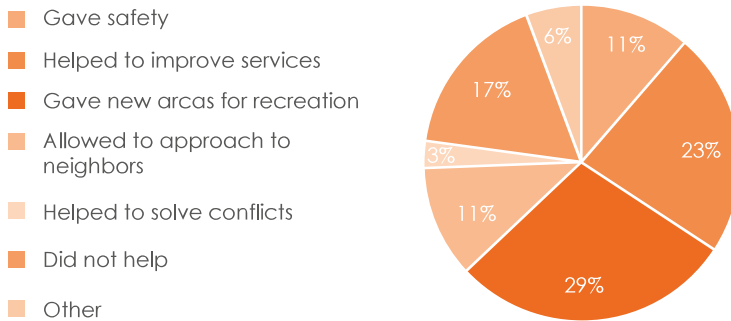
Then the 11% stated that it allowed them to get closer to their neighbors, as activities and workshops promoted by the program, had encouraged them to get to know and treat each other respectfully.

Finally, the 3% indicated it helped to prevent conflicts, but some neighbors commented that the sports complex was used as a meeting place for youth gangs ha-



raising the community at the time of the survey.

GRAPH 4. IN A MORE PERSONAL ASPECT, THE PUBLIC SPACE...?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

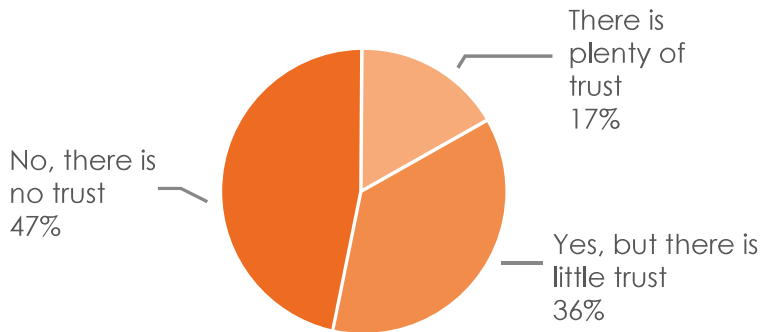
The above data pointed us little about the impact of PREP on trust, reciprocity and cooperation among respondents, all members belonging to the community, so we proceeded to identify these aspects from government intervention.

## BUILDING TRUST

As we established in the first part of this work, trust is an attitude based on the expectation of the behavior of another person, where both are involved in a relationship and where they can generate types of affection between them (Durston, 2001). Relying on the *other*, deposit certainties about reaching objectives that may have individual or collective benefits.

In order to learn more about the formation of trust in public spaces before and after the implementation of a government program, the UDLT users were asked about trust in others, with the following results:

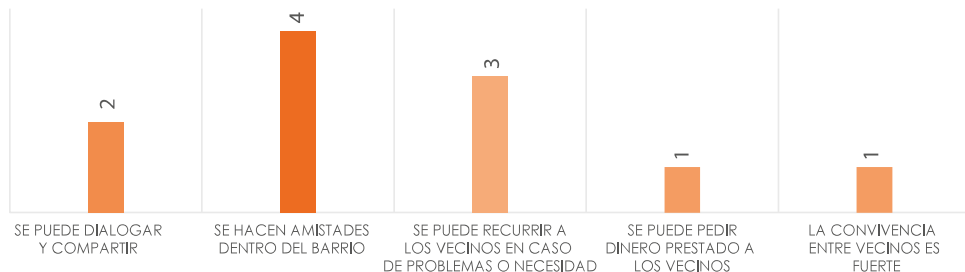
## GRAPH 5. ¿DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PEOPLE TRUST OTHERS?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

Results from the survey revealed that, only 2 out of 10 people surveyed trusted others, the rest did not or had very little trust in other people, which shows that the generation of this value is hard to reach. For those who said that they trusted, their reasons comprehend the possibility of dialogue, making new friends in the neighborhood, the possibility go to the neighbors in case of problems or need and it was also possible to borrow money and create a healthy coexistence between neighbors (See **Graph 6**).

GRAPH 6. WHY IS THERE TRUST?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

\* In this question, one individual could have answered affirmatively to various options.

The level of trust for those neighbors, who said they have it, is due to the kinship between one or more families living in the neighborhood, as when forming new families, these tend to stay close to the homes of their parents. That is why; two or more families that have some degree of kinship can inhabit a block.

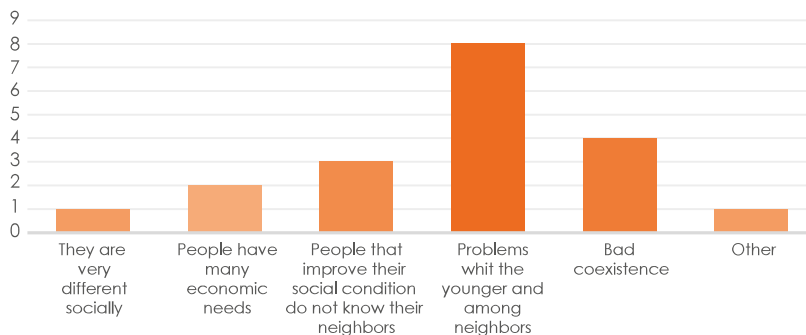
On the side of those who said they had little trust, reasons were due to the lack of communication between neighbors, struggle making new friends, low recurrence among neighbors when facing problems and the tough issue for neighbors to work in some common activity.

This lack of trust is due to social problems in the observed in the neighborhood, such as addiction to drugs and alcohol, so the neighbors have located people who suffer from addictions or engage in illegal acts and they get organized to try to avoid them and protect from them.

For example, one of the strategies they have chosen to pursue this is the figure of the “*watchful neighbor*” to prevent home robberies by observing suspicious movements of strangers in the area, even deciding to make and place posters with police numbers so that residents can make anonymous complaints and to prevent such crimes.

In relation to the total lack of trust (1 out of 2 users found themselves in this situation), the reasons had to do with social differences, the large number of economic needs of the people that motivates the low socialization and the unfamiliarity of the neighbor. Above all, problems with young people and problems among neighbors leading to a complicated coexistence.

GRAPH 7. WHY IS THERE NO TRUST?



Source: Selected data based on the survey: “*Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines*”

\* In this question, one individual could have answered affirmatively to various options.

As shown in **Graphic 7** above, the majority of the surveyed said that the main problem of distrust between neighbors is due to conflicts with the young and among neighbors, this is understood by the social context of the neighborhood with "barrio gangs"<sup>5</sup> who constantly have violent disputes.

The "barrios" are a group of individuals who, by their similar interests, are looking for a symbol that identifies them as part of a community, such as tattoos, type of clothes and behavior. This creates a bond of *belonging* that reflects in a sense of friendship, trust, cooperation, partnership, etc., and it is this same affinity between them the one making the neighbors to consider them as a threat.

In this sense, a resident believed that *"You can do nothing against a "cholo" as they turn against you, so you cannot stand up against anyone; even they are very close with each other, if you do anything to any of them, then they do something to you, so we do not engage with them. Among them there is trust"* (MA, interview).

As remarked above, this trust between those who belong to the "barrios" derives from their own sense of belonging to a group and it reaffirms with their participation in the activities promoted by their organization, which affects the perception of security in the colony.

Authors like Bourdieu (1985), Coleman (1990) and Durston (2001) stated that the presence or absence of trust is product of the interaction with others, because trust implies a willingness to relinquish the control of one's own goods to the other person. Reason enough to investigate the factors needed to build trust and found that the most important factors were the time to meet and treat each other, to have a public space for social integration and knowing other people's friends. Concerning to V.'s opinion -a surveyed resident- *"I think influences to grow trust among people seeking a place in which to get to know others, to spend time, because as no one knows each other, we only say good morning, good afternoon"* (V., interview).

Generating trust, in the case of the implementation of PREP in Lomas de Tabachines, can infer that,

<sup>5</sup> Neighbors have instituted for these bands the nickname of the "barrios", named after one of the youth groups bothering the community.

beyond the actions taken by the program in favor of forming bonds of trust between neighbors, is formed from other factors that must not necessarily affect a public policy, but perhaps other features like the time to know each person and friendships.

However, providing a community center such as the *UDLT*, is a platform in which can be developed proper dynamics that strongly enhance coexistence, interpersonal encounters and conflicts resolution, which may contribute to the formation of trust ties within the community without being decisive. Moreover, insecurity conditions that affect the neighborhood had seriously undermined the creation and strengthening of these ties, consequently a worthwhile form of government incidence could be the improvement of surveillance and security conditions.

## FORMING RECIPROCIITY

Reciprocity is the second component that can be generated by social capital. This value involves the exchange of tangible and intangible assets between people, such as gifts, help or favors. To make reciprocity happen, needs an “*obligatory and free*” trade, besides the people receiving aid are committed to the people who helped them to “*return the favor*” -not necessarily in an immediate

or equivalent way (*Durston, 2001*). To investigate the factors considered part of the *reciprocity*, respondents were requested to answer about the type of help they would be willing to offer, the type of people they would help and their recent helping experiences.

Regarding the type of help they would be willing to offer, most neighbors focused their responses on what they call *moral help*, in other words, *uplifting* support in difficult situations. Other considered examples of assistance included to offer *car pool* to a specific location or babysitting, favors made to their neighbors only sporadically. Also almost 50% of respondents would be willing to provide some material or financial support, without affecting their personal assets.

Looking for who respondents would be more willing to help, fifteen surveyed answered that those who live on their street, four would help those living in surrounding blocks, seven to those who live other neighbors and eight said they would help anyone in need, even a stranger or a person outside the community.

However, when asked about the number of times people had resorted to their neighbors in the event of difficulties in the last month, the results showed a different attitude, which did not necessarily reflect that they asked for any type of support. For example, 70% said that have never reached out for help from

neighbors, 10% said only about one or two times, 13% about three or four times and 7% have done it more than five times.

A sample of reciprocity, although not necessarily based on the neighborliness, is the free of charge<sup>6</sup> "community workshop leaders."<sup>7</sup> These workshops teach primary school themes to children, recycling and art with watercolors lessons so children can express their emotions. Workshops have surfaced some family issues such as domestic violence, addiction and neglect. Also in the workshops are taught simple cooking recipes, as many children are alone most of the day because the parents are away.

L.I. taught these workshops in an area set up at her own home with her own resources, as she said: "*I put my little room in my house and got a second hand board with my resources. When I impart the recycling workshop I work with the centers of the toilet paper roll, water caps, cardboard and I charge is 10 pesos per hour. Most of the children come one hour and I teach them here by playing*" (L.I. interview).

This female workshop leader's idea is that someone must be willing to work for the community so that in the medium or long-term the beneficiaries from this work would be able to give back appropriate values into their homes and the neighborhood that could lead to a better coexistence. This specific case is about working with children.<sup>8</sup> For the workshop teachers, their efforts will create cohesive commitments within the community, acts of reciprocity in time.

The characteristics of cooperation

The third component of the social capital reviewed in this paper has to do with cooperation, understood as the process that emerges as result of frequent interaction between individuals, which also incentives the appearance of opportunities to meet and solve common problems.

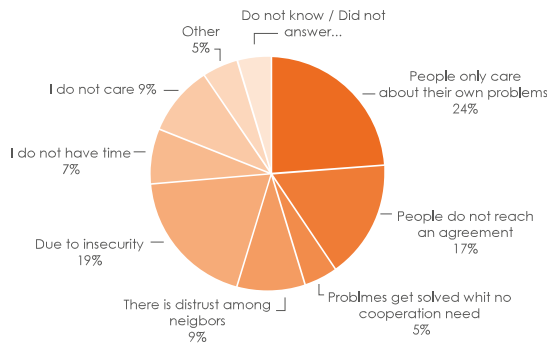
This study aimed to know the main motivations of cooperation and non-cooperation within intervened

<sup>6</sup> There is a symbolic 10 pesos recovery fee.

<sup>7</sup> Community Workshops Curses, is a project managed by ITESO university in which members of the community are trained for 3 months to teach Math, English, Spanish, and values to children with learning disabilities. Workshops in Lomas de Tabachines were held in the temple of San Francisco Xavier by a teacher who was about to graduate from the master of Educational Psychology.

public spaces. To accomplish this goal, first we queried among respondents why people do not cooperate to solve problems in the UDLT. Subsequent results indicated that most people often focus on their own problems or complicated to reach agreements between the community members; and fundamentally, security is a factor that undermines cooperation as well.

GRAPH 8. PEOPLE DO NOT COLABORATE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN THIS PUBLIC SPACE BECAUSE...



Source: Selected data based on the survey: “Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines”  
 \* In this question, one individual could have answered affirmatively to various options.

One of the issues related to cooperation or lack of it, has to do with the kind of “cooperation” that the respondents would be willing to accept. The majority of the responses focused on work and time to help, however it was evident that at least 1/3 of the respondents were not willing to cooperate in any way.

In the fieldwork, it was concluded that people are willing to make commitments with the rehabilitated public area, therefore they will keep giving maintenance to the sports complex as long as there is reciprocity of the authorities. Respondents said they would be willing to cooperate if any authority or neighbor requested their support to participate in cleaning or painting activities as a benefit for the neighborhood, but they acknowledge that without constant vigilance in the unit it would be a waste of time and effort. M.I. declared: “People do not cooperate to solve the problems of this public area because they cannot reach an agreement, if they wanted to take turns to look after the park or give

8 Children in marginalized neighborhoods tend to have several doubts in the classroom that cannot be clarified by their parents, because of either ignorance or lack of time due to extensive working hours in order to reverse some of the conditions of marginality and poverty in which they are immersed.

*maintenance to it, they could do it"*(M.I., interview).

For most of the respondents, leadership is essential to boost cooperation, therefore, the absence of a social leader to launch, encourage or invite to participate in activities and projects for the neighborhood or any other cause, limits cooperation.

The convening power of the leader helps to improve coordination of stakeholders and this can lead to better results in the implementation of projects, as J. L. said:

*"People here are peculiar, because if someone invites them there is an answer, but there is no initiative, the example pushes people. They need someone to come and tell them, "Hey, let's do this, this program helps us with benefits for everyone," and then people do respond"* (J.L., interview).

Leadership is essential but in this analyzed case, it was particular, it was a religious leadership, which managed cooperation (besides the relationships established in the public rehabilitated area) among the inhabitants of the neighborhood around the celebrations on the first Sunday of each month for the sick in the San Juan Bautista church.

The group of *San Juan Bautista*, who leads the process, provided the organization. In this event, the members organized a meal for the elderly and sick, especially for those with disabilities or who lived alone.

All the provided food comes from the neighbors' donations, as mentioned by one of the participants:

*"I have belonged to the group of San Juan Bautista for approximately 17 years, since we started to come together in the parish community and its construction was done ... when we have to do activities of the group in the church, we get notified in advance, they tell us the day and time but it is regularly on Sundays"* (A., interview).

There were also found other types of cooperation practices inside the neighborhood, which were impulse prior to the spaces recovery. This kind of practices were identified as the communities' commitments to issue the neighborhood problems in meeting attended by nearly 100 people.

Reunions have been taken with the main purpose of getting the municipal maintenance to the sports unit so the families could use the installations properly having adequate activities to the young people. Even though, it has been looking for a constant and clearer communication with police chiefs so they could provide greater security to the neighborhood.

Groups participation and social networks

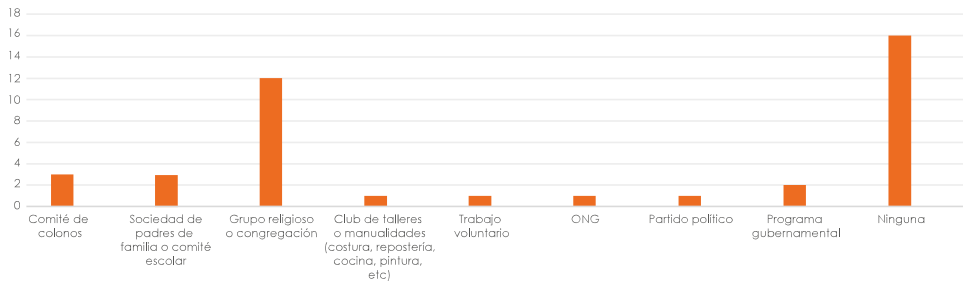
The surveys' results, as the conducted interviews inside and out of the public space, allowed observing that there was already a



level of cooperation among neighbors; it was associated with some other attitudes that could be interpreted as part of the social capital, such as trust and reciprocity, the participation inside the groups and social networks. This was another important reason for the paper's research: find out the origin of the already existing forms in the space before governmental intervention.

It was detected that neighbors were already participating in associations such as inhabitants committees, Parents Company, religious groups (mainly linked to the Catholic Church), workshops, volunteering and with lesser extent in Organizations of Civil Society (OSC), it was also found that neighbors participated in politic parties.

GRAPH 9. IN WHAT KIND OG ORGANIZATIONS DO OR DID YOU PARTICIPATE?



**Source:** Selected data based on the survey: "Generación de capital social en la Unidad Deportiva Lomas de Tabachines"

\* In this question, one individual could have answered affirmatively to various options.

To people, participation can be important in diverse objectives and not only as a mechanism of "voice" (Hirschman, 1977). For example, to some of the respondents participation could be a vehicle that can improve home subsistence, and it also helps to better services, the community life and the conditions of their children's life:

*"I participate in the improvements because they better my life quality and my neighborhood's services and house, also because I think about the future, when I am an old woman I want to walk in my neighborhood, I want to leave a nice place to my children so they can live well"* (L.I., interview).

To others, participation promotes support and help bonds when facing risk situations, when there is an emergency, the participating people can trust and expect that associations in which they also work, will provide help as a reciprocity act. Other impulse sources to the participation are associated to the hope of security improvement, support to abandon vices, for amusement and entertaining, feeling good and be useful to the community or simply to get together with their neighbors:

*"Participating in the religious group is important to me because I feel good about myself, it gives me peace and tranquility, we also support each other, as a matter of fact I go to the sports unit with my church friends who I have known since I was a child"* (M.A., interview).

Some residents, outlook that youth must be involved in community service programs so they could take charge of the development of the whole community: *"For me, to participate in these organizations make me feel useful and I can leave an example to the new generations to come, given that social organization can achieve a substantial improvement on environmental conditions"*. (I. interview).

What can be clearly observed in the results of this investigation is that participation in neighborhood's activities have been barely influenced by the implementation of the PREP. Most of the residents claimed that the program has just a few or even no incurrence in the involvement activities of neighbors to address problems; the participation level is the same and occur through the same channels known by them. Therefore is very complicated to state that the PREP has been a determinant factor of the people's involvement in public affairs even those that affect them directly as security matters.

So far, it seemed that public programs with a *"participative sense"* would not be the ones to

improve people's commitment to their own issues and conflicts, but a general participation in general as it has been happening. In conclusion, the incidence that governments would have to generate social capital based on the characteristics mentioned here is blurry and unclear.

## CONCLUSIONS

The perception of the respondents of the standstill or decrease of the neighbors participation since the PREP's intervention, is that although there has been an effort to incentive the participation and involvement of the society, design, implementation and evaluation of the program through the institutionalized media (such as the web and the social controller-ship proposed by the PREP itself) there has not been a great difference, due to the lack of resources for the spaces maintenance and their deterioration because of its "abandonment" (due to negligence or lack of resources) it is noticed as a slight by the neighborhood participation, this weakens the enthusiasm to participate in future interventions and the apathy becomes obvious.

In this paper, it was tried to approach the elements that characterize social capital according to Durston (2001): trust, reciprocity and cooperation in a space intervened by governmental action, this in order to see if the government intervention could push or

create attitudes of trust, interactions or new bonding or cooperation agreements.

Observing this, there is a little to say about the government, the trusting attitudes can be previous to intervention, for example: in the observed results, it was detected that trust is an attitude that is generated from the neighborhood's everyday relationships, at the same time motivated by kinship, friendships or simple solidarity to common causes. It was also observed that trust is cut due to the difficulty of achieving that more neighbors get involved in any common activity or because of the social problems that exist in the neighborhood that are associated to the addictions and antisocial behavior (street violence), trust is also undermined due to conflicts with the young, among neighbors and bad coexistence.

In this sense it was also observed that insecurity has a significant impact in the potentiation of trusting others, given that it is reduced to kinship bonds and friendships that can happen with close neighbors (as it was established in the previous paragraph).

To the respondents it was important that good coexistence was incentivized by the creation of public spaces (both objectives are intended to reach through PREP), however they require additional actions such as crime prevention and the provision of public safety by the municipal police, apart from attending addiction problems among the younger.

Regarding reciprocity, the survey data reveal that the majority of the respondents would be willing to help their neighbors in a moral way, as it was stated before, this may be due to the neighbors similar economic situation so it makes impossible the disposition of monetary resources to help or support anybody else.

Another important aspect is that reciprocal actions are limited by distance among neighbors, in other words, the respondents pointed they would be willing to help those that live closer and have previously known, that is why the reciprocity expectation is high as they say they would expect their neighbors to help in case there is some unfortunate event.

On the other hand the collaboration among neighbors for the resolution of conflicts facing difficulties such as lack of interest in common problems, lack of agreements among neighbors and insecurity. The respondent versions say that this is due to an absence of a leader (with convening power and proactive) that encourages other inhabitants to be co-responsible solving conflicts and needs, it does not matter if the leaders come from a social or religious field or from a neighborhood organization.

That is why the formation and identification of community leaders is required so they can work as social articulators to mobilize and organize efforts to improve the community social conditions and seek participation and shared re-

sponsibility between civil society and government. It is more probable that cooperation becomes real through these leaderships.

Regarding cooperation in social groups and social networks, it was observed that the respondents that participated in organizations did it essentially in the religious kind and that participation in no governmental organizations was due to the satisfaction and the benefit the community obtains when they get involved, however the dedicated time to the participation is limited by personal restrictions.

The findings allow to point governmental social programs that pretend to be implemented and must involve beforehand the neighbors' acknowledged leaders, and the organizations that already exist inside the community as they are an important "social capital stock" and count on recognition and social support of the participants and the neighbors. This facilitates participative neighborliness collaboration to validate governmental actions and allows to motivate the formation of new leaders through time, which could impact in a significant way in the neighbors life in similar marginality conditions.

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