

**On Psychology, Work and the  
Production of the Subject: The Case  
of the Urban Passenger Transport  
System in Bogotá - Colombia**

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## Summary of Thesis

This thesis examines the relationship between psychological knowledge, work and the production of subjectivity with regards to the transition that is taking place in the Urban Passenger Transport System in Bogotá, Colombia. Specifically, it explores the place and operations of psychology in respect to the production of the drivers as subjects within the transition from the 'traditional' to the 'Transmilenio' service. A multi-site ethnography was conducted in order to map the psychological practices, as well as their connections and distant 'flows', involved in the production of drivers' subjectivity. The observations were conducted in a variety of sites, such as traditional, feeder and trunk companies, recruitment companies and municipal authorities' offices. The psychological practices found were allocated in the sovereignty-disciplinary-governmentality power complex. This thesis argues, firstly, that colonial dimensions are involved when psychology is applied to work places other than the North-Atlantic societies. Secondly, these colonial dimensions are manifest in the ways in which psychology constitutes human subjects at work. Therefore, this study explores the colonial dimension of the relationship that psychology and work have established regarding the constitution of workers as subjects in the 'local' conditions of the Urban Passenger Transport System in Bogotá. The results show a) the place and operations of psychology in the processes of constitution of 'desirable' 'free' workers; b) the constitution of the traditional driver as the 'other' of the feeder and trunk drivers; c) the place of psychology in respect to intensification of the uncertainty in the working conditions; and d) the neo-colonial relationships that are involved in the production of workers as subjects in psychological terms. Thus this thesis recognises that the uncertain working conditions of the 'traditional' service are exacerbated in the 'feeder'

and 'trunk' services that comprise the new Transmilenio service. The transition from the 'traditional' service to the Transmilenio service has brought about radical changes in the working conditions, a re-organisation of the social relationships and a new place for psychological knowledge.

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## Chapter 1. Preamble: Questions, Aims and Argument

*'Modern colonialism won its great victories not so much through its military and technological prowess as through its ability to create secular hierarchies incompatible with the traditional order.*

*These hierarchies opened up new vistas for many, particularly for those exploited or cornered within the traditional order. To them the new order looked like – and here lays its psychological pull – the first step towards a more just and equal world.'*

(Nandy, 1989, p. 9)

During the late 1990's, I was working at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá as a member of an occupational and organisational psychology team that was reconsidering its role with respect to the huge social problems concerning Colombian workplaces at that time. The academic knowledge that occupational and organisational psychology provided to solve perceived problems at work was under scrutiny. Basically, our research team was concerned about the place of the university as a social institution and the role of psychological knowledge regarding the 'real' problems of Colombian workers and work-organisations. Our concern was centred, first, around the tendency of psychologists in the country to view individuals as means by which production is achieved rather than human beings, and second around the fact that Colombian work psychology departments were more interested in the applications and adaptations of foreign psychological instruments than in a 'true' understanding of the national organisational environment. It became clear to us that there was a lack of knowledge about the culturally specific 'logics' of Colombian organisations, and as a result Colombian companies had not considered the importance of social sciences in general, and organisational psychology in particular, for their own improvement.

Within this panorama of concern and debate, our research team decided that working with social and economical sectors would provide a good opportunity to enhance psychological knowledge and to increase the presence of universities in Colombian society. This was, in essence, an attempt to develop closer alliances between universities and everyday workplaces and their practices.

The Urban Passenger Transport System was one of the social and economic sectors that suffered serious problems and was thus targeted as a possible alliance. Problems with the mobility of passengers had become a major social and political concern to the point where all prospective candidates for the City Council had to offer some kind of solution to transform the transport service. It was one of the problems, if not the most important one, for which the inhabitants of Bogotá were waiting for a solution. Traffic jams, pollution, insecurity, aggression, low quality and the waste of productive time were some of problems associated with the ways in which the transport system was carried out. By the year 2000, the Urban Passenger Transport System comprised 69 companies and cooperatives with approximately 21,000 drivers and a similar number of owners of different types of vehicles transporting the 8,000,000 citizens of Bogotá.



Picture 1. "Traditional" transport buses operating in one of the roads of the city.

A research team, composed of academic staff and students, was created, and collaborative agreements with some of the transport companies and cooperatives were established in order to implement the strategies associated with work psychology. We were very much welcomed by these companies and cooperatives; managers and other organisational members were interested and grateful because it was the first time that the university sector had directly engaged with their problems. At first glance, we thought that we could solve some of the difficulties regarding workers and organisations by applying psychological tools and strategies. It seemed obvious to us, for instance, that processes such as personnel selection would help facilitate both an improvement in profits and assist the internal organisation of these companies. We expected that this type of intervention would make a small contribution to the improvement of the general system and to the quality of life in Bogotá.

An evaluation of the state of the personnel selection process within the transport companies revealed that such processes were either non-existent, or – when applied – were not rigorously carried out. So, after a mutual agreement between the managers and our ‘psychological team’, a more thorough evaluation of candidates was attempted. However, such an attempt met with limitations and problems, given that specialised psychological tools available in the country for the selection of drivers were found to be inadequate. When objective and projective personality tests were applied, most drivers could be classified as suffering from serious mental illness (Silva & Torrado, 1997; Arango, 1999). Moreover, traditional perception, intelligence and discrimination tests were not appropriate for a Colombian population with low levels of education. Under these circumstances, the selection of drivers proved to be a source of stress for those involved in the process. Such issues caused us to reconsider the selection process and make the required adjustments. However, even after adjustments were made, most of the candidate evaluations we conducted were overlooked. When we presented managers with those we considered to be the best candidates, managers had already given contracts to the ones they had deemed to be the most appropriate. In general terms, our opinions were somehow ‘important’ but not actually taken into account.

A similar problem occurred in the attempted application of other psychologically informed strategies in areas such as customer service training, interpersonal relationships training, and health and safety programs. It was evident that the tools we were offering were not the most adequate for these companies. It was, therefore, critical for our team to obtain a better understanding of the situation. Accordingly, we decided to tackle inherent organisational conflict within ‘traditional’ services by

drawing on principles from Latin American social psychology of organisations (Schvarstein, 1992) and from discursive psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1997). We assumed that a deeper understanding of work conflicts could provide tools to help resolve the conflicts of companies through an understanding of their 'negotiated' organisational life.

These critical and culturally relevant psychological frameworks potentially provided a better picture about the transport companies and their inherent problems. Indeed, research emanating from those alternative psychologies made clear the different roles played by the social actors and the negotiation processes that were taking place amongst managers, owners and drivers (e.g. Pulido-Martinez & Burbano-Valente, 1997; Burbano-Valente & Pulido-Martinez, 1997). It was established, for instance, that relationships of family, friendship and the so-called '*compadrazgo*<sup>1</sup>' underpin the whole 'traditional' service at all levels. The members of the 'traditional' service are either relatives or already have an established friendship prior to any work relationship. The 'traditional' companies do not regulate the system and are limited to lend out their routes to the, approximately, 21.000 owners of the vehicles. In this situation, the central business relationship that structures the 'traditional' service is established between the owner of the vehicle and the driver who, in most cases, is a relative, a friend or a '*compadre*'. The owners of the vehicles are those who negotiate the details of the operation and methods of remuneration directly with the drivers in an individual and informal way thus generating the so called 'war of the cents', which refers to the fierce competition for passengers in Bogotá's streets (see Chapter 5). We examined the discourses used to negotiate the working life under this particular

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<sup>1</sup> Social ties established by the catholic baptism.

'traditional' ways of organising work. As a result of the critically and culturally informed research we conducted in response to met 'resistance', managers and owners the vehicles became more interested in what we were trying to do and took greater interest interested in psychological interventions in general. It could be said that we were gaining a place within the transport service.

Nevertheless, for me, there was a degree of discomfort in relation to the way our research was being used and its effects. By generating a new and deeper knowledge of managers and drivers as social actors and of negotiation processes we seemed to be providing valuable help to managers for them to achieve their organisational goals. For us as an academic team, this knowledge was very useful for teaching and academic purposes but it had no direct benefit for the drivers with whom we were primarily concerned. It seemed clear to me that even critical positions within the psychological discipline were mostly destined to be trapped within the organisational imbalance of power.

When I left Bogotá to start my doctoral studies, a new transport service known as 'Transmilenio', comprising 'trunk' and 'feeder' companies (see Chapter 5), gradually began to replace the older 'traditional' system. In essence, drivers and managers of the 'traditional' companies were moving from unregulated and 'informal' working conditions to 'modern' and regulated ones. At the beginning of my PhD research project, it seemed relevant to me to understand the constitution (transformation) of the drivers' subjectivities within the specific working conditions that were emerging. This would afford me the opportunity to study the constitution of workers as subjects in

one of the contemporary transitions that was taking place within the world of work in Latin America and in an unexplored sector of Colombia.



Picture 2. The Transmilenio 'trunk' service.

However, when I returned to Bogotá for 32 weeks to conduct the ethnographic fieldwork I found a very different situation in terms of the application of psychology. The Transmilenio service was being implemented by means of psychological techniques and interventions. All the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies had either contracted psychologists or external and expensive psychological services. Psychological interventions were being conducted from the very first contact between the companies and the workers. Complex personnel selection processes were being implemented, training programmes were in place, health and safety programmes were put into practice and workshops to improve drivers' behaviour were instigated. These strategies were designed and mostly conducted by professional psychologists who

were using all kinds of psychological frameworks, from the psychology of interpersonal differences to neuro-linguistic programming.

Within the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, central issues such as workers' identities, work-tasks, organisational relationships, and the 'customer/passenger–driver' relationships were all understood by means of psychological knowledge. Psychologists proudly announced that new kinds of 'desirable' drivers were emerging as a result of the application of psychological strategies. From being '*choferes*', which is a pejorative term to identify the 'traditional' drivers, the new driver was identified as an 'integral' 'feeder driver' and a 'trunk driver'. The relationships between the three different types of drivers were partially constructed around the 'psychological features' that the new working conditions involved. Thus, my interest in studying the constitution of drivers as subjects focused on the place of psychology in transforming drivers within the transition of the urban passenger transport system from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio system. And my central research question was formulated as follows:

- What role did psychology play in terms of the constitution of workers as subjects in the transition that was taking place in the urban passenger transport system?

To address this question I thought that it was important to consider that in Colombia, work psychology has not developed a corpus of research for understanding the problems related to work settings. The relationship between academic psychology and work is limited to the application of psychological strategies developed in other



contexts and the 'unorthodox' application of psychological knowledges found in business literature. Managerial practical knowledge has been combined with academic psychology and other practical tools, such as neuro-linguistic programming, in order to intervene in the problems of organisations. There is a kind of tribute to international 'gurus' who sell their 'know-how' to businesspeople, psychologists and other professionals and managers. International and national agencies transfer the psychological business strategies directly from their locus of production in the North to the Colombian context. International human resources companies compete for clients to whom they sell their psychological-based strategies. Within the Colombian universities, there is a plethora of psychological training programmes, most of them include some type of organisational psychology courses. In a panorama in which the Colombian work environment is being 'psychologically colonized', the 'best way' to conduct business proposed by psychology is assumed to be the logic of business modernisation and progress (Acosta, 2000). So, I could hardly attempt to answer the question for the place of psychology regarding the constitution of drivers as subjects without taking into consideration that psychology is a knowledge that is not produced in the Colombian context but rather replicated. I wanted to question the relationship between psychological knowledge and the world of work in this kind of transition, and I wanted to examine the ways in which psychological knowledge contributes to the production of 'desirable' workers. I also wanted to explore whether or not psychological interventions, which aim to 'modernise' the world of work, contribute to the perpetuation of relationships of subordination-coloniality in countries such as Colombia. I thought it would be pertinent to argue, firstly, that there are colonial dimensions involved when psychology is applied to work places other than the North-Atlantic societies, and secondly, that these colonial dimensions are manifest in the

ways in which psychology constitutes human subjects at work. Therefore, this study explores the colonial dimension of the relationship that psychology and work have established regarding the constitution of workers as subjects in the 'local' conditions of the urban passenger transport system in Bogotá. This represents a key sector and an important example of the Colombian (as well as Latin American) labour market.

The transition that is occurring in the transport system provides a privileged setting to explore the place and operations of psychology in the world of work for several reasons:

- 1) The system constitutes an example in which different working conditions and ways of organizing work co-exist and influence each other (see Chapter 5). The 'traditional', the 'feeder' and the 'trunk' companies established a variety of ways of 'exploiting the transport business', which allow comparisons to be made in terms of the place of psychology in each of these companies regarding the 'making up' (Hacking, 1995b) of drivers as subjects.
- 2) The 'local' applications of psychology within the transport system show the ways in which workers are 'made up' in the particular appropriations, adaptations and hybridisation of psychological knowledge that takes place in the country.
- 3) The transition from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio service, and the concomitant constitution of the 'feeder' and trunk drivers, is being orchestrated within the changes that are affecting the world of work globally. Hence, by extension, the working conditions in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies are a reflection of the tendencies that affect the global labour market.

- 4) The transition from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio service is being arranged within the liberal logic of transforming Bogotá in an international competitive city, which is one of the forms that the 'liberal wave' (Osborne & Rose, 1998) is taking in Colombia.

Thus to explore the place of psychology in the constitution of the drivers as subjects and the possible colonial dimension that it brings about, I designed a multi-site ethnography (Marcus, 1995), which constitutes the corpus of this study. I 'mapped' and followed the 'trajectories and connections' (Rivas-Gamboa, 2004) of the psychological practices applied in different settings within the transport service and established relationships between and across these diverse settings in relation to the practices applied.

Thus I am about to provide a series of descriptions of psychological practices derived from the ethnographic research I conducted. I would like to call this study an assemblage that shows firstly, the psychological practices and their particular appropriation, hybridisation and transformation, as well as the relationship that they constitute in order to produce drivers as subjects, and secondly the ways in which the constructions of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers are related to a rationality of government.

Every chapter is composed around description of practices. Altogether these practices show a kind of rationality that can only be seen by looking at the whole picture. It is a rationality of government that is articulated in psychological terms (Rose, 1996). The parts of assemblage contribute to the illustration of how government is articulated

and legitimated in psychological terms around the constitution of the individual driver. Psychological language is a mechanism that presents the domain to be governed as a question of subjectivity. Psychology makes the field to be governed amenable by providing truths about what workers are; it provides the arguments and truth claims (Miller & Rose 1986; Rose, 1996; Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). The chapters could be read separately, as each one presents a different angle of the relationship between psychological knowledge and work. Together, however, they gain force as they illustrate the subtle place of psychology regarding the rationality of 'liberal' colonial government. The study is divided in the following parts:

Chapter 2 shows how this study was conducted. The dimensions of the multi-site ethnography are considered. It points out how a combination of spaces, times, connections and movements were used to create an analytical grid in which working and psychological practices emerged as materials to be analysed.

Chapter 3 considers studies which look at the relationship that psychological knowledge has established with the world of work. It is argued that, in general terms, critical studies of the relationship between psychology and work aim to improve work psychology by pointing out its horrors and errors (Venn, 1984) and by doing so, sooner or later become vehicles for the modernisation of psychology. Therefore, critical studies of psychology are destined to be incorporated within mainstream psychology. Even though analyses of the place of psychology are important for understanding how psychology operates in the contemporary world, they have universalistic assumptions that leave aside the 'local' conditions where psychology is applied.

Chapter 4 considers a series of key proposals for an analysis of the place and operations of psychology within the transport service. It is proposed that the analysis of the place of psychology, firstly, has to look at how the working conditions frame the problems that psychology attempts to solve. Secondly, the analysis has to consider the ways in which psychological practices and discourses interact with the Colombian popular constructions (lay psychology constructions) to constitute the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers. Thirdly, it has to examine the psychological interventions in the light of sovereignty-disciplinary-governmentality power complex (Hook, 2004) and finally, it has to look at colonial governmentality.

Chapter 5 describes, analyses and compares working conditions within the transport service in terms of daily routines, work contracts, ways of remuneration, social relationships and salaries. It points out how, within the new configuration of the transport system, psychology has gained a place linked to the municipal government regulations for the transport sector. These regulations introduce the psychological subject and the driver as a subject with rights and duties. The psychological and the discursive production of legal subjects create the space for psychology to be applied in order to produce the ideal workers in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies.

Chapter 6 considers the Colombian cultural constructions of the 'traditional' driver as 'chofer'. The 'chofer' is a central referent against which the 'feeder' and 'trunk' driver is psychologically constructed. As most drivers are moving from the 'traditional' service to the Transmilenio service, psychological interventions are directed at transforming the ways in which 'traditional' drivers are understood and produced as drivers. The re-invention of the driver in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies – carried

out in psychological terms – runs against these popular images which have their ‘substance’ in the lay psychology’s ways of producing people at work in Colombia.

Chapter 7 presents a mapping of psychological practices within the ‘feeder’ service. The psychological strategies construct the driver as an individual at different levels which comprise the production of the driver as a ‘free’ employee. So the ‘government’ (Foucault, 1979) of the ‘feeder’ company is attempted by means of the production of the ‘integral feeder driver’.

Chapter 8 continues the mapping of psychological strategies, this time in the ‘trunk’ company. It points out how, in the absence of ‘real working contracts’, psychology becomes a central vehicle for establishing the link between the drivers’ subjectivity and the company. The ‘trunk’ company does not contract workers directly, but the psychological strategies aim to intensify the relationship between the driver and the company through the production of the ‘trunk driver’.

Chapter 9 considers the implementation of psychological strategies in the transport service in the light of the international dissemination of psychology. It argues that the psychological production of drivers not only replicates the idea of the employee as the ‘ideal’ subject of psychology and subordinates other modes of production of subjects, but the application of psychological strategies facilitates a kind of colonial governmentality.

So, in this preamble, I have signalled the reasons for my interest in the urban passenger transport system in Bogotá as well as in the understanding of the place that

psychology has within the transport companies. The questions, aims and arguments that guided this study were framed by such concerns. In the following chapter, I shall describe the way in which this research was conducted. I consider fundamental issues involved in the ethnographic research that I carried out in the urban passenger transport service in Bogotá.

## Chapter 2. Assembling the Study

*'... in spite of the immense differences between humans, we are alike in all being technologically and metaphorically implicated in the world in multiple ways. Such inevitable, worldly immersion makes scientific aspirations to a neutral God's eye view of things presumptuous.'*

(Haraway, 1991 cited in Jensen and Lauritsen, 2005, p. 63)

*'No matter how carefully one plans in advance the research is designed in the course of its execution.'*

(Becker, 1965 cited in Roberts and Sanders, 2005, p.297)

### Introduction

In this chapter I consider the ways in which I approached this study. Following Roberts and Sanders (2005), I present an account of the dilemmas confronted before starting the fieldwork, during the process of ethnographic inspired research within the transport service and *'subsequently in the lengthy time taken to unravel the theoretical importance of the data'* (Roberts & Sanders, 2005, p.294). Before, during and after, as Marcus (1995) suggests, does not mean that conceptual work was conducted first, and the fieldwork after. On the contrary, what has to be highlighted is that both phases were conducted in the light of each other. If they appear as separate phases, it is not because they were carried out in a sequence, it is because they have the coherence of something that happens after the facts (Martin, 2007).

I would like to say that this study was designed as an ethnographic exercise, not only because I spent 32 weeks in the field in Bogotá collecting information, but because my experience within the transport service and the information I used were not only limited to those weeks, but extended to previous years spent in contact with the transport service. In the first chapter I pointed out that I was not a newcomer to the



transport system. When I started my PhD, I had been involved in different psychological studies for the companies of the 'traditional' service. This experience provided me with a critical view of both my role as a psychologist and of the place of psychology within the transport service.

As a result, I was convinced that the relationship between psychology and work had to be improved. The introduction of qualitative methods and the constructivist approaches to the field of work psychology (Johnson & Cassell, 2000; Symon, 2000; Symon, Cassell & Dickson, 2000; Gergen & Thatcher, 1996) seemed to me a kind of transformation of the whole psychological discipline. Giving voice to those who do not have a voice within organisations (Gergen & Thatcher, 1996), for instance, appeared a plausible, pertinent and fair task to carry out in order to make work places more egalitarian. However, this humanist attempt, which I took very seriously, turned out to be counterproductive. Even though I was trying to develop a critical view of psychology, the studies which the research team and I conducted almost always became better tools for the administration and were used as means of subordinating the workers. It was evident that the problem was not the creation of new psychological perspectives; rather, that the critique of psychology had to focus not on how to improve this knowledge, but on the place and the operations that psychology performs to regulate people at work (Henriques et al, 1984).

This chapter is not only about how the study was conducted; it is also about how I looked, as a Colombian psychologist, at the transport sector to explore the operations of psychology within the world of work in my country. Danziger (2000) highlights the pertinence of psychologists conducting studies about psychology. I concur that the

lived experience of being involved in the discipline gives a particular view and access to specific practices which possibly give more potency to the critical accounts psychologists provide about their own discipline. Being trained in psychology and being part of the profession creates a combination of 'experiences' which allows me to be a 'competent reader' (Geertz, 1973) of the 'psy' complex (Rose, 1985b; Ingleby, 1985) in Colombia.

When I started this research project I had only the outline of a plan. Even though I had been involved in the 'traditional' companies, the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies were almost unknown territory. Such a territory had to be explored in order to look at the psychological practices that were constructing the drivers as subjects in the Transmilenio service. I understood 'practices' in the sense proposed by Michel Foucault (1991a, p.75) '*as places where what is said and what is done, the rules imposed and reasons, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect*' to produce certain kinds of subjects. Based on this definition of what practices are, the fieldwork could be understood as the examination of the psychological practices emerging in different locations and moments within the transport system. I proposed a multi-site ethnographic method (Marcus, 1995; Markus & Saka, 2006) to consider the place of psychology within the changes that were taking place.

Different types of companies co-exist in the transport service in Bogotá. These are 'traditional' companies that are still offering the transport service in most areas of the city (see Picture 3) and the Transmilenio service companies that are gradually replacing the 'traditional' ones. The Transmilenio companies are divided into 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies. The buses of the 'trunk' companies circulate in the corridors

especially constructed for them where no other vehicles can circulate (see Picture 4).

The buses of the 'feeder' companies circulate around the neighbourhoods bringing the commuters to the platforms of the corridors (see Picture 5).



Picture 3. 'Traditional' buses on the streets of Bogotá.



Picture 4. A 'feeder' bus on one of the platforms.



Picture 5. 'Trunk' buses in one of the platforms of the corridors.

I contacted 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies in order to conduct this study. Predictably the 'traditional' companies were very interested in collaborating. Contrary to my experience in the 'traditional' service, the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies were not as collaborative as I had expected. Even though the managers and drivers came from the 'traditional' system, they were very suspicious about the nature of this study. When I presented the project, I briefly related my interest in the ways in which the conceptions about drivers in the Transmilenio system differed from those conceptions of the 'traditional' driver, and indicated that I wanted to understand these differences under the new working conditions. I expressed my desire to observe and to participate in the organisational daily life, and where possible, in the activities relating to human resource management. In addition to this, I talked about possible interviews with drivers, managers and psychologists. I signalled that the research could lead to a reflection on the work practices, not for the improvement of profits but in terms of

conducting organisational activities in other ways. I pointed out that the research I was proposing would present and reflect the existing situation in order to deploy a series of considerations about how they as members of organisations would like it to be in the future.

In many cases, after talking to the managers of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, I was redirected to speak to the company's psychologists. In some cases, they were not very willing to collaborate. They argued that qualitative observations, such as those I was planning, make only minor contributions to the company. '*Those observations do not produce real benefits*' was the reason put forward to deny permission to carry out my research. In fact, after presenting my research proposal, many of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' managers rejected it. Finally, five companies out of thirteen agreed that I could conduct my observations. I decided that two of these would be the most beneficial because drivers, managers and investors were former member of the 'traditional' companies.

### **Multi-Site Ethnography**

I wanted to look at the place and operations of psychology regarding the constitution of workers as subjects in order to examine its possible colonial dimension. A multi-site ethnography seemed to me an adequate strategy to follow psychology as a practice that circulates, 'flows' and colonises and is moreover structured, adapted and hybridised in settings such as the transport service in Colombia. Multi-site ethnographies are different from other 'single' site ethnographies by their emphasis on following connections and 'flows' among a series of settings. Thus, the multi-site ethnography proposed was basically an exercise in mapping terrain (Marcus, 1995)

where psychological interventions were the target for description. The 'mobile' ethnography – I moved across and between multiple sites – allowed me to follow unexpected trajectories where work psychology as practice was 'mise-en-scene' within the transport service (Marcus, 1995).

Although established prescribed ways about how to conduct a multi-site ethnography have not been formulated, there are paradigmatic studies to consider, such as those conducted by Martin (1994; 2007) and Haraway (1989) that explored the cultural dimensions of science and technology. The places in which the multi-site ethnography is conducted are not established beforehand. However, a 'baseline' is recommended as a starting point (Marcus, 1995; 2000; Martin, 2007). I therefore considered that mapping the psychological practices in the 'feeder' company would provide an appropriate 'baseline'. In the 'feeder' company I had no restrictions, the manager authorised me to conduct interviews with any member of the company and gave me access to all organisational archives and documentation which allowed me to collect the information I needed to start following the connection between the places.

As the mapping of the psychological interventions within the terrain of the 'feeder' company progressed, the connections and 'flows' of psychological practices which had been applied started to appear. For example, the 'feeder' company did not conduct personnel selection processes; instead recruitment companies provided this service. Similarly, the constant psychological training to improve the drivers' 'sense of belonging' is not applied by internal psychologists. Rather, consultants who work for international companies design the interventions.

I followed the connections that were emerging by means of opportunistic movements (Rivas-Gamboa, 2004) which took me to: a 'trunk' company, a 'traditional' company, a recruitment company, an importer of psychological instruments as well as to the municipal government offices. In addition, I also included my relationship with the university as a place that was 'in connection with' (Marcus, 1995; 2002) and contributed to the multi-site ethnography. As a result, a variety of people and institutions became involved in the psychological practices; they were neither exclusively transport companies nor professional psychologists. On the contrary, managers, social workers, physical trainers, independent consultants, recruitment companies and the government were connected to psychological interventions from place to place.

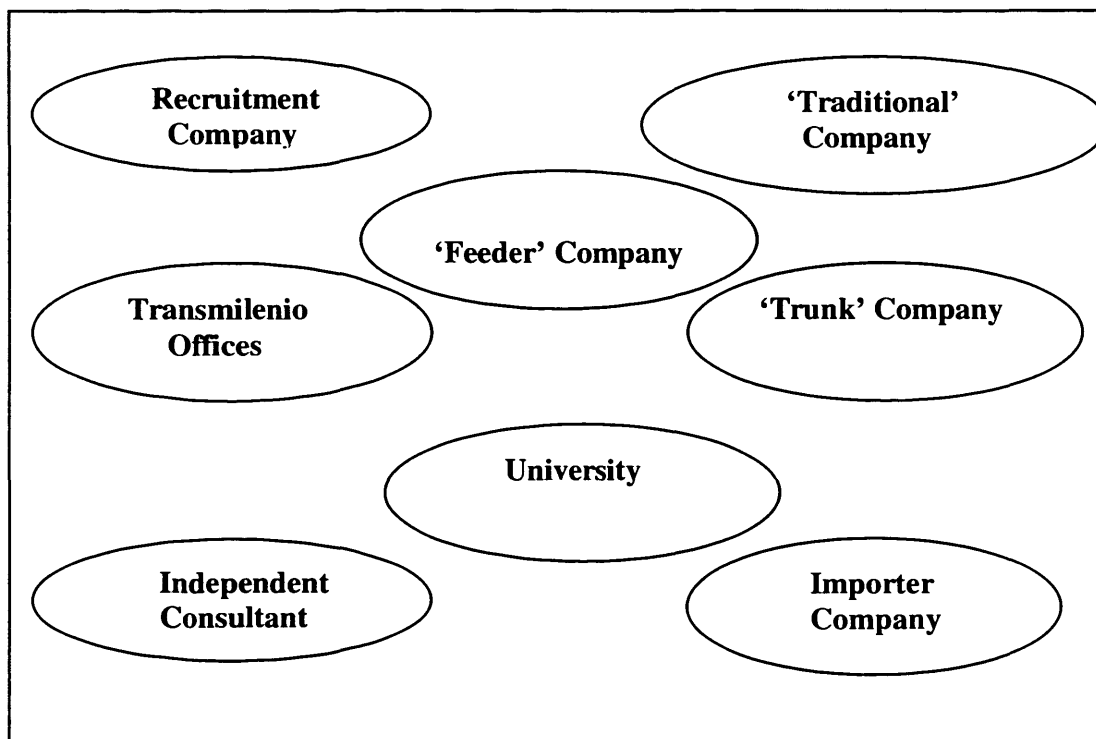


Diagram 1. Sites in which the fieldwork was carried out.

Looking at the psychological practices in different sites was not a simple question of adding places as in an inventory of where psychological practices are counted and classified. Rather, it was a question of constructing a site for research where connections, associations and interactions regarding the object of study – psychology as practice – could be seen (Marcus & Saka, 2006; Markus, 2002; Martin, 1998; Hovland, 2005).

As a result of the process of ‘mapping’ in different sites, a comparative dimension appears (Marcus, 1995). The variations that psychological practices presented among the sites led me to see differences in terms of the psychological interventions that the mapping was making evident. For instance, it was not only possible to see how the psychological practices attempted to produce different ‘desirable’ workers in distinct ways, it was also possible to see how the production of the ‘desirable’ drivers was intrinsically constituting the ‘traditional’ driver as the ‘other’ that should disappear. The multi-site ethnography enabled me to consider the place and operations of psychology regarding the constitution of ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ drivers as subjects and the ‘traditional’ driver as the ‘other’, in a network of relationships. In this way it was possible to address the research questions I wanted to approach.

At same time, the colonial dimensions that the application of psychology brings about also appear with the progression of the ‘mapping’. As Marcus (1995) argues, the ethnographic ‘mapping’ shows the global to be an emergent dimension of the connection among sites. The ‘local’ psychological interventions were part of ‘far-reaching flows’ (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). The connections started to show how the sites and the people involved in the network had different and partial connections with



the international dissemination of psychology. For instance, some psychologists have been trained in North-Atlantic societies; and some of the psychological instruments available in the Colombian psychological market were imported from Europe and applied without cultural validation processes.

The mapping between and across the sites was always accompanied by conceptual reflections. The construction of a conceptual framework, as Marcus (2000) suggests, was an inherent part of the fieldwork. In this sense, the conceptual framework was the result of a constant examination of the connections of the psychological practices across and between the sites. The conceptual tools allowed a better understanding of the emerging data (Sato & Rebello de Souza, 2001).

Once in the sites, conceptual issues had to be elaborated regarding the relationship between: a) psychological practices and working conditions, b) 'popular' constructions and the psychological constructions of the drivers c) psychological practices as a complex network of institutions, professional tools, strategies, discourses and the process of social regulation and disciplinarisation.

Every chapter of this study provides a sense of being 'in connection with' (Marcus, 1995) different elements. The chapters are 'messy texts' (Marcus, 1993) that enter into a relationship to constitute a composition, which is in itself a unity (Phillips, 2006). This composition does not aim to produce laws or prescribe courses of action (Marcus & Saka, 2006) it only shows a mapped terrain where a process of 'governmentality' (Foucault, 1979) is taking place.

## Companies

The mapping of psychological practices across and between the sites led me to the three different types of companies that at present co-exist in the transport service in Bogotá. COOBUSES<sup>2</sup> ('traditional'), URBANOS ('feeder'), and CENTURIA ('trunk') collaborated with this study. These constituted the best options in order to conduct my research for two simple reasons. Firstly, in one way or another, they were remarkably successful within their respective sectors. I assumed that the success of these companies was due to the performance of their drivers. Secondly, because most of the members (drivers and administrative staff) of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies came from the 'traditional' service, they were therefore immersed in the new working conditions and possibly being subjected to the processes of psychological transformation.

COOBUSES was one of the most successful companies in the 'traditional' sector. It had been growing constantly from being a small 'traditional' company to becoming a medium-sized one. COOBUSES is recognised within the sector for its attempts to improve the quality of service. The management was consistently concerned with workers and owners, planning and implementing different programmes to promote well-being. COOBUSES is composed of a small number of administrative staff, 250 drivers and a similar number of owners of vehicles. I knew this company before my fieldwork as I had been doing some psychological research for them. In COOBUSES I had completely free access to the organisational activities, administrative meetings and company archives, and additionally I was allowed to interview those who wanted to participate in the study.

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<sup>2</sup> The companies' names have been changed. Even though they agreed that their real names could appear I decided that for privacy issues it would be better to keep them anonymous.

URBANOS was one of the most successful companies of the 'feeder' service. The municipal government reported that this was the only company that fulfilled the requirements of the 'feeder' service in areas such as punctuality, efficiency, affordability and accessibility for all citizens (Transmilenio, 2006). Moreover, URBANOS achieved remarkable results in terms of customer service to the point that there were no major commuter complaints (Elhajeck, 2003). URBANOS was created with funding from 'traditional' companies and individual bus owners. The company is structured around the following areas: administration, accountancy and operations. The thirty-two administrative and operative staff came from the 'traditional' system. This means that they left an organisational environment based on friendship and familiarity to face a new organisational environment based on efficiency, punctuality and work control. Nine non-articulated buses are used for the service in three different suburbs which are populated by different social classes. These buses run through the routes 180 times per day carrying commuters to and from the central transport corridors. The manager of URBANOS, who was a former manager of one of the biggest 'traditional' companies, agreed that I could access any space and company documentation.

CENTURIA is a consortium of twenty-five 'traditional' companies. It is a 'trunk' company 'created by transporters for transporters'. The administrative personnel define CENTURIA as a very 'flexible' company. That is to say, CENTURIA does not establish direct working contracts with the drivers. Recruitment companies provide the labour force for the 240 buses to be driven and the drivers are distributed in shifts according to the city's peak hours. In terms of their reaction to my research, the

administrative personnel were more reserved. They allowed me to attend most of the weekly training, which included many psychologically oriented activities; however, they restricted my access to organisational documentation and administrative meetings.

## **Mapping**

A central part of the mapping aimed to describe the psychological practices and the working conditions, as follows:

a) I established the working conditions by considering work contracts, salaries, know-how and daily working routines. I collected this information by:

- Following and describing drivers in their daily driving routines;
- Examining the terms of legal work contracts, and
- Conducting interviews with managers, psychologists and drivers.

b) My fieldwork on the psychological practices aimed to elucidate:

- The psychological practices for producing the worker as a capable individual;  
and
- The psychological practices intended to transform the drivers' self.

I collected this information by:

- Participating in the daily organisational life and specifically in the psychological processes. I conducted observations at staff meetings, workshops, personnel selection interviews, and physical training sessions. This information was recorded in a field book;

- Interviewing drivers, managers and psychologists;
- Examining organisational documents, and
- Examining the transcriptions of interviews conducted in other studies.

## **Tools**

- Field notes. These were basically descriptions of what people do, including what they say, and their interaction; the field notes also contained my personal reflections about the research processes, my relationship with the members of the organisations, the possible interrelationships within the work settings, as well as the steps that I had to follow to collect information. They were focused on the practices carried out during the working day.
- Interviews aimed to collect material that was not directly available for observation. Specifically, I was interested in the description of the psychological practices that took place in the companies, and personal descriptions of what people actually ‘acted on’ with regard to the application of these psychological strategies.

The following interviews were conducted:

- Four interviews with psychologists working for 'traditional', 'feeder', 'trunk' and recruitment companies;
- One interview with a psychologist who works for the municipal government;
- One interview with the psychologist who manages one of the companies which imports psychological instruments to Colombia;
- One interview with a psychologist who works for an international consultancy;

- One interview with the 'feeder' company manager;
- One interview with the 'traditional' company manager;
- Three interviews with 'traditional' drivers;
- Five interviews with 'feeder' drivers;
- Three interviews with 'trunk' drivers;
- One interview with a 'feeder' physical trainer.

All the interviews were un-structured. However, the following topics guided the interviews:

- a) For the psychologists and managers: a description of the problems surrounding drivers; a description of the psychological tools applied; reasons for considering these tools appropriate to solve the problems at work; and the goals achieved within the company by applying these psychological tools.
- b) For the drivers: the work history; changes in the working conditions; descriptions of the psychological practices attended; the practicality of psychological interventions; changes in the manner of executing the work activities and changes in the routines outside work.

All the interviews were taped apart from the three interviews conducted with the 'trunk' drivers who requested the interview not to be taped.

The information collected was initially compiled in the following thematic matrices which were constructed for each company:

- a) The working conditions matrices, which included: contracts, salaries, know-how, control over work as well as the description of the problems relating to the labour force.
  
- b) The psychological practices matrices, which included the psychological interventions conducted to produce the worker as an individual and to transform the driver's self.

The observations were used to create a grid that included: problems faced when dealing with drivers; the psychological tools applied; the people targeted and the settings where psychological interventions took place; the psychological proposals about what a driver is. As Rose (1999) stated, these are no more than the components of an analytical grid which generates the kind of materials chosen for examination. *'They sensitise us with the kind of connections and relations amongst diverse elements that have brought our contemporary ways of thinking, judging and acting into being'* (Rose, 1999, p. xxiv). Thus, a mixture of participation, the examination of documents and interviewing allowed me to observe different angles of the relationship between working conditions, psychological knowledge, and the constitution of drivers as subjects, all of which was finally organised into the chapters that constitute this study.

<i>Sites</i>	<i>Work practices</i>	<i>'Psy' practices</i>
<b>'Traditional'</b>	Contracts	Versions about what workers 'are'; Lay and academic psychological versions  Psychological interventions; Individualising normalising psychological techniques
<b>'Feeder'</b>	Salaries	
<b>'Trunk'</b>	Know-how	
	Control	
<b>Other sites</b>	Relationships to working conditions	
<b>Results</b>	<b><i>Working conditions (Problems)</i></b>	<b><i>Proposals about drivers' subjectivity (Solutions)</i></b>

Table 1. The analytical grid.

### **Timetable**

I had my timetable distributed between the different sites. My former contact with the 'traditional' companies gave me a 'privileged' position, not only in terms of the contacts I made, but as regards the different materials collected. Interviews, field notes, pictures, and also the time spent carrying out research in these companies provided me with invaluable material for understanding the place of psychology in the 'traditional' transport service. I felt it would not be necessary to spend too much time



in the 'traditional' companies, as I had sufficient information for my purposes. However, I attended the 'Consejo de Administración' meeting in COOBUSES, which is a weekly meeting where the hiring of new drivers is decided on. Further to this, at COOBUSES I attended four workshops conducted by psychologists working for the municipal government.

In URBANOS, the 'feeder' company where I established the 'baseline', I was involved in daily activities inside and outside the company's offices. For instance, I participated in the physical training of the drivers and I additionally accompanied drivers in their daily routines. I also reviewed what I considered could be relevant organisational documentation about past psychologically oriented activities such as materials in the archives where the descriptions of practices were kept.

In CENTURIA, my access to information was somewhat more restricted. I followed drivers in their daily tasks and I attended the activities conducted by the company's psychologist, which I was allowed to 'map'. Thus, I observed different psychologically oriented workshops that took place as part of the permanent drivers' training and I was also able to conduct an interview with the company's psychologist. In this company, some drivers contacted me after the workshops, and they wanted to participate more directly in the project. These interviews were not taped because the drivers wanted to speak off the record.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented the research design that guided this study. The multi-site ethnography led me to map the psychological interventions and to follow their

connections and distant 'flows'. Observing, interviewing and participating in the organisational life were activities accompanied by constant reflection about their conceptual significance. As I pointed out, the conceptual and the fieldwork were not separated phases; rather they were conducted in conjunction with one another.

The next two chapters constitute the conceptual framework guiding the study. Once the mapping of the practices advanced, conceptual tools were brought about to a better understanding of the place and operations of psychology. Chapter 3 examines the studies considering the relationship between psychology and work. Following this, in Chapter 4, I present the conceptual tools which guided the analysis of the mapping of the psychological practices.

## Chapter 3. Critical Studies of Work Psychology

*'Neither Dorothea Dix nor Clifford Beers nor Adolph Mayer nor Sigmund Freud via his American disciples nor Kurt Lewin nor B.F. Skinner were or are representatives of the government. Yet they have been probably contributed as much to the reproduction of American society as the employees of the State Department of the Pentagon, insulting though it may be to mention their names in the same breath'*

(Castel, Castel & Lovell, 1982, p. 315)

### Introduction

This chapter examines the studies that have considered the relationship between psychology and the world of work. These studies were reviewed in the search for tools that cast light on the ways in which psychology operates. There are many approaches that have analysed the place and operations of psychology from different perspectives. These studies, all of which are concerned with the role of psychology regarding employment, can be divided into those that have been formulated within the limits of academic psychology and those approaches proposed in other social related disciplines. I start by pointing out how work psychology considers its own place with respect to the liberal society and work. This is a central issue as it is against this background that many critiques have been formulated. Then, I consider the studies that examine the place of psychology within the world of work. It is argued that although these critical studies are important to understand how psychology operates in modern societies, they have serious limitations because their critical endeavours merely point out 'errors and horrors' (Venn, 1984) in an attempt to improve psychology and also because they do not take into account the cultural, social, and economic differences of the locations where psychology is applied.

## Work Psychology

Since psychology met the world of work, its place and operations have been linked to liberalism (Viteles, 1932), and to the civilising project of modernity (Munsterberg, 1913). Work psychologists assumed that capitalist liberal society is the culmination of the history of humanity, which is better than any other previous social form (Munsterberg, 1913). Psychologists formulated their proposals for intervening in work settings around the liberal principle that the individual's 'best effort' at work brings about maximum productivity, profits and general well-being. The 'utilisation of manpower' became a central concern that opened a space for psychology to be applied, as there was a tension between the worker's capacity to work versus his/her willingness to do so which threatened the viability of capitalist society (Viteles, 1954). Psychological knowledge gained a place within the world of work by promising that it was able to solve this tension through conquering the worker's willingness to work. It promised to regulate human capacities in order to increase productivity by knowing *'the conditions and devices, which can most effectively arouse or release the inner forces which lead the employee to participate willingly, fully and satisfyingly in furthering the production aims...'* (Viteles, 1954, p. 6). In this way, psychology at work found its place in relation to the preservation and progress of liberal society. Subsequently, psychology's operations targeted the control of the 'energies of man' within a project of happiness at work that would make liberal society feasible (Viteles, 1954). This was considered not only as a desirable and ethical order but the only one possible. (Lander, 2000; Triantafillou & Moreira, 2005; Davila; 1985).

According to Viteles (1932; 1954), the operations of psychology are mostly associated with and presented as a way of liberating human beings from the 'chains of efficiency'. That is to say, achieving efficiency is the aim of capitalism, which does not necessarily lead to a concern for the well-being of workers. Work psychology takes employees' well-being as a goal and by taking it into consideration turns the problems of efficiency on their head. Psychology claims that the preservation of capitalism, in terms of productivity and profits, depends on psychological issues such as work satisfaction (Viteles, 1954; Mayo, 1990; Davila, 1985).

The topics and strategies developed within work psychology attempt to relieve the tension between efficiency, profits and workers' well-being in an ethical way that corresponds to liberal society. Schrader (2001) states that psychological strategies promote liberal values, for instance as follows:

- Personnel selection aims to bring fairness to workplaces by assuring a selection based on merit. Potentially, everybody is capable of being positioned within the world of work according to their abilities, intelligence, education, aptitudes and attitudes, independently of issues of class and cultural background;
- Training rewards best effort. Training aims to produce continuous improvement in the production process and enhancements of capacities and personal growth that would lead to satisfaction and optimum organisational performance;
- Leadership tackles the question between authority and autonomy at work. Leadership strategies attempt to find an equilibrium between the autonomy

and participation of workers within the constraints that work environments impose.

Underlying the psychological strategies at work, we find the rational autonomous economic man, who according to his interests is capable of deciding whether or not he wants to work in a labour market which supposedly has no restrictions (Steele, 2004). Psychology presumes that the worker keeps for himself/herself the willingness to work. So, once a worker accepts the work contract, psychology takes charge of conducting his/her willingness to work to the maximum by connecting it to a project of happiness (Triantafillou & Moreira, 2005).

This psychological project of happiness at work is taken to have a universal validity, as the arsenals of psychological strategies are derived from the application of scientific method. Therefore, psychological theories, strategies and instruments are true and neutral devices applicable to any place where capitalism is in force. If there is any influence of culture in the world of work in places different from those where psychological strategies were conceived, cross-cultural studies will propose the variables to make the necessary adjustments in order to make the universal psychological enterprise feasible (e.g., Erez & Gati, 2004).

The historical advance of such a psychological enterprise at work has been documented in relation to North-Atlantic liberal societies (e.g. Koopes, 2003; Furham, 2005; Shimmin & van Strien, 1998; Katzell & Austin, 1992). These historical accounts – which do not always explicitly acknowledge the relationship between psychology and liberal society – consider a rationality where outdated problematic or

unsuitable proposals are displaced by new approaches which are deemed to be more appropriate to the working conditions in which human beings carry out their labour activities. As Morawski points out (1992), these histories legitimate psychology as a valuable scientific endeavour, and such endeavour corresponds to a society that venerates industrial-organisational efficiency and the people who are able to be successful in the institutions of that society (Katzell & Austin, 1992).

In this way, the place and operations of mainstream work psychology are established in relation to the achievement of the goals of capitalist society. Psychology promises to solve the tension between labour and capital by improving productivity and workers' well-being. This enterprise is structured within the context of the application of the scientific method, which claims to establish a universal truth about human beings at work. If culture has any influence in the world of work, the differences are translated as variations of those variables proposed for the North-Atlantic societies where the psychology is produced. In this way the psychological enterprise at work advances around the world.

### **Criticising the Place and Operations of Psychology**

Concomitant with these studies that celebrate the place of psychology and the beneficial effects that its operations bring about to the world of work, other studies are concerned with the reason and consequences of that place and operations. Both inside the limits of academic psychological knowledge as well as in other related social disciplines researchers have conducted critical examinations.

The target of these critiques is the relationship between psychological knowledge, liberalism and the world of work. For instance, according to Wexler, (1983), the historical, cultural and economic link of psychology to the modern liberal project is a fact that has undeniable consequences. Psychological knowledge naturalises the liberal relationships established in workplaces, by means of a system of representations which aim to make workers conform to capitalist working conditions. Psychology describes the world of work as 'natural and inevitable' (Wexler, 1983) and at the same time psychology naturalises workers' subjectivity. Wexler (1983) states that as a consequence, workers are now conceived as natural beings with the capacities and features of the human kind. These capacities, abilities, and attitudes can be measured, controlled and used to improve productivity. Workers are also understood to encompass a particular 'human nature' which makes them different. Moreover workers are 'free' subjects who can determine their place in society and their opportunities for development. Freedom is understood as the condition for the development of these workers' capabilities and potentialities. The notion of workers as a 'free subjects' implies a 'moral vision' of human beings at work. In this vision, workers become responsible for their own success or failure exclusively depending on their work performance (Bock, 2000). The focus on performance enables psychology to deny the history of the liberal ways of working, the construction of the work in itself as a liberal issue (Meda, 1995), and the socio-historical formation of capitalism (Wexler, 1983).

In the same vein, other psychologists with a Marxist orientation have analysed the place of psychology in relation to class struggle and its operations in terms of the ways in which psychology contributes to the distortion of class relationships. The pro-



management stance of psychological knowledge, for instance, is the target of their attack. According to Bramel and Friend (1981), the privilege that psychology gives to management is manifest in the intrinsic negation of the conflict between the labour and the capital involved in the employment situation. Psychology orchestrates the negation of the conflict of capitalism and suppresses any resistance to exploitation, providing a view of workers as people who can easily be manipulated for the achievement of managerial goals.

Psychology's treatment of work has also been critiqued for occluding the cultural and social environments in which class struggles take place. Prilleltensky (1994), for example, proposes that the managerial bias of psychology not only has its origins in the relationship between the employer and the employee, but also in the cultural and social assumptions in which the world of work is immersed. According to Prilleltensky (1994), the presupposition that the enterprise is free of conflicts, combined with the assumption that science is good for society, make psychology appear as something good for both employee and employers. Therefore, the intrinsic conflict of capitalism –between those who exploit and those who are exploited – is reduced to issues related to the best way to reach organisational goals. By providing a diagnosis of the human problems that impede the achievement of organisational goals, and by claiming to be able to provide the best ways to solve these problems in order to accomplish the mutual benefits for both employee and employers, psychology becomes a knowledge that fundamentally could lead to organisational success. Along these lines, Prilleltensky (1994) points out that psychology helps to maintain the 'status quo' by the use of three mechanisms. Firstly, psychology personalises the conflicts when it locates the problems of work in persons so that work conflicts

become the problems of individuals. Secondly, psychology proposes a collaborative approach characterised by common goals 'ideally' shared by workers and managers. This collaborative approach shows the subtle power effects of psychology insofar as prevalent ideologies are internalised in workers who in turn become unaware of the ways in which they are being manipulated, influenced and controlled. This subtle manipulation makes workers not only ready to obey, but also makes them desire to. Finally, psychology translates the problems of work into problems of the worker's 'mind' which are then 'solved' by the experts of the 'psyche'. As a consequence, when work conflicts become psychological problems, managers are able to make 'ethical' decisions based on psychological recommendations.

Besides studies conducted within psychological frameworks, other social sciences have also examined the place and operations of psychology in relation to work. For example, it has been pointed out that psychology is an 'innocuous knowledge' because it does not produce the results it promises regarding the world of work (Braverman, 1998). Braverman considers that psychology as a 'pseudo science' inasmuch as it attempts to solve problems that do not come under its remit, such as the gradual intensification and simplification of work and the workers' loss of control over working activities. He argues that psychology and work have established a long-lasting relationship which dates back to the introduction of 'scientific administration' in the world of work. As soon as Taylorism started to be applied in workplaces, Braverman (1998) maintains that specialised departments, different academic knowledges, professions and institutions emerged in order to deal with the problems of the labour force. However, this long-standing relationship between psychology and work does not signify that psychology occupies a central place in work settings. On

the contrary, Braverman's (1998) analysis suggests that psychology at work is nothing more than a 'mythology' or a kind of useless social ornament. Psychology has always been at the mercy of the objectives of capitalist society, that is, it has always been linked to the interests of business. Furthermore, and contrary to what it promises, psychology does not obtain the habituation of workers to work or the prediction of workers' behaviour. The constant renovation and proliferation of psychological knowledge tools and interventions constitute the very evidence of psychology's failure to reach its aims. In fact, according to Braverman, the proliferation of different psychological knowledges is one of the points that strongly demonstrates the ineffectiveness of psychology.

In contrast to Braverman's (1998) assumption regarding the 'inoffensive' and 'innocuous' role of psychology at work, other studies have mentioned the extreme 'effectiveness' of the operations of psychology when dealing with the labour force. Baritz (1960) and Brief (2000), for example, state that psychology as academic knowledge and psychologists as a group of professionals who offer their services to the world of work have reached a state in which a 'true science of behaviour' is delivered in order to control the labour force. According to Baritz, psychology at work is a power '*more fearful than anything previously hinted*' (Baritz, 1960, p. 210) which is placed at the disposal of managers by psychologists who act as 'servants of power'. The analysis conducted by Baritz (1960) focuses on the historical relationship between psychologists as a group of professionals and managers as a group in charge of social control. The advances in psychological knowledge and the alliance established between management and psychologists propagate the powerful effects of psychology. Notwithstanding that this is not an egalitarian relationship, psychologists

have assumed the values of management in order to be accepted into the companies and they are therefore unable to exercise any kind of active and effective criticism.

These analyses can be depicted as a history of the ways in which psychologists convinced managers to use psychological knowledge, and how behind this goal the critical role of the social sciences disappeared. The 'trajectory' of psychology in the world of work is described as an odyssey which starts with mutual indifference between psychology and management in the first decade of the twentieth century and ends with total agreement as regards the central role of controlling human behaviour to achieve higher productivity. This is clearly an account of a struggle which has largely been produced thanks to the imbalance of power that exists between management and psychology. Thus, managers are located in a central role as one of the most powerful elites in contemporary society capable of establishing judgments related to and legitimised by the relationship of psychology to work. Psychologists are subjugated to a position where it is possible for managers to judge psychological work according to how effectively it achieves the goals of organisations. This position inhibits the intervention of more critically oriented psychologists and restricts their independent opinions. In an attempt to secure their position, albeit a subordinate one, psychologists more often provide non-critical interventions which are characterised by the apparent neutrality and 'scientificity' and by solutions based on individuals for the problems of the labour force. Therefore, psychological knowledge at work is a rationalised enterprise aiming to improve profits, whilst simultaneously attempting to subordinate workers by limiting the possibilities of political action.

Other studies questioned the place of psychology in terms of the knowledge produced. These studies targeted the supposed neutrality, transparency and effectiveness of psychological knowledge within the world of work. The characteristic emphasis of work psychology on pragmatic issues is a central concern for critical studies inside the psychological discipline. These studies try to question the 'place' of psychology by analysing the nature of its knowledge. For instance, psychological research conducted under the label of industrial-organisational psychology provides a series of pragmatic solutions to solve management problems which are little more than common sense (Bramel & Friend, 1981). Lamal (1991) and Gordon, Kleiman & Haine (1978) conclude that industrial and organisational psychological knowledge is 'familiar' to everybody involved in the business environment without requiring any previous contact with psychological formalisations. There is a shared knowledge concerning the manner of conducting business which does not depend on academic psychological explanations. The charge is that psychology only appropriates that knowledge and make it appears as its own. In a similar vein, other studies highlight a pragmatic emphasis around psychology and work as installing a 'reactive' knowledge which is merely concerned with management problems (Moghaddam, 1995; Le Mouel, 1990). This is to say, psychology is not concerned with theorizing the world of work, but rather with solving the problems of management. Furthermore, psychology reacts to the questions formulated by management but does not have its own theoretical proposals. For example, Nord (1982) and O'Reilly (1991) suggest that the typical pragmatic emphasis in the psychology-work relation does not produce major novelties. On the contrary, it manufactures a series of repetitions and variations over the same main themes and thus contributes little to advances in psychology. Moreover, after examining the academic production of conventional industrial and

organisational psychology, Anderson, Herriot & Hodgkinson (2001) argue that the relationship between psychology and work appears to move away from relevant and rigorous research to produce studies which can be classified as popular, pedantic and/or puerile science. Most crucially, it is argued that the relationship between psychology and work is immersed in a 'descriptive philosophy' that either leaves aside relevant theorisations of empirical research or produces a multiplicity of theories which do not lead to an understanding of the contemporary changing world of work (Fernández-Ríos, 1995).

Other studies claim that academic psychology is not an exact representation of reality, either at the level of data or at the level of the research processes. Rather it is the result of a struggle among different social actors in search of locating their own points of view over other social actors who have relatively less power. According to Gillespie (1993; 2000) for example, critical approaches aim to provide a historical account of 'science at work' by way of questioning why social scientists, managers, and workers arrived at a particular interpretation of psychological research which came to be accepted as correct. Gillespie's book 'Manufacturing Knowledge' (1993) is better at capturing the sense of the social construction of scientific knowledge as manifested in the work place. According to Gillespie (2000), the manufacturing of knowledge is a *'contingent phenomenon, a construction that reflects ideological commitments, cultural and national styles, and local technical conditions'* (Gillespie, 2000 p. 114). Gillespie's central aim is to question the production of psychological knowledge as something transparent and free of social struggles. Instead of an ascetic view of power, he proposes that scientific production could be seen as a 'flexible' resource, a highly variable collection of epistemological assumptions and

experimental techniques that are themselves shaped by scientists' social values and their commitment to particular scientific beliefs (Gillespie, 2000). Knowledge and power establish a 'dialectical relationship' which according to Gillespie (2000) primarily means a relationship between the power positions of scientists and society. That is to say, a body of knowledge becomes accepted only if scientists have enough power within their discipline in the broader society. These types of social-constructionist studies do not deny the powerful effects of scientific knowledge; on the contrary, they re-affirm them. At the same time, these studies bring scientific power into a new dimension: social sciences do not derive their power from being coherent, systematic and methodical in accordance with the established scientific canons. What enables a version to be taken as 'scientific' – that is, the 'correct one', widely accepted and applied – is the social, professional and personal interests of social scientists and the social networks around them.

In this context, psychological knowledge is not a kind of discovery which is achieved by means of a series of methodological procedures. Gillespie (1993) proposes a view of psychological knowledge that is conceived as the result of an imposition exercised by means of a chain of authority. He argues that factories and universities, researchers and managers, all have a shared view of society to the point that work settings can be looked upon as laboratories in which it is feasible to conduct experiments. Gillespie (1993) further argues that given that psychologists propose that experimentation is a plausible way of making sense of the world of work, managers come to believe that psychologists are scientific 'arbiters' of organisational conflicts. This metaphoric translation is possible thanks to a previously established politics of production and not because academic psychology has brought it about (Gillespie, 1993). Even though

there are shared views of the world among social actors, this does not mean that everyone involved in the chain of authority has equal power positions. Along the chain of power there are different versions about: how to conduct research; what theoretical tools are appropriate to confront the problems under examination; which material has to be analysed; which material has to be discarded and which population has to be researched. It is the 'versions' of the 'actors' located in power positions that are taken to be the 'true' versions. The positions occupied by social actors and the ways in which they play their role determine the extent to which the final version can be affected. This is the reason why Gillespie (1993) describes psychologists and managers in terms of the inner characteristics of the self such as charisma, persistence, commitment, honesty, the ability to negotiate, and so on.

According to Gillespie, socio-constructionist studies of psychology do not aim to determine if psychological research produces 'good' or 'bad' science. On the contrary, they aim to demonstrate that even the most sophisticated social research is 'imprinted' by the social context in which it is produced. By choosing key research processes and by de-constructing the production of psychological science, socio-constructionist studies of psychology aim to produce an imbalance that questions, for instance, the scientific ideology relating to the intensification of production and supervision, which lies behind psycho-organisational knowledge.

### **The Place of the Application**

So far, I have considered different approaches that have focused on the relationship between academic psychology and the world of work. I have discussed the ways in which researchers look at the different characteristics of the relationship between



psychology and work from both within and outside the discipline of psychology. Conventional psychology, as an artefact of liberal society, shows a constant preoccupation with productivity while attempting to humanise work and protect workers from potential threats to their well-being. In the tension between productivity and well-being, mainstream psychological knowledge identifies itself as a set of solutions for the impasse generated between capital and labour. In providing such solutions, psychology claims its social utility. However, this role of psychology as a kind of mediator is the focus of other critiques that consider psychological knowledge to be a powerful tool utilised to control the minds of workers. According to these analyses, when psychologists attempt to solve intrinsic work contradictions, a bias is produced. Psychologists opt for enhancing the interests of management and use psychology as a way of blinding workers in order to maintain the status quo. In other words, traditional psychology's main role (inadvertent as it may be) is to maintain capitalist employment relationships through the deployment of psychological tools and legitimised knowledge which serve to distort and disguise exploitative class relationships.

As it has been discussed, there are other critiques which aim to bring the validity of industrial, work and organisational psychological knowledge into question. In these analyses the way in which psychology is produced is the focus of concern. The main objection of these analyses is related to the alleged 'transparency' of psychological knowledge. This objection radically opposes the assumption that psychology is an exclusive product of a rational process. In general terms, it opposes the assumptions that psychology advances through successive discoveries about what workers are, do and think. These critical analyses propose that psychological knowledge is the result

of a chain of authority that imposes a 'correct' version of what organisational life is. This version is imposed over other versions produced by social actors who are in an inferior position within the chain of authority.

All these critical, often historically based, studies seek to 'destabilise', in one way or another, the assumptions which guide the production and application of the psychological discipline in work settings. They examine the relationship between psychology and work which has been fundamentally characterised by its technical nature, its lack of theoretical concern, as well as by an absence of historical perspective beyond those hagiographies that celebrate the psychological enterprise. In this sense, the reviewed critical studies target what Canguilhem (1994) called the disciplinary naivety of psychology's practitioners. This naivety finds its roots in a lack of historical knowledge that leads psychologists to have a 'good interventionist consciousness' and a 'manager's mentality' when confronting inter-subjective relationships.

I suggest that it is fundamental to draw attention to the fact that all these critical studies coalesce around the following aims: they all target psychological knowledge in order to improve it as their ultimate goal. What is under consideration is the constitution of a better psychological knowledge that should be as follows:

- More theoretical – as work psychology has a very low epistemological profile it can be perceived as little more than common sense or as offering a host of social techniques without a theoretical framework.

- More democratic – psychology has to abandon its pro-management stance to become more autonomous and widely available to different groups and organisations such as trade unions. Psychologists should be concerned not only with the interests of management but should also take into consideration workers’ and unions’ objectives (Huczczco & Curie, 1984). It is supposed that a psychology concerned with union issues, for example, would provide tools for the general well-being of other groups involved in organisational life. The general consensus among critical theorists is that if psychology considers the interests of other organisational actors it could potentially become more egalitarian (Rosen & Stagner, 1980).
- More liberating – psychology has to reconsider its own objectives and abandon the support it offers to maintain the ‘status quo’ in work settings. In doing this, psychology has to question the exploitative social relationships at work and promote processes of social change at work.
- More legal – psychology has to reconsider its own actions when intervening in work places in order to preserve not only the interests of business, but fundamentally to preserve workers’ rights (Gilliland & Paddock, 2005).
- More humanistic – psychology has to review its tools and instruments because the rationality behind its technologies considers the human being as a machine only useful for the process of production. By applying other less reductive psychological instruments, workers potentially become the human part of the machine.

These critiques also have another important feature in common. Given that their ultimate goal is to contribute to the development of a more meaningful and relevant psychology, they generally concur with Teo's (2005) assumption that well-founded criticism promotes the advancement of psychology. There is an imperfect psychological knowledge that by being constantly criticised is moving towards a fuller and 'real' awareness of human subjectivity. Subsequently, these critical approaches do not intend to challenge the place of psychology as such, but rather attempt to transform psychology with the aim of improving it. However, as the place of psychology is preserved, these studies become part of the psychological enterprise itself. The insight that critical studies provide is limited to suggestions and perceptions which lead to the transformation of the psychological knowledge. Contrary to other relationships that psychology has established with other aspects of society – such as the mental health arena (Miller, 1986a; 1986b), which has been deeply affected by critical positions – the relationship between psychology and work continues its 'progressive and fashionable' (Abrahamson, 1991) advances while largely sidelining criticism.

Finally, critical studies of the relationship between psychological knowledge and the world of work tend to reproduce universalistic claims. This is to say, critical studies of psychology assume that their validity is as universal as the knowledge they attempt to destabilise. The local conditions and particularities that the capitalist society presents are left aside under the assumption that the same social relationships would take place around the world (Chakrabarty, 1988). In these circumstances, local relationships between employees and employers are taken as being similar as those of the North-

Atlantic societies, where the critiques were conducted. Therefore, the local material working conditions have not been a central concern. Moreover, the fact that psychology is produced in North-Atlantic societies, and then replicated, adapted and applied in Latin America, has not been part of the critical endeavour. On the contrary, the critiques themselves are translated in the same terms in which they have been formulated. Consequently, they play the same role; they intend to transform psychological knowledge while perpetuating its place as a true knowledge that only needs to be adjusted to the local conditions in order to be pertinent. Typically, as Campos (1981) suggests, work psychology in the Latin-American region incorporates elements of Marxist critiques while keeping its basis in the image of economic autonomous man.

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing the critical studies that have considered the relationship between psychology and work, it is clear that even the critical studies themselves have become part of the enterprise of psychology. It is also clear that both psychological knowledge and its critiques have universalistic assumptions; they assume that the same effects will appear wherever psychology is applied. The fact that there are three different worlds of psychology (Moghaddam, 1987; Owusu-Bempah & Howitt, 2000) remains almost unconsidered for these critical studies. Even though the expansion of work psychology has been widespread, the psychological studies and the critical studies are limited to what Staeuble (2005; 1999) calls a celebratory attitude. They celebrate the dissemination of European and North-American psychological knowledge as a sign of progress and development.

Therefore, in the next chapter, I consider the key features (Pickstone, 2000), or conceptual tools necessary to conduct an analysis of psychological practices found in the transport service. Rather than proposing a theory, I present some tools for a tactical analysis of the constitution of workers as subjects according to the mapping that I conducted in the transport service.

## Chapter 4. Conceptual Tools

*'I would take up my own voice again, and we would do philosophy, even if this meant reencountering psychology, at that moment, as a kind of absolutely unavoidable and inevitable impasse that western thought entered into in the nineteenth century'*

(Foucault, 2000, p.258)

*'... the coming of age of psychological disciplines was not a coherent phenomenon. It was an awkward, irregular, unregulated, and often misguided enterprise. Nor did it take place in books or laboratories but, rather, it happened on the streets, in classrooms, on buses...'*

(Gagen & Linehan, 2006, p.796)

### Introduction

In this chapter I propose a series of conceptual prescriptions that complement and guide the analysis of the psychological practices mapped within the urban passenger transport service in Bogotá. The conceptual tools to be formulated do not attempt to improve work psychology by pointing out 'errors and horrors' (Venn, 1984), they simply attempt to guide an analysis that de-familiarises the place and operations of psychology within the transport service in order to explore the colonial dimensions of this knowledge. Thus the 'conceptual prescriptions' are tools which contribute to making sense of the mapping of the social territory in which psychology gains a place and performs its operations. Initially the chapter re-considers the pros and cons of the critiques of work psychology; the second part presents the conceptual tools that guided the analysis of the psychological practices and their connections in relationship to the urban passengers transport service.

In the last chapter I re-visited some of the fundamental approaches that have examined the relationship between psychological knowledge and the world of work. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychology gained its place within the business

environment linked to capitalist liberal society and to the civilizatory project of modernity (Munsterberg, 1913; Viteles 1932). Since then, psychology has promised to solve the conflict between labour and capital by proposing a project of happiness at work, which is directed to promote workers' well being, and as well as enhancements in profits. The critiques of work psychology have targeted such a project from different angles (see Chapter 3). It is not necessary to replicate these critical studies in order to establish the fact that similar consequences occurred in the world of work in contexts different from those in which they were conducted. The conclusions proposed by these studies are as plausible for North-Atlantic societies as they are for the rest of the world.

These critiques do not constitute a critical 'body of knowledge' in themselves. On the contrary, they are rather isolated efforts that share a crucial characteristic: they belong to a knowledge 'parallel' to mainstream psychology. According to Teo (2005), these critiques can be considered as a part of the whole psychological knowledge, because psychology progresses by paying attention to its critiques. In this sense, the critical studies of psychology are elements of what Walsh and Bahnisch (2001) called 'totalising disciplinary claims'. Even though critical analyses of psychology – or critical analyses of 'psy' sciences in general – have undertaken a praiseworthy task, they act as vehicles of modernisation (Miller, 1986a; Rose, 1996). Modernisation in this case means that the critiques tend to be incorporated into the conventional psychological knowledge as attempts to improve it, or as proposals to develop new 'psy' branches and disciplines. Therefore, critical studies of psychology remain caught in what they seek to critique: the appropriate way of carrying out 'psy' sciences. As a consequence, in relation to the world of work, they will either remain



ignored or, sooner or later, become part of conventional psychological knowledge. Perhaps in the best scenario, they will give rise to one of the many re-formulations of psychology (see for instance, Caballero-Munoz, 2001).

Critical studies of work psychology have other limitations that have not been pointed out before. In general, these critical studies are guided by the assumption that their conclusions have a universal validity. Consequently, they do not consider the possible qualitative differences related to the context of application. Critical studies of the relationship between psychology and the world of work simply forget the specificity of the location in which psychology is applied at two levels. On the one hand, the studies are not concerned with the place of psychological knowledge in countries where this knowledge is fundamentally adapted and replicated rather than produced. On the other hand, critical studies of work psychology are not preoccupied with the growth and dissemination of the psychological enterprise around the world. It seems that the lack of consideration of both the place of the application of psychology, as well as the processes of its dissemination, indicate that critical studies forget a constitutive process that accompanies modernity, this is its coloniality (Escobar, 2003; Coronil, 1996; Mignolo, 2005).

In this sense in this study, I am not attempting to reformulate a psychological approach to the world of work. I am not trying to make a better, more pertinent, or more relevant psychology. Moreover, I am not trying to find conceptual elements as the basis of a different psychological perspective. Based on the psychological practices I encountered in the transport service, I am trying to achieve a critical understanding of the place of this knowledge when applied to countries like

Colombia. It is important to argue that the psychological enterprise embraces colonial dimensions when it is applied to places other than the North-Atlantic societies. These colonial dimensions are manifest in the ways in which psychology helps to constitute types of human subjects at work. Hence, as stated in Chapter 1, I want specifically to explore the relationships that psychology and work have established in relation to the constitution of workers as subjects in the 'local' conditions of the passenger transport system in Bogotá and then refer these constructions to processes of coloniality.

It seemed to me that in order to conduct such an analysis within the transport service, it was necessary to be guided by the following conceptual prescriptions:

- 1) Working conditions 'frame' the psychological practices at work but do not limit them.
- 2) Lay psychology and work academic psychology interact to constitute the worker as a subject (Danziger, 1997).
- 3) Work psychology is more than a series of academic claims; it is better understood as a 'psy-complex' (Rose, 1996; Ingleby, 1985).
- 4) Psychological practices aiming to constitute the worker as a subject can be located in the sovereignty/ disciplinary/ governmentality/ power complex. That is, they begin in the technologies and practices produced to regulate and govern the social world, not in an academic ivory tower (Foucault 1977a; Henriques et al, 1984; Rose, 1996).
- 5) The power complex can be extended to the relationship of modernity to coloniality in order to understand the colonial governmentality implicit in psychological practices (Castro-Diaz, 2007).

These five key features of my approach do not attempt to see how the workers change in their individual subjectivities, or to establish the meaning of the psychological changes. They attempt to de-familiarise the place and operations of psychology by considering psychology as a tactic of governmentality focusing on subject-constitution and knowledge-production (Deacon, 2002). These conceptual prescriptions complement the fieldwork mapping, which shows the tactical arrangements, associations, strategies, and battles that have taken place in order to produce certain kinds of 'desirable' subjects at work. In this sense, I am not addressing the social processes through which workers '*actively manoeuvre in relation to discursive practices*' (Newton, 1998, p. 426). That is to say, subjective meaning and individual agency are not the focus of this study. I am not taking into consideration issues related to the position of particular individuals within discourses. It seems to me that this question only brings nostalgia for a psychology that can explain the perennial question for 'what is in the workers minds' (Pittinger, 2003). Rather this study is concerned with the tactical dispositions for the production of subjects at work and not with the problem of subjective meaning (Foucault, 1977b; 2000).

**1) Working conditions 'frame' the psychological practices at work but do not limit them.**

The psychological interventions within the urban passenger transport service are associated with changes in working conditions. Working conditions constitute a framework and a target for psychological interventions, as they bring about problems

related to the labour force which psychology has to deal with. The problem of drivers' adaptation to the changes is an obvious reason for psychology to be applied. However, even though the working conditions constitute a framework and target for psychological interventions, it means neither that the transport companies' employment situation is a monolithic entity nor that the tactical psychological applications follow a pre-established sequence.

The working conditions in the transport service are the result of:

- a) The Colombian legal regulations of capitalist competition,
- b) The shape that these regulations take in the day-to-day life of the 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, as well as,
- c) The global influences regarding the organisation of work in every work setting (Chakrabarty, 1988; Schvarstein & Leopold, 2005).

The transport service constitutes a framework in which, according to particular working conditions, a series of psychological practices and discourses to produce psychologised human beings are formulated. Thus, working conditions configure the ambits in which a series of problems and solutions emerge that involve issues related to the conduct of drivers. Psychological practices and discourses have a space to operate, as these problems are related to drivers' willingness to work.

Thus, the configurations of factors such as: work contracts, salaries, control over tasks, social relationships and legal regulations vary over time and from workplace to workplace. However, the particular configurations that the working conditions take in

the transport companies are examples of the relationship between 'local' working practices and global regulations of the world of work.

Proposals about drivers and managers are changing according to the working conditions. Drivers and managers are relational categories: they differ in respect to tactical changes in the working conditions and cultural context (du Gay, 1996). This does not however imply that the economic issues involved are secondary to the constitution of subjectivity at work, but that the constitution of the subject does not stop at purely economic explanations (Chakrabarty, 1988). The working conditions provide a general framework for the understanding of how the driver is being constituted in an exercise of government of work places and how psychology has a place in such an endeavour.

## **2) Lay psychological constructions and work psychological practices and discourses interact to constitute the worker as a subject.**

Researchers have started the task of integrating lay psychological dimensions in order to consider how psychological knowledge operates in North-Atlantic societies in which it is produced (Richards, 1987; Danziger, 1997). The studies have established that there is not 'real' division between lay and academic psychologies, but rather one forms the base of the other (Richards, 1987; Danziger 1997; Sparti, 2001; Brinkman, 2005). Psychologists can talk about 'psychological objects' such as, emotions, motivation and personality, just to name a few, because the psychological discipline took these categories from the '*broader language community to which psychologists belong*' (Danziger, 1999, p.82).

In general terms, if work psychology has a place in a given work context it is precisely because it is able to transform the relevant lay psychological categories. Conversely, if lay psychological categories are susceptible to change by psychological interventions, it is because they share elements in common. These common elements are related to the psychological nature of modernity and the conception of the individual that it brought about (Duarte, 2005; Danziger, 1997; Foucault, 2000). For instance, Danziger (1997) argues that academic psychology and popular understandings have the same modern base, which is intrinsically tied to the 'great transformation' that took place in Britain and North America (Polanyi, 1957). Such a base is related to the arrival of a society based on free-wage labour and capital, the ubiquity of commercial and contractual relationships, the principle of representative government, individual enterprise and scientific rationality (Polanyi, 1957; Danziger, 1997). According to Danziger (1997), the advent of modernity brought a reconstitution of the relationships between individuals and their actions, and resulted in a new sense of the self.

The interaction between lay and academic psychologies has a central consequence, if academic psychology is able to interact in public arenas, such as work places, it is precisely because it incorporates lay psychological constructions about the world of work. Thus, psychological proposals about work and workers are not universal truths but cultural products (Jacques, 1996); that is to say, they are not 'natural kinds' but 'human kinds' (Danziger 1997). Therefore, psychological categories often only make sense within a certain social context and can be alien to other social environments (Danziger, 1999; Hacking, 1995a).

Work psychology proposals have to make sense within work settings in order to be applied, otherwise they would not have any significance. This implies that psychological categories often only make sense within certain social context and can be totally alien to other social environments (Danziger, 1999; Hacking 1995b). Therefore, psychology makes sense in work environments because it uses the 'local' business categories, and after psychological research, it returns the lay categories transformed as 'scientific' categories to the working environments. As the popular constructions consider people in a context, what psychological research does is to add new distinctions, which cause new realities to come into being as regards those people with who psychological categories interact. These new distinctions are formulated in the '*hope of immediate of future intervention in the lives of individual human beings*' (Hacking, 1985b, p. 351). In this way, work psychology changes the state of lay psychological categories, so that, what has been considered the community's ways of conceiving human beings at work becomes the domain of academic psychology.

Work psychology and lay psychological categories that circulate in the broader social environment have an intricate relationship which is hardly recognised by academic psychology. The examination of this relationship have constituted an important tool for understanding how psychology operates linked to the production of certain kinds of human beings in the framework of the 'local' psychologies of North-Atlantic modernity (Danziger, 1990; 1997; Richards, 1987). In this sense, it has been established that psychological understandings mean understandings about human beings at work within the practices and the culture of those North-Atlantic societies. (Martin, 2007; Blackman & Walkerdine, 1991; Brinkmann, 2005; Parker, 2007; Rose, 1996).

Blurring the limits that exist between work psychology and the North-Atlantic culture – in which it emerged and where it is produced – is an important issue for consideration in the relation to the place of psychology in the Colombian work environment. In view of the fact that North-Atlantic psychology is produced by, produces and is an example of its cultural subject matter (Richards, 1987) – that is to say, if lay North-Atlantic psychological constructions are at the base of work psychology – the interaction with the other lay psychologies has to be a concern for the understanding of the place of this knowledge in work places located far from North-Atlantic ones.

Consequently, in the transition of working conditions which involve lay conceptions of work and workers such as the one under examination in this study, it is indispensable to pay attention to the interaction between these popular conceptions and work psychological discourses. Exploring the interaction between academic North-Atlantic psychology in other cultural environments which did not ‘directly’ contribute to the production of its North-Atlantic categories, and the consequent effects in terms of the constitution of the workers as subjects in a different cultural context, is a central point for understanding the place and operations of psychology. If it is accepted that the consolidation of work psychology categories coincides with the modern disciplinary organisation of North-Atlantic societies (Papadopoulos, 2004), the interaction of these categories with other lay psychological categories could be seen as process of local disciplinarisation.

In the 'traditional' service there are different ways of conceiving what a driver is; these conceptions interact with the psychological proposal of desirable 'feeder' and 'trunk'



drivers. The former constructions are based on lay psychological terms, and the latter on academic psychological discourses. The interaction lay-academic psychologies shows a way in which psychological knowledge operates in societies such as Colombia. An understanding about how psychological knowledge operates locally 'there' in North-Atlantic settings – where it is produced – contributes to establish how psychology operates locally 'here' in the Colombian work places – where this knowledge is mostly applied. If something specific has to be said about the differences between the places of production and the places of application of psychological knowledge, the relationship between psychology and its 'local' North-Atlantic audiences has to be pointed out.

### **3) Work psychology is more than a series of academic proposals.**

Work psychology is difficult to define. Researchers suggest that it is an interdisciplinary field composed of social psychology of organisations, human factors, organisational behaviour, organisational development, psychology of differences, ergonomics, industrial and organisational psychology, human resources management, total quality management and the psychology of small groups (Acosta, 2000; Hollway, 1991). Even though there is a vast diversity of psychological approaches to be applied to the world of work, it is still possible to include them under one roof if we consider that a) most of the psychological proposals, in one way or another, have a central and fundamental 'pragmatic' interest in solving the problems generated by employment (Jans & van Drunner 2004; Guion, 1965; Steffy & Grimes, 1992) and b) they all have a common origin in the way in which modernity conceived problems related to the social efficiency and the place of human beings within this social regulation (Hollway, 1991; Jans & van Drunner, 2004; Foucault, 1997a; Rabinbach, 1990).

It is not only the variety of approaches which makes work psychology difficult to link to a specific academic field. For instance, at present, psychological knowledge related to the world of work is not only being produced in schools of psychology but also in departments of business administration (Zickar, 2004). Psychologists do not exclusively produce psychological knowledge – there are other professions involved in its production. Psychologists in workplaces are not merely dedicated to the application of psychological tools and strategies; they perform other administrative tasks that are not directly linked to academic psychology. As a consequence, the psychological regulation of the labour force is no longer a restricted field to professional psychologists. Many other professionals use psychological means of understanding the individual at work to affect the relation that human beings have with production activities. As pointed out by Hollway (1991), *'there will continue to be a role for something – a class of agents and a cluster of discourses – to do the job that work psychology has done for eighty years. Whether it will be done by work psychology is much less sure'* (Hollway, 1991, p. 154).

Within the world of work there is a community of researchers and a group of practitioners which is comprised of different professions and these have become increasingly separated (De Wolf, Shimmin & Montmollin, 1981; Highhouse & Zickar, 1997; Anderson, Herriot & Hodgkinson 2001). The formation of new work psychologists emphasises administrative strategies and leaves aside psychological theories (Hyatt, Cropanzano, Finfer, Levy, Ruddy, Vandaveer, & Walker, 1997). Psychological knowledge is appropriated and disseminated in best-sellers which offer a series of psychological strategies to deal with the practical problems of workplaces and propose how workers should be. Frequently in the business environment these

best-sellers occupy a more important place than psychological research, which is considered naïve, pedantic or puerile (Anderson, Herriot & Hodgkinson, 2001). The only corner that seems exclusively reserved for psychologists is the evaluation of the psychology of human differences at work (Hollway, 1991). In this panorama, it is impossible to affirm that psychology at work is what psychologists do; there is a complex network of practices, vocabularies, professions, agents, discourses, theories, editorials, conferences, journals, techniques, organisations and instruments deployed in the world of work that constitute a particular manifestation of what has been called the 'psy-complex' (Rose, 1996; Inglebly, 1985).

The studies which give more weight to the 'psy-complex' tend to understand how psychology loses and gains its place in society rather than looking at the psychological theories and ideas which aim to establish a truth about what the world of work and its members are (Schnog, 1997; Rose, 1999; Hollway, 1991). At work, psychological knowledge and its derived practices provide the means *'and understandings through which behaviours, conduct and thoughts are classified, administered and surveyed in relation to regulative ideals or images of desired self'* (Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001, p. 103). Psychology at work, considered as a part of the 'psy-complex', is not a series of theories from different epistemological positions proposing a series of psychological interventions; it is not the result of grand historical events or the concatenation of successive brilliant ideas (Blackman, 1994). Psychology at work is basically a tactical arrangement of a constellation of elements which aim to 'make up' (Hacking, 1995b) human subjects as desirable workers in given historical circumstances (Rose, 1996; Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001; Hacking, 1995b; Hollway, 1991; Foucault, 2006).

Looking at contemporary psychological practices is the recommended alternative to establishing how, in the broader social field, the 'psy-complex' operates to describe and enforce 'good behaviour' (Parker, 2007) as well as to produce malleable, docile and self-motivated subjects at work (Rose, 1996; Triantafillou & Moreira, 2005; Foucault, 1997a). This enterprise is not only to do with the analysis of the reflexive problem of psychology, which is related to the capacity of psychological knowledge to simultaneously produce the subjects about who it speaks (Richards, 2002; Hacking, 1995a; Danziger, 1990), but it is also connected to the analysis of the arrangements that produce the social regulation of subjectivity via the production, application and dissemination of psychological knowledge (Henriques et al, 1984; Rose, 1996; Ingleby, 1985).

The 'psy-complex' further implies that there is not one single mode of regulation at work, but different tactical arrangements along the constellation of professionals, tools, theories, authorities, institutions, and instruments involved. There are many modes of psychological regulation which are constantly being 'enriched' with more psychological constructions about what a worker should be (Hollway, 1991; 1984a). These tactical arrangements can be considered, for instance, at the level of specific countries as in the studies conducted by Rose (1985), Ward, (2002), Hollway (1984b) and Castel, Castel & Lovell (1982) or can be restricted to the analysis of specific situations and psychological instruments (Henriques et al, 1984).

The multifaceted relationship that the 'psy-complex' assumed in countries such as Colombia – where psychology is not produced but imported, translated, disseminated,

hybridised and applied – has not concerned Colombian psychologists. In Colombia studies that considered ‘how’, ‘why’, ‘between who’, ‘between what points’, ‘accordingly to what processes’ and ‘with what effects’ psychology is applied are not common. Most of the studies that look at the relationship between the world of work and psychology celebrate the expansion of psychology and claim solutions to the impediments that psychological knowledge could find in its expansionist enterprise (Acosta, 2000; Morales, 1971).

Notwithstanding this, the psychological enterprise in Colombia has assumed astonishing dimensions and psychologists ‘venerate’ psychology as part of the modernisation and progress of work settings (e.g., Pena-Correal, 1993; Ardila, 1982; Castaneda-Zapata, 2006). The dimensions of the ‘psy-complex’ are surprising. They have gone from having three schools of psychology at the beginning of the 70’s to having more than nineteen university schools of psychology in the city of Bogotá alone. All these schools offer different kinds of psychological training related to the world of work. There are thousands of psychologists who receive their training in accordance with ‘international standards’. This means that the undergraduate programmes replicate topics taught mainly in the United States. There are whole series of translations of the business best-sellers on the market which teach how to reach organisational excellence and participative workers. There is a ‘tribute’ to business ‘gurus’ that offer international workshops. Psychologists offer ‘polygraph services’ in the media in order to be used in personnel selection processes and to test the honesty of current employees. There are international companies which offer their human resources consultancy to Colombian companies. Thus there is a particular

configuration of the 'psy-complex' at work which has not caught the attention of researchers. The 'psy-complex' in Colombian workplaces is waiting to be explored.

**4) Psychological practices aiming to constitute the worker as a subject can be located in the sovereignty/ disciplinary/ governmentality/ power complex.**

Work psychology provides a series of theories, technologies and psychological norms which simultaneously locate workers within the productive process, providing knowledge about them and constituting the norms against which they can be judged in terms of progress and compliance. Proposed ways of being a worker homogenise the labour force by comparing psychological features and cementing workers in specific positions. In general terms, the disciplinary effects of psychology are vital for a modern work organisation as they:

- a) aim to guarantee subject positions in which reflexive self-surveillance is encouraged and re-enforced (Hook, 2004), and in doing so,
- b) are indispensable for the production of surplus (Foucault, 1977b).

However, the analysis of psychological practices and discourses should not stop at those disciplinary effects. As Rose (1996) points out, the disciplinary effects of psychology have to be considered, but the analysis has to go beyond in order to understand the 'psy-complex' in the light of the effects of government. Thus, the efforts of surveillance, control and normalisation of the world of work have to be understood in the conjunction between disciplinary power - which aims to produce the individual at work - and the programmes for the government of the populations of

workers which emerged with the advent of modernity (Foucault, 1986; 1996; Rose, 1995a; Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001; Walkerdine, 2005).

In this way, the 'psy-complex' present in the urban passenger transport system can be analysed not only in relation to its effects when producing an 'individual normalised driver', but it can also be analysed in relation to bigger rationalities of government. Thus the analytic effort has to be directed at locating psychological practices applied in the transport service in the continuum of sovereignty-disciplinary-governmentality-power complex (Hook, 2003). Looking at psychological practices in terms of disciplinarisation and government does not mean examining instances that are opposed; on the contrary, they complement each other (Hook, 2003; 2004; Foucault, 1996).

Governmentality, as the conjunction of tactics and rationality for 'the conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1979) elevates psychological practices to a different levels. Psychology becomes part of the tactical arrangement of techniques which structure the possibilities of the others actions; it is a vehicle to conduct one's self and others' conduct in the particular rationality of liberalism (Rose, 1996). Psychology is involved in three dimensions of government. Firstly psychological practices and discourses render human beings knowable in such a manner as to make them amenable to political programming. Secondly, psychological practices and discourses are themselves techniques of government. By using psychological techniques different authorities shape and instrumentalise human conduct, and thirdly, psychology produces the individual that informs and allows the exercise of the liberal government (Rose, 1996). In general terms, psychology makes human beings

thinkable and calculable by translating, creating and simplifying human subjectivity into a term in the languages of the market and the economy (Rose, 1988; 1992; 1993).

The link between psychology, work and liberalism is not new. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, work psychology has always recognised its strong attachment to the liberal capitalist society and to the civilizatory project of modernity. However, in terms of the government the relationship between psychology and work acquires new dimensions. Hence, the psy-complex considered in relation to the world of world, connects individuals and organisations to the political objectives in different ways that show the 'inventiveness' of liberals and neo-liberal forms of government (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1993). Individual existence is relocated through the intersection of economic and psychological life; as a result the personal loses its private character, becoming a concern for employers and for the state (Miller, 1986b).

The production and transformation of the subjective 'autonomised' psychological life of workers becomes a crucial element in the exercise of the political rationality of liberalism (Donzelot, 1981). Autonomisation of workers subjectivity is a central feature of contemporary governmentality in the North-Atlantic 'advanced democracies' (Rose, 1992) where there is a revaluation of the worker as a 'free', autonomous and responsible individual, and where, in face of the decline of the Welfare State, non-state agents are carrying out the social regulation. Thus, in terms of the exercise of the liberal rationality of government the 'psy-complex' at work constitutes a constellation of knowledge, experts, professionals and institutions which produce and apply technologies for governing and seeking to construct workers who are able to operate as productive bodies and autonomous subjects. The autonomous



worker is not only a passive product of the application of disciplinary psychological technologies; he takes an active part with regard to the construction of himself. By means of the technologies of the self the worker is able to conduct his own government (Rose, 1993; Dean, 2002) in terms of self-improvement, self-transformation, self-motivation, self-fulfilment, self-esteem and self-liberation. The conduct of self-government by using the self-ways is presented as a question of freedom with psychological advice and expertise (Rimke, 2000). Freedom thus becomes one of the principal strategies for liberal government. As Rose (1992) states, subjects are obliged to be 'free'. This freedom is created around the self-conduct that is considered as a goal to achieve autonomy and the obligation to maximise one's life as a kind of enterprise (Rose, 1996). In this sense, the world of work becomes a series of places where the government of the liberal society is exercised by the creation of autonomous psychologically self-determined subjects who act responsibly and freely.

Even though, liberal reforms are related to the reduction of size of the state, the privatisation of the public sector, the transformations of working conditions and the delegation of government to non-state agents have a global character; the analysis of the 'psy-complex' at work in these changing conditions between the public and private however has been limited almost entirely to the North-Atlantic societies. In the Latin American region, researchers have not been concerned with the place and operations of psychology at work. Some studies have been carried out which have been mostly limited to what Barratt (2003) called 'I see what Foucault saw', namely researchers re-affirm that the 'psy-complex' produces same effects in Latin America as in North-Atlantic societies as regards the problems which government rationalities reveal in the world of work (see for instance, Coimbra, 2003).

**5) The power complex can be extended to the relationship of modernity/coloniality in order to understand the colonial governmentality implicit in psychological proposals.**

The relationship between the 'psy-complex' and liberalism has been questioned when the distribution of psychology around the world is taken into account. For instance, Brock (2006) argues that the relationship between liberalism and psychology is spurious. To support this argument, Brock (2006) argues that in countries which do not belong to the North-Atlantic axis the 'psy-complex' is present but is not associated with liberal government for as the principles which determine the government of these countries, such as Cuba, follow other rationalities.

This type of critique leaves aside the fact that the branches of the psychological discipline interested in work have always recognised their strong link with liberalism. In addition, Brock (2006) forgets that what is proposed by the Anglo-Foucauldians (De Marinis-Cuneo, 1999) in relation to the government of 'advanced liberal democracies' does not have the objective of being unique or universal. It proposes one way to understand how government is conducted and the place of psychology within that. It is perhaps more pertinent to critique these studies in terms of their view of liberalism as something that is 'advanced' in North-Atlantic societies, thereby implying that there are 'other' non-advanced liberal societies. The analyses to a certain extent suppose that disciplines and governmentality are issues which relate first to North Atlantic societies, and afterwards to the rest of the world (See for instance, Rose, 1985b). In such a sequence, first here, second there, the well known

'other' of the North-Atlantic societies is created. The 'other' is 'something' that has not reached the same state of advancement as the 'centre'. As pointed out by Camso (2005), even Foucault and his followers tend to see disciplines as a compact set of techniques that originated in Europe and their expansion as only a question of confirmation for the rest of the world. In this matter Camso (2005) points out that it is urgent to research a 'culture of disciplines' within the particularities of the Latin-American region. If a new kind of 'exoticism' now relates to the expansion of disciplines (Camso, 2005) it is not possible to forget that Foucault himself shows that the New World was the scenery where the disciplines were first experimented. In this sense, the Republica Guarani in the south of the American Continent constituted the first attempt of disciplining and creating individuals and populations at the beginning of modernity. Perhaps, what is necessary is to find tools that permit a global understanding of the 'psy-complex' beyond the contemporary calls for historical reconstructions of the expansion of psychology, as Brock (2006) and Turtle (1987a) have proposed.

Researchers have already pointed out that it is necessary to re-think modernity as a global phenomenon in order to de-centralise it from the imposed European limits (Wallerstein, 2004; Mignolo, 2005). It has been proposed, for instance, that modernity is a longer process which started with the discovery of the American continent and the reconfiguration it brought about (Coronil, 1996; Wallerstein, 2004; Dussell, 2002). Modernity is not only a phenomenon centred in North-Atlantic societies and extended to the rest of the world. It is a simultaneous process with diverse implications for the different geographical sites. For the North-Atlantic societies, this meant modernity and for Latin American, Asian and African societies colonisation and

modernisation/neo-colonisation. An alternative conception of modern processes looks at modernity as global processes (Escobar, 2003; Dussel, 2002; Coronil, 1996; Castro-Gomez, 2002). As Escobar (2003) points out, alternative conceptions of modernity which consider the simultaneity of the process around the world are necessary. In this sense, there is no modernity without coloniality, says Escobar (2003). This perspective points out for instance that:

- a) capitalism and coloniality constitute modernity;
- b) as a consequence, it proposes a world view for modernity, instead of a modernity focus in Europe, and
- c) the domination of the 'other' of Europe as a concomitant dimension of the relationship of coloniality/modernity.

The studies explaining the place of psychology in a framework that reduces, centralises and limits modernity to the North-Atlantic countries forget that a central element of the 'psy-complex' is composed of the constitution of the 'other' in psychological terms. That is, the colonial process was always present as a central figure in the constitution of psychological knowledge (Bathia, 2002a; Richards, 1997). Due to this limited view of modernity the analysis, to a certain extent, isolates psychology and liberalism as 'elements' that have a place, origin and dissemination in North-Atlantic societies and which are not the result of a global modernity allowing certain manifestation of the global liberal geoculture in different places around the world (Papadopoulos, 2003)

The proposal of the 'psy-complex' is particularly useful in order to carry out an analysis of psychology in terms of a simultaneous modernity around the world

because it allows us to see the contribution that other regions have provided, not necessarily in theoretical terms, but in terms of constitution of psychological ways of thinking and to the idea of the individual as the subject of concern. Contribution, interaction, variation, intensity, reformulation and hybridisation constitute the issues that complement and have to be researched in terms of how disciplines and government are exercised. Yet in order to research the 'psy-complex' within the contexts of the contemporary expression of modernity called the liberal geoculture, it seems pertinent to pay attention to complementary conceptualisation 'beyond' governmentality as conceived in North-Atlantic societies which look at modernity, capitalism, coloniality and the constitution of the subject. In this vein, Castro-Gomez (2006) proposes that Foucault's analytics of power can be read at three levels. Firstly the level of disciplinarisation that produces for instance useful and docile workers as well as the technologies of the self, and which aim to the autonomous constitution of subjectivity. The second level is related to the governance of the modern state which is based on mechanisms that 'at distance' govern economic life and countries' populations (Rose, 1996; Latour, 1983). Additionally, according to Castro-Gomez (2006) a new third level can be added. In this level are located the supra-states 'dispositivos' (apparatuses) that in the liberal geoculture are in charge of the competition between states for natural and human resources of the planet. These three levels of the exercise of power are not inclusive. They do not establish a relationship of cause effect, they do not replace each other, 'they comprise complex nodes of power that cannot be thought in an independent way' (Castro-Gomez, 2006, p.162), and they all pass a remit for the construction of the subject in determined ways. So there are three chains of power with partial articulations. They are only partially interconnected, there is not a last determination executed by global powers, however,

these global exercises of power do not work in the abstract, but are concrete at the level of the constitution of the subject as a psychological worker and in the government of organisations as part of the liberal rationality. The global rationality of power constitutes a kind of global governmentality of the liberal geoculture.

## **Conclusion**

The key features of my conceptual approach rely heavily on the work of Michel Foucault, and on the ways in which this work has been made to formulate different critiques of psychological knowledge. The main points can be summarised as follows: work is a place to observe the processes of the production of the subject where psychology plays an important role; psychological enterprise has encountered the international transformation of the world of work amidst the changes that are taking place within the transport companies in Bogotá. In this encounter, psychological knowledge subordinates 'other' local ways of understanding people at work. Psychological knowledge gains these powerful effects because it is not only a way of thinking but also a series of techniques, professionals, mechanisms, tools and institutions that compose the 'psy-complex'. The 'psy-complex' aiming to produce workers can be located in a chain of power that ranges from disciplinary individualisations to the government of liberal economic life at national and supra-national levels. The objective is not to establish what is wrong with psychological knowledge but to attempt to de-familiarise the practices at work. As Miller and Rose (1986) state, knowledge of the social function of psychology 'cannot be derived from a critique of its theoretical inadequacies' (Miller & Rose, 1986, p.3). In the following chapters an attempt at exposing the relationship between working conditions,

particular forms of the 'psy-complex' and rationalities of power that bring about proposals for being a subject at work within the transport service are explored.

## Chapter 5. Working Conditions

*'The organisation is the place where you are told off.'*

Field-notes

### Introduction

This chapter considers the working conditions and the social relationships within the 'traditional' 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, respectively, COOBUSES, URBANOS and CENTURIA. It is argued that changes in work practices and their concomitant social relationships are an indispensable framework for understanding the place of psychology in the constitution of drivers' subjectivity. Changes in working conditions such as routines, contracts, and wages, the control of working tasks and know-how, as well as changes in the constellation of social relationships are documented in detail. It will be argued that these changes in working conditions have created new problems regarding the labour force, for which academic psychology proposes solutions by constructing psychological ways of being at work.

In this chapter, I will investigate how a typical working day for drivers of the COOBUSES, URBANOS and CENTURIA illustrates the magnitude of the changes in working conditions. This is followed by a comparative analysis of salaries, work contracts and the social relationship between drivers, managers and owners. Next, I will analyse the reasons why psychology was not applied and apparently not relevant for solving the problems of the 'traditional' service, and I will also analyse why it became relevant and pertinent for resolving the problems of the new 'feeder' and



'trunk' services and its labour force. Finally, the uncertain working conditions of the 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies are examined in detail.

#### **A day in the working life of a driver in COOBUSES, the 'traditional' company**

A driver's typical working day in the 'traditional' system consists of the following activities: the driver's 'journey' starts very early in the morning, around 4:30am, when he heads to the private parking lot where his vehicle has been parked up from the previous night and which he has chosen for its proximity to his home.



Picture 6. One of the private parking lots

After preparing his vehicle for the day – which includes a brief mechanical assessment – the driver heads to the dispatching zone where an officer of the company awaits to assign him a route for the day (Picture 7 illustrates one of the dispatching zones. These are located in the local neighbourhoods). Since this process is not formalised, the driver is aware that the earlier he arrives at the dispatching zone the sooner he can start his assigned route.



Picture 7. One of the dispatching zones.

These zones are distributed around the city according to the company's routes.

The routes can cover vast areas of the city, and one complete return journey can take up to 3-4 hours depending on the traffic conditions. There is no exact timetable clearly set for the routes, and therefore, the time it takes to cover any given route will depend on how quickly, or how slowly, the driver wishes to drive. This also depends on his encounters with 'competitors' operating in the same zone and the number of passengers the driver manages to 'collect' along his route. Most of the time, the 'traditional' driver has to enter into fierce competition for passengers in the streets, since buses from competing companies also operate the same routes. Whilst driving the vehicle, the driver has to keep an eye on other drivers and perform risky manoeuvres to prevent other buses from 'stealing' would-be passengers further down the route. Therefore, the 'traditional' driver does not respect established bus stops, he has to sell the tickets whilst the vehicle is in motion and has to persuade passengers to move to the back of the vehicle while controlling the back door. This pressure to

engage in risky conduct forces the driver to reach illegal speeds while driving through urban areas, which puts not only his own life at risk but the lives of passengers and pedestrians as well.



Picture 8. Street scene where 'traditional' drivers compete every day for passengers.

Once the driver reaches his final destination, he takes a break which can last anything from half an hour up to two hours. He is free to spend this time as he chooses and usually, he spends it socialising with other drivers; this also provides an opportunity to have a nap, to eat and to check the vehicle's engine, brakes, water and oil. This process is repeated several times throughout the day and by the end of a 14 or 16-hour shift, the driver heads home and, once again, parks up in close proximity to his home. The next day it starts all over again. This routine is repeated every day as drivers only

take one or two days off per month. Usually days off work are spent maintaining the vehicle, which is one of the responsibilities of the ‘traditional’ driver.

### **A day in the working life of a driver in URBANOS, the ‘feeder’ company**

In URBANOS, the working routine is completely different. Each driver has to cover his assigned route 29 times a day for six days a week. Every morning, the driver has to report to work ‘on time’ and wearing his uniform at the company’s depot in order to start his working journey. The feeder service starts at 4:00 am and finishes at about midnight. Drivers work in two shifts of ten hours, either from 4:00 am to 2:00 pm or from 2:00 pm to 12:00 am, with a break of 20 minutes at the end of the fifth hour. During their breaks they eat, drink and go to the toilet. Every week the drivers swap their shift, which implies that every second week each driver ends up working long shifts of 20 hours.

There is no time wasting as buses are prepared by the company the day before. URBANOS provides all the supplies and services necessary for the operation (washing services, mechanical repairs, smash repairs, etc). The only requirement is that the driver drives the vehicle according to company specifications. He takes the vehicle from the company’s depot and heads to the ‘feeder’ platform, where his shift begins. The ‘feeder’ platforms connect the ‘feeder’ service to the main corridors of the ‘trunk’ services of the Transmilenio system (Picture 9 illustrates one of the platforms where URBANOS drivers collect and dispatch passengers to transfer to the main system). The driver has to take passengers to and from his designated platform and has to monitor his time. He cannot drive faster or slower than the specified speed,

because by using special devices at the entrance of the feeder platform the company and the Transmilenio's representatives control the time.



Picture 9. One of the 'feeder' platforms

The driver can only stop the bus at the stipulated bus stops to board and set down passengers. The contact between the 'feeder' driver and the passengers is very limited; as the feeder service is free of charge he does not have to collect money and it is mandatory that social interactions are kept to a minimum. At the end of the shift, before heading home for the day, the driver usually has to attend a 'physical cultivation of the body' programme for half an hour, which takes place in a park right in front of the platform.



Picture 10. A 'feeder' bus approaching one of the 'feeder' platforms

#### **A day in the working life of a driver in CENTURIA, the 'trunk' company**

Similar to drivers in the 'feeder' service, CENTURIA drivers also have to wear a uniform. The driver is only required to drive the vehicle through the specially designed corridors of the trunk service. As passengers pay when they enter the enclosed platforms of the trunk service, CENTURIA's drivers do not have to deal with any money, reducing the social interaction between drivers and passengers to a minimum. It is mandatory for the driver to avoid any social contact except in the case of emergencies. The lack of social interaction and the pre-paid system greatly increase the efficiency of the service.



Picture 11. A platform of the 'trunk' service

The 'trunk' driver works six hours a day and his shift is very flexible because of periodic changes to the roster: this rotates in the morning, afternoon or evening, depending on the company's specifications. This 'flexibility' requires that drivers have full-time availability, allowing them to work two smaller shifts of three hours during the peak hours if needed. The 'trunk' service is never interrupted throughout the day. The changeover of shifts takes place during the normal stops at the main platforms.



Picture 12. One of the platforms of the main corridors

When stopping at the platform, the driver has to ensure that the gap between the bus and the platform is no wider than 20 centimetres. He also has to ensure that the doors of the bus are in precise alignment with the doors of the platform, which demands special skills since the buses of the trunk services are quite long. Once the bus is correctly positioned at the platform, all the doors open automatically while the driver monitors the boarding and alighting of passengers. All the buses of the trunk service are fitted with satellite technology which monitors their every move. The driver must monitor the time spent at the platform, the time spent on the run between platforms and maintain the speed of the bus within the legal limits to meet the requirements of the service and to avoid being reprimanded.

Picture 14. Steps and boarding of the trunk service vehicles







Picture 13. Illustrates one of the locations in the city where the different services co-exist



Picture 14. Shows one of the depots of the 'trunk' service companies



## Comparing Working Conditions

Amongst the multiple changes that are taking place in the urban transport system in Bogotá, the differences in the working practices – especially the daily routine of drivers in the ‘traditional’, the ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ companies – are not just samples of the complex constellation of changes involved in the transition. The working practices in the ‘traditional’ service constitute a crucial problem, so much so, that one of the reasons that the Transmilenio system is being implemented is to eliminate these ‘traditional’ working practices.

In the ‘traditional’ service the driver is in charge of the entire operation, he is not only a driver, but also makes the decisions regarding:

- Timetables
- How to drive, how to compete,
- Where and how to collect passengers
- Who is allowed to board the bus and who is not
- The maintenance of the vehicle
- The number and the duration of routes covered and breaks
- Where to park the vehicle at the end of the day

By controlling the whole operation in the ‘traditional’ service, in many ways, the driver keeps a degree of ‘freedom’ and autonomy. He is working ‘for himself’. Within the ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ services the worker becomes just a ‘driver’. He is limited to the operation of the machine while all other aspects of control are transferred over to the companies. Thus, ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ drivers are not working for ‘themselves’ but for their respective organisations. These organisations have the control of time,

money, maintenance, speed and social relationships; that is to say, the companies now possess the 'know-how' of the operation. The changes in the working practices in Transmilenio system – and the subsequent drivers' loss of control over the operation – have been accompanied by other changes in the 'objective' working conditions. Work contracts and salaries have been enormously affected.

### **Salaries and Work Contracts in the 'Traditional' Service**

In the 'traditional' service, the fundamental business relationship is established between the owner of the vehicle and the driver with very limited intervention, if any, from the transport companies. Even though the 'traditional' transport companies are ultimately in charge of providing the transport services, they are not the owners of the vehicles that operate on their routes. In fact, they lend out their routes to the thousands of owners of the vehicles. The owners of the vehicles are those who negotiate the details of the operation directly with the drivers. Therefore, the owner of the vehicle becomes an 'entrepreneur' with almost complete autonomy over the driver's work contracts and methods of remuneration. By the same token, the driver becomes fully autonomous, working independently of any organisational structure to the extent that transport companies often only keep records of the vehicles, not the drivers.

There are two different established methods of remuneration in the 'traditional' system. In the first method the owner rents out the vehicle to the driver for a fee, allowing the driver to exploit the vehicle as he pleases provided that he honours the vehicle's rental fee. In the second method, both the owner and driver agree on a certain number of tickets to be sold for the day and any additional tickets sold represent the driver's earnings. Since the driver is not paid by the transport companies

but by the owner of the vehicle, the '*war of the cents*' becomes the competition for passengers in Bogotá's streets while the basic form of management is the 'piecework' system. That is, on any given day, a driver can pick up approximately 500 passengers. The higher the number of passengers he collects, the higher the profit he makes. This situation motivates drivers to work many more hours than the hours established by the Colombian Ministry of Work, and as a result, many drivers end up having just one day off a month. The 'war of the cents' and 'piecework' system allow the earnings of a 'traditional' driver to be remarkably higher than the salary of any other worker with the same educational level. The monthly salary of a 'traditional' driver ranges from COP\$1,200,000 (£400) to COP\$1,500,000 (£470), and this allows some drivers eventually to become owners of their own vehicles after many years of saving.

In accordance with Colombian work laws, the methods of remuneration in the 'traditional' system can be 'accommodated' in two different ways. In many cases, for legal purposes the owner and the driver appear as 'sharing' the ownership of the vehicle, and therefore the driver is not considered as an employee but as a business partner. In other cases, the transport companies ask drivers to deposit a small amount of money daily, which is repaid at the end of the month as their minimum wages in accordance with the law.

In general terms, the types of work contracts established between the driver and the owner of the vehicle allow for the flexibilisation of work practices within the 'traditional' service, which, in most cases, acts in favour of the driver. These working conditions also contribute to flexibilise other aspects of the driver's life. The driver does not have to wait to be paid either weekly or monthly; he directly takes his daily

'share' from the amount of money obtained during the day. This allows drivers to not only have a sense of self-management and control over their economic life, but also over life more generally. As cash flows in daily, he always has money in his pocket for day-to-day expenses to meet his family needs. Moreover, if he overspends or needs additional money, the next day he will try to sell more tickets and will run extra routes. Consequently he knows he can always obtain the extra money he needs.

This type of self-management that characterises the 'traditional' service is what promotes the so-called 'war of the cents'. Everyday drivers compete for passengers on the streets, fighting for what the passengers represent: the number of tickets sold. The passenger – who supposedly should be the most important factor – is rather seen as a ticket, or according to the jargon: 'the cargo'. In general terms the 'traditional' service is designed rather for business than for passengers. In this situation the quality of the service is not important and the passengers are not constituted as customers, rather they are seen as a captive population who depend on the transport service.

### **Salaries and Work Contracts in the 'Feeder' Service**

In the 'feeder' service the work contracts are established between drivers and the transport companies, while the owners of the vehicles become shareholders of these companies. Drivers are hired on three-year work contracts. The length of the work contracts corresponds to the length of the concession that the transport companies have to operate the routes. At the end of the three-year concession the authorities review the performance of the companies and decide whether to extend their concession for another three years. Thus, drivers are always reminded that the renewal of their work contracts will depend on their company's performance.

The salaries in the 'feeder' service are significantly lower than the salaries of the 'traditional' service. In the 'feeder' service a driver's basic monthly salary is around COP\$650.000 (£175), which is approximately half the salary in the 'traditional' service. In order to cover the whole operation without the need for additional workers, drivers are required to work 10 hours a day, but since the legal limit is 8 hours a day, the companies pay overtime rates for the two hours that exceed the daily legal limit, which helps to complement their earnings a little. In addition, as a way of compensating the lower income of the 'feeder' drivers, the transport companies also pay them a discretionary amount of money every month in subsidies.

### **Salaries and Work Contracts in the 'Trunk' Service**

The basic salary of a driver in the 'trunk' service is around COP\$750.000 (£195), which is slightly higher than the basic salary in the 'feeder' service, but much lower than the salary in the 'traditional' service. Like the 'traditional' service, however, the transport companies operating in the 'trunk' service do not establish direct work contracts with the drivers. The transport companies use the services of recently created employment agencies to supply 'drivers' for the new transport system. Often these agencies 'recycle' 'traditional' drivers who have been displaced by the new Transmilenio system. The employment agencies are neither involved in the operation of the vehicles nor in the operation of service. In the 'trunk' service, work is totally flexibilised in order to achieve maximum profit.

The transport companies argue that this form of hiring drivers is the result of government regulations. In accordance with these regulations if for any reason the transport service stops then the company's concession to operate can be cancelled.

Therefore, this 'flexible' form of hiring drivers is a preventive strategy in the event of a strike. The companies control their labour force by keeping the rights to replace any worker whenever required.

	<b>'Traditional' company</b>	<b>'Feeder' company</b>	<b>'Trunk' company</b>
<b>C O N T R A C T S</b>	It is an agreement between the driver and the owner of the vehicle. Many of these agreements are not 'real' work contracts, but informal co-ownership agreements where the driver does not have access to social security.	It is established between the driver and the company. The company mediates the relationship between the worker and the owner (investors). It is mandatory that drivers have access to social security. The contract lasts for three years.	The trunk companies use the services of 'employment agencies'. Therefore, no legal employee-employer relationship is established between the driver and the companies.
<b>S A L A R I E S</b>	It is an agreement between the driver and the owner, depending either on the number of tickets sold, or on the payment of a rental fee for the vehicle which is paid daily.	It is a pre-established amount of money, which is paid monthly. The salary is not the result of personal negotiation and is much lower than in the 'traditional' companies. Bonuses have been added to the basic salary to compensate for the lower income.	It is a pre-established amount of money, which is paid monthly. It is much lower than in the 'traditional' service, but higher than in the 'feeder' service.
<b>C O N T R O L</b>	The control of work is exercised mainly by the driver. The driver decides on timetables maintenance, speed, and stops. The system is auto-regulated and informal.	The company has the control of the whole work process. Timetables, maintenance, routes, shifts, break, holidays, days off.	Many strategies are designed to control work. Satellite technology is used to control each vehicle. There are many inspectors on the routes and passengers also play a key role in the surveillance of the work.
<b>K N O W  H O W</b>	Workers keep for themselves the knowledge about how to execute the work activities.	The knowledge of the manner of execution is in the hands of the management who plan the work process.	The knowledge about how to conduct the work activities is in the hands of the managers.

Table 2. Comparison of the working conditions within the three systems

### **Additional Issues Relating to the General Working Conditions**

So far I have described what drivers do as well as aspects of the ‘objective’ working conditions under which their activities are carried out in the urban passenger transport system in Bogotá. The implementation of the Transmilenio system works against the ‘traditional’ service. The new formal practices and the construction of big infrastructures – which includes corridors, terminals and platforms – constitute the essence of the Transmilenio system and also the ‘heart’ of the reorganisation of citizens’ mobility in Bogotá.

The re-organisation of the transport system is mainly based on the new distribution of routines, time, space and the control over work practices and responsibilities. The new distribution of work results in the drivers’ loss of control of almost the entire operation and leads to a significant reduction in their salaries and an increase in their time off work. It also brings about a process of ‘de-skilling’ and ‘re-skilling’ since driving in the corridors of the new system requires new skills.

To a certain extent the reduction of salaries became acceptable to the drivers for the following reasons:

- The Transmilenio system can transport more passengers in less time by replacing the ‘traditional’ vehicles with long two-carriage and three-carriage bend buses. At the beginning of 2005 the Transmilenio system was transporting more than one million passengers a day, which accounts for approximately 18% of the service (Echeverri, Ibanez & Hillon, 2004). By the year 2016, when the system is expected to be fully implemented, there will be a significant reduction in the total number of buses from around 20,000 in the



'traditional' service to roughly 3,500 vehicles in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' services. This drop in the number of vehicles will radically reduce the number of positions available and increase the number of unemployed drivers. Thus, the chances of 'traditional' drivers being able to move from one owner to another or from one company to another are already affected.

- Several transport companies competed to win the government concession to operate in the new system. In this competition the cost of operation became of paramount importance and salaries turned out to be a cost that could be 'easily' reduced given the fact that in other sectors workers with same levels of education earn less than drivers. Even though the salaries have been reduced, they are still higher than the salaries of other workers with similar qualifications.

In addition to these reasons for the reduction of salaries, there is a generalised instability in the 'traditional' transport system. This instability is mainly related to two issues. Firstly, in many instances, the work contracts are not formalised according to Colombian law. Instead of a contractual relationship mediated by the law and transport companies, work contracts are established based on 'informal' agreements between the drivers and the bus owner. They are therefore generally established outside of any legal framework: familiarity and friendship underpin these relationships of subordination. Secondly, drivers are not strongly linked to any one organisation, they move easily from one company to another and from one bus owner to another.

The 'traditional' service has been described as a setting where 'pure capitalism' takes place (Urrutia, 1980). State regulations are almost absent, the mediation of work organisations is limited, the public service is in private hands and the contracts are negotiated on a one-to-one basis between the owner and the driver. The whole situation is uncertain for the driver in the sense that very often he is not included in the Colombian social security network and he could suddenly be fired without any social protection. It is not difficult to associate this situation with what has been described in the literature as the world of work before the advent of securities provided by the Welfare State (Donzelot, 1981; Rose, 1999; Schvarstein & Leopold, 2005; Castel, 2002). Of course, this situation is not related to a lack of the Welfare State in Colombia. In the country similar formulas to those carried out in the North-Atlantic societies were implemented. In Colombia the essence of the Welfare State – which is the establishment of measures relating to wages and salaries, nutrition, health, housing and education – supposedly have to be guaranteed to every citizen. However, the lack of economic resources, the political situation, and the corruption of the government do not allow these goals to be achieved. Thus the Welfare State in Colombia is restricted in terms of population covered and benefits offered (Velez-Arango, 2005; Le Bonnie & Rodriguez-Salazar, 2006). The structure of the 'traditional' service – particularly, the 'war of cents' which created a highly flexible system for a city in constant growth, and the lack of governmental regulations – at no time allowed the introduction of the sector and its workers to the social security networks.

As Montezuma (1996) points out, neither the driver and nor the bus owner are interested in being part of the social security system. The amount of money that the owner and the driver have to discount from their daily income as well as the lack of

concern for regulating the labour force are impediments to formalising employment relationships. Many companies do not keep records of drivers while some companies are uncertain who is driving the buses on the streets of Bogotá. Under these circumstances, the driver in the 'traditional' service hardly fits the image of the 'employee' as an ideal worker with legal rights and duties. Despite the instability and lack of formalisation of this economic arrangement, the worker at the centre of the 'traditional' service is highly autonomous and 'free' to take charge of the whole operation described above.

With the introduction of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies no end is in sight to the uncertainty that characterises the 'traditional' service. In fact, I would say that uncertainty has become 'formalised and intensified' in the new service. It seems to me that in terms of working conditions, the shift from an unregulated labour process to a regulated transport service in Bogotá has never passed through the benefits offered by a Welfare State. This is to say, strong social security benefits and life-long employment were never characteristics of the 'traditional' service and certainly are not characteristics of the new 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies either.

Short-term contracts and flexibilisation are central features of the world of work in URBANOS and CENTURIA. These working conditions have been orchestrated in the middle of the liberal reforms which the country has implemented since the 90's. The 'feeder' and 'trunk' working conditions are very similar to those in the 'traditional' service, but the loss of control over work and the future decrease in the demand for drivers have made these positions more fragile and vulnerable.

Contrary to other economic sectors that have been 'flexibilised' as a result of neo-liberal reforms introduced by the World Bank, in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies the drivers' vulnerability is not the result of 'flexibilisation' of the labour market, since it was already 'flexibilised'. It seems that in the transition from the 'traditional' to the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies drivers' vulnerability and uncertainty have been both formalised and intensified in terms of: a) the limits imposed on the turnover of drivers, which means they cannot not move as freely as in the 'traditional' service; b) the introduction of a network of security makes the situation more vulnerable as short terms contracts have become the established norm within governmental concessions to operate the system (i.e. drivers are the subjects of legal rights and duties as represented by the working contract); and c) salaries have been considerably reduced.

The uncertainty of work which characterises the transport service is not a result of privatisation, for the sector was already in private hands. From the 1950's until the Transmilenio system was implemented, the 'traditional' companies were the only alternative to public transport in the city. Public transport was offered privately after free enterprise was legally authorised in 1953 (Restrepo, 1960). The national decree 2045 of 1953 established that *'the transport service must be regulated in a way that guarantees 'free enterprise', freedom in routes, the efficiency of the services as well as the income of people and other parties involved in this activity'*. Thus, the public transport service was developed privately and left in the hands of owners and drivers. Transport companies regulated the format of the service with minimum intervention from the State. State regulation was limited to establishing prices and assigning transport routes.

Arguably, the implementation of the Transmilenio system is an appropriate mechanism for regulating the absolute right of 'free enterprise' and to redistribute the property of the 'traditional' service (comprised of 21000 owners) to a few companies. Transmilenio returns the control of the transport sector back to the State by controlling the companies which offer the service. The State regulation of the sector is guaranteed as Bogotá's municipal government is in charge of establishing the conditions of operation. By controlling the renewal of the companies' concessions in accordance with performance standards the municipal authorities maintain control over the service.

Thus the advent of the Transmilenio system signifies the return of State control and the consolidation of drivers as employees. According to new government regulations, the transport companies of the new system have to meet legal requirements regarding the labour force. In addition, the government also determines the type of driver for the new service. The driver, as a future employee, has to meet certain requirements, which previously were not clearly specified. According to the Transmilenio's manual of operation (Alcaldia Mayor de Bogotá, 2001), the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers have to meet the following prerequisites: to hold a driver's licence at the appropriate level; to have completed a special Transmilenio training for drivers; to undergo police checks; to undergo medical examinations; to undergo psychological evaluations; to be aged between 22 and 60 years old; to be taller than 1,60 meters, and so forth.

Through the government's specification of the 'employee', psychology has been *officially* introduced into the new transport system. Uncertain working conditions are

accompanied by mandatory strategies which locate drivers as psychological subjects.

The official introduction of psychology aims to carry out the following operations:

- a) To evaluate the driver's 'internal life' in terms of emotional stability, self-control, self-efficacy, and tendencies towards drug and alcohol abuse.
- b) To evaluate specific psycho-physiological characteristics such as the capacity for concentration in repetitive tasks and colour discrimination.
- c) To transform drivers' interiority – this is part of training programmes which aim to improve the 'driver-passenger' social relationships – and also to facilitate the processes of re-socialisation with other social actors by promoting tolerance, conflict resolution techniques, customer service skills as well as a sense of belonging to the city.

Three different psychological practices have to be performed in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies as mandatory activities. They relate to the drivers' capacities and abilities, their 'internal' characteristics or what is on their minds, and to a series of exercises to transform the drivers' minds. In the new 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, psychology is an official strategy for the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1979; 1996), that is to say, to reassign and re-socialise drivers who formerly were members of the 'traditional' service.

## **Conclusion**

Much of the literature concerned with the contemporary constitution of drivers' subjectivity indicates the neglect of one central point: objective working conditions (see, for instance, the debate between Thompson & Acroyd, 1995 and Knights &

Willmott 1997). Clearly, many analyses leave aside the material conditions of work in order to draw attention to the discourses which aim to produce certain types of workers. These de-contextualised arguments are indicative of studies conducted within the 'turn to discourse', which have become more of a critique of the management and business psychology literature than an analysis of the 'real' world of work (see, for instance, Townley, 1994). The cultural analysis of subjectivity, for example, very often looks exclusively at discourses which constitute workers' subjectivity leaving aside the objective conditions that frame those discourses. Analyses of the constitution of workers' subjectivity therefore have become heavily stereotyped as questions of 'cultural repertoires' (Garcia & Carvajal, 2007).

In this chapter, I have explicitly focussed on the changing working conditions in Bogotá's transport system which provided the framework for the introduction of psychological knowledge. By describing and comparing the different ways of organising work within the transport system in Bogotá, this chapter illustrates the complex situation in which psychology 'officially' emerged as part of the strategy of the municipal authorities to 'govern' the transport sector. The implementation of the Transmilenio system is based on three fundamental axes: the creation of the 'trunk' and 'feeder' companies, the construction of an adequate infrastructure (e.g. corridors, bus stops and terminals), as well as the gradual disappearance of the 'traditional' service which had been become the only alternative form of public transport in the city since the 1950's.

The transition currently taking place is not a typical case of 'precarity' (Schvarstein and Leopold, 2005) or a transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism. Moreover, it is not

a typical case of the contemporary wave of privatisation where public services and governmental enterprises are placed in the hands of private investors. The 'traditional' service was already in private hands and functioned within the rules of total free enterprise. The Transmilenio service is not only responsible for the elimination of 'free enterprise' which characterises the 'traditional' service, but also for reorganising the transport sector and for returning control back to the State. The public transport has been systematised and regulated by the State while the transport business has been left in the hands of private companies. Furthermore, this is not a transition from stable and permanent working conditions to a situation of uncertainty since the working conditions in the 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' services are similarly unstable. This transition is better understood as a perpetuation and intensification of the vulnerability of the worker through the formalisation of uncertainty. The implementation of unstable working conditions is influenced by transformations which are affecting the world of work at a global level and the Colombian working conditions in particular (see Chapter 9).

In the transition from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio service, social relationships are being redefined as regards working conditions; there has been a displacement in terms of the knowledge and control of the working tasks as well as a significant reduction of salaries. This is reflected in an accentuation of the asymmetry in terms of power amongst drivers and managers. Psychology has gained an official place by redefining the social relationships: 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers are re-composed and consolidated as abstract workers with both psychological features and with legal rights and responsibilities. However, these are only the 'grid references' of the problems that emerged in the transition from the 'traditional' to the 'feeder' and 'trunk'



services. Drivers as former members of the 'traditional' service have to be transformed into employees according to new working conditions and company requirements.

There are multiple tactical arrangements to achieve this goal within the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies. These arrangements operate within the tension established between the psychological subject and the subject of rights and duties (i.e. the employee). However they also have another central point of reference: the employee of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies must have a superior image to the 'traditional' driver. In the next chapter I therefore present these images of the 'traditional' driver as the 'other' who is the subject to be displaced and replaced by the new driver.

## Chapter 6. The Production of the ‘Chofer’

*‘Organisational discourses determine individual subjectivity’*

(Bergstrom & Knights, 2005, p.59)

### Introduction

The last chapter considered the working conditions in the transport system as a central issue for the place of psychology regarding the constitution of the driver as a subject. It was established that the official introduction of psychology to the working conditions of the Transmilenio system occurs amidst the tension created between the conceptions of the driver as a ‘psychological subject’ required by the municipal authorities and the driver as a ‘subject of rights and duties’ as represented in the work contract. Thus, the ‘subject of rights’ and the ‘psychological subject’ became the ‘grid references’ for the application of the psychological interventions intended to produce ‘desirable’ workers, such as ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ drivers.

This chapter concentrates on the production of the ‘chofer’ as the typical driver of the ‘traditional’ service. It considers the popular images or lay psychological discourses which – from different sources and circulating in a variety of settings – produce the ‘chofer’. It has been pointed out previously (see Chapter Five) that the ‘traditional’ transport service achieved full efficiency (Urrutia, 1980; Montezuma; 1996) and ‘traditional’ drivers work capably and willingly without official psychological interventions.

The ‘chofer’ is a dominant figure who controls the operation of service and who the owner of the vehicle has to trust with very limited intervention from the transport companies. Under these circumstances, there are a series of popular constructions – or

lay psychological discourses – that locate the ‘chofer’ as the main problem of the ‘traditional’ service, while leaving the one-bus/one-owner structure untouched. With the advent of the Transmilenio service, the lay constructions of the ‘chofer’ became a third ‘grid reference’ for the introduction of academic psychology. This constitutes a territory for the application of psychology within the ‘feeder’ and ‘trunk’ companies, as drivers are individualised and integrated as a certain type of subject and the ‘chofer’ becomes the object of academic psychological interventions.

### **‘Choferes’**

It could be argued that working as a ‘traditional’ driver is a stigmatised occupation. The chaos that the transport system represents in Bogotá – the daily traffic jams, the aggression and the waste of time – in addition to the ‘war of cents’ could easily be associated with ‘traditional’ drivers and the ways in which they perform their work activities, sometimes with hostility, rudeness, and risky driving manners. Under these conditions, there are a series of descriptions that could be said to conform to images or a series of typologies (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001) about the place of drivers in the ‘traditional’ service. These descriptions circulate amongst commuters, managers, owners, and drivers. These versions appear in the daily social interactions in the city, in the ‘traditional’ companies, in the media, in owners’ and drivers’ associations and official documents. All of them constitute a set of discourses that ‘make up’ a ‘chofer’, which – as previously mentioned – is a pejorative term.

The term ‘chofer’ comprises a series of typologies, which reflect the drivers’ working position in the ‘traditional’ system and in the popular imagination. These typologies illustrate the ‘making up’ (Hacking, 1986) of workers in relation to the ‘traditional’

transport service. According to Reguillo (1991), typologies mean different places of enunciation which constitute social relationships that aim to generate consensus about certain kinds of human beings. Of course, these are 'fictional descriptions' in the sense provided by Michel Foucault (2006), that is, they are 'fictional' because they are produced amidst the working practices of the 'traditional' service, and also because they came from different sources and it was I who organised them into a whole.

Each of the typologies about 'traditional drivers' claims to tell a truth related to the subject they are talking about. This truth is not a characteristic of the drivers, but a truth fundamentally linked to work practices and the power relationship underlying those practices (Foucault, 1977b; Henriques et al, 1984; Reguillo, 1991; Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001). The typologies of the 'chofer', on the other hand, provide a level of individualisation and integration of 'traditional' drivers that constitute the territory in which academic psychology can be applied.

'He had to be a chofer' is a common expression with respect to 'traditional' drivers. By using this expression citizens show their rejection of those who are working as 'traditional' drivers. Even though drivers are not very observant of the traffic regulations, are aggressive, do not take care of others and fight in Bogotá's streets, this behaviour does not occur all the time. Clavijo (1997), for example, pointed out that rather than fighting, drivers have a variety of 'codes of cooperation'. When these codes of conduct are not observed, the 'war of cents' appears. However in Bogotá, a widely disseminated stigma of the 'traditional' driver exists which concentrates on the expression 'chofer'. In the following I exemplify the typologies that compose the image of the 'chofer'.

## Public enemy

The following excerpts are examples of how the 'traditional' driver emerges from different sources as a 'public enemy'. Very often in the news, 'traditional' drivers appear linked to criminal events:

**Newspaper 'El Tiempo':** *'The bus driver was attempting to escape when he hit a motorcycle. Travelling on the motorcycle was Jose Ochoa and his small daughter, who was pronounced dead when she arrived at nearest hospital. Hector Erasmo Garcia appeared at the police station and told the police that he has was attacked in the car a few minutes before the girl was killed. Erasmo identified the bus driver as one of the attackers in the car that caused the girl's death.'*

**Transit authorities report in 'El Tiempo':** *'In 2004, 442 bus drivers have been reprimanded because they were driving under the influence of alcohol. This is the result of unexpected alcohol tests conducted by the transit authorities. Likewise, during 2004 the transport authorities (Secretaria de Transito y Transporte) and the traffic police reprimanded 5,603 drivers because they did not have a drivers' licence or bus insurance. In addition, 712 buses were found to be in operation without any regular mechanical review. It also took 693 buses out of operation that did not have registration.'*

Everybody who lives in Bogotá has different stories about how dangerous the 'traditional' drivers are. Pejorative names like 'guaches', 'indios' and a 'plague' are commonly used to describe them as hazards for the public. Passengers and private car drivers are affected by the conditions in which the 'traditional' service is offered. Passengers are affected because they are immersed in the daily 'war of the cents', and private car drivers have to deal with 'traditional' drivers' risky and aggressive driving on Bogotá's streets.

**Passenger :** *'Choferes break all traffic rules, even worse; many of them do not even know such rules exist. They are rude, intolerant aggressive and do whatever they want. They never stop where you request them to, and if you say something, they make humiliating threats and people respond abusively. Every time you complain... or say something... they insult you with all kinds of words. When*

*you give them money to pay for the ticket and you don't have the exact fare they become angry, sometimes you have to get off the bus because they are not willing to take you... They are like a plague and threat to the public.'*

**Passenger :** *'When a pedestrian crosses the street some choferes speed up to scare them. Recently, that happened to me when I was crossing a street. I was panicked and upset. I swore at him, he stopped, went back and started to insult me. He called me a bitch and used every pejorative and vulgar name that exists. Then, he re-started the vehicle to continue his dangerous driving. This was in front of a crowd and nobody said a word. Everybody is indifferent, drivers do whatever they want in this city.'*

**Passenger :** *'Do you believe that the buses are just a hazard for pedestrians? If you do not believe this, it is because you have never been on a bus. They are a hazard to everyone; they think they are transporting cattle and not human beings. They do not allow passengers to get on or get off the bus; there are people who have been hurt because they have fallen down. It is very unpleasant inside the bus; the price of the ticket includes the vallenato (popular songs). You feel that you are going to be deaf. Buses are like vulgar discos.'*

**Private car driver:** *'The choferes block off the roads, they try to overtake everybody. They have the biggest cars on the road and they are always annoying everybody around. They are not concerned about others. They don't give a penny for someone else's life... they think that they can intimidate everybody. 'Move that biscuit box or I will break it in pieces, stupid donkey!' That is the best they can say...'*

Bus owners also complain about 'traditional' drivers:

**Bus-Owner:** *'Bus drivers are rude, intolerant, they do whatever they want, they are always fighting, and they have no respect for their fellow workers, let alone care about the public. One hears about drivers being involved in assaults, robberies and accidents caused by their careless behaviour. Bus drivers are different from all other workers: they are very bad-mannered.'*

'Traditional' drivers describe themselves as a threat to public safety:

**Bus-Driver:** *'The guild and ourselves, the drivers, are very discredited and we are the ones to blame, because we do not have the basic norms of conduct, we are not clean, we always keep the radio on full blast, we could be friendly with passengers but no, we do the opposite, we like to insult the 'mechudos' (pejorative word for passengers). So this is why we annoy everybody, we are hated.'*

The most popular image of those that comprise the 'chofer' presents the driver as someone who has a series of negative characteristics: he is irresponsible, aggressive, alcoholic, and a potential killer. As the driver is the 'face' of the 'traditional' service, considering him a 'public enemy' strongly contributes to locate the problems of the 'traditional' system at the level of the choferes' behaviour.

## **Victim**

The other side of this 'public enemy' reveals the driver as a victim. For example a letter from one of the guilds known as ASOCIADOS states:

*'Former inter-municipal bus helpers, peasants displaced from their land, people with scarcely any education or none at all and professionals who did not pursue their careers because they could not find a place in their field, they all constitute the driver population. For them bus driving represents a very small but secure income.*

*They belong to the middle and lower social classes; their families are affected by economic, educational, health, housing and food needs. They lack social security. Some of them have more than one family and in some cases, each family has several kids.*

*The Colombian government condemns them to work with fares that do not cover the basic expenses. This is the source of both the 'war of cents', and the chaotic traffic situation.*

*Of course, all these facts affect the drivers' behaviour. They reflect these problems when dealing with passengers, by their personal presentation and their avariciousness. Drivers are condemned to only a few hours of sleep, as they have to work long shifts of up to 17 hours.*

*Moreover, the bus driver is daily affected by the actions of clever robbers, singers of Mexican songs who ask for money in the bus, homeless people who get into the bus using the back door and the passenger that never gets a place in the bus and insults the driver because he is not driving faster than 100 kilometres per hour by the tenth avenue. When this annoying passenger wants to get off the bus, he exasperates the driver by ringing the bell incessantly. Thus he obliges the driver to stop in the middle of the road or on the wrong side of the street.*

*Every morning, the bus-driver leaves home in a good mood, but he often finds his first passenger has no change and buy his ticket with a COP\$10,000 bill (£2). In this case the driver promises to give him his change later. After three blocks the passenger comes to ask for the change, annoying and insulting the driver because he*

*does not have the change yet, to the point that the passenger challenges the driver to a fight by calling him a pickpocket.*

*Bus drivers are permanent victims of violent attacks. Everybody knows that they deal with a large amount of money; gangs are very tempted to attack them, and some have killed drivers.*

*When the government establishes the price of the ticket they do not take into consideration the difficulties of giving very small change units. The aggression between the driver and the passenger is encouraged by COP\$ 5 (1p) or COP\$10 (2p). In addition, to the public opinion, the government presents the driver as a thief who does not return the correct change. Usually the driver does not return the money because he has no small coins.'*

Passengers also consider the driver a victim of the working conditions of the 'traditional' service:

**Passenger:** *'I have to add some additional things. The drivers have an inhuman salary regime; they have to deliver a certain amount of money everyday... this is known... the war of the cents. The transport companies only have three strategies: money, money and more money. They are not concerned if the driver has to cover the route using the sidewalks.'*

**Passenger:** *'It has been said that every bus is a small company and every passenger is a bus stop. Drivers in Bogotá are under a lot of stress, for example, they have to drive, and at the same time they have to receive the ticket money and return the change, and at the same time, they have to watch out for other passengers. I do not know how they manage to move and to survive'*

To sum up, social class, lack of education, governmental regulations, commuters' aggression, working conditions, and low income are combined to produce the 'traditional' drivers as 'victim': a position which is tactically the counter-face of the 'public enemy'. The unregulated conditions under which the 'traditional' service is offered are called upon to explain the drivers' behaviour. However the problems of the service are still located at the individual level.



## Warrior

The introduction of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies has replaced 14% of the 'traditional' service. This has accentuated the 'war of the cents' because there are fewer passengers using the 'traditional' service. In the battle for fares, fellow 'traditional' drivers consider one another as enemies who have to be defeated, or potential allies who will collaborate against other drivers.

**Bus-driver :** *'We are street warriors, the fight is against other drivers who work for this company and against the drivers who work for other companies. This should not be so, but co-workers are always 'remolcando' (getting the first place in the route) or they are 'gruas' (a strategy that consists of driving the bus very slowly to get more passengers), or they are 'clever' drivers that organise 'devueltos' (when the driver has not collected enough passengers the route is re-started without authorisation).'*

**Bus-Driver :** *'We make alliances with other drivers, we agree who goes first and who goes second, this is the way. We do not damage each other... you have to ask the fellow drivers coming in the opposite way how many competitors are ahead, as you do not only fight with the drivers from your own company but with drivers from other companies as well.'*

**Magazine Actualidad Colombiana:** *'The driver could follow the route blindfolded; he covers the route four times everyday. Just for a moment there are no enemies on the route who can steal passengers. However the contenders in the 'war of the cents' are like hunters. Every time they stop, during the few seconds that it takes to collect the money and return the change, their eyes focus on the mirror. They have to check that there are no other 'predators' around. There are a lot of hazards. Every three minutes another vehicle from the same company approaches. There are other rivals on the route. When all the 'warriors' concentrate on one street, only the strongest survives... overcrowded buses are not the only consequence of 'the war of cents', when one is a competitor, as Mario Olarte points out, one tries to be at the centre, alternative routes are used, traffic jams have to be avoided. You have to force your bus; you have speed up. We have an advantage, as our buses are new. To prove it Mario Olarte engages the fourth gear and overtakes two rival buses that were running in the left lane. In the daily fights for the 'booty', they damage the buses of their contenders, the exterior mirrors are often broken in these battles...'*

**Manager:** *'It is impossible to train technically competent drivers for the 'traditional' transport. Here, in the streets, drivers have to win. It is a fight for passengers, and it is not a question of rules written in a book. It is a question of fighting and strategy. Some agree that they are not going to engage in 'remolcar' (dishonest competitions); then for one day they work in pairs, but the next day they are competing.'*

The image of the driver as a 'warrior' of the 'war of cents' is central to the companies which make up the 'traditional' service. The transport service is a battlefield where alliances between some drivers are established and where other drivers are considered as enemies to be defeated in order to sell as many tickets as possible. The working conditions generate constant competition – the '*war of cents*' – among individuals who work for themselves in a mutual struggle and any damage to another driver's income is to their own advantage and benefit.

### **Sailor**

I have chosen 'sailor' to name the image of the driver as a flirtatious person. It refers to the image of the driver, generally, as having more than one affective relationship, and often, more than one family. It is said that the driver has a family in every bus terminal.

It is possible for the 'traditional' drivers to support more than one family because the salaries are significantly better in the 'traditional' transport service than in other sectors, which is considered to be the reason why women are attracted to them. Whether or not this is true, drivers very often joke about situations where their wives found them in 'hot' situations. Some are proud of having many sons with different women, and some boast about being able to support more than one family.

The following excerpts exemplify this image which contributes to the general construction of the 'chofer':

**Bus-driver:** *'A driver's life is full of love, and it is a life full of party. We have a tendency to have very good relationships with the opposite sex, we have a very good understanding with females, most drivers, well not most, but many drivers have more than one home, they have two or three wives, this is much appreciated and generates satisfaction, this encourages us to carry on our job which is very hard.'*

**Bus-driver:** *'Bus drivers are like sailors, they are human beings who tend to have adventures, these adventures generate flirting, flirting produces attraction, and attraction produces sexual relationships. There is certain compatibility, can you imagine? A bus driver starts his journey in the same parking lot, everyday he collects the same people, and 50% are females of middle class. They enjoy it when the drivers fancy them, they see in the bus-driver a kind of idol, and they are predisposed to accept his friendship. This is repeated in every terminal. This is the reason bus-drivers and sailors are very similar.'*

**Bus-driver:** *'Here, I learnt how to deal with women. The co-workers and the drivers' life make you feel more and more experienced as regards women. Nowadays I have the gift; I can have all the female friendships I want.'*

Managers and owners find this multiple relationships disturbing:

**Manager:** *'There are bus-drivers who are very flirtatious, they have different families. In our company, Mr Murillo supports many families; he is proud of having 80 sons. They used to establish one official relationship, and have many of what they call 'branches'. We have many problems for this reason. The 'branches' sometimes come to the company to complain about their unfair situation.'*

**Owner:** *'When you have money to support two or three girlfriends... three homes... and you are getting older and older... that is when the problems start, there is a conflict. The driver works but he cannot get enough monetary resources to support three different homes. This is an awful destiny.'*

## **Independent**

The informality of the service also produces a system that is beneficial to the driver.

After some years working as a 'traditional' driver, he can become an independent

owner. In the 'cycles of re-cycling' vehicles, 'traditional' drivers can buy an old bus and become independent entrepreneurs. This is one of the main reasons why they continue working in the 'traditional' service.

Approximately 20% of the drivers have bought a vehicle, and have become independent owners who either drive their own bus or rent it to other fellow drivers. According to Montezuma (1996) the possibility of becoming a driver is an indispensable requirement for the survival of this type of service. The system is self-perpetuating when drivers become owners. This fact makes the 'traditional' system grow, and enhances the turnover of routes and companies. This progression is intrinsically linked to the expansion of the city.

Becoming a 'traditional' driver is not only about having the opportunity to buy a bus, but it is also related to being independent, having the control of the operations and earning higher wages. As the 'traditional' driver is in charge of the operation and maintenance of the vehicle, he has the autonomy to decide when and how to operate the bus. Being a 'traditional' driver is considered to be a good opportunity which offers a better social status compared to other workers with the same levels of education, it also provides both money and transport for the driver's family.

**Bus-driver:** *'The central concern for a driver is how to get his own bus. This is the purpose of every bus driver. I would like to have my bus, or a taxi. Then, I would contract a driver and work whenever I felt like it... if you work hard you can reach your goals, you can buy your bus and you do not have to depend on others anymore.'*

**Bus-owner:** *'I bought a bus and a taxi, because I wanted independence, I have my own small business. Some have business because they inherited them, but I wanted to earn mine. It is very good to feel that you do not have to work for others. I have seen here and in the United States people giving orders to others. It is*

*too much to see how unfair that is. Workers are badly treated. I would never accept being treated like that. I wanted to be independent, this was a feeling that I have had since I started to work as a bus-driver, I wanted to buy my cars'*

**Bus-owner:** *'In the old days, the repairs and the buses were cheaper, they were more profitable, the driver of that time is the owner of today's transport, most of them have triumphed, but nobody goes beyond the first bus. When drivers buy a bus they do not exert themselves anymore.'*

**Bus-driver:** *'There, in the countryside, being a bus-driver is like being the country's president. I enjoy being a driver. Since I was a child I wanted to be a driver. I wanted to be a driver because it is a good profession. I was a farmer, I was growing crops, I wanted to go to the city, I wanted to migrate. In the countryside one does not have opportunities. Driving you can get money, you have to work hard, but you do not have anybody who bothers you, imposing rules.'*

**Bus-Driver:** *'This is a position where you always have money, you do not depend on somebody else, there is always money for anything you could need, if you need additional money you could do additional runs, that happens when you go out for drinks, you always overspend, but you know you just have to take on additional work the next day. This is a real advantage as you have money in your pocket every day, you do not need to ask for favours.'*

## **Uneducated**

Drivers' lack of 'culture' (good manners) is attributed to be the cause of the chaotic situation of the 'traditional' transport.

**Teacher ITSSA:** *'Drivers have to be educated in order to offer a good service. This is indispensable because a driver has to be decent, polite and friendly. In addition, his respect for the norms will make him an ideal driver. I am sure that a good driver will not have problems with the public; if he knows how to deal with the public he is not going to be aggressive even when passengers misbehave. This is the main reason why drivers fundamentally need human relations courses'*

**Passenger:** *'The public transport in Bogotá definitely cannot be in the hands of these people; drivers cannot be illiterates with a licence to drive. It is necessary to be a good driver such as those who work in Spain... in Madrid. Drivers need high levels of training; no 'guache' who has only three years of the primary*

*school should drive. It is time to get rid of them. This is a cultural problem. The responsibility of driving a bus is huge. We need very educated and polite drivers; driving is not only a question of starting the vehicle and moving forwards.'*

## Background

As a complement to the images that constitute the 'chofer', I provide in this section some additional aspects that are strongly associated with what is considered to be the features of a 'traditional' driver. As previously indicated, it is very difficult to determine the exact number of drivers in Bogotá. The high turnover and the manner in which the 'traditional' transport business is organised, does not allow the collection of reliable information about the drivers. It is calculated that approximately 21,000 people work as drivers in Bogotá, distributed amongst 69<sup>3</sup> 'traditional' companies (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2000) of different types.

	<b>Companies</b>	<b>Number of vehicles</b>
A	Very large	More than 1,000 vehicles
B	Large	From 667 to 1,000 vehicles
C	Medium	From 334 to 667 vehicles
D	Small	From 333 to 100 vehicles
E	Very small	Less than 100 vehicles

Table 3. The classification of 'traditional' companies.  
Taken from Montezuma (1996)

Studies have been conducted to determine specific features about the drivers. For instance Pulido-Martinez & Burbano-Valente (1997) examined the distribution of demographical characteristics in 540 'traditional' drivers. The study reported that 72.17% of the participants were between 25 to 45 years old. Most of them came to

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<sup>3</sup> Even the exact number of companies cannot be determined. Some transport associations, such as Asopetrans, report that there are 67 companies. The Municipal authorities report 69 'traditional' companies.

Bogotá from the rural areas of the Cundi-Boyacense region. The educational levels were distributed as follows. 10.74% did not complete primary school. Of the 34.78% who completed primary school, only 12.94% completed secondary school; a further 28.72% began but did not finish secondary school. There were some drivers who had some tertiary education. Most of the 'traditional' drivers - approximately 73.8% of them - came to the 'traditional' service between the ages of 17 and 25 years old. At the time of the study, 87.3% of drivers were more than 35 years old.

The education level of the drivers is low. Although the percentages show that most of the 'traditional' drivers had at least some primary education, it is very often possible to find drivers who are completely illiterate. This situation can be explained by the personal relationships that are at the base of the 'traditional' service. Low levels of education, and the cultural family relationships of the cundi-boyacense people, facilitate access to the 'traditional' service.

The process of becoming a driver starts when relatives and/or friends introduce future 'traditional' drivers to the owners of the vehicles. As there is no formal training, learning how to drive is a process linked to social networks. Family members, fellow drivers, and owners teach the newcomers the basic bus-driving skills. This learning occurs when the vehicle has to be moved from one place to the other within the parking lot, or when maintenance routines are carried out. This 'friendship' enables drivers to start their driving activities before the legal age.

These general indicators show the composition of the 'traditional' drivers (Pulido-Martinez & Burbano-Valente, 1997). They indicate the relationships of informality

and familiarity which characterise relationships within the 'traditional' service relationships and which provide solidarity and support, as well as the connections to become involved in the transport service. At the same time, the network provides a kind of social protection within the 'traditional' service in terms of turnover and social support. The 'traditional' service thus becomes a series of workplaces which reproduce the rural social relationships of subordination (to a 'patron') that prevails in the Cundi-Boyacense region.

### **Psychological Interventions**

In this context, I will argue that psychological interventions targeting the 'traditional' driver remain marginal. Even though the problems of the transport service are located at the level of the individual and his behaviour, the triad driver-owner-manager is not interested in psychological transformations; because the 'war of cents' remains the primary condition for the operation of the 'traditional' service, efficiency is fully achieved, and a win-win situation is repeated.

Universities and government authorities – which are the entities interested in organising the transport service – have offered psychological interventions to transform the transport business. This was an attempt to bureaucratise the 'traditional' service by introducing psychologically oriented ways of organising the companies. However, these interventions are irrelevant as their focus is on the importance and quality of the service. An illustration of the personnel selection case in COOBUSES better exemplifies this situation.



Drivers are constantly blamed for the bad functioning of the system. To management personnel it would seem obvious that ensuring the selection of the best candidates for the position would contribute to lessen the problems. However, this is not the case. The following personnel selection report<sup>4</sup>, which has been randomly selected, is an illustration of the situation.

### **General Profile Description**

*The applicant has a vast work experience in the transport sector (his formal occupation for more than 12 years) and has been stable in most of his jobs. There are no records of relevant disciplinary breaches. He has the experience and knowledge to handle public transport vehicles. He can manage his work in a timely manner but would need more control in special situations (of stress) when a particular response is required, since in his case high levels of aggressiveness could influence his reactions. He can interact well with co-workers in everyday situations, managing even to establish bonds, however when it comes to arguments he can react aggressively because he is susceptible in the face of criticism and offensive behaviour.*

### **Characteristics of Personality**

*He appears to be able to interact well and to have good interpersonal relations to work in a group, which allows him to create a suitable environment to perform his duties; he adapts to the norm and is capable of following instructions accordingly but at moments of tension he requires support and supervision.*

*His anxiety is evident in face of evaluation (tests), which can affect his performance, nevertheless he is keen to follow instructions; initially he performs accordingly, but when the degree of difficulty increases and conflict erupts, he gives up quickly and shows apathy. In the face of threatening or conflictual situations he gets carried away by impulsivity and in some cases he cannot even inhibit his aggression and easily becomes vulnerable and irritable; therefore one must consider the type of relationship he will establish with the employer.*

### **Intellectual Characteristics**

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<sup>4</sup> This report was presented to the owner of a vehicle, who was interested in hiring the driver. This excerpt summarises the main psychological report that is kept in the company's archives.

*His levels of concentration, his specific attention and his visual sharpness are adequate, however he shows difficulty in his discriminative capacity. His spatial, visual and motor abilities are acceptable. He manages to express his ideas easily but he has difficulties in planning situations especially if they are untimely.*

### **Work Performance**

*He has been stable in his work performance. He appears to be a responsible person, interested in the job and in the company. He demonstrated a great interest in working for COOBUSES because he sees it as a company that offers many opportunities. He has experience of driving and has previously driven public transport vehicles. His performance is consistent and he has adequate mechanical knowledge to deal with the job.*

### **Recommendations**

*It is recommended that Mr. Castañeda, the owner of the vehicle, consult the psychologists in regards to the applicant's individual conditions before signing a contract. The relationship between owner and driver must be handled with caution, since the applicant's personal characteristics can lead to confrontation; there must be monitoring with regard to his interpersonal relationships (customer relations included), there also must be a monitoring in regards to conflictive situations in order to avoid aggression, wrath and apathy.*

The personnel selection report illustrates the fate of psychological oriented applications conducted by professionals linked to governmental and academic organisations. In general terms, it would appear obvious that this type of selection should be the first step to hiring a driver capable of performing in an efficient manner, because it focuses on the psychological characteristics which are adequate for the occupation. The report considers: labour stability, attitudes, personality features, and previous work performance. All these 'factors' are intended to describe whether or not the applicant meets the ideal characteristics for the occupation. However this type of selection – which is so appreciated amongst other production sectors – does not have a 'conventional' place in the 'traditional' service. Two reasons make this clear:

firstly, within many of the 69 companies and cooperatives personnel selection is not a fundamental requirement; secondly, even amongst the companies that have some kind of selection procedure, the process is usually carried out by external agencies with low-quality standards and are only meant to meet bureaucratic requirements.

It would appear to be common sense that selecting a driver in an adequate manner would generate better profits and would lessen the financial risks, as regards the money invested in the vehicle. Yet, psychologists' recommendations are rarely taken into consideration; drivers are often hired even after being identified as inept in the selection process. This is corroborated by the fact that, in the case of COOBUSES, many workers were sent to psychological evaluation after being hired.

Why did this type of psychological intervention become irrelevant, at least in the usual terms? In order to answer this question one must carefully reflect on what the psychological report reveals. First of all, it is possible to observe that the applicant has a *'vast work experience'*, he has been driving buses for over 12 years and *'He has been stable in his work performance'*. Therefore one could presume that the applicant has managed to perform within the sector without any major issues, as *'there are no records of relevant disciplinary breaches'*. Besides his satisfactory performance as a driver, the applicant also emerges as having good interpersonal relation with co-workers: *'He appears to be able to interact well and to have good interpersonal relations to work in a group'* and *'He can interact well with co-workers in everyday situations'*.

Considering these comments, it would appear that the applicant is feasible of being hired without a problem because up to this point the applicant was identified as being adequate for the position. However, as follows, the psychologist emphasises the applicant's aggressiveness: *'High levels of aggressiveness could influence his reaction'*; *'In the face of threatening or conflictual situations he gets carried away by impulsivity and in some cases he cannot even inhibit his aggression and easily becomes vulnerable and irritable'*, which then leads the psychologist to recommend a close supervision in order to avoid any potential situations of conflict with the owner of the vehicle as well as with the customers: *'The relationship between owner and driver must be handled with caution, since the applicant's personal characteristics can lead to confrontation; there must be monitoring with regard to his interpersonal relationships (customer relations included).'*

Therefore, this report reveals on the one hand the applicant's aggressive behaviour and the other hand his stable and adequate work performance: an aggression that must be controlled and a work performance that indicates the applicant could continue to be successful in his work. However it is exactly on this point – aggression versus good performance – that a situation of ambivalence arises, preventing psychologists from effectively selecting an adequate driver for the 'traditional' system. To resolve this impasse, psychology should first find answers to a 'practical' problem: What are the characteristics required to qualify a driver for the 'traditional' system?

To find an answer to this question psychologists must follow the traditional procedure of organisational psychology, a process that starts with a job description and the establishment of a professional profile for the position. This is soon translated into

the application of a series of tests, followed by an interview which makes inquiries into particular aspects of work relations. Once these aspects have been identified they are matched against the established professional profile in order to determine whether or not the applicant is suitable for the position, and capable of being hired.

However, as soon as this psychological process starts with the analysis of the job description and the establishment of a professional profile for the position, psychologists face a dilemma: the best person for the position is someone who is aggressive, astute and cunning; someone who succeeds by having disrespect for the traffic norms; and someone who is not very concerned about the passengers' well-being. Given the peculiar way in which the 'traditional' system is structured, a person with these characteristics would truly be the best person for the position. In the 'traditional' system, selection of the best candidate implies recommending a worker who is primarily concerned with profits to the detriment of public or passenger benefits.

Psychologists who work for public and university organisations have to confront this dilemma, which makes them unable to select the best applicant for the job. On the one hand, it is possible to identify a worker by describing him in psychological language; individualizing him as a subject in the form of calculable traces (Rose, 1988). Subsequently it is feasible to compare such traces with the profile of the 'best' ideal driver. On the other hand, once these calculable traces are established, it is not possible to maintain an ethical decision as the 'best' worker would result in a real danger for Bogotá's inhabitants. If psychologists recommend the 'ideal' driver for the system, they would be recommending a worker who could potentially be harmful to

commuters. If psychologists recommend a worker with characteristics that indicate that he could primarily be concerned with commuters, they would be recommending a person who is unfit for the position. Under these circumstances therefore the fact that owners and managers of the 'traditional' system cannot rely on external psychologists' recommendations makes sense; it may account for why these recommendations are taken as a secondary source of information or ignored completely.

## **Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to present a series of images which constitute 'traditional' driver as 'chofer', a pejorative term that indicates how the 'traditional' worker is conceived both inside and outside the transport companies. These images are fundamental in order to understand the interaction between the lay constructions of the driver produced in the 'traditional' service and the proposals about 'desirable' drivers constructed in academic psychological terms. In this sense, the different lay psychological constructions that 'make up' (Hacking, 1995b; Smith, 2005) the 'chofer' prepare the territory for academic psychology to be applied, every image contributes to individualise the 'traditional' driver and simultaneously integrates them under the umbrella of the 'chofer'. This individualisation and collectivisation is a previous and indispensable step in the process of psychological disciplinarisation. The 'chofer' has become the target of academic psychological interventions that aim to shape 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers according to new ways of being.

Thus, the lay constructions composing the 'chofer' have central importance in the following ways:

- a) With the advent of the Transmilenio system the 'chofer' becomes the way of 'being a driver' that has to be changed.
  
- b) On the one hand, the 'traditional' driver is already constituted both as an individual who has particular features, and as member of a population. Therefore, lay psychological discourses provide the territory (individuals with certain features) and elements (problems defined in terms of individuals features) for academic psychology to be applied (Danziger, 1990; Richards 1987).
  
- c) On the other hand, the lay constructions that compose the 'chofer' become subordinated ways of conceiving drivers (Triunfillaou, 2005) which are gradually being replaced by the academic psychological constructions about what a driver should be. This responds to both the specifications of the Transmilenio system and the concomitant re-organisation of social relationships.

The lay psychological discourses that comprise the 'chofer' were effective strategies which helped to maintain the 'traditional' service without any structural change for many decades. It was the individual 'chofer' who could be blamed for the problems of 'traditional' transport. Tactically, the images composing the 'chofer' contributed to locate the problems and possible solutions of the 'traditional' service at the level of individual drivers whilst keeping the structure of the transport service untouched.

However, keeping the problems at the level of the individual did not mean that academic psychology had a space in which to operate in order to transform 'traditional' drivers who were mostly considered to be uneducated workers. The 'traditional' service is completely efficient: the informal arrangements – such as those carried out between the driver and the owner of the vehicle – regulate the service and make it 'perfect' (Urrutia, 1980) and sufficiently flexible to cover the transport needs of the new suburbs and profitable enough to provide an income for the drivers and owners of the vehicles. It was not necessary to govern the drivers in psychological terms. Under those conditions, academic psychological interventions are seen as a waste of time; they are not necessary either to improve efficiency or to regulate the drivers' conduct. The time wasted in psychological interventions could be better utilised in the 'war of the cents'.

In the panorama of the 'traditional' service, work psychological interventions are marginal. They do not occupy an important place. Psychologists, who work for universities and governmental agencies, focus their interventions on the driver in order to improve the chaotic situation of the service, and to provide a space for the customer-commuter. For these reasons such marginal applications are destined to fail, as the 'free enterprise' that generates the war of cents within the 'traditional' service is not concerned either with the passengers, or with the quality of life of Bogotá's inhabitants.

The re-organisation of the transport service that the Transmilenio system is bringing about has changed the relationship of power between drivers, owners, managers and customers. Thus, the dominant position held by the driver in the 'traditional' service is



changing, and the customer-commuter is becoming a powerful guard of driver's behaviour. With the introduction of the Transmilenio service, the flexibility of the 'traditional' system and the image of the 'chofer' were facts that became central when presenting the 'traditional' service's lack of consideration for passengers. This prominent 'fault' became an important point that facilitated the implementation of the Transmilenio system.

Therefore, before proceeding to the new chapter, I would like to signal the triangle that I have established. There is a tension between the 'subject of rights' and the 'psychological subject', which the implementation of the Transmilenio service has brought about. The 'subject of rights' and the 'psychological subject' constitute the 'grid references' for psychological interventions. In this chapter a new 'grid reference' has been added, namely lay psychological discourses of the 'traditional' drivers as a 'chofer'. This completes the space that makes possible the introduction of experts into the regulation of the conduct in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies. In the next chapter I will analyse how these 'grid references' provide for different tactical psychological operations within the 'feeder' company.

## Chapter 7. The Production of the 'Feeder' Driver

*'The irony is that we believe, in making our subjectivity the principle of our personal lives, our ethical systems, and our political evaluations, that we are, freely, choosing our freedom.'*

(Rose, 1999, p. 11)

*'The really effective forms of control are those in which people participate'*

(Ingleby, 1985)

### Introduction

The last chapter considered the constitution of the 'traditional' driver in lay psychological terms, which present us with the discourse production of the 'traditional' driver. The pejorative word 'chofer' is the output of the complex interrelations that take place among drivers, bus owners, commuters and authorities. In this sense, the 'chofer' is a fictional construction (Foucault, 2006) derived from attributions made by those who participate in the 'traditional' service. This fictional construction is produced in connection with the working conditions that structure the 'traditional' service and the problems that emerge as a result of the way in which this service is offered. In the 'traditional' transport system, government authorities do not have much influence in regulating the service and the distribution of the power between the triad driver-owner-management does not support the application of academic psychology.

In this chapter, I will explore the central place which psychology occupies in constituting the driver as an 'employee' in the 'feeder' companies. It has already been established that the transition from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio service returned the control of the transport system to the municipal authorities, and also

contributed to the regulation and the 'government at distance' of the labour force (Latour, 1983; Rose & Miller, 1990). Work psychology was introduced officially by the mandatory regulations which prescribe the use of psychological tools and strategies in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, as described in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, I illustrate the ways in which psychological practices are incorporated into the 'feeder' company. I will show how academic psychology contends with the complex variety of sources which produce the 'traditional' driver as a 'chofer', in order to replace him with a normalising formula associated with the production of the psychological subject (Henriques et al, 1984; Hollway, 1991; Rose; 1996). In this contention the 'feeder' driver is constituted as the counter face of the 'traditional' driver. Thus, psychology helps to produce drivers in accordance with the new uncertain working conditions whilst strongly contributing to 'other' (Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001; Bathia, 2002b) the 'traditional' driver as someone who has to be reconstructed or displaced from the scenery of the city.

My strategy in this chapter is to start by analysing how the driver is constituted in psychological processes such as personnel selection and induction, which individualise, integrate and exclude the worker. Next I will consider strategies that attempt to transform the ways in which the driver relates to himself. The chapter concludes by looking at the ways in which psychological knowledge, interventions and expertise – in general terms the 'psy-complex' – provide technologies for the production of the 'feeder' driver (Rose, 1996).

## **Personnel Selection**

Salaries, control over work, know-how and contracts constitute the fundamental differences between the 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' services. Taking into account the fact that the working conditions are very different in each of those settings, the first 'psychological' question that one could ask is whether these differences are respectively reflected in the profiles of 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers. In effect, there are no fundamental variations. The ideal driver's profile is similar for the three services since driving requires the same abilities independent of the type of service. The absence of strong differences was corroborated in one of mappings I undertook to consider the processes of personnel selection for URBANOS, the 'feeder' company. In this work, I visited one of the external companies that provide URBANOS with psychological services. Here I observed the psychological methods applied to candidate selection, and I also interviewed one of the psychologists.

In terms of the differences between the 'traditional', 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers, the owner-manager of Colombian Psy Corporation affirmed that there are only a few nuances between the profile requirements of the 'traditional' and Transmilenio service. These nuances refer, for instance, to educational levels. The 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies cannot accept drivers who have not completed their secondary education. Conversely, in the 'traditional' service there are drivers who are totally illiterate. I would say that rather than strong differences between the psychological profiles, there are 'intensifications'. By intensifications, I am referring to the psychological factors under examination and the new restrictions in educational levels which help to constitute the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers as the 'positive' counter-face of the 'traditional' drivers.

I have previously indicated the inconveniences that emerged when drivers were evaluated following psychological technologies. For instance, the psychological processes produced much higher levels of anxiety than in other group of workers. The psychological tests such as those included in the 'drivers' psychological battery' do not discriminate properly (Silva & Torrado, 1997); moreover, when the 'draw-a-person' projective test (Machover, 1949) was applied, all drivers were classified with a degree of mental deficiency and madness (Arango, 1999). As I had been familiarised with the application of 'drivers' psychological battery', which is imported and distributed by the Colombian Psy Corporation (CPC), I asked the manager to discuss the problems with the tests, including their inability to discern between drivers. He stated the following:

**CPC owner-manager:** *'That battery of tests does not work because the 'cultural problem' of drivers does not allow better results. This is incredible but certain aspects such as perception, sensation and reaction times are influenced by cultural matters. There is a certain slowness amongst the drivers, there is... we can say... a lack of development of the brain. Cultural contact does influence development; it certainly has to be researched in depth but it seems that this is the reason the tests do not work properly.'*

Drivers are extremely skilful in carrying out all the activities involved in driving a bus under the difficult conditions generated by the 'war of the cents' on the streets of Bogotá. However, as is noteworthy in the excerpt, when psychological expertise evaluates drivers, these remarkable abilities occupy a secondary place and are replaced by descriptions of a population that are intellectually wanting. Drivers, rather than the psychological tests, are the focus of the problems.<sup>5</sup> The 'cultural' problem of

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<sup>5</sup> This is a variation of what I presented in the last chapter where the application of psychological processes via personnel selection of drivers locate abilities and long-working experience in second place; and behavioural issues tend to rather dominate.

the 'traditional' driver emerges again here and there in relation to diverse aspects of the drivers' behaviour. For instance:

**CPC owner-manager:** *'... of course we have reached the point where our quality is well-known; we are aware of our limitations, we would be delighted to be doing a more complex personnel selection process. When we were researching the best equipment for the selection of drivers, we carried out research at international level. We realised that there are more strategies that accompany the application of the test conducted in the simulator machine than we imported. The personnel selection processes should explore different areas from family relationships, personal preferences to questions relating to drugs and alcohol consumption. I saw very interesting tests that are not possible to apply in the Colombian context. But, you know, the problem is the 'culture of the driver'... Drivers have more than one family, they consume alcohol, I think it is very complicated to apply these types of instruments here in Colombia. These tests cannot achieve what they promise as these psychological instruments are based on honest answers. Personnel selection based on these instruments are destined to fail.'*

This fragment brings to light new aspects of the social class and educational levels that are identified as the 'cultural' problem of the driver. There are different instruments at the psychologist's disposal to evaluate prospective drivers in terms of psychosocial skills and behaviour. These instruments are appreciated, but nonetheless the 'cultural' problem of the driver is signalled as an obstacle preventing the proper functioning of these instruments. This time, the psychological instruments that examine the private life of drivers are constructed for 'cultures' where candidates can talk freely about alcohol consumption and their family relationships. However, it is well-known that 'choferes' in Bogotá frequently drink and have more than one family, but they would not talk freely about these aspects in the context of psychological testing. Rather, a vacuum of knowledge is created between what everybody knows, and the 'knowledge' that it is possible to achieve using psychological tools. A kind of 'nostalgia' for the moralizing role of psychology based on objective methodologies appears (Rose, 1996). Drivers would not talk about

alcohol habits or multiple family relationships, despite them being predominant characteristics associated with being a driver in the city. Thus the type of psychological instruments that examine workers' interiority, are destined to fail.

Once again, a process of 'otherisation' based on psychological practices is taking place (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). Once the 'chofer' characteristics are located in relation to the psychological subject – which is implicitly present in the psychological instruments – the 'traditional' driver becomes the 'other' of that subject. This is just another step to produce the 'traditional' drivers as the 'other' of the 'honest' psychological subject, which is implicit in the instruments to evaluate habits. In these terms, the 'psychological' subject is what the 'traditional' driver is not.

Accordingly, I pointed out that the cultural problem of the driver denotes: social class, a lack of formal school education and, concomitantly, a lack of good manners. In terms of the personnel selection profile, formal education becomes a fact of classification and exclusion for 'traditional' drivers. There is an equation. Formal education is equal to good manners. When this equation is transplanted to the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, education becomes a requirement that has to be achieved. Essentially, secondary education is seen as a kind of polish for the driver. Those who have completed secondary education have supposedly had a psychological transformation that could lead them to behave properly in social relationships, and to drive prudently.

This conception of the 'choferes' with a lack of education, which is translated as a psycho-behavioural lack, becomes a criterion for inclusion and exclusion orchestrated

in psychological profiles. Secondary education is established as a filter in order to consider those candidates who might occupy a position as 'feeder' or 'trunk' drivers. It seems trivial and practical, but this requirement is fundamental for the exclusion of 'traditional' drivers from work opportunities. As established in the last chapter, 73% of the 'traditional' drivers have not completed this education level, therefore most of the 'traditional' drivers cannot move to the Transmilenio service. In this sense, education works as a restriction for many 'traditional' drivers who have only completed primary education or are almost illiterate. In general terms, driving skills are important, but not as important as secondary education in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers' profiles.

Something more has to be said about this relationship between educational levels and the constitution of the driver that emerges. The relationship between education and good behaviour acts as restrictor and intensifier. Firstly, as stated, it prevents 'traditional' workers who have not reached secondary level, from moving to the Transmilenio service. Secondly, it intensifies the need for education as a way of gaining intellectual skills, and a calm temper, thus enhancing the value of education and downgrading the importance of other skills. Thirdly, it contributes to establishment of a different social status in terms of education-behaviour distinction for the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers. Finally, and perhaps even more importantly in this game between restriction and intensification, the 'traditional' driver is again 'otherised'. The 'chofer' comes to occupy the position of the uneducated, slow minded and therefore unintelligent worker, while the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers are notably, educated, smart and intellectually adequate.



There is a further aspect that emerges in terms of the personnel selection of drivers which also has to be taken into account. One of the psychologists, who was a former member of Human Hands (HH) – which is another provider of psychological services to the transport system – revealed the following in an interview:

**Interviewer:** *'How was the personnel selection process established?'*

**HH Psychologist:** *'We were experimenting, we did not have a clear ideal profile. I had my own criteria which I applied. For me the ideal driver was the one with very good human relationships, patient, kind with passengers, who could control his impulses, with excellent self-esteem, with very good moral development, responsible for his family and very motivated...'*

**Interviewer:** *'And how did you establish all these characteristics?'*

**HH Psychologist:** *'There were a series of tests in the company. They did not discriminate properly. But I got the feeling for the different tests. Then, I translated the results in accordance with the drivers' situation. At the beginning it was uncertain, but after a while I knew what the test would reveal when applied to these workers. This is what people define as learning how the tests work.'*

It is well-known that psychological enterprise has formulated prescriptions for determining the individualisation and integration of workers around the world. Cross-cultural psychological studies are central to this branch of psychological enterprise. Psychological norms that have been established in the countries where psychology is produced are extended as variations that occurred in other contexts (Schvarstein, 1992; Parker, 2007). In this way, the aspiration for the universal integration of human beings, within the norms imposed through psychology, is revealed. However, even in the absence of these official ways of conducting psychological procedures, psychologists contribute to the easy expansion of psychological interventions using other more convenient means. Even though the full conditions of validity are not

achieved, the operations of psychology do not stop. What is fundamental is to 'inscribe' the characteristics of the worker in order to locate him within a range which determines whether or not he is an adequate candidate. This implies comparing the different features of the driver against a norm established by statistics. Even if the accuracy of the results obtained is not as precise as the 'cultural fact' influencing these results, the operation is performed and the effects of individualisation are produced.

Moreover, intensifications of psychological interventions take place even after the worker is inscribed by means of personnel selection procedures. The following excerpts of the interview conducted in the Colombian Psy Corporation (CPC) illustrate how psychological findings are intensified once they leave the psychologist's hands:

*Interviewer: 'How is the contact with the companies carried out at the moment?'*

***CPC:** 'Basically, companies know that we do psychological evaluations; they send the drivers to take the machine test. When the drivers come we suppose that most of them have already been pre-selected, that is, the company has already carried out a pre-selection based on an examination of the CV.'*

***Interviewer:** 'You conduct the evaluation and the company decides...'*

***CPC manager:** 'Yes, we have some clients, for instance, in the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies... we present our concepts based on the normal curve, more precisely based on the percentile scale. I can tell you that the 'trunk' company is highly selective; therefore candidates who for us would be suitable for the drivers' position, because they are located over the 50 percentile, are rejected. The 'trunk' company accepts only candidates who exceed the 60 percentile. This decision is taken because the management has decided that they have to hire the best candidates. This has given rise to situations where drivers came here to complain. They point out how they were considered suitable for the position but were not*

*accepted by the company. We have to explain that they are suitable but the companies' politics are different and that the companies have the right to do this kind of thing.'*

These excerpts show other aspects of the relationship between psychological knowledge and the transport service and the constitution of the driver as a subject in the city. I shall say that the first operation performed by the psychologist locates the driver on a suitable-unsuitable scale. The division in psychological terms is established accordingly with statistics at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

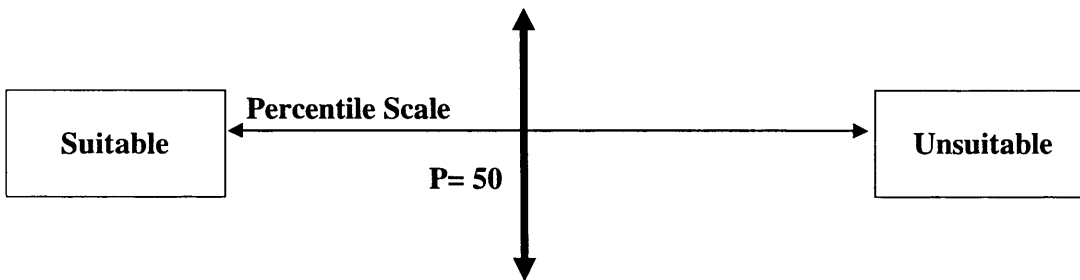


Diagram 2. First operation: the inscription of the worker in the Percentile Scale.

At the same time additional issues emerged. The initial operation of psychology by which the driver is located within the psychological network is limited and intensified by the 'feeder' company that contracted the psychological services. The psychological procedure initially provides a division between those drivers that are suitable and those that are unsuitable for the position. However, these are not the only criteria applied. The psychologists' criteria are subordinated because it is the company which decides who is going to be hired. On the other hand, the psychological criteria are intensified as the company decides to be highly selective and elevates the psychological standards in order to obtain better drivers.

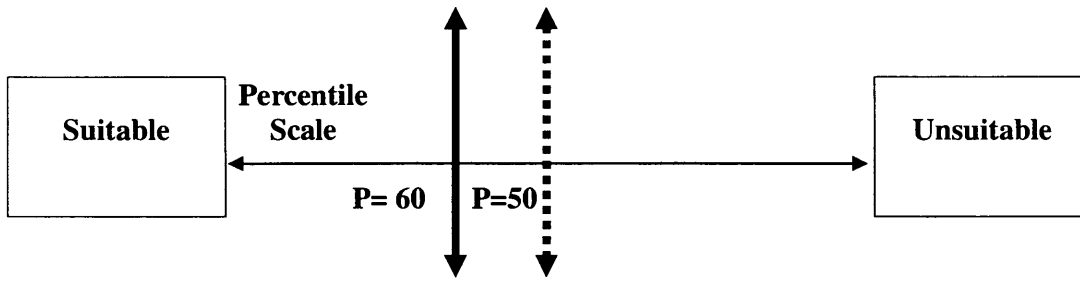


Diagram 3. Second operation: the intensification performed by the company.

Clearly, the authority of psychology can be used beyond the limits of psychological expertise. The company 'freely' modified the criteria recommended by psychologists. As referred to in the excerpts, by moving the accepted standards, the company aims to intensify the effects of psychology when discriminating between drivers. It is evident that this intensification carried out in the transport company shows the dissemination of psychological forms of thinking to other parties not directly linked to the academic psychological world. The more intense the psychological features the better it is. On the base of this, the authority of psychology does not stop at the limits of its practitioners. It operates with an independence which creates a tension between the manager and the psychologists, and where the driver does not have the power to affect the knowledge that is obtained about him.

Thus the driver is constructed in the personnel selection process as an individual of certain abilities which are no different to those required in the 'traditional' service. However, notwithstanding this, there are differences in the place of psychology. It is against the psychological criteria that drivers are constituted; the normalising and integrating inclusion for exclusion effect (Foucault, 1977a) that psychology produces is inevitable, and rather desirable in the 'feeder' service.

## Training

Once a driver is selected, he is subject to a constant series of psychological processes at URBANOS. The induction programme which took place in this 'feeder' company was continuously depicted as a starting point of a new era led by URBANOS. This induction programme lasted several weeks, during which time a group of selected candidates undertook a series of examinations which consisted of many phases and involved different professionals, such as administrators, psychologists, physical trainers, and mechanics instructors. At the end of the programme the best candidates were offered a contract for three years, which is the length of the license given to URBANOS by the municipal authorities. The following excerpt from a discussion with the URBANOS' manager illustrates the process aiming to produce the 'feeder' driver:

**Manager:** *'... so, we were immersed in this stuff. The challenge was to structure a model company. The challenge was to change things that were established for more than 50 years in the 'traditional' transport. It was the point to start and complete something new in the transport in Bogotá. It was an experiment, all we did here were pioneering experiments. We had many different and interesting things to do.*

*We confronted two themes at the same time the choice of bus models and the selection of the drivers. Transmilenio authorities had established that the 'feeder' service would need two-door buses, but we finally proposed three doors to make it easy for the passengers to get in and out, and the municipal government accepted.*

*Moreover, innovations had to be devised regarding drivers. We thought that we were about to work with the same 'traditional' drivers. It was a challenge as they were coming from the 'traditional' service with all its tricks and habits. We spent lots of time thinking about how to select the best drivers; they were the centre of our concern. It was at this point when I remembered my experience as a fireman; I was trained as a fireman. I thought, it was possible to make an experiment... we designed and implemented a month-long special selection training process. We told the applicants that at the end of the month-long process only the best candidates would be offered a contract. We did not pay a penny to those guys, we did not have to. We only bought some*

*groceries for them, we thought, this was an obligation, as they were really in need. All of them were coming just for some groceries. They attended the training full of enthusiasm. It was great. It was very emotional. All this was recorded on video. Right at the beginning, they all started to understand that this meant a change in the way of life, this was transforming, we were focusing on the fact that we came here to work, we came here to make possible the enterprise called URBANOS.'*

This excerpt shows both the place of bus-transport technology and the human technologies directed to construct URBANOS as a model enterprise, which implies a general transformation of both the work habits and the 'traditional' drivers. Challenge and experimentation articulate the practices that were carried out in order to achieve the transformation of the service. The new working conditions, the feeling of elation engendered by the changes, as well as the value of the work and education, were the points to be intensified. In addition, the drivers were located in a different position to the one they had in the 'traditional' service; they were not paid and only groceries were provided during the training weeks. Challenge and experimentation are directed to produce the new 'feeder' drivers by subjugating their will and by making this subjugation appear as a question of internal challenge and experimentation.

Drivers and administrative staff constantly referred to the induction process as a 'breaking point' that made everybody conscious of the '*challenge*' that was coming. The strategy that took place in the fire station had made a great impression and was documented in great detail. The manager described this strategy as follows:

**Manager:** *'We conducted a test that was related to confinement in spaces. The test started at about midnight. First of all, drivers were blindfolded. They had to do the entire test blindfolded. They did not know anything about where they were. It was a total surprise! The test consisted of a series of experiences which were distributed along a kind of labyrinth. They had to advance crossing all types of obstacles. First they confronted explosions, and after that they could feel fire close to them; they had to climb obstacles, and they*

*fell into a pool full of very cold water. They were wearing security equipment which was very uncomfortable for those who are not accustomed to it, and it was sometimes difficult to breathe. In addition, they were trapped; they went into a tunnel that did not have an exit and they were in the middle of a fire. In these circumstances, alliances were made and teams started to be created. We were interested to see how they would react when confronting these stressful situations. We can say that we were interested in human reactions and ways of communicating.*

*The central point was teamwork. This was the first step to introduce teamwork, we knew that we had to inculcate teamwork and the strategy was totally appropriate.*

*It is one thing saying what I am saying and another living the experience. Unfortunately you cannot experience that without being there, because it is more intense than I could ever say. Can you imagine a group of people who suddenly face fire and explosions... who are walking and suddenly fall in a frozen pool?*

*After the test a process of reflection was undertaken. The topic of communication was first considered, and we asked them, how they had established communications to help each other, and we also asked them when the communication was broken. We emphasised teamwork, we insisted that when the team breaks the communication, members of the group were lost. It happened that some of them lost the rope that was guiding them and moved away from the labyrinth, and they were in trouble. In this respect we tried to make them conscious that it is very important to follow instructions. This means that there are some simple norms that have to be followed. They were told not to let go the rope, it was their guide. When we do not observe the norms everything starts to go wrong, the whole team fails.*

*The feedback was perfect. What happened in the test is the same as what happens here in the company when there is an order which has to be followed. Additionally, there are different types of people - there are those who are slow, those who let go of the rope, and those who are lost. We reflected on all this a great deal.*

*As Constanza indicated (psychologist in charge), this is experiential education. I had to trust my group, I was walking with my group, I had to know that this was a situation where all of us had to collaborate to avoid the fire, and we had to walk in the middle of fire without burning ourselves. It may sound too intense when you hear me talking about it, but this is nothing compared to the real experience! It is a really interesting experience.*

*Drivers have to act in good faith. That is, they had to believe without seeing. As we humans are very visual, as sight is central for us, when we suspended vision, the drivers were totally disoriented. This is understandable; we are lost without the possibility of using our eyes to see. Some of them believed that by means of a strange mechanism we were transported to another location, they lost the sense of time; they believed that they had spent many hours on the test, they thought that the test was never-*

*ending. There were sensations that they had never experienced before, they said it could not be possible and they were not in the same place, they felt as if they were in the woods!*

I presented this long excerpt in the hope of transmitting the flavour of what was involved in the selection-induction programme. This is a simulacrum that targeted many aspects of the production of the 'feeder' driver. It shows the complex interrelationships between different levels of production of the worker as a subject which occur when psychological strategies are applied. Firstly, the whole simulacrum produces the individualisation of the driver. After the test, drivers were classified as those who have good communication skills, those who can contribute to teamwork, those who can follow instructions, and those who can remain calm in a dangerous situation. That is, the drivers were classified as those who are able to work under the conditions of the 'feeder' service imposed by the municipal authorities, and under the 'translation' of those requirements that the company had made.

The whole strategy targets the transformation of the driver. In this sense, the strategy is a technology aiming to change the drivers' self. The strategy comprises three components: one at the level of the mind or 'cognitive' processes, another at the level of the 'rough' sensations of the body, and finally it appealed to the level of 'faith'. It seems that all parts are intended to affix new meanings about what a worker should be to the level of basic physical responses. This 'experiential education' practice connects sensations and feelings as the base of the production of the 'feeder' worker.

Violence is exercised over the worker under the process of transformation. The levels of stress were exacerbated in order to bring about 'basic human sensations and feelings'. Workers were rendered almost completely defenceless. This is a way of



exercising power by aiming to affect the 'nerves' of the body in order to produce trust and faith, and to transform the drivers' behaviour, producing them as docile workers able to follow what is appropriate for the company.

The whole strategy is conducted using psychological assumptions. As Hollway (1991) points out, work psychology functions by establishing two main knowledge registers. The first register targets – and is knowledge about – the individual worker; the second register targets small groups and provides knowledge about the individual in these groups. Both levels complement each other. In general terms, at work, the psychological jargon and the whole arsenal of psychological technologies are composed around these two registers.

As I shall point out, the strategy that I am analysing is adapted to the psychological registers. That is, it was originally designed to train firemen, but it has been transformed into an induction strategy using psychological terminology. In this sense, psychological knowledge is extended to new areas. The firemen strategy, at the same time, translates and transforms a training domain in a practical psychological exercise for the production of 'feeder' drivers. This strategy shows how the contemporary world of work is understood in terms of the psychological, which does not make any distinction or establish any limits between management and psychology as academic fields.

Something more has to be added. At the beginning of the excerpt, the manager mentioned that this is a strategy of confinement. However, the end output is exact the opposite. Drivers mentioned that they were in an open space. I conclude my analysis

of this strategy with the claim that the simulacrum produces a very particular set of effects: a material confinement, bodies in a labyrinth, and an illusory freedom, that is, the feeling of being in the woods. This illusory freedom is precisely what is required for the new working conditions, where the central requirement is to challenge one's self.

## Selves

Other strategies directly organised by the psychologist were also used during the induction programme. The following psychological strategy, called 'the challenge for options', was used to conclude the four-week induction process. It consisted of a game: metaphorically, using their own bodies, participants have to prepare a 'melcocha' – a typical Colombian dessert that I freely translated as 'molasses toffee'. The ingredients and the chefs are human beings, who have to perform the preparation as described in the following excerpt:

**Psychologist:** *'We applied many strategies in the induction process. For me the central issue was to inculcate what is involved in the challenge for options. I would say that drivers learnt this concept clearly after the molasses toffee activity.*

*This is a group activity where... uhmm... to start I asked the group... well what is your favourite dessert? What kind of dessert do you like? Ice cream? Rice pudding? I was prepared. If nobody mentioned molasses toffee then I would mime the movements of how the sugar mix should be done to prepare the molasses toffee and ask them what dessert it was... but, there is always someone who knows molasses toffee.*

*Then I asked them what the characteristics of a molasses toffee are ... everybody said this and that... Then I said right, right, right... so now we are going to cook a human molasses toffee bar, which has a central mass and a peripheral mass; these are the layers of the molasses toffee ... this may seem a little difficult if you have not seen how the group behave... I asked who wanted to be the central mass and who wanted to be the peripheral mass. I also said, some of you will be molasses toffee makers and some will be supervisors... so I gave them the option to decide what they wanted to be, and they had to choose... then I told them what they had to*

*do according to what they had decided to be... then the ones who wanted to be the central mass sat down, they closely attached themselves to each other grasping their hands and feet. I said... Next, those who decided to be the peripheral molasses toffee mass go and grasp tightly the ones who are the central mass ... the ones who decided to be molasses toffee makers, subsequently had to make a molasses toffee, I said ... that... they had to try to pull those people apart, in other words, they had to detach... to unglue the molasses toffee by pulling those people away.*

*Each unglued person became a molasses toffee maker, and had to help to unglue more people, until there were just a few left... oh!!! There were others just observing. They simply observed and could not do anything. They were not even allowed to touch anybody. Everybody was happy, everybody laughed, it was very, very funny, people enjoyed it... People pulled and pulled until the molasses toffee had totally disintegrated, oh!!! It was incredible when finally the activity was over. At the end we all sat down and I asked the group how they felt... I asked them about what happened during the activity, and they all commented... it was fantastic... someone pushed me... someone pulled me... someone scratched me here... I laughed a lot... Then I asked the ones who were the central molasses toffee to tell us how they felt... as usual the people constituting the central molasses toffee had a great time, they had had a lot of fun and enjoyed it because they were at the centre of all the action, being pushed, pulled... laughing their heads off. The peripheral molasses toffee members also enjoyed themselves, but not as much as the central molasses toffee members. The molasses toffee makers enjoyed ungluing people. The supervisors did not say much, they had just been watching. Then based on what people said I explained that this was just a game, but the idea of this game was to introduce the 'challenge for options'... At this point, I reminded them that before the game started everybody was told about the activities and types of roles... and according to these options each one had decided the levels they wanted to be involved at. I then spoke about diverse concepts, one of which is the 'challenge for options' and I told them... you all were given the opportunity to play one of these four roles: central molasses, peripheral molasses, molasses toffee makers, or observers/supervisors... nobody was forced into a role. Each and every one of you had the option to decide your role... some of you challenged yourselves a little more... some of you were just observing and decided to be supervisors... I then showed them another concept by saying that some of them had not left their comfort zone... they just said 'no I am not going to be involved with pushing and pulling others'... 'no, thanks' and 'bye-bye'... and they remained static. However, everyone had the option of taking up the challenge... you were the ones who decided whether or not you were going to leave your comfort zone. I emphasised the central point, and asked them not to forget that through this game the experience had shown us that whoever challenges himself to be*

*the central molasses enjoys much more, has a great time, and profits... whoever challenges himself to be involved gets much more satisfaction and enjoyment than the others. The supervisors said they were envious watching all the others having fun laughing and pushing.... then I told them this is the challenge for option, which means that to step out of your comfort zone you have to make an effort, you have to take risks and do new things. It is not simply staying still. It is not only a question of thinking about and keeping all this in mind... now that you will be working for Urbanos, how are you going to take on the challenge for options? I asked them. How much are you willing to give? And how much are you willing to receive? That is, the more you invest the more you profit... This is an invitation for you to do your best... this is an enterprise, which is being constructed by all of us. This is not a ready-made thing; this is not a place where you are going to find everything already done. On the contrary, we are constructing an enterprise... how much are you going to challenge yourself in order to construct this enterprise that all of us will benefit from? That is the concept... that is the idea...'*

First of all I would like to point out that this strategy is contrary to the previous one, in the sense that it is not an extension of psychology colonising other techniques, but it is a 'prêt a porter' psychological instrument that is available in the international consultancy market. The psychologist told me that this strategy is part of a 'battery' that the international firm she works for offers to the Colombian companies. The strategy was adapted in order to make it 'significant' for the national population. It can be applied, as she said, in any Colombian company.

I have chosen this psychological strategy for many reasons. It is a sample of the complex psychological work that is now being applied within the 'feeder' companies. 'The challenge for options' is a strategy that is not explicitly directed to a work task, nor directed to transform worker's perception about specific activities. 'The challenge for options' is aimed at transforming the worker. Diagram 4 helps to represent the spatial distribution of workers in their different roles and the psychologist.

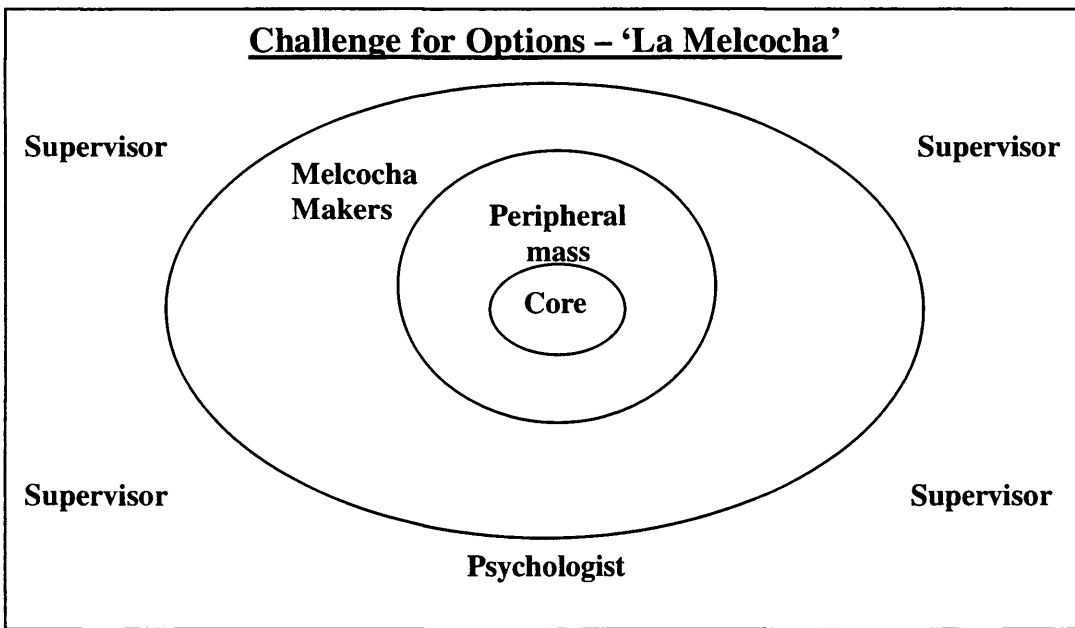


Diagram 4. The structure of the ‘Challenge for Options’ strategy

I shall say that this psychological strategy seems like a parody of the new world of work developed in COOBUSES. There is a tension in the whole strategy between two extremes. The proactive worker is located in one extreme, and the static worker is located in the other. Between these extremes there is a process and a choice. The process is related to how to become a proactive subject. The process starts when the candidate dares to step out of his ‘*comfort zone*’ – in which nothing exciting happens – and when he dares to take risks to do new things. The difference between the two extremes is mediated by the candidate’s willingness to transform his inner self in order to become an appropriate worker. The candidate has to challenge himself ‘a little more’ and when he dares to do so ‘*everybody wins*’.

Once the proactive subject dares to take the first step, he has to do ‘*new things*’. Accepting the ‘challenge for option’ implies a continuous line of change; transformations have to be constantly produced. Finally, if the process is followed, the

worker will have an organisation constructed by his own will. *'How much are you going to challenge yourself in order to construct this enterprise?'* The following diagram exemplifies the process.

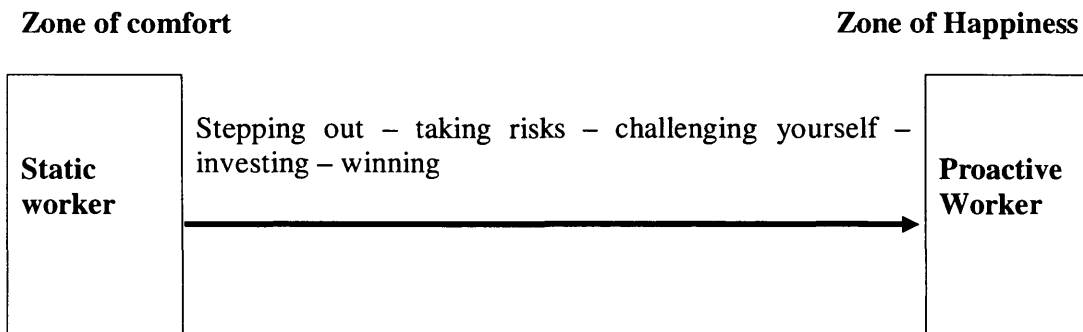


Diagram 5. The structure of the 'self-transformation' proposed by the 'Challenge for Options' strategy.

Apparently, the whole strategy encourages a process of election. Nevertheless on a more detailed examination of the strategy, the election has already taken place. The proactive worker is the 'active', 'committed' and '*sentimental*' worker who dares to be happy (Hollway, 1991). This is to say that, when the 'sentimental' and 'active' worker becomes more committed he obtains more pleasure, enjoys more, has a great time working, and profits more. He becomes a worker who assumes that the challenge will make him happy. On the contrary, the static worker is full of 'envy', 'stays quiet', 'lives in a comfort zone', 'does not make any effort', and does not 'enjoy himself'. This is the unhappy worker.

There are no other options or possible elections. The slogan seems to imply that there is just one good decision, and nobody obliges you to choose the route to being happy. It is a promise associated with happiness at work, or happiness by working. Thus, it is obvious that workers would have to be irrational to choose the option of being the unhappy, static worker.

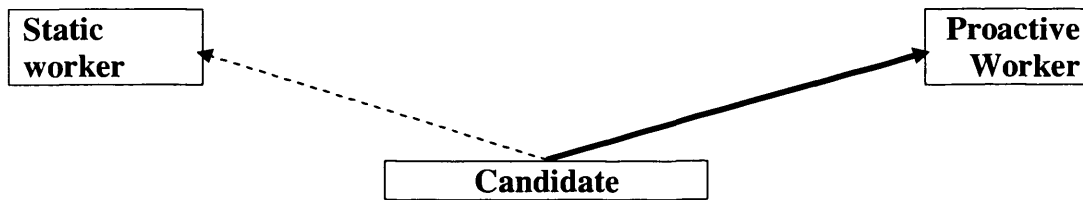


Diagram 6. Options available to the candidates.

I would like to point out the plasticity of the psychological strategies at work. The 'challenge for options' attempts to produce a kind of worker - 'the free worker' - who is able and willing to choose his own destiny. This strategy can be applied to any process of organisational change. Regardless of where the workers come from – whether they were 'traditional' drivers or workers from another sector – each worker is compelled to change. The workers' social class, education and cultural background are not considered in any sense beyond their capacity to choose the 'rational' direction proposed. If there are any difficulties, these are considered as internal barriers that the workers voluntarily impose on themselves in order to refuse the possibility of enjoyment and happiness. In addition, the relationship between the management and the worker remains untouched, and almost disappears, as the workers self-manage their willingness to do what has to be done at work. Finally, I would like to point out that in the application of this psychological technique, there is no space for an identity derived from the work activities. Specific duties and tasks related to the drivers' job do not occupy any place in the psychological interventions. Therefore, driving (work) in itself is not a central issue for the constitution of identity (Walkerdine, 2005).

## Exercising

Other professionals (non psychologists) also participated in the induction process. For instance, a physical trainer was employed to develop an exercise programme. He stated the following in the interview:

**Physical Trainer:** *'I was asked to develop a series of physical activities for the drivers. The manager told me that the drivers were going to be trained in different subjects and that they were going to be put under stress. He wanted a space for physical activities in order to make them relax. I carried out some tests to identify their overall fitness. For instance, I tested the speed of their reaction. I gave them scores. These scores were included as a part of the criteria to decide who was going to be hired.'*

It is important that a focus on psychological stress also initiated the process of 'individualisation' which took place around the physical training of the 'feeder' driver. However, this is not the main issue that I would like to emphasise. Rather, I would like to analyse the link between the physical training and the psychological issues that extended from this initial intervention and which still continue in the daily working routines.

A physical training programme was initiated when the drivers started their employment. Drivers were asked to attend a physical programme either at the end or at the beginning of their 10-hour shift. According to the rosters, both groups had physical training around 2:00 pm. As this time was not paid, some of the drivers decided not to attend; yet by means of subtle oppression it became obvious to the workers that they were 'obliged' to attend. The company sent reluctant workers a series of memoranda in which it was asserted that even though the workshops were not mandatory, attendance was 'strongly recommended'.



The physical activities are always performed in a park located in front of a 'feeder' platform where drivers collect and set down the passengers. This is certainly an embarrassment for them. They had to do the exercise routines in front of their 'clients'. In addition, sometimes the routines involved boys' games and physical contact. According to the trainer, physical exercising constitutes a new form of 'profound and mutual discovery' that as adults/workers they have never previously had the opportunity to participate in. Regarding the psychological transformation that the physical exercise produces, the physical trainer had the following to say:

**Physical trainer:** *' I do not only organise physical activities. As you saw today, we have lots of different things, from childish games such as, trompo, cucunuba, la ratonera and bolas - because sometimes the drivers are like children - to football and other sports. Sometimes I programme a martial arts workshop. The idea is to construct a space where they can get in touch within themselves. This is the objective I have. This is a space to acquire a culture, the culture of the caring for themselves. Doing exercise is a way of knowing themselves. They had never done exercise, just sports when they were children, but they were not familiar with getting to know themselves through exercise. At this moment, they have become conscious. They have acquired the discipline. For instance, we have a manual on relaxing exercises; they took the manual home to do the proper physical activities. The manual makes a series of suggestions to reduce the physical stress caused by the working routines. They told me this had a good effect on them', they acknowledged the positive results. They even say that they have abandoned habits like smoking; they attribute this to the psychological effects of exercising. They have been very motivated to the point that they have quit alcohol and smoking. The psychological results are very satisfactory.'*

**Physical trainer:** *'I talk to them a lot. They are full of fear and repression. At the beginning they were very ashamed of doing exercise because everybody could see them. The 'trunk' drivers were laughing at them, they did not even dare to jog, but nowadays they even grab each other's hands. Before this they were scared because they were educated in a macho environment. I think that they are scared of expressing themselves. So I think that more than*

*physical training, this space is an opportunity to get to know many aspects of themselves that they have not had the opportunity to get to know before.'*

I would like to point out how psychological practices and discourses emerged in the unexpected setting of the daily physical training. I was expecting a relationship between exercise and improvements in physical capabilities. However, it appears that exercising is as important for getting to know oneself as for the improvement of physical capabilities. Here, psychological practices and discourses operate differently; they do not propose a way of being as the 'challenge for options' does. This is not a technology that shows an ideal self that has to be achieved. The drivers are compelled to understand their bodies in order to decipher themselves. They are guided to know their hidden selves by exercising. As a result of this constant exploration, problems such as alcohol consumption and smoking – which usually are associated with the drivers and about which drivers never talk in the psychological selection process – are blurred. Here in the physical training setting these issues are not taboo; they are not only topics of conversations, but also the unexpected target of the combination of self-discovery and exercise.

Perhaps, the authority of psychology is more effective when not delivered by the intervention of a professional psychologist. Culturally the perspective of 'a sane mind in a sane body' is well disseminated in Colombia. It is an assumption that works independently of psychological formulas. However, in the context of the physical training programme, exercising is not only a way of preventing social stress and diseases associated with lengthy work. The physical training becomes a way of knowing aspects of driver's self which were unknown before. These aspects come to the light thanks to the psychological expertise exercised by the physical trainer.

## Culture

Twice a year the Mayor's Office in Bogotá holds a 'car-free day'. On this day, private cars are not allowed within the city, and Bogotá's inhabitants must rely on public transport. The morning before One 'car-free day', the URBANOS manager called for a general meeting at 4:15 am before the day's operation started. When I arrived at the meeting, the URBANOS manager and his secretary – both wearing the Transmilenio driver's uniform – were standing in front of a group of drivers. The drivers were not yet in their uniforms. The manager was talking about the importance of the day to prove that the Transmilenio service could transport most of the Bogotá's citizens. He said that that was an opportunity to show how the 'URBANOS family is the best company within the 'feeder' service'.



Picture 15. Shows a 'feeder' driver wearing the Transmilenio uniform.

The Transmilenio uniform is very symbolic. It is a sign of being both a member of the URBANOS family and a member of the Transmilenio service. The manager's secretary pointed out that there is 'mystique' constructed around the uniform; 'drivers cannot behave as choferes when wearing the uniform.' Drivers themselves state that wearing a uniform gives them a different social status in comparison to the 'traditional' drivers. Uniforms contribute to produce what the 'traditional' driver is not: clean, disciplined and ordered. Drivers say that they are respected and helped when wearing the Transmilenio uniform, and everybody in the city immediately recognises the uniform.

In URBANOS the uniform has been incorporated as part of the organisational 'culture' promoted within the principles and jargon of the 'school of human relations'. On the 'car-free day' the manager performed and promoted humanistic values wearing the Transmilenio uniform. The uniform itself embodied URBANOS human relations principles of being the same, belonging to the same team and being a family. This sense of identity extended to the point that the drivers and other employees addressed the manager as 'brother'. Even though in the 'traditional' service there are no clearly established hierarchies, different rules are established for interacting with managers and owners. However, in URBANOS the human relations jargon obscures the hierarchies and articulates a series of practices that target the individual. URBANOS' members stated:

**Manager:** *'Three 'traditional' companies are the owners of URBANOS. These associates and I wanted a different type of transport company. We knew that the new Transmilenio companies did not want to hire drivers. They preferred to use the services of recruitment agencies, but we wanted to show that it is possible to have a good company, happy workers and profits. We agreed that familiarity has to be central for the culture of the company. We*

*had in mind URBANOS as a big family, and as you can see, here, you have the URBANOS family! We all are attached to this family, the only thing we do not have is an URBANOS anthem.*

**Driver:** *'Here I am the manager, secretary, first boss, second boss, third boss, I can be the driver, the platform manager, this is the integration in the URBANOS family. We know that Mr. Marco Aurelio is the number 1, we know that there is an order of importance; second is Eduardo, third Carlos, but we cannot say things like 'Damn it! Here comes Mr. Marco Aurelio!'... Nooooo!!! ... We say, 'Hello brother', he is not the manager, he is a co-worker. In this company you are not excluded, you are not isolated. You have to carry out different activities and you can be the boss when you are the platform manager or the cleaner when a bus is dirty, we have to do many kinds of things.'*

So, under the human relations jargon and the flexibilisation of work, drivers' identities – with regard to their tasks – are blurred. This does not mean that there is only an interest in labour exploitation; on the contrary there is a real concern for the driver and his family. So, in this humanistic approach, URBANOS established direct three-year work contracts in accordance with the culture of the company as a 'big family'.

**URBANOS manager:** *'We had to offer three-year contracts, it would be inappropriate to say, yeah, we are a family, but we do not accept you as a relative, we do not want to have a commitment with you. I always had in mind that it was possible to structure a transport company that offers direct contracts. I wanted to show that direct contracts are not the cause of unionism as it is disseminated in the transport sector. I wanted to demonstrate that if you hire a driver this does not mean that you are going to be sued.'*

As usual, the human relations jargon and strategies are considered to be an effective tool against unionisation (Zickar, 2004). The humanistic reasoning that good working conditions and sentimental management will bring happy and collaborative workers guides the administration. This is a shared knowledge about how to conduct business. It is not derived from psychologists' intervention, but from the general diffusion of these principles in the Colombian business environment. As prescribed by the human

relations' school, workers are the most important factor for production. This principle guides different activities such as constant rewards and bonuses, and the home visits that social workers carry out. During an informal meeting I asked drivers about the home visits:

**Interviewer:** *'I am very curious about the home visits. What are they for? It seems to me that they are a little intrusive.'*

**Driver:** *'I think the home visit is an expression of how we are important for the company. It is another way in which the company recognises that the family is important for the driver. It shows how organised this company is. It means integration between the URBANOS family and the worker's family. There is total integration; they know that you have one family to look after. URBANOS is concerned about our families, whilst in the 'traditional' system nobody is interested'.*

**Driver:** *'The home visits are for gathering information. This information is very important. It is not like in the 'traditional' system, where it is not important if you are an alcohol consumer or not, there is no difference if you are a responsible father or not, or if you have three women. Nobody says a word. Here, there is an investigation; psychologists go to the driver's home to see how he lives, who he lives with, where he comes from, how is the family composed, and what education level the family members have reached. I consider that this is real integration with the company. This is the way that we can say that we all are one nucleus and that we all work towards the same objectives. This is what makes URBANOS a successful company'.*

**Driver:** *'Home visits are good for the family. When they went to my home they got to know my wife and kids. They asked her if I was a good husband... (laughs)...no, seriously. It is a way of looking at how you behave outside the company. You are reassured about the kind of people you work with. This is a way of facilitating integration and good social relationships with colleagues. It is also a kind of selection, for instance, we all thought Mr. Mariano was one of the best candidates, but when the psychologist interviewed his wife she told her that he had another family and she also said that he was violent. He was never hired. I think the home visits are a way of protecting both the family and ourselves'.*

The human relations jargon relating to the concern about families articulates other strategies that have been employed to develop an 'integral' driver as the

administrative team was concerned about drivers' habits. They knew that the drivers had to become accustomed to new working routines and to a smaller salary and in addition, drivers had to be polite when dealing with passengers. Thus, under the human relations principles and jargon, psychologists implemented strategies for the workers that emphasised aspects such as 'how to deal with their free time', 'how to manage their salary better' and 'how to improve family relationships'. These produced results such as:

**Driver:** *'In the 'traditional' service we fight with passengers. Here we cannot for two reasons. We know that the passenger is part of our family and a member of the URBANOS family. Moreover, we have to meet the same passenger every day (laughs) so we have to behave.'*

**Driver:** *'There are many unfortunate changes. One is the salary, we have an established amount of money paid monthly plus a bonus and a uniform. However, in the 'traditional' service we earned more money. We earned more money but we did not have the capacity to manage it, otherwise we would not be here as employees. We did not have this capacity, we were taught here about how to deal with money.'*

**Driver:** *'In the 'traditional' service we had money in our pockets every day. Now we have money once a month and when we receive the money we know how to administer it: this for food, this for the utilities, etc, etc. Here the salary is reduced but the money is better distributed and therefore it is used better.'*

**Driver:** *'The company knew that there was a contradiction, we knew we had more time with the family. We have one day a week to spend with the children, but before we did not know what to do. We finished a shift, for instance, at 2 pm, we did not know if we had to go home or to stay here. This was new for us, we used to leave home at 4:30 am and we returned at 11:00 pm. We learnt in courses how to deal with the free time and strategies to improve family communication.'*

All these strategies target different aspects of workers' lives. They attempt to produce what the manager called an '*experimentation to work with the integral feeder driver*'. The human relations jargon has a key place articulating all these technologies that

attempt to make up this 'integral' worker. 'Integral' here refers to aspects of the workers' life that are under company surveillance, and to the attempt to produce a driver who is a part of the company family.

The application of the human relations strategies within the 'feeder' company is fundamental for the management. I would like to point out that the application of the strategies and the management of the labour force in terms of the jargon provided by the humanist approach to organisation has a space within URBANOS thanks to relatively more stable working conditions. The integral 'feeder' driver, member of the URBANOS family, is only possible in a climate of mutual trust between the company and the workers. The following excerpts illustrate this central point:

**Manager:** *'... of course I thought, I was inviting them to be part of a family. I wanted them to be part of my family, but I was not going to give them my surname. It was not possible to say, I want you to be part of my family, we are going to work together, but I am not going to employ you directly. I felt that it would be like a nonsense, it was an indication of mistrust, the drivers would think that I was not sincere and that they could be dismissed at any time. Transparency was important. The drivers were hired by the company, this is what the company is – and what the company was, it is responsible for them as member of the team.'*

**Driver:** *'At the beginning URBANOS was in a difficult financial situation. The manager told us that it was impossible to make the monthly payments. He said that he would understand if we wanted to leave the company. He also said that he would pay all the additional money for the problems caused. But we trusted him. We agreed that the payment could be postponed and we worked for two months without a salary until the situation improved.'*

## **Conclusion**

The dissymmetry that the Transmilenio system brought about between management and workers is organised as a series of relays, networks, and strategies in which psychology has a central place. In this sense the psychological strategies show the



particular shape that the disciplinary-governmentality complex assumes in the 'feeder' service setting (Hook, 2003).

The psychological strategies considered here constitute different ways of targeting the individual worker within the 'feeder' company. They can be located along the same chain of power. Firstly, this chain starts with the individualisation of the workers as subjects of capacities, attitudes and abilities (inclusion by exclusion). Secondly, it continues with proposals about how the individual worker should become; and thirdly, it finishes by prescribing the exercises in order to achieve the ideal state required for the 'feeder' driver.

Because it is possible to locate the psychological strategies along the chain of power it does not imply that they are part of a coherent, absolute, controlled, and planned organisational movement. These psychological practices are not necessarily one the cause of the other, nor do they follow a sequence for their application. They only emerge simultaneously, competing and complementing each other. Even though the psychological interventions seem fragmented and chaotic, in different ways, they contribute to the production of the integral 'feeder' driver, which is fundamentally an autonomous subject.

Psychology is identified with what psychologists do; however, it goes beyond the actions of psychologists. Other professionals borrow the jargon, objectives and strategies of psychological knowledge, and use and transform them in unexpected ways (Rose, 1996). In this chapter it was possible to see the 'local' malleability of

psychology, its facility to be locally hybridised, its capacity to be adapted to strategies used by other professionals and possibly, as a result, its particular effectiveness.

So, psychology provides the tools and the elements to transform and constitute a type of worker according to the new flexible and uncertain conditions of work. The project of co-existence and happiness at work that psychology proposed is still possible for URBANOS, where direct working contracts still allow the implementation of a mixture of psychological strategies which attempt to produce an anonymous, and essentially individualistic, proactive worker on the one hand, and on the other, a sentimental worker who is attached to a family company. The co-existence of both types of strategies is possible thanks to the basic trust established between the driver and the management mediated by the direct and stable three-year work contract. I consider that URBANOS constitutes a halfway compromise between the 'traditional' companies and the 'trunk' companies. URBANOS is an example of what Hollway (1991) called the contracting organisation that maintains features related to the advantages which the Welfare State offered to workers.

In the next chapter I consider the psychological interventions carried out in the CENTURIA, where the working conditions established a different kind of relationship between the management and the worker. In this case, the 'conduct of the conduct' assumes other dimensions more intensively related to the constitution of a psychologically free driver.

## Chapter 8. The Constitution of the 'Trunk' Operator

*'Psychologists are the hands of the company, they are the craftsmen who knit together ideas, which are conceived in the brain of managers.'*

Fieldnotes

### Introduction

The last chapter presented a series of psychological technologies which are applied with the aim of producing the 'feeder' driver. Such technologies ranged from those intended to individualise, integrate and exclude people at work, to those which transform drivers in order to become subjects who exercise their own self-government. In the 'feeder' company the particular combination of psychological practices were seen to be framed within the working conditions, which are still related to direct work contracts between the company and the driver.

This chapter follows a similar path. It maps the psychological practices which are applied by CENTURIA, the 'trunk' company, in order to examine different situations in which psychology and its practitioners are involved. To begin with, consideration is given to the processes that are involved in the personnel selection of 'trunk' drivers. I then describe how workers were introduced to CENTURIA during 'continuum training workshops' as conducted by psychologists. Finally, consideration is given to how the construction of the 'trunk' driver as the manager of his own bus is intensified in the constitution of the 'OTAS' (Association of Transport Organisations). In general terms, this chapter explores the relationship between CENTURIA's working conditions as characterised by the absence of work contracts, and the psychological techniques that serve to intensify work on the self in order to transform drivers into

the ideal CENTURIA 'operator'; that is, one who is a fully autonomised worker by way of a psychological contract.

### **Personnel Selection**

As previously stated, CENTURIA has not established formal processes of personnel selection. Recruitment companies provide the company with drivers as 'available hands' according to the new flexible conditions under which the service is offered. Therefore, there are no direct work contracts between the worker and CENTURIA. Personnel selection is carried out by independent psychological services in a similar way to the 'feeder' company, as outlined in the previous chapter. After the initial selection the driver undergoes interviews with both the recruitment company and CENTURIA. Every candidate can be interviewed from four to six times. Conducting the CENTURIA interviews are the company manager and one of the psychologists from the human resources department.

The process of personnel selection that takes place in CENTURIA is less interested in determining drivers' skills and is more interested in establishing other informal criteria that discriminate, integrate or exclude drivers and contribute to the production of the 'operator' as the ideal CENTURIA driver. Psychologists have established these criteria in order to find the 'other type' of driver which the company needs:

**Psychologist:** *'We want other types of drivers. In CENTURIA it is not a question of ordinary people. They have to be very well groomed, their clothing has to be impeccable and in particular they have to be good looking. We are looking for drivers with these characteristics to distinguish them from the 'traditional' drivers who are always dirty.'*

Therefore, candidates are accepted according to what psychologists consider to be a 'good looking' driver. If the driver does not reach their criteria of good looks he is rejected. Therefore physical characteristics are central to the exercise of inclusion by exclusion between candidates. Furthermore, the psychologist affirmed:

*'Physical beauty is central, but it is not all. We also want spiritual beauty. Both characteristics complement each other'.*

Of course these are not clearly specified criteria but merely a question of the psychologist's subjective '*taste*'.

In addition to beauty, observations of cleanliness are involved in selection. Psychologists, for instance, in a potentially embarrassing and invasive way can ask drivers in the middle of the selection interview to take off their shoes in order to prove that they are 'really' clean '*from head to toe*'. Under this kind of beauty and cleanliness check, appropriate driving skills can be taken for granted. That is to say, abilities relating to driving a bus are not as important as these necessary 'first impressions'.

Traditionally, psychologists have supported their studies, decisions and conduct according to the liberal ethical values that work psychology embodies. The assurance of merit and fairness in selecting the best possible candidate for a position endorses the social utility of psychology. However in the case of CENTURIA, the concern for the image the company wants to convey assumes more importance than the notions of merit and fairness. While the ability to drive well is taken into consideration by the recruitment company that puts forward the candidates to CENTURIA, the company itself takes for granted driver's capacities and skills. Executing the work (that is, driving in the correct way) is not issue being evaluated by CENTURIA's

psychologists. Rather it is the physical features of the driver that will endorse the company as the one with good-looking 'operators' as is its primary concern. Thus, psychologists have become the guardians of new ways of classifying individuals around unusual and non-traditional standards. Even though Colombian psychologists have made judgements based on physical appearance, such criteria were secondary to a candidate's abilities, attitudes and aptitudes. In the case of CENTURIA, however, (as well as with other companies in different sectors; see Garcia & Carvajal, 2007) good looks become a central feature for selection. Thus psychologists are playing an important role in the transformation of an ethic of work which is in the process of being changed by an aesthetic of the body. Psychologists have become the judges not only of '*interior beauty*' but also of '*external beauty*'.

### **Renaming**

In the 'traditional' service drivers are called by different nicknames. Particular characteristics of the driver's body or behaviour or a similarity with particular animals or things are used to re-name and identify the driver. In general terms, nicknames are aggressive appellations. As the 'traditional' companies are not in the habit of keeping drivers' records often such nicknames have become the only way of identifying the driver. One of the priorities of psychologists in CENTURIA was to target such a 'choferes' custom. Psychologists learnt all the drivers' names in order to demonstrate that it is possible to treat '*everybody as they should be treated*'. The psychologists first decided to learn the drivers' names themselves, and afterwards the other organisational members had to follow suit:

**Psychologists:** '*Learning the name of every driver is one of our purposes. We know all their names, and we instructed everybody to learn them as well. At the moment everybody knows each other's*

*name. We were explicit in the workshops; we do not want nicknames. That is all very well for the 'choferes' of the 'traditional' transport but here they know they have to be different. Here everybody knows everybody's name. We first memorised all the names. It is inappropriate to talk to an operator and not to address him by name or catch his attention with a 'pssshh' sound. At the beginning of a working relationship, learning workers' names is the most effective thing you can do to recognise them as humans.'*

I would suggest that this rule of taking into account real names as part of a strategy to reduce the aggression between the drivers is a disciplinary step based on good manners and one that contributes to the constitution of the psychological contract that the company aims to establish with the driver. Recognising drivers' names implies a break with the ways in which drivers related to each other in the 'traditional' service. This process of re-naming is not however limited to the drivers' nicknames and the establishment of good manners. Processes of re-naming are extended to further aspects of organisational life to talk about other members of the company besides drivers. For instance:

**Psychologist:** *'Here in CENTURIA we do not have cleaners anymore, the lady who cleans and serves the coffee is fundamentally an office assistant. Drivers are not workers anymore they are associates, and managers are not supervisors they are 'facilitators''.*

Re-naming people, then, is extended to most of the company members not only to teach them good manners but also to blur organisational hierarchies. Psychologists affirm that this is a way of constituting a more egalitarian organisation.

## Constant Training

The CENTURIA 'operators' are being made 'professionals' in psychological terms. Psychologists apply different 'professionalisation' strategies in a programme of constant and mandatory training. This psychological training runs twice a week for one hour and is subject to psychological reflections and exercises. The workshops I attended were especially designed to teach psychological strategies for dealing with the aggressive behaviour of commuters and to maintain motivation and effective communication at work. These workshops were conceived as a mean of 'making up' a professional CENTURIA 'operator' who is the 'other' of the 'chofer' (Sparti, 2001; Hacking, 1995b).

**Psychologist:** *'In CENTURIA we want to see happy people. This implies that people choose to come here and it is not the only option they have. Working in the transport service is after all not only about driving. The idea that driving is the only thing necessary is only for the 'traditional' service. We want professional drivers; we want people to achieve their professionalism and people who feel in their hearts that they have a profession. Believe me, what I am saying is true. If I feel that I am a 'chofer', I behave as one, if I feel I am a professional in conduct however I behave very differently.'*

Managers and psychologists are aware that re-naming is only one strategy for the construction of the professional operator. A naming system is in itself not enough to ensure the self-management of drivers. Multiple strategies are necessary if drivers are to be sufficiently autonomous to carry out their activities without any type of overt supervision, which is the aim of CENTURIA:

**Manager:** *'We do not want children, we only want adults. This is indispensable because we do not believe in control or supervision; it is not possible for one person to motivate another to perform tasks which they are reluctant to do. This is the reason why respect, good manners and education are the foundations of the social relationships in this company.'*



Here the manager is talking about a very particular type of adulthood. That is, the worker is obliged to reach an adequate level of adulthood to be able to be an efficient manager of both himself and the bus. 'Operators' are fundamentally and ideally efficient managers and this is a good solution to maintaining a relationship between the company and the driver in the absence of a formal working contract and the consequent legal subordination of workers that it represents. In the mutual relationship established around changes in the work contract, the company is obliged to trust the driver and ensure he is able to manage himself in a responsible fashion:

**Human Resources Manager:** *'Here we believe in people, we trust them, they are the managers of their buses. Drivers have a large amount of money in their hands. The bus costs many million (in Colombian Pesos - COP). The bus is the investment and they are responsible for making it profitable. Every day we insist on the responsibility they have. The role is the same as that of a professional administrator; they are trusted by the investor to make a profit with money.'*

The figure of the driver as manager is particularly important as it reaffirms the relationship with the 'investor' and not with the company. In the training workshops, the psychologist insisted that the ideal professional driver of CENTURIA was one who behaved like a manager and subordinated his own interests in favour of those of the investors:

**Human Resources Manager:** *'You are the managers of the bus, you are the ones who are in charge of protecting the money of those who invest COP\$500.000.000 (£100,000) in a bus. There can be no excuses to argue, you cannot damage the owner's property, and you have to manage it for the good of everybody. How can you say to the owner 'I have damaged your property worth COP\$500.000.000'. You have to be aware of who is risking more - the owner or you. If you are conscious you cannot complain about the monthly bonus.'*

The weekly workshop is also a time when psychologists consider a driver's achievements and is therefore an opportunity to reinforce what is considered to be appropriate behaviour and to discourage what is not. In every workshop I attended the psychologist asked the drivers to introduce themselves. After every presentation she made some comments. She knew the name of each driver and some information about their private lives. She was keen to make comments about the social and family life of those drivers who were considered to be company models formulating comments such as the following:

**Psychologist:** *'Eduardo is one of our outstanding drivers and he is greatly esteemed by the company. He is becoming what we want for all of you. He is studying in the university and is going to be a lawyer. You should look upon him as an example of how to get on. CENTURIA should be just a springboard for your improvement...  
...We greatly respect Mario. He recently formalised his relationship with his girlfriend and got married. He is a man dedicated to his family. He is not like others who still have affairs.'*

The company's psychologists very often propagate these types of comments in training workshops. The workshops therefore provide the opportunity for the workers' private lives to be made public under the authority of the psychologists who, in the process, sanction what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. In the interview I expressed my curiosity about these comments and inquired about what criteria guided them:

**Psychologist:** *'We have established what we want. We want them to leave the guild of 'choferes'. We always emphasise that they have children and wives. They have values and should avoid extra-marital relationships, make radical changes in their lives and take care of their families... uhmmm if you ask me for the criteria I would say that the criterion is the difference between an operator and a chofer. The 'traditional' service is full of 'choferes'. I know the academic, social and cultural level of the guild; they have no education and affection for others. This is the reason why the*

*transport industry is in a mess because there are no solid roots for authority and leadership. We insist on organising their lives, because if you visit the home of the traditional driver his life style does not reflect the amount of money he has earned in the 'traditional' service. For someone earning that amount of money he should have more material comforts.'*

The capacity of psychological knowledge to translate work and the organisational problems of '*the transport industry*' into a jargon of feelings – '*lack of education and affection*' – becomes evident in the excerpts taken from the interview. In making this translation, psychology occupies central stage and defines the problem – '*the transport industry is in a mess* - and provides the solution - *solid roots for authority and leadership*. In so doing psychology demonstrates its conservative and normalising tendency as well as its capacity to produce the 'other' as one who is not morally accepted (the *chofer*). At the same time the discipline constitutes itself as an authority that is able to intervene in the lives of those who were once '*choferes*' but now are targeted for explicit psychological influence and regulation. Weekly psychological workshops provide the opportunity to involve targeted individuals in technologies of self-examination and transformation which involve identifying the '*chofer*' as '*other*'. Take for example the following exchange:

**Psychologist:** '*Give me some synonyms for a chofer.*'

**CENTURIA drivers:** (laughing at each other) '*Bad people!*'...  
... '*Drunk! Dirty!*'... ... '*Promiscuous!*'... ... '*Mischievous!*'

**Psychologist:** '*Are you still interested in being a chofer? Are you choferes?*'

**CENTURIA drivers:** '*I am not 'chofer' but Gonzalo is'*... ...  
'*Pedro is still a chofer because he has many branches...*'  
(branches meaning more than one family)

The weekly training, as well as most of the psychological practices, involved pronouncements of the CENTURIA creed (or credo which connotes a central part of the Catholic mass where the congregation reaffirms their faith). Psychologists 'preach' the creed, which comprises: ethical comportment, respect for people, excellence in service, social responsibility and perpetual improvement. These, according to the psychologist, are the *'DNA of the CENTURIA culture'*. In this respect, the psychologist argues that instead of 'organisational charts' the company opted for other formulas to put the company in 'order'. According to the human resources manager:

**Human Resources Manager:** *'What becomes important is not how the people are distributed in hierarchies, but how everybody can improve.'*

In the absence of work contracts, the creed became central. Moreover, the apparent non-existence of a hierarchy is at the same time a question of rhetoric and an assumed fact. Officially, subordination is established with the recruitment company which is the organisation that hires the driver. However, in practical terms, drivers are subordinated to CENTURIA because the company frequently changes its provider thus obliging the drivers to move every three months from one recruitment company to another.

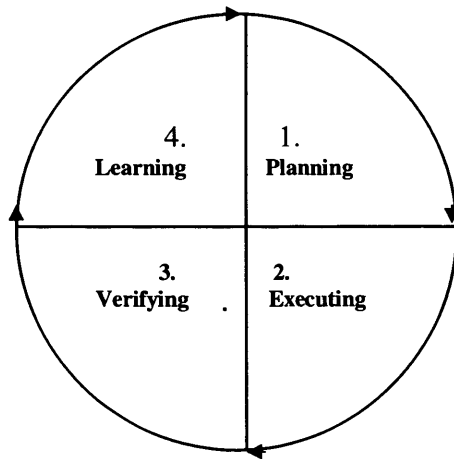


Diagram 7. The 'organisational chart' at CENTURIA.

This diagram was designed to show how *'there are no hierarchies' at CENTURIA*. The diagram, as opposed to a conventional 'organisational chart', is not about external hierarchies but related to a sequence of technological steps that CENTURIA members have to perform internally. It is a general guide for the application of technologies of the self that aim for the achievement of excellence in service (Foucault, 1996; du Gay, 1996). The diagram shows a general proposal for homogenisation and normalisation where all the individual workers who follow it paradoxically become isolated subjects that together compose a chain. The diagram summarises the general attempt to regulate the conduct of the drivers who by remaining individuals are homogenised and become part of a group. Thus, as the psychologist stated, the individual workers become *'part of the network of work where they play nothing more than 'roles', just as there are no major differences between a centre-forward and a back, as they all comprise a football team'*.

### **The Association of Transport Organisations (OTAS)**

The uncertain and flexible conditions of work and the discursive construction of the manager provide the opportunity to consider one of the ways in which the uncertainty and intensification of work have taken place in Colombia, namely the proposal of the Association of Transport Organisations (OTAS). It seems to me that this manner of organising work not only intensifies the discursive construction of the driver as a manager, but also attempts to establish the fictional character as a fact. The OTAS are a way of organising work where workers create their own companies in order to be worker-managers of their own enterprises. In this new 'collaborative' association, cooperative ideals are formulated as the sum of individual entrepreneurship and consequently the role of the state as provider of social security could easily disappear, as the relationship between driver and company becomes a relationship between one enterprise and another.

Workers were divided into different groups of approximately 20 members each. Drivers were asked to develop companies that would, for instance, replace the recruitment companies which initially had hired them. This formula worked as means of dispensing with the third company which mediated between the driver and CENTURIA. Drivers were sent to one of the socio-technological centres which specialised in helping people in the establishment of these kinds of cooperative companies.

CENTURIA established the groups to be trained and the possible services that would be provided by cooperative companies. Services included a variety of possibilities for

future companies such as producing uniforms and providing drivers. The central idea was that CENTURIA would establish supply contracts with each of the companies established by the drivers in order to make them feasible. As a result, it was expected that once the drivers' companies were up and running the problem of possible strikes would be avoided as contracts would be established between companies and not with individual drivers. It was also expected that a new kind of association between drivers and the company would appear. As one of the drivers indicated:

*'The human resources manager told us that CENTURIA did not want to contract employees, the company wanted to have relationships with associates. They saw us as future entrepreneurs'*

The strategy was suspended after the fictional manager moved from merely practising technologies of the self to become an effective entrepreneur. That is to say, the organisation of the OTAS was suspended when drivers started to gain power and self-organisation. As drivers point out:

**Driver:** *'We realised two things. On the one hand CENTURIA planned this strategy in order to avoid the possibility of us being considered as workers with legal rights. We had to put all our money in order to establish the OTAS. We would be independent and if we wanted any kind of social protection we had pay for it. We realised that being, at the same time, a driver and manager has advantages and disadvantages. We realised that we could negotiate our salaries. We used to complain that our salaries were not fair; they were reduced as we moved from one recruitment company to another. With our own company this would no longer be the case, which is why they suspended our training and the whole programme.'*

**Driver:** *'The manager and the ladies (psychologists) did not allow us to decide who would be in each group. They controlled the distribution and the number of groups. We thought that they would promote competition. We also thought that they were planning to give more work to some workers than to others. However, we became more attached to each other, we knew that this could be an opportunity to act together to reach our goals.'*

## **Conclusion**

CENTURIA seems to constitute the 'ideal' post-modern organisation that some psychologists consider a matter of celebration (Gergen & Thatchery, 1996). It is a kind of virtual organisation that does not have the 'traditional' working ties with its members but searches for other ways of reformulating fundamental relationships. For CENTURIA the constitution of workers as entrepreneurs is fundamental (Rose, 1992). Around the proposal of CENTURIA's operator, the mutual relationship of trust between workers and the company becomes a question of 'investors trust you' as the 'manager of the bus'. In psychological terms the drivers become 'autonomised' (Donzelot, 1981) as managers who cannot make independent decisions about work tasks as the system is totally regulated. They can, however, manage themselves in order to take care of the investor's property and become a figure of politeness and efficiency which constitutes the public image of CENTURIA. In the absence of direct work contracts the psychological contract is intensified according to issues that are not directly related to driving, such as the establishment of CENTURIA's associate teams, the recognition of individual identity, continuous psychological training, the emphasis on groomed image and the constant call to be a kind of driver who is the 'other' of the 'chofer' by being moral and educated enough to work for CENTURIA.

In the next chapter I will compare the psychological interventions that have been described in previous chapters. I will summarise how the constitution of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers other the 'traditional' driver and the 'traditional' service in general. After that I will explore how the 'othering' process and the 'autonomisation'



of the driver can be located in the chain of power that leads to a colonial governmentality.

## Chapter 9. Dimensioning Psychological Interventions

*'The assumption that modern science is trans- or a-cultural, and thus could not be multicultural or androcentric in any fundamental way, is just such a civilisational believe for most members of the educated middle classes in Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere around the globe.'*

(Harding, 1998, p.14)

### Introduction

The 'mapping' of the psychological practices carried out in the previous chapters shows the 'psy-complex' in action. The psychological interventions in the urban passenger transport service involve many professionals, practices, discourses, strategies, tools and institutions. These psychological interventions, in their shared goal of transforming 'choferes' into 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers, are a way of conducting the liberal rationality of government based on the production of autonomised subjects (Donzelot, 1981; Rose, 1996). In this chapter, I discuss how these practices connect in such a way speak to the international dissemination of psychology, and the ways in which the rationality of liberalism exercises a kind of colonial governmentality. Thus, the chapter seeks to illustrate how local applications of psychology to the transport service are intrinsically connected to the liberal rationality of government, at the level of the regulation of global competence - and, in so doing, contributes to the propagation of colonial relationships.

### Psychological Practices and the Government of the City

In tracing the 'flows' of psychological practices applied, other connections appear as related to how the government is exercised in the city. For instance, the CENTURIA psychologist pointed out how the psychological practices conducted in the company

led in part to improving Bogotá, and therefore, were also a contribution to the progress of the country, as seen in the following extract:

**CENTURIA Psychologist:** *'We are the best company in the sector. We are traditional transporters who became organised. That makes a big difference. In this company we are interested in personnel selection processes, there are different strategies to promote positive leadership; there is a mission for the company, which is not only concerned with technological outputs, but also with well-developed human resources. We take our mission very seriously. It is not only a question of driving new and nice buses and generating profits. I do not mean to be pedantic but CENTURIA has seriously taken the objective of constructing a better company for a better city. It is a question of bringing people to the company in order to cultivate their selves. Developing the human resources is our contribution to the progress of Bogotá, and to the progress of the country.'*

And, this sentiment is seen in the following:

**CENTURIA Psychologist:** *'I think I am doing a good work which is also recognised. I think humanising work is a question of improving society. I have this mission to carry out, I am not doing this for me but for the betterment of Colombians. We all are Colombia!'*

The consulting psychologists working for URBANOS made the following statement:

**URBANOS Psychologist:** *'This was like the one of the Seven Wonders of the World! There was an appropriate climate for doing what I wanted. The manager told me, to do what I considered appropriate... I collaborated in many ways. I saw that everybody was motivated; it was a question of directing this energy into constructing a company. I was interested in creating a sense of belonging... I was astonished with the results. I had had some experience with the "traditional" service; it was incredible! The drivers were not the same beings called 'choferes'... We organised a parade that went along the same streets covered by the route. All the drivers were proud of being URBANOS workers, their sons were wearing the uniforms, all of them had bought the small uniforms for their kids... it was very satisfying, the feeling that you were doing things to bring about a sense of belonging for a company that was transforming Bogotá...'*

The manager of URBANOS also stated that:

*'I think that undoubtedly the Transmilenio service is improving the living standards in Bogotá. Changing the quality of life in the city was a responsibility that the system introduced. Improving the quality of life is a goal which required a lot of commitment. We had to develop our capacity for reflection. We had to look at ourselves to develop a self-capacity to examine ourselves. Based on that critical capacity for self examination and adaptation we have taken a series of preventive and corrective measurements that aimed to improve the service'*

In an informal conversation the human resources manager of CENTURIA also noted:

*'It seems to me that the Transmilenio service brings about many good things. Drivers are working fewer hours. They are behaving better. They are not as stressed as before. Therefore, the aggression that characterises the 'traditional' service is disappearing. I would say that Transmilenio brings about decent jobs. This is the first advantage. In addition, the service is transporting more people in less time, which is a second advantage... I think, the Transmilenio system produces culture; Transmilenio is 'cultivating' people in order to organise things in the city. There are very interesting social effects such as, the stress of the citizen has been reduced. Nowadays, commuters can enjoy travelling in the city.'*

In general terms, these excerpts illustrate that the psychological discourses and practices undertaken within the companies were linked to bringing about changes, benefits, discipline, advances and progress not *only* to the companies - but to the city. Thus, the psychological practices started to show connections related to the regulation of the city of Bogotá. I followed this connection to the municipal authorities, which participated in the implementation of Transmilenio and were in charge of the control of the whole system.

### **Implementing the Transmilenio Service**

The Municipal government's strategy to implement the Transmilenio service and the concomitant social changes were also carried out in a framework of psychological interventions. Prior to the implementation of the Transmilenio service, the 'psy-

complex' provided an important component in the negotiations taking place between the government authorities and the 'traditional' companies and guilds. The municipal authorities announced in a series of meetings that the system was going to be implemented. As the manager of URBANOS described, the municipal government invited the traditional transport representatives and the driver and bus owner associations to a series of meetings where decisions about the implementation of the Transmilenio service were presented.

In these meetings, the rules for participating as active members of the Transmilenio system were specified. The negotiations were conducted in a tense climate. This was not the first time that the government authorities and the members of the 'traditional' service negotiated radical changes in order to transform and improve the transport service. However, all previous attempts to change the transport service had been hindered because members of the 'traditional' service paralysed Bogotá for days, by using different strategies such as general strikes and blocking the roads with their vehicles. Therefore, any proposals for modernisation of the transport service had failed. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Transmilenio service was possible given the fact that the municipal government had the support of the population to intervene in the problems of the transport system; this popular support came because the infrastructure changed: Alfredo Penalosa, who was the city mayor at the time, was the first mayor elected by popular vote; the previous administrations of the city had been appointed by the State.

Psychological interventions were an important part of the negotiations to implement the Transmilenio service. Psychological expertise, as Osborne and Rose (1998) point

out, contributes to the government of the city by shaping the manner in which the problems to be solved are considered, and by providing the possible solutions. One of the psychologists who directly participated in the negotiations between the municipal authorities and the 'traditional' companies stated the following:

*'There were a multitude of conflicts. Members of the 'traditional' service had a very limited view of the transport system. They didn't know about quality or about caring for commuters, and we had to tell them that we were going to suspend the 'traditional' service and replace their buses with new ones. These were buses that were controlled with very advanced satellite technology... the knowledge and the technologies were somewhat strange for these people. They only knew of illegal behaviour, 'patos' (relatives that help to collect the money), 'devueltos' (when the driver has not collected enough passengers the route is re-started without authorisation) and all manner of infringements. Transmilenio was a complete shock for them. It was a shock not only economically but also culturally and socially.'*

This fragment illustrates a way in which psychology was used to make transport governable before the implementation of Transmilenio service. Specifically, the 'lacks' that psychology characteristically seeks to attend to in order to facilitate a process of governance, began to emerge (Cruinshank, 1993). Thus, the problems related to the transport service were partially reduced to the 'traditional' service members' 'lack' of capacity, in understanding necessary for the implementation of the new transport technologies. This 'lack of understanding' transforms the control and the routines of the 'traditional' service into a psychological impediment.

Psychological issues became central when the system started to be implemented. The psychologist working for Transmilenio argued that:

*'Transmilenio had changed the Bogotans' quality of life. This fact could not be explained either to a 'traditional' bus owner or a*

*'chofer'. Even if they had the intellectual capacity... even if they loved the city... a mourning process emerged. It was like the 'death throes' of the 'traditional' transport service. They had to adapt to the new situation. If you do not move on, change will change you. We were taking away their means of supporting their families... for instance, there were families that lost the means to cover their living expenses; wives, sons and cousins were all dependants of the income generated in the 'traditional' bus service. We knew that there would be a crash and that they would react strongly. The strategy to deal with this was to provide them with the opportunity to express their feelings. They were able to give vent to negative and aggressive emotions. In fact we dealt with those emotions using many different psychological approaches'.*

Clearly, the economic problems brought about by the implementation of the system are translated as psychological problems of emotions and mourning. Even though the economic problems are recognised as a result of the modernisation process, they do not occupy centre stage. The modernisation of the transport service thus became a psychological issue and its solution was linked to controlled expressions of emotions, which were guided by psychologists. In this way, psychological strategies were used to control the negotiation by both obscuring the economic problems and by appeasing the emotions associated with economic displacement.

The strategy was possible by virtue of the psychologists' and other professionals' in-depth knowledge of the transport system and its members. Using this strategy, knowledge obtained from the population became the key tool with which to intervene (Foucault, 1977a) as seen in the following excerpt:

**Transmilenio Psychologist:** *'To tell you the truth, I have never been a commuter, I never use the public transport, however this does not stop me. We created a research team; we carried out a very detailed fieldwork. We took buses and carefully documented and analysed all the behaviours. We went to the terminals to talk to drivers and we were disguised when talking to drivers. Then, we accumulated all the information needed. Look, it is easier to obtain knowledge of informal matters than of the formal ones. Ask for*

*something illegal, ask for the vices and immediately someone tells you all you want to know. It was relatively easy to do an analysis of the field.*

The excerpts from the interview with the Transmilenio psychologist illustrate the ways in which psychology contributes to make the whole 'traditional' service predictable in behavioural terms. The problems of the 'traditional' service were always conceived in terms of the drivers' behaviour, but psychology did not have a central place in explaining the functioning of the service (see Chapter 6). However, with the advent of Transmilenio, psychological knowledge acquired in the 'traditional' service reaches its full potential. Members of the 'traditional' service were constituted as 'other'. These people were therefore unable to understand the advantages and consequences of the technological changes implied in the implementation of the new system. The 'sentimental' and 'non-clever' 'other' is knowable in psychological terms and his 'lack of understanding' is translated only in terms of 'mourning'. The expression of feelings became the strategy to deal with the psychologised 'other' (Cruinshank, 1993). On the other hand, knowledge of the whole 'traditional' service in psychological terms facilitates the normalising character of psychology, enabling it to form the parameters by which the guild's conduct is judged as inappropriate, immoral and full of vices. This also located the members of the 'traditional' system in a disadvantageous position when negotiations took place.

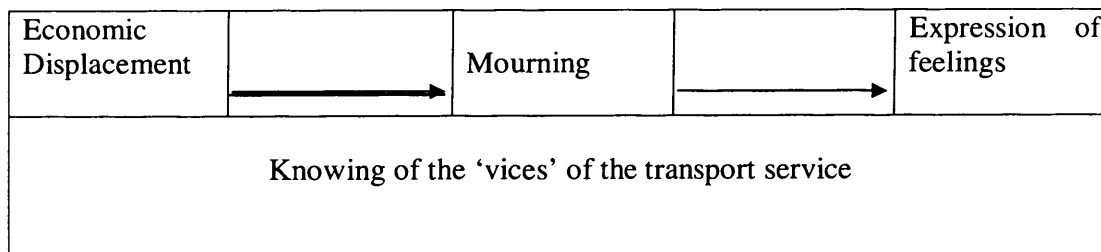


Diagram 8.



After acquiring enough information about the members of the 'traditional' service, the psychological planning was put in place. The psychological strategies not only left aside the social and economic issues involved in the transition, but they were presented as almost a magic formula for influencing the members of the 'traditional' service.

**Psychologist:** *'Right from the beginning, neuro-linguistic programming was the strategy to prepare drivers and bus-owners for the Transmilenio changes. Neuro-linguistic programming strategies ensure, if you know the theory, that people involved in the 'traditional' transport can accept whatever you propose... that is, what is not yet seen is taken for granted. This is a kind of preparation of someone else's mind for the future acceptance of what you are saying. Unconsciously, their minds had already made the decision you have decided on. This is work that has to be complemented with communication and assertiveness techniques. It was very successful! We needed to sell the idea of Transmilenio. We did not pretend that the changes would become imperceptible, we just did not want them to originate uncontrolled reactions from out of the blue...'*

This excerpt shows the presupposed powerful and unexplained effects of neuro-linguistic programming which influences others' minds to believe that they are taking autonomous decisions which have already been taken. As Rose suggests (2000), this kind of psychological intervention exemplifies the liberal dream of the full regulation of the self. In this vein, the excerpt illustrates the general 'climate' of psychological 'freedom and autonomy' which was offered to the members of the 'traditional' service so that they could participate in the Transmilenio service. The municipal authorities had already taken the decision to implement Transmilenio; the participation of the 'traditional' service members became a question of deciding whether or not they were going to participate in the planning itself.

The simulacrum of 'we are inviting you to take your own decisions' appears as part of the implementation of the Transmilenio service. The authorities had already taken the decision to implement the system. The plan for the implementation was communicated to the members of the 'traditional' service. However, the possibility of being involved in the new system was presented as a question of an autonomous decision; according to the psychologist, the 'traditional' transport workers were sceptical.

**Psychologist:** *'This cannot be so good, the members of the 'traditional' transport said. The presentations of the Transmilenio project included economic, financial and legal topics. As people were not accustomed to hearing the truth, they were confused; they were accustomed to seeing things in turmoil and full of tricks. I presented the project and I said we were inviting people to participate, we were going to present the changes in order for them to take part, if they dared. They could play an important role in the changes. We did not ask for their approval. Transmilenio was a fact; it was taken for granted that it was going to take place. This is an example of neuro-linguistic programming; we never ask for approval. We saw in our minds how the members of the traditional service were relinquishing their resistance. We saw them accepting our proposals. We started to deal with the legal issues involved by using neuro-linguistic programming. Thus, we reached 67 legal agreements and a 'social cleaning' of all the transport sector; we did this by eliminating all the 'pirates' (illegal bus companies).'*

As the fragment illustrates, decisions were already taken before the 'negotiation' with the members of the 'traditional' companies. The situation, however, is presented as a question of being about a proactive subject who 'dares' to do the appropriate things. Psychological expertise, once again, translates such problems as losing control of the service and the reduction of income into a question of autonomous decisions. The ways in which members of the 'traditional' service became affected were never taken into consideration. It was assumed that the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies would

regulate issues of displacement and unemployment; issues brought about by implementing the system.

The Transmilenio system was negotiated and is being implemented as a way of solving the problems of mobility in Bogotá. This is a central preoccupation that is linked to the contemporary liberal view of making cities competitive for the globalised market, where the fast and reliable transportation of the labour force is one of the indicators of well-governed cities (Sassen, 2003). Such competitiveness corresponds to the liberal style of thinking and the concern with a specific way of government (Iverson, 1993). Cities like Bogotá have become such an important 'node' that they are taking over the central role of the nation states in regulating international competence (Lungo, 2005; Osborne & Rose, 1998; Sassen, 2003) The city is the space where competition for resources is taking place. It is a source of wealth and also the place where the flows of capital converge (Lungo, 2005). In this sense, the city is classified in terms of being more or less enterprising, and this implies a degree of success in the international market (Osborne & Rose, 1998). In this vein, the production of Bogotá as a competitive city brought about issues such as:

*a) An increased value of practices undertaken by North-Atlantic metropolises.* For example, Alfredo Penalosa, the city's mayor, frequently stated in his public speeches, when referring to the Transmilenio system, that we always thought about small projects, but at that time, we had to think about giant projects: that Bogotá could potentially be as beautiful and efficient as Paris or New York;

*b) Viewing the 'traditional' system as an obstacle for reaching the desired objective of being similar to the aforementioned cities.* The 'traditional' service causes many problems which the metropolises located in the North-Atlantic societies do not have,

namely the 'traditional' service is a sign of underdevelopment, which causes loss of productive time and chaos in the city;

*c) A conception of Bogotá's inhabitants as undisciplined citizens in need of being educated.* The 'traditional' transport system was a source of disorganisation and indiscipline and the commuters collaborated in this lack of organisation of the service;

*d) A preoccupation with the rights of the Bogotans.* The passenger transport system for a competitive city needs to ensure the rights of fast and reliable mobility for all citizens. Thus, the Transmilenio system was promoted as a way of eradicating the 'discriminatory' practices of the 'traditional' service. For instance, Penalosa's<sup>6</sup> administration constantly argued that elderly and disable people were prevented from using the 'traditional' service because the way in which the service operated did not allow for safe access to the vehicles. The improvement in the 'quality of life' of Bogotans was presented as one of the main reasons for the changes in the transport system. Regularity, consistency, easy access, speed, lower carbon emissions and safety were also presented as some of the modern advantages for the general population;

*e) A reallocation of the role of the commuters.* The alleged benefits of modernisation and the idea of anti-discriminatory practices locate the customers at the centre of the controlling processes. The government authorities created a call centre to receive complaints and suggestions; thus, the ordinary commuters' judgement of the Transmilenio system became a central tool used by the government to evaluate the

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<sup>6</sup> Penalosa was the mayor of Bogotá between 1998 and 2002.

companies' operation. Periodically, 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies receive a report of customers' complaints, which is a fundamental part of the evaluation carried out for the renewal of their licences. Therefore, the passenger moves from being the 'cargo' in the traditional system, to becoming the 'judge', and the drivers' conduct becomes a central issue for Bogotá as a competitive city.

Thus, psychological discourses and practices were connected to other ways in which the contemporary liberal rationality of government is exercised. That is to say, psychological practices and discourses were linked to the processes of 'making up' Bogotá as a competitive city. Nowadays, the rationality of government that regulates global competence is exercised beyond nation states (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007). Cities have become privileged places where liberal rationality of government is exercised to regulate competition for the appropriation of the natural and human resources of the planet (e.g. Sassen, 2003; Lungo, 2005; Castro-Diaz, 2007). This does not mean that the state is obsolete, but it means that in the actual liberal conditions – in which the Welfare State is being dismantled – it does not have the kind of central place it had in the past. The production and regulation of Bogotá as competitive city have implied the return of the control of the transport system to the hands of the state. Also, this goal of transforming Bogotá has implied new ways of exercising government over the 'traditional' companies. These companies were guided to participate in the configuration of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies which gradually will replace them. Finally, making Bogotá competitive implied the transformation of drivers and the disciplinarisation of the citizens. On the other hand, the implementation of the Transmilenio system was influenced by a modality of colonial thinking where the North-Atlantic metropolises are the models to follow

(Escobar, 1998). To a certain extent the replacement of the state for the city as a centre for regulation has re-activated issues related to the processes of modernisation. That is to say, instead of considering the nation state as the site for implementing programmes that will bring progress and development, the city becomes a more modest space to be modernised.

### **Transformation, Development and Psychology**

The particular place and operation of psychology in the transport service also constitutes an example of how contemporary global 'flows' influence 'local' settings. The international dissemination of psychology, the transformation of the world of work as well as the new role of the cities as sites for the exercising the liberal rationality of government, meet in the transport service in different ways. These 'flows' can be seen, as suggested by Castro-Diaz (2007), as networks that are partially connected. Being connected does not mean that one determines the other; it means that they co-exist simultaneously. An examination of studies that have considered the place and operations of psychology in terms of contributions to national development, cast light on colonial dimensions of the psychological practices and discourses that are being applied in the transition from the 'traditional' to the Transmilenio service.

In North-Atlantic societies, psychologists have discussed the importance of the world of work for the modernisation of societies, such as the Colombian (i.e. Inkeles, 1983; Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Harrison, 2000). Typically, these studies conceive the place and operations of psychology in relation to a conception of development as a scale of successive changes at industrial and economic levels. These changes aim to guarantee international competition by introducing a series of strategies that guide those underdeveloped countries and regions towards the same paths taken by the developed

countries. The changes introduced by the modernisation processes involve a series of social issues that are translated and 'produced as psychological' and solved by means of psychological strategies. For instance, Azuma (1984) argues that psychology seeks to take charge of helping people to confront the very psycho-cultural shock implied in modernising changes. This psychological help is especially important because the modernizing changes bring about violent destruction of traditional ways of living and thinking which constitute the basis of identity. Also, Cherns (1984) affirms that the world of work has a double role in modernisation processes: work is the way in which humans relate to their environment and at the same time, paid work is a typical characteristic of modern societies. Any difference with respect to the ways in which work is organised in developed societies becomes a factor that contributes to maintaining underdevelopment in the countries located in the 'Third World'. Thus, countries around the world can be located along a line that connects two extremes: developed and underdeveloped. According to Cherns (1984) 'developing societies' keep traditional ways of organizing work, and modern societies organise work activities around employment. Consequently, developed societies are organised around the figures of the employee and employer, and developing societies have to change traditional ways of organising work for the modern 'employment'. This transition implies a shock which strikes the people involved; therefore psychology has to intervene this process in order to make it less harmful (Cherns, 1984).

Moreover, the role assigned to psychology, at the international level, is not only related to this buffering effect of modernizing changes. On the contrary, complex models based on psychological knowledge have been proposed to explain how this 'ideal state of national development' can be achieved. Characteristically, the

variations related to the level of national development are conceived in terms of differences in the 'state of mind'. Triandis (1984), for instance, establishes a series of differences in terms of physical, cultural, and economic variables in order to propose a model to explain behaviour, and 'the mind' which aims to produce 'hard workers' useful for economic development. In the same vein, the motivational theory proposed by David McClelland (1961) constitutes a way of understanding the problems of national development. According to McClelland (1961) the inhabitants of the 'Third World' have a lack of achievement motivation. This lack becomes a fundamental cause for the economic and organisational problems, and also for the disadvantaged position of the 'Third World'.

In 1974 Alex Inkeles and David Smith published their well-known study 'Becoming Modern. Individual Change in Six Developing Countries' which proposed that *'there is nothing more relevant and challenging for psychology than to explain the processes whereby people move from being traditional to becoming modern personalities.'* In order to achieve this objective the authors themselves dedicated their book to proposing a theory of 'modern man', and to explaining how it is possible to reach this ideal modern personality by means of changes at the individual level. Inkeles and Smith (1974) point out that even though there were many studies considering diverse aspects related to the differences between industrialised nations and non-industrialised nations, researchers had left aside or not considered issues related to 'individual change' as a fundamental fact to explain those differences. Inkeles and Smith's proposal (1974) maintains that there is an ideal subject which is a central cause of development. This ideal subject is the 'employee' who has a type of personality developed in respect to modern work settings. Inkeles and Smith argue that they did



not add anything new to the concept of the modern subject - this concept was already diffused and circulating in society - these authors only claim that they helped to concretise the characteristics of the modern subject which remained vague.

By proposing that the problems of under-development and modernisation are related to a 'kind of mentality' manifested in the ideal features of the employee, Inkeles and Smith (1974) translated the question of 'becoming modern' into a psychological question of inducing the 'right' personality features in the 'common people' of the non-industrialised countries. Thus, economic and political issues related to economic growth can be translated into psychological problems that facilitate – or, on the contrary, obstruct – the proliferation of 'modern man' (Inkeles, 1983).

According to Inkeles and Smith, the set of psychological features that identify the modern worker not only influence their conduct in work places, but these characteristics also influence their behaviour in every other social setting away from companies, in their becoming active citizens. Such characteristics are stated as follows:

*'As a modern informed participant citizen, the modern man identifies with the newer, larger entities of region and state, takes an interest in public affairs, national international as well as local, joins organisations, keeps himself informed about major events in the news, and votes or otherwise takes some part in the political process. The modern man's sense of efficacy is reflected in his belief that, either alone or in concert with others, he may take action which can affect the course of his life and that of his community; in his active efforts to improve his own condition and that of his family; and in his rejection of passivity, resignation and fatalism toward the course of life's events. His independence of traditional sources of authority is manifested in public issues by his following the advice of public officials or trade-union leaders rather than priests and village elders, and in personal matters by his choosing the job and the bride, he prefers even if his parents prefer some other position or some other person. The modern*

*man's openness to new experience is reflected in his interest in technical innovation, his support in scientific exploration of hitherto sacred or taboo subjects, his readiness to meet strangers and his willingness to allow women to take advantage of opportunities outside the confines of the household.'* (Inkeles & Smith, 1974 p, 290-291)

In non-industrialised countries, the relationship between psychology and modernisation was widely adopted with a '*general feeling... that psychology can be used to help in the development processes*' (Ardila & Castro, 1973, p. 65). Psychologists in Latin America assumed a celebratory attitude that opened a space for psychological studies and interventions (Staeuble, 2003). However, even though it is certainly true that psychologists have undertaken serious examinations of the problems related to work in the 'Third World', it is also true that they have contributed to the translation of the problems of work into psychological terms, so that the problems of work became trivialised by reducing them to variables related to individuals.

Once the problems of work are translated as individual variables, psychological differences between the North-Atlantic societies inhabitants and the populations of the Latin America appear. For instance, the 'poor man' is proposed as the model that describes the subjectivity of most 'third world' inhabitants. This psychological construction matches up, perfectly, as the counter face of the 'modern man'. Thus, Inkeles and Smith (1974) proposed a kind of subject constructed around the psychological characteristics for the North-Atlantic societies, and Ardila and Castro (1973) summarised, the psychological characteristic of the 'poor man' which constitutes the typical subject of the Latin American region. This is a human being with the following characteristics:

1. *'Lack of development of personal life: the poor have insufficient education, understanding about things, convictions, etc. The poor man is the non-self-actualised person.*
2. *Close contact with nature: the poor accept nature as a final ruler, follow its rules and behave impulsively.*
3. *Lack of self-control: sexual freedom, aggressiveness, impulsiveness, all this is related to their close contact with the nature and the lack of personal life.*
4. *Internal contradictions: pride and humility, skepticism and faith, roughness and softness, etc., at the same time.*
5. *Instability of convictions.*
6. *Dependency and passivity: the consequence of several centuries of oppression in different forms*
7. *Lack of self-consciousness: the poor do not possess a view of their own life and behavior. They live in the present, do not plan for the future, do not take care of their money, their children, or their work. Not learning from experience, they repeat the same mistakes over and over again.*
8. *Lack of sense of reality.*
9. *Lack of responsibility.*
10. *Psychological simplification: things have only one face for them; they are straightforward, black or white.*
11. *Resentment and resignation: the poor resent being converted into an element of production into an appendage of the machine they have to operate; this profound resentment gives way to a feeling of impotence, to a learned helplessness that appears on the surface; they believe that nothing can be done, that they will be poor forever, that life is hard and unfair but nothing can be changed.'* (Ardila & Castro, 1973. p, 72-73)

Two sides of a coin have been produced in psychological terms; on the one side, the 'desirable employee', and on the other, the 'poor man'. The former is the type of human being who supposedly corresponds to the type of subjectivity dominant in North-Atlantic societies – characterised by being rational, autonomous, participative, efficient, concerned with others, and with a tendency to establish democratic gender relations. That is to say, 'he' is the psychological subject (Henriques et al, 1984). The latter, the 'poor man', matches all the features that the psychological subject is not. In this sense, he becomes the 'other' of the desirable employee. The 'poor man' is

essentially traditional, heteronymous, inefficient, authoritarian, non-intelligent and 'macho'.

Clearly these constructions go beyond the world of work. The researchers, emphatically, affirm that they just concretised versions circulating in both academic psychology and in the wider social world. These two ways of conceiving human beings demonstrate the role of psychology in the construction of differences and of 'desirable' and 'undesirable' people. Psychology in a triple movement has provided descriptions of people, has opened possibilities for their regulation and control and has suggested areas for intervention (Rose, 1996, Henriques et al 1984). In this way, the psychological differences produced in relation to national development, replace other fundamental issues such as inequalities in terms of outcome, lack of opportunities, difficulties in accessing education and infrastructure, colonial dependency, and economic exploitation.

The relationship between the world of work, psychological knowledge and national development emerged in an epoch corresponding with the end of direct colonialism, and the appearance of neo-colonial forms in which psychology – and its unaccountable replicas, adaptations and translations for its application to the 'South' – play a fundamental role (Nandy, 1997). By means of one of the main characteristics of psychological knowledge, its capacity to produce subjects, psychology contributes to the processes of regulation between developed and developing, rational and irrational, and civilised and uncivilised, between dominators and subordinates. In so doing, psychology contributes to the liberal regulation of the international order.

The importance of academic psychology for national development is partially rooted in the 'modernizing strategy' designed in the United States after the Second World War. Psychology provided a series of tools, strategies, professionals and jargon, which aimed to be weapons to win the 'cold war' (Herman, 1993; Brock, 2007). According to Deshpande (2003), two objectives were at stake: firstly, to prevent Asian, African and Latin American countries from becoming communist regions, and secondly, to establish viable paths for the growth and development of these countries. This modernizing strategy coincided both with the global leadership obtained by the United States and with the end of direct colonialism exercised by European countries. In these circumstances, the relationship between power and knowledge was reconfigured producing the division known as first, second, and third worlds. According to Escobar (1998), this division constitutes a continuation of the processes of colonisation by other means. The modernizing strategy opened a space for the construction of theories, concepts and practices that allow for locating, describing and intervening in those countries classified under the labels of the 'Third World' and 'underdeveloped'. The relationship between power and knowledge produces the division between 'developed and developing' countries. As a result, 'developing countries' were (and are) continually constructed and re-constructed as backwards, traditional, retrograde, non-developed, non-democratic, half-civilised, and therefore as necessitating help, orientation and intervention (Escobar, 1998); that is to say, in need of being governed in order to follow the same path of those countries already enjoying development.

In this sense, a kind of orientalism was constructed around national development (Said 2003), as a set of knowledges and practices that have permitted the exercise of

the liberal rationality of government over the populations of the Latin America, with a justified coherence in terms of economic goals and the promotion of general well-being. Psychology has specified the areas of interventions, orchestrated the implementation of the programmes, as well as producing ways of being that are congruent with modernisation and development. What can be said, done and thought about the 'Third World' is in many ways restricted by the psychological jargon. What can be said, done and thought corresponds more to the inhabitants of the North-Atlantic societies that produced psychology, than with the reality of the countries in Latin America.

### **Conclusion**

Each and every social science has made its own contribution to national development and modernisation. Thus, there are prescriptions related to economic, social, and psychological issues (Escobar, 1998). Psychology contributes to the 'logic' of modernisation and national development, in providing a series of proposals about how the inhabitants of the developing countries should be and what kind of new mentality they need. I chose the 'encounter' between the complementary proposals of Inkeles and Smith (1974) and Ardila and Castro (1973) not only as a historical curiosity; I selected them for several reasons:

- The proposals complement each other. They exemplify the way in which the 'psychological subject' who is responsible, self-controlled, able to understand and to judge his own psychology (Blackman & Walkerdine 2001), exists in relation with the 'pre-psychological' subject; a subject who is incapable of self-control, emotional, and in need of help in order to judge its own self, in order to facilitate the exercise of regulation between states.

- These proposals simultaneously emerged at the end of direct colonialism and the beginning of both the Cold War and neo-colonialism. That is to say, they emerged when the ways of governing the relationship between the states changed and became focused on the production of a determined kind of subjects. As it has been pointed out by Nandy (1989) neo-colonialism is not only based on the appropriation of resources and economic dependence, but is fundamentally based on the modulation of certain ways of being.
- In the same vein, the proposals by Inkeles and Smith (1974) and Ardila and Castro (1973) constitute a central example of how psychology transforms economic, political and historical problems into psychological ones, facilitating the exercise of the liberal rationality of government that avoids references to cultural and historical determinants.
- Ardila and Castro are two of the most internationally recognised Colombian psychologists. In this sense, their work is an important example of the celebratory attitude (Staeuble, 2005; 2003) that psychologists in Latin America assumed with regard to the application psychological discourses and practices in the region.
- Inkeles and Smith's work was decisive for the actual series of theories about modernizing the mind that take the psychological subject as the desirable object, that has to be constituted around the world in order to make the world harmonious and developed (e.g. Harrison, 2000; 2006; Mendoza, Montaner &

Vargas, 1997). Psychological explanations for the situation of underdevelopment are far from disappearing; they are 'the central liberal truth' (Harrison, 2000). For instance, in his book, 'Underdevelopment as State of Mind', Harrison (2006) renovates the argument that the situation of poverty and lack of industrialisation in Latin American countries is fundamentally related to the 'patterns of thought and behaviour' that characterise the region.

- It is not necessary to force a comparison in order to see the similitude between the psychological proposals allowing for the exercise of the liberal rationality of government at global levels, and those conducted within the urban passenger transport system both to negotiate the implementation of the Transmilenio service, and in the constitution of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers.

Thus, this chapter has raised the visibility of psychological practices and strategies applied within the transport service to a new dimension. The chapter has presented the connections that psychological practices and discourses have with the liberal rationality of government, at the level of regulating relationships between national states. Although the implementation of the Transmilenio service is in consonance with the contemporary role cities have for exercising the liberal rationality of government, the analysis of psychology's place in terms of state modernisation can be extended to understanding the place of psychology in the government of the city. That is to say, the Transmilenio service is being implemented in order to make Bogotá a competitive city; however the implementation and the psychological strategies applied *also* follow the logics of 'modernising the city' of the developing world, which are based on the models represented in North-Atlantic metropolises. In the concluding chapter of this



study, I summarise the central arguments presented in previous chapters, and propose general conclusions.

## Epilogue

*'We do not discover psychology but live it and produce it.'*  
(Parker, 1999, p. 13)

Throughout these chapters I have mapped several key psychological practices applied to the context of the urban passenger transport service in Bogotá. This mapping aimed to de-familiarise the place and operations of psychology, as well as to explore its colonial dimensions. In this epilogue, I review the arguments presented in the previous chapters, and discuss the main conclusions of this study. I also consider possibilities for future research endeavours, in light of and following this study.

In Chapter 1, I described how academic psychology moved from being not widely applied in the 'traditional' service, to becoming disseminated in the Transmilenio service. In the new 'feeder' and 'trunk' companies, the drivers' problems were defined in psychological terms; psychologists and consultancy firms were providing psychological services; and programmes were applied in order to transform traditional drivers into the desirable workers required by the Transmilenio system. My aim was to examine the place and operations of psychology in terms of how the drivers were constituted as subjects in the urban passenger transport service, and to explore these constructions in relation to processes of neo-coloniality. In pursuing this endeavour, every chapter that comprises this study has contributed to this effort in different ways. That is to say, every chapter shows from different angles the psychological practices applied and the constellation of relationships involved in the application of psychology.

In the second chapter, I presented the methodology guiding this study. The construction of the drivers as subjects did not simply take place in one company, but in a number of different sites, which needed to be compared and contrasted. Thus, a multi-site ethnography was selected to guide the study. This ethnography focused on psychological practices carried out in every site (the ways in which the 'psy-complex' was mise-en-scene) and followed the connections and 'distant flows' between these practices and other sites (Marcus, 1995). Thus, the multi-site ethnographic approach necessarily implied a comparison and thus allowed me to follow interconnections and 'distant flows' in the dissemination of psychology. It also allowed me to explore links with 'global' processes such as the neo-liberal transformation of the working conditions that affect the local world of work. The process of mapping was constantly accompanied with reflections about the conceptual significance of psychological practices. In this way, the fieldwork was not a separate phase from the construction of a conceptual framework; on the contrary, as Marcus (1995) recommends, they were conducted in light of one other.

In conceptual terms, first of all, the project involved revisiting studies that examine the relationship between psychology and work (Viteles, 1932; Baritz, 1960; Gillespie, 1993; Prilleltensky, 1994). It was pointed out that these studies focused on finding either the positive issues, or the 'horrors and errors' (Venn, 1984) of work psychology in order to find ways to improve it. Thus, the critique of these approaches has helped to recognise different problems, such as the engagement of work psychology with the problems of management and not with problems of workers; and the 'common sense' knowledge about business that is produced in the academia, rather than theories to better explain the world of work, and/or the social class conflict that psychology

obscures when applied to workplaces. Instead of questioning the place of psychology within the world of work, these studies became vehicles for the modernisation of psychology at work (Rose, 1996). Chapter 3 presented an analysis of these studies, as a step leading to a series of conceptual tools that took me beyond attempts to improve psychology.

In Chapter 4, I described five 'key conceptual prescriptions' to conduct an analysis of the place and operations of psychology (Deacon, 2002). These tools were the result of my interactions with the transport service. The five conceptual prescriptions aimed to provide a conceptual guide for the better understanding of the psychological practices and their interconnections. First of all, the research had to focus on the changing working conditions within the transport system. The working conditions are the result of the way a global liberalism is transforming the world of work, as well as the particular arrangements put into place within each company. Thus, the working conditions have connections that extend beyond the walls of the companies. Secondly, lay and academic psychologies work together to 'make up' people. The '*chofer*' is the figure that has been replaced by the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers; in this struggle academic psychological interventions subordinate popular ways of conceiving drivers. Thirdly, psychology is more than a series of theories that are proposed as the result of a process of discovery. Psychology is better understood as the 'psy-complex' (Rose, 1996; Ingleby, 1985), meaning a network of professional, theories, jargon, instruments, technologies, institutions, journals, books that cross academic boundaries and make psychology mundane. Fourthly, the psychological practices and discourses that aim to produce the drivers-as-subject can be located in the sovereignty-disciplinary-govermentality complex (Hook, 2003; 2004). More than

making the distinction between the psychological practices in relation to this complex or chain of relations, the research tried to establish the ways in which they related to the production of the driver as individual, and contributed to the exercise of governmental liberal rationality by producing autonomised workers (Donzelot, 1981). Finally, the psychological practices were interrogated in relation to another 'chain' of the disciplinary-governmentality power complex. These practices were considered in relation to the regulation of the global 'competence' for the appropriation of human and natural resources of the planet where colonial dimensions of the psychological practices could be observed.

Chapter 5 presented a comparative analysis of the 'material working conditions' in the 'traditional' 'feeder' and 'trunk' service. In this analysis, the dimensions of the uncertainty taking place in the transport service emerged more clearly. It was argued that the lack of state regulation, and the familiarity and friendship of social relationships – crucial parts of the 'traditional' transport – did not allow most of the 'traditional' drivers to be entitled to the social benefits provided by the Colombian Welfare State. However, 'traditional' drivers' wages were remarkably higher than the salaries of other workers with the same educational levels. Currently, the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers are being introduced to the legal regulations of the world of work that the neo-liberal reforms brought about in Colombia. As a result, the total 'free enterprise' of the 'traditional' service became regulated by the state – and the uncertainty of the traditional service was intensified and formalised.

The introduction of the Transmilenio service returned the control of public transport to the state, and left the control of the labour force in the hands of the 'feeder' and

'trunk' companies. The application of psychological strategies were introduced as mandatory practices to be carried out in the Transmilenio companies. Thus, it was established that the introduction of psychological practices and the subject that accompanied them, along with the legal subject of rights and duties, introduced by the working contracts, constituted two components of the 'grid reference' that opened the space for psychology to be applied.

The third component of the 'grid reference' was constituted by the 'lay' psychological discourses that produced images of the 'traditional' worker. Thus, in Chapter 6, the constitution of the 'traditional' driver as a 'chofer' was presented, making salient the radical importance of those images for the application of psychology. The psychological interventions were targeted in opposition to the images of the 'chofer'. In Chapter 7, the psychological strategies that aimed to produce the worker were mapped. These psychological interventions aimed to individualise, normalise and homogenise the worker; they also aimed to produce 'desirable' drivers. The case study of URBANOS shows a variety of psychological interventions which relate to the type of short but direct work contracts established with the drivers. In these circumstances, the prescriptions formulated by 'human relations school' which focused on the construction of the company as a family co-exists with those psychological practices that only attempt to autonomise the worker. The mapping of the psychological practices conducted in URBANOS also illustrated the malleability of psychology in order to be used for different professionals, as well as the hybridisation that occurs in the process of adaptation to different cultural situations.

Chapter 8 presented a similar mapping of psychological practices. In CENTURIA, the psychological practices aimed to produce a fundamentally autonomised driver. The company does not establish direct working contracts, but recruitment companies provide the 'hands' to carry out the driving. Under these working conditions, psychologists intensified the psychological *contract* and the production of the driver as an entrepreneur. It in this sense, the similarity of the 'trunk' and 'traditional' working conditions was discussed, with both services being very flexible in terms of working conditions. In the 'traditional' service there was an almost complete 'free enterprise' in terms of the regulation of the working conditions, whilst in the 'trunk' companies there is a 'free enterprise' regulated by the government. However, the regulation that Transmilenio service brought about formalised and intensified the uncertainty of the working conditions. Likewise, the 'traditional' driver was the worker that keeps a certain grade of 'material' freedom as he controlled the whole operation. On the contrary, the CENTURIA driver becomes the human part of the machine and his autonomy is constructed in psychological terms. The independence and real possibilities of becoming an entrepreneur that operated in the 'traditional' service are replaced by the psychological work related to becoming a psychological entrepreneur (of oneself), and an apparently 'autonomised manager' of the vehicle.

Chapter 9 considered the connections that the application of psychological practices to the transport sector has a relation to the exercise of the liberal rationality of government at a global level. For contemporary liberalism, the city becomes a privileged site for the regulation of competence for procuring and using human and natural resources (Sassen, 2003; Osborne & Rose, 1998) The city became the place for the government 'at distance' of global human and natural resources (Osborne &

Rose, 1998). Thus, the 'local' psychological practices applied within the transport service were also linked to the city's progress and national development. This link between psychology and development is neither exclusive nor new to the transport service. Rather, it is related to the ways in which psychology has contributed to the neo-colonisation and re-subordination of territories after the re-organisation of the relationship between power and knowledge after the Second World War (Escobar, 1998; 2003; Herman, 1993; Coronil, 1996). Thus, in following the 'flows' affecting the psychological practices applied within the transport service, it was possible to see the same correspondence between the construction of the 'traditional' 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers, and the psychological premise that defines the North Atlantic 'citizens' and the 'poor and wild' inhabitants of the rest of the world. The chapter therefore illustrated, in a different way, how psychology is involved in the preparation of a terrain to be governed. It also demonstrated how psychology - in making people amenable, knowable and calculable (Rose, 1988) - is involved in the production and reproduction of colonial dimensions of the liberal rationality of government that 'otherise' groups and populations.

My aim was, throughout the chapters, as Marcus (1995; 2002) states, to generate an object of study for 'contemplation'. The mapping showed the simultaneity of:

- The new working conditions in the Transmilenio service, which are affected by the neo-liberalism and globalisation's influence on the world of work;
- The mise-en-scene of the 'psy-complex' (Rose, 1996) in different sites of the urban passenger transport system;
- The interconnections between the psychological practices applied in different settings within the transport system.



The mapping of psychological practices, and the charting of their connections and distant flows, was undertaken in relation to the disciplinary-governmental complex (Hook, 2003) in order to examine the production of the driver as an individual and thus to scrutinise the place of this in the exercise of the rationality of government. This sitting of psychological practices in the sovereignty-disciplinary-govermentality 'chain' was not meant to imply that there was a kind of sequence or a hierarchy between psychological practices in different sites. On the contrary, they were considered 'messy' practices in the sense proposed by Marcus (1995). That is to say, psychological practices were seen as competing and/or complementing each other; they gained coherence when allocated in the chain, allowing us to see the ways in which psychological practices aim to produce certain types of 'desirable' workers in the context of the urban transport.

Thus psychological practices, in different ways, contribute to the construction of the 'traditional' driver as the 'other' of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers. A number of issues are involved:

- a) *The popular construction of the 'chofer' became subordinated in terms of the relationship between lay psychology and academic psychology.* On the one hand, lay psychological discourses about workers were 'under attack' from academic psychological discourses, which prescribe what a 'desirable' driver should be. On the other hand, academic psychological discourses about the characteristics of 'desirable' workers correspond more closely to North-Atlantic societies, in which psychology incorporates popular concepts related to work and workers (Siguan-Soler, 2002; Danzinger, 1997). In this sense these processes of subordination imply a kind colonisation of both an

academic field and a practical terrain, as it has been described for other countries (Van Elteren, 1992; Van Strien, 1998; Willpert, 1990). That is to say, the psychological practices show the ways in which psychology in Colombia becomes a 'translation' and adaptation that 'naturalises' the North-Atlantic psychology (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Ibarra, 2006) and it also show how the transport service becomes a terrain governable in the terms proposed by North-Atlantic psychology. Once the transport service is knowable and amenable in North-Atlantic psychological terms drivers can be incorporated into the global homogenised autonomous labour force. (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2003a, 2003b; Prasad, 2003).

- b) *Academic psychological discourses about drivers are 'naturalised' as indigenous ways of understanding workers.* Psychology gains its potential to produce the autonomised 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers from its capacity to be easily 'translated' and hybridised. Psychological practices conducted within the transport service are the result of '*selective adaptations... to fit the demands of domestic markets and institutions*' (Zeitlin cited in Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006, p. 1555). Thus, psychological interventions designed for other contexts were translated into Spanish and applied to the transport service. As a result of this process, psychology becomes 'naturalised' (Ibarra, 2006). It is supposed that, to a certain extent, translations transform psychological strategies into a kind of 'indigenous' tools.
- c) *The 'traditional' driver is produced as the 'other' of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' driver by opposing psychological 'lacks and excesses'.* Psychology establishes a series of 'lacks' related to the 'traditional' driver (Cruikshank, 1993). Thus, 'chofer' has a 'lack of' education, a 'lack of' politeness, a 'lack of' adequate

sexuality, a 'lack of' social responsibility etc. In contrast, the 'feeder' and 'trunk' drivers have, I would say, an excess of 'self-ways' (Rimke, 2000). For example, the 'feeder' and 'trunk' driver is self-managed, self-motivated, self-fulfilled, self-regulated and autonomous. In this interplay between 'lacks and excesses' the autonomised driver becomes the 'desirable' worker.

d) *The production of the 'chofer' as the 'other' of the 'feeder' and 'trunk' driver is a central part of the process of individualisation and disciplinarisation of the workers as well as part of the way of exercising the liberal rationality of government within the transport companies.* Psychological practices are strategically applied to produce the 'other' and the psychologised drivers who characteristically have to be self-regulated. At the same time, the production of the self-regulated driver extends the liberal rationality of government from the production of individual workers to the ways in which companies have to be managed. That is to say, the Transmilenio service companies are governed as places in which the labour force is produced and regulated by becoming not only autonomised subjects, but also these subjects become part of the 'best, way' of conducting the business, thus subordinating any other forms of management. It is around the self-regulated subject that the company's problems are defined and their solutions formulated.

e) *The regulation of liberal competence also involves the production of the autonomised subject.* The production of autonomised drivers is an important part of the 'modernisation' of Bogotá as a competitive city. Thus, the production of drivers as subjects becomes part of the ways in which the city comes to regulate the appropriation of human and natural resources. At this

level, the liberal rationality of government 'otherises' the differences between the North-Atlantic societies and the rest of the world. The underdeveloped are compelled to become 'modern' following the paths left by the developed. The transformation of Choferes into desirable workers becomes connected to this global process of 'neo-colonisation of the mind'.

Thus, these general conclusions illustrate ways in which colonial dimensions emerged when psychology was applied to the transport service as a vehicle for the exercise of the liberal rationality of government. Among the sites a series of intricate connections were mapped that make visible the ways in which local applications of psychology are related to global processes.

I would like to point out that this study is not against the Transmilenio service. The system has brought about some of the benefits it promised and has also introduced new problems for the passenger mobility. The well-being of Bogotá's inhabitants is being achieved, as well as their disciplinarianisation. Also, this study did not target psychological practices to show psychology's 'horrors and errors' (Venn, 1984). I was not interested in assuming the role of a moral judge who points out the inconveniences and injustices of psychology and disapproves the behaviour of its practitioners. I tried to establish a map of a little terrain within the world of work, where the battle for the production of souls of the people living in Latin America in general and in Colombia in particular is carried out. This is only a small step; the task of analysing how societies in Latin America are being far more intensively psychologised than the North-Atlantic societies is a terrain that has to be further researched. The transport service is one example of the ways in which psychological enterprises are assuming dramatic dimensions in Colombia. The effects and

consequences of the introduction of psychological enterprises in the world of work in Colombia are waiting to be explored. The study of the psy-complex would involve different issues such as the exploration of the other sectors, the particular ways in which psychology has been disseminated in the country, the historical relationship established between psychological expertise and the Colombian business environment as well as a reconstruction of the social history of psychology in Colombia.

To conclude, I just would like to point out that this study attempted to map the relation between the production of subjects and the exercise of the liberal rationality. In the exercise of this rationality, subtle colonial dimensions that perpetuate dependency are reproduced, and it has shown the ways in which, as Foucault stated, capitalism penetrates deeply into our souls by producing subjects (1977b). The 'map' has striven to show how we are being governed in terms of the production of subjectivity and the intricate relationships involved. After this mapping of the psychological practices applied in the transport service, it is now possible to consider the critical questions formulated by Foucault (1996). If this is the way we are governed, how do we want to be governed? Do other possibilities exist?

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