



The History of Family Constellations

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This book is distributed free of charge with the aim of contributing to the knowledge and understanding of the history of Family Constellations, both worldwide and in Colombia, particularly in Medellín. We hope that this work serves as a valuable resource for all those interested in this therapeutic practice, helping to enrich their knowledge and foster its development in various communities.

The content of this book may be copied and used for educational purposes, respecting copyright and referencing Liliana Arbeláez N. as the researcher and writer. Through her investigative work, Liliana has reconstructed the history of this revolutionary technique and philosophy of life.

A Tribute to the Pioneers of Family Constellations

From Germany to Colombia and Medellín, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the teachers of Family Constellations. I thank them for their courage in accepting the challenge of exploring and adopting this psychotherapeutic technique, transforming it into a path to reconciliation and a philosophy of life. Thanks to their work, millions of people around the world can now learn to see things as they are, give them a place in their hearts, and claim the right of new generations to do things differently.

Their courage and dedication have been fundamental on this journey. Thank you for being guardians of a healing tradition, for honoring the memory of our ancestors, and for guiding future generations towards greater awareness and liberation from limiting patterns.

I deeply admire their ancestral wisdom, their ability to delve into the depths of the human being, and their skill in revealing the light that each one carries within.

Thank you for being catalysts for change, for building bridges between the past, present, and future, for healing the wounds of the lineage, and for paving the way for a new awakening.

Your work has planted in us the seed of the infinite potential that resides in every being. You inspire us to grow, to spread our wings, and to fly towards the fullness of our being.

In this simple act of gratitude, I celebrate your vocation, your passion, and your dedication. Thank you for being beacons of hope, for illuminating the path to healing, and for reminding us of the transformative power of love with open eyes and a disposition towards humility with the Great Teacher Life.

May your legacy continue to flourish in every corner of the world, bringing light and hope to those who seek to heal their wounds and discover the greatness that resides within. May the new generations of Family constellation facilitator in Medellín, Colombia, and the world continue this legacy, fulfilling our part and exercising our right to do so as it is meant for us, free from loyalties that prevent us from continuing to evolve as servants of the Greater Good.

In love, service, and learning.

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Summary

This book offers a comprehensive and detailed look at the evolution of Family Constellations, from its beginnings in Germany to its arrival and development in Medellín, Colombia. Designed to be a valuable tool for constellation facilitators, the text explores the roots and transformations of this therapeutic practice.

Delve into the origins and development of Family Constellations, a technique that has revolutionized psychotherapy with its phenomenological and systemic approach. Discover how Family Sculpture and Psychodrama, with their powerful non-verbal techniques, laid the groundwork for Family Constellations. Throughout the pages, the contributions of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and his concept of transgenerational solidarity are explored, deepening our understanding of family dynamics across generations.

Understand how systemic family therapy, with its holistic view of family systems, became one of the fundamental pillars of Family Constellations. Additionally, the impact and influence of Thea Schönfelder are revealed, whose innovations and teachings were crucial in the early development of Family Constellations.

Learn about the life and work of Bert Hellinger, who, with his philosophical and phenomenological approach, transformed Family Constellations into a globally recognized therapeutic tool. Examine the journey of Family Constellations to Colombia, its adaptation, and growth within the country's cultural and therapeutic context. Discover how Medellín has become a vibrant center for Family Constellations, with an active community of facilitators committed to healing and family well-being.

Introduction

Family Constellations represent one of the most significant innovations in the field of psychotherapy and systemic therapy. This book aims to trace the fascinating journey of this practice from its beginnings in Germany to its arrival in Colombia. Throughout these pages, we will explore the deep roots of Family Constellations, rooted in the techniques of systemic family therapy and the premise of the unconscious from psychoanalysis.

The narrative begins with the origins of Family Constellations, highlighting the crucial influence of techniques such as Family Sculpture and Psychodrama. Through the lens of pioneering figures like Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, we will understand the importance of transgenerational solidarity in shaping family dynamics.

This book also honors Thea Schönfelder, considered by the author of this book as the mother of Family Constellations, and Bert Hellinger, internationally recognized as the Father, whose methodological and philosophical contributions have transformed this technique into a systemic therapeutic tool and today as a recognized philosophy of life worldwide. From systemic family therapy to contemporary innovations, the journey reveals how these influences have shaped a practice that continues to evolve.

Finally, let us shift our focus to Colombia, where Family Constellations have found fertile ground to flourish and evolve. Particularly, Medellín stands out as a vibrant and active hub, with a resolute community of facilitators devoted to healing and enhancing family well-being. This book not only chronicles history but also celebrates the continuous evolution of Family Constellations, encouraging readers to comprehend and engage in this transformative practice.

Through this introduction, I hope to prepare the reader for a deep and enriching exploration of Family Constellations, offering a comprehensive view of its history, theoretical foundations, and global and local impact.

History of Family Constellations

Family Constellations are deeply rooted in the techniques of systemic family therapy and contributions from the psychoanalytic clinic of Freud, Lacan, Adler, Szondi, and Jung, which expanded therapists' understanding of unconscious dynamics in family systems.

Bert Hellinger, known as the father of Family Constellations, in his professional journey, during his religious and missionary life in Africa, trained as a philosopher and phenomenologist before becoming a psychoanalyst and systemic family therapist. His methodological contributions transformed what was initially a technique into a phenomenological, systemic, and transdisciplinary tool with a significant impact on psychotherapy, which today becomes a philosophy of life for millions of individuals worldwide through his contributions with the Orders of Love.

Family Constellations are a living fabric of theories, techniques, and experiences that continue to evolve today. Their roots are nourished by Hellinger's philosophy and other knowledge, gaining complexity and depth. As a systemic consciousness tool, they are used for diagnosis and intervention, respecting ethical principles and transdisciplinary collaboration, especially in emotional, mental, and relational well-being processes.

As Carola Castillo (2013) states in "Echoes of the Past. Systemic therapeutic work in Family Constellations":

"Family Constellations are not a theory; they are the result of the union of principles from various psychotherapeutic schools such as Family Systemic Therapy, Behavior Therapy, Gestalt, Psychodrama, Milton Ericsson's Hypnotherapy, and Arthur Janoff's Primary Scream, among others. Bert Hellinger, after having worked with these different techniques for more than thirty years, developed his own therapy, which today is called 'Family Constellations.'" (p. 21)

The journey through the history presented in this book will lead us to the realm of systemic family therapy, where Family Constellations began to develop, not in Germany, but in the United States. According to Pereira (1994):

"Family Therapy, as we know it today, began to develop in the United States in the 1950s. Historians of Family Therapy even specify that the year 1952 can be cited as the beginning of the movement." (p. 1)

At that time, psychology focused on the individual field, but the development of ecology and Systems Theory in the 1950s allowed for a more holistic view of psychological phenomena. This facilitated the integration of the intersubjective dimension of family dynamics in psychology.

In this context, family therapy and systemic psychology became the foundation of Family Constellations. Two key techniques emerged from this field: family sculpture and psychodrama, with fundamental contributions from Anne Ancelin Schützenberger and Jacob Levy Moreno.

Simón, Stierlin, and Wynne (1998), cited by Población and López (1991) in "Sculpture in Family Therapy," point out that the Family Sculpture technique is related to Psychodrama, using active dramatic techniques. They observe that few cite Jacob Levy Moreno as a theoretical source, a historical situation that this book aims to overcome.

Family Sculpture and Psychodrama at the Beginning of Family Constellations

Family Sculpture is a non-verbal technique in Family Constellations, focused on interaction, behavior, and emotional charges in human group communication. Población and López (1991) cite Anne Ancelin Schützenberger in "Introduction to Psychodrama" (1970), where she defines the technique as:

"It is about developing a situation difficult to explain verbally through mimetic means," and among its purposes is "to release interaction, to focus on behavior and the emotional aspect of communication, not on the semantic," although it is followed by a "discussion about the feelings that have been experienced." (p. 2)

Other theorists also contributed to the technique of Family Sculpture. Población and López (1991) mention:

"Kantor and others (Duhl, Kantor, and Duhl, 1973) from the Family Institute of Boston, and its subsequent development and extension to Papp, Silverstein, and Carter (1973) from the Family Institute of New York, and later to Andolfi and others." (p. 2)

It is crucial to transcend dichotomous thinking and embrace the paradigm of complexity and systemic thinking to acknowledge synchronicities within the academic realm. Frequently, multiple theorists explore related topics, yielding comparable results, which holds great significance in academia.

Family Sculpture is defined as: "Symbolic plastic expression of the bond structure of a system, through the instrumentation of the bodies of the elements of said system." (Población and López, 1991)

This technique allowed for the introduction of family system dynamics into psychology and the visualization, through plastic and symbolic expression, of family dynamics. The principles of Moreno's psychodrama on the emotional charge of non-verbal communication are also taken up, conveyed through bodies on the psychodramatic stage. According to "Introduction to Psychodrama":

"The dramatization of the psychic, experiential, and intimate reality of a subject, the improvised representation of one's own life and experiences by the inspiration of the moment itself as they arise." (Filgueira Bouza, 1992, p. 9)

Moreno is recognized as a precursor of group psychotherapy, psychodrama, and role-playing. Although he did not use the term "constellation," his practices in psychodrama reflect the discovery of unconscious dynamics in Family Constellations, as already warned by Adler and Jung.

Acknowledging the roots, as the main objective of this book, led us to register and give Moreno his place as a precursor of group psychotherapy, psychodrama, and role-playing, being in turn one of the precursors of the systemic, plastic, and unconscious approaches that underlie Family

Constellations. Without Moreno having used the term "constellation," the essence of his practices in psychodrama accounts for the discovery of what happens at the initial moment of a Family Constellation, where not only the placement of bodies representing the system is important but also the dynamics of unconscious order that transit in the family atmosphere, as also warned by Adler and Jung and as we will see later in the roots of psychoanalysis and psychodynamic clinic.

In the archaeological exercise, Moreno's undeniable contribution was found in various experiences of group order, where the encounter of bodies, the unconscious, and catharsis have a fundamental place in the objective of group psychotherapeutic processes, which were configured by the author in question in three moments: "exploration, training, and re-learning of roles." (Filgueira, 1992, p. 2)

The Family Sculpture technique allows the consultant to show the therapist an internal image of their family system, representing how they have internalized their dynamics. For Población and López (1991):

"As a model, it is a metaphor expressed in body language, since every analogical model is considered to be a metaphor." (p. 5)

It is essential to recognize the contributions of Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, a key figure in psychogenealogy and systemic family therapy. Schützenberger discovered transgenerational repetition and identification with deceased ancestors, developing the Genosociogram to graphically represent affective bonds and unconscious dynamics in a family. In an interview, Schützenberger stated:

"We are less free than we believe, but we have the possibility of conquering our freedom and breaking free from the repetitive family destiny of our history, understanding the complex bonds that have been woven in our family and illuminating the secret dramas, the unsaid, and the unfinished grief." (Schützenberger, 2015)

These concepts are essential to understand Family Constellations as a living genogram. The decades of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s saw advances in systemic family psychotherapy, influencing therapists' tools. Although not all theorists use the term "Family Constellations," the device is nourished by the vision of the family as a complex system that includes inter- and transgenerational transmissions of genetic, unconscious, and cultural order. These concepts are further explored in the second chapter of the book, explaining the theoretical roots of Family Constellations.

Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Transgenerational Solidarity

Reading Hellinger, those interested in his theoretical formation will realize that one of the sources he drew from is Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy's contextual therapy. From there, he took ideas of transgenerational solidarity and the balance between giving and receiving, which gave rise to the book "Invisible Loyalties" in 1973, translated into Spanish in 1983. In this text, Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1983) conceptualize loyalty and its invisible web in family dynamics, which Hellinger adopted to enrich his own constructs:

"We presuppose that, to be a loyal member of a group, one has to internalize the spirit of its expectations and assume a series of possible attitudes for specification, to fulfill the internalized mandates. Ultimately, the individual can thus submit to both the mandate of external expectations and that of internalized obligations. In this sense, it is interesting to note that Freud conceived the dynamic basis of groups as related to the superego function." (p. 39)

This conceptualization is fundamental for understanding, in Family Constellations, the psychic dynamics inherent in guilt, a concept that Boszormenyi-Nagy had taken from Martin Buber. The pair of loyalty and guilt, understood as dynamic elements of human psyche and family systems, are always intertwined in a permanent interplay. Regarding this, Boszormenyi-Nagy (1983) states:

"The inability to fulfill obligations generates feelings of guilt that constitute, then, secondary regulating forces of the system. Therefore, the homeostasis of the obligation or loyalty system depends on a regulatory input of guilt. Naturally, different members possess equally different thresholds of guilt, and it is too burdensome to maintain a system regulated solely by guilt for a long time." (p. 39)

Although etymologically the word "loyalty" comes from the French term meaning "law," its real essence in family dynamics lies in the "invisible web of group expectations, rather than in manifest law" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1983, p. 49). This web is built with invisible and unconscious threads, but perceptible in family interactions that are shaped through consanguinity, lineage, and the merit that a member achieves in the system for their functions within it.

When the rules that shape loyalties in the system are respected, the family atmosphere is one of trust and recognition among its members. These rules are written in the "book" of the family's collective unconscious and have been transmitted from generation to generation through non-verbal language, genetic heritage, behaviors, and conducts that shape the modes of relationship of new members, as well as through the mechanism of projection. This "book" with symbolic records of patterns that give each member the guidelines of the relational context of their system, configuring as the family unconscious, is:

"[...] the dynamically most significant component of the individual's world, even though it is not external to him. Its scope is essentially linked to the ethics of relationships and cannot be mastered by intelligence or cunning alone." (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1983, p. 51).

With Boszormenyi-Nagy, there were also theories about existential debt between children and parents, justice and social dynamics, the experience of subjective justice or injustice, equanimity and reciprocity, dual norms in ingroup loyalty, balance and imbalance in relationships, parentalization, loyalty in the psychotherapeutic model of transference, among other concepts that provide fundamental elements to the episteme of Family Constellations from Hellinger's perspective.

Systemic Family Therapy at the Roots of Family Constellations

In the historical progression of systemic family therapy, we find the contributions of Nathan W. Ackerman, an American child psychiatrist who became interested in mental illnesses and their

relationship with family life disturbances. "Ackerman maintains that there is a continuous dynamic interaction between the biological factors that determine human life and the social environment within which one interacts, and that intrapsychic conflicts are the result of internalized interpersonal conflicts" (Garibay, 2013, n/p). Alongside Don Jackson, Ackerman created the journal *Family Process*, which solidified family therapy in the United States.

Within this same historical influence and advancement of systemic approaches in psychotherapy, we encounter Murray Bowen, who differentiated Family Systems Theory from the General Systems Theory proposed by Bertalanffy. Murray observed dysfunctional relationships between schizophrenic mothers and children, observations that led to his well-known "symbiotic hypothesis." Murray states that there are two movements in the family system: one leading to union and the other to individuation. The balance between these two movements is a condition for the healthy functioning of the family system. "He introduces the term undifferentiated ego mass in an attempt to capture the frequent clinical observation regarding how often similar conflicts are repeated across generations" (Garibay, 2013, n/p). From there, he coined the term multigenerational transmission process, recognizing that this process occurs through the unconscious and family projection.

Carl Whitaker, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, described the existential conditions that determine families and how, symbolically, family myths and fears are linked among family members who develop role-playing games like that of the "black sheep" (Garibay, 2013).

In 1954, Gregory Bateson, an anthropologist, social scientist, linguist, and cyberneticist, teamed up with Don Jackson, who was heavily influenced by the theories of H.S. Sullivan. Although Sullivan was not precisely a family therapist, he laid the groundwork for interpersonal relationship theory, which allowed for a stronger connection between psychoanalytic techniques and family therapy. Sullivan's system is integrative and open, blending the contributions of Freud's unconscious, Mead's social behaviorism, Dewey's experimental functionalism, Benedict's cross-cultural anthropology, Lewin's field theory, Meyer's contextualized mental disorder, and White's understanding of human behavior and intentionality (Garrido & Espina, 2007b).

These theoretical foundations gave rise to Sullivan's theory, which was then taken up by Jackson and Bateson when they created the MRI (Mental Research Institute) in Palo Alto, California. At this institute, studies were conducted on the families of schizophrenic patients, and the principles of Cybernetics and General Systems Theory were incorporated. They developed the theory of the double bind between mother and child, which describes the dysfunctional communicational context in schizophrenia (Garibay, 2013). Important theorists like Paul Watzlawick also joined this group, whose theory of human communication made significant contributions to family therapy and systemic therapy.

Contributions are also found from Jay Haley, "very interested in the contributions of Milton H. Erickson and the work of Salvador Minuchin, and in 1976, The Family Therapy Institute was founded in Washington" (Del Rio, 2012, p. 86). According to Haley, as cited by Del Rio (2012), understanding the organization and hierarchy of the family is fundamental to comprehending the dysfunctions that occur within it. For this systemic therapy theorist, the therapist plays a directive role and seeks to directly influence the family system, as if they were another member.

Within this school of systemic tradition in psychology, we also find the contributions of Virginia Satir, based on the constructs of ego psychology and Gestalt, employing an insight-based approach (Garibay, 2013). According to Sanabria (2013), "Satir is based on communication theory and transactional patterns between individuals" (p. 1). In her book, "New Peoplemaking," Satir recorded some findings from her work with families. According to her, all families "are subject to the same operating forces: self-esteem, communication, rules, and links with society" (Satir, 2002, p. 20).

In her work with families, Satir (2002) poses some questions that shed light on the learning that takes place in family dynamics and that are clinically observable in the phenomenological and systemic psychotherapeutic device of Family Constellations:

"Through my work with families, troubled and nurturing, on most continents of the globe, I have learned that the family nucleus, anywhere, faces the same situations. In all Families: Each person has a feeling of worth, positive or negative; the question is: Which one? Every person has the capacity to communicate; the question is: How do they do it and what are the consequences? Every person obeys certain rules; the question is: What kind, and how do they work in their case? Every person has a link with society; the question is: In what way and what are the results?" (Satir, 2002, p. 19).

Among the elements that nourish Satir's developed techniques are several, including sculpture, metaphor, drama, reframing or rephrasing, humor, contact. The techniques developed from these elements, which nourish the beginnings of Family Constellations, are communication stances, family stress ballet, simulated family, ropes as a therapeutic instrument, anatomy of a relationship, family reconstruction, parts party, and exercises to strengthen awareness. All of these are techniques that stimulate the therapist's imagination, making them flexible. Satir notes that her proposals are guidelines or examples that foster the therapist's creativity and the emergence of new procedures; they are not formulas to be repeated. In this sense, the therapist's work on their own subjective processes and individuation in relation to their family system is fundamental (Satir, 1995).

As we have seen, the historical development of systemic family therapies, within which Family Constellations are framed, traces its origins to psychoanalytic theories, group therapy theories, or group dynamics, and general systems theory. These developments occurred both in the United States and in the European continent.

Thea Schönfelder as the mother of Family Constellations

Thea Louise Schönfelder, born in 1925 in Hamburg, Germany, is another influential figure in the development of Family Constellations. Schönfelder, a medical doctor specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry, was a pioneer in Family Therapy and Concentrative Movement Therapy (KBT). Her work at the University Hospital of Hamburg-Eppendorf and her founding of the DAKBT association positioned her as a key figure in family psychotherapy in Germany (DAKBT, 2018).

Schönfelder, the daughter of a social democratic politician who suffered persecution during the Nazi regime, developed techniques such as family sculpture, influenced by Virginia Satir. This

technique, involving the symbolic placement of family members to explore their relationships, was adapted and applied in the context of Family Constellations. Schönfelder emphasized the importance of body and symbolic work in treating youth affected by World War II (Schönfelder et al., n.d.).

Despite her limited written output, Schönfelder left a significant legacy in family psychotherapy. Her approaches and techniques continue to be used and valued in the treatment of children and adolescents in Germany, marking a lasting influence in the field (Schönfelder et al., n.d.).

The evolution of Family Constellations is the result of constant enrichment from various theoretical and practical influences. Bert Hellinger, with his profound background and experiences, along with the contributions of pioneers like Thea Schönfelder, has developed a methodology that allows access to the unconscious dynamics of family systems. This approach, grounded in phenomenological and systemic principles, offers a path to understanding and transforming family relationships, bringing consciousness to deep and previously inaccessible places in the human psyche.

This journey also allowed us to recognize that the foundation of the technique used by Schönfelder was based on bodily perception and what was called concentrative movement therapy, which focuses on bodily perception and from this approach solutions to family situations represented by the members of a given family dynamic are found. For this, she, like Kurt Ludewig, used not only groups of human beings but also wooden figures on a board, later called the family board, which is conceptualized by Ludewig in his texts on systemic family therapy (Ludewig, 1996).

In the translation that could be made of some fragments of Thea Schönfelder's texts, an experience she named as "the beginning of everything" was found. An experience at the University Hospital of Hamburg that showed Thea how the symbolic material of the family's unconscious affects the psychic dynamics of a child, who, without knowing the past of the family history, participates in emotional and psychic impacts through the unconscious. Furthermore, in this experience, Thea discovered how this unconscious material can also manifest as images or memories related to the history of other people participating in the phenomenological field in which a family sculpture, configuration, or constellation is set up. This is the account:

"I'm not going to let you die" was the phrase that started it all: the child was a patient at UKE, he was there for paranoid psychosis, according to his internal images, he thought he was in a prison and was going to be executed. He was in danger of committing suicide, and when he got serious, Thea remembered the exclamations of the "Stürmer": "die, Jew"; which she heard in her childhood. Thea decided to convene a meeting with the boy's family, with his mother, grandmother, great-aunt, and the boy. Thea asked the family, "Which of your relatives was murdered by the Nazis?". As a result, the great-aunt told the story of her husband, who was epileptic and murdered by the Nazis. The boy was sitting on the edge of the chair and his eyes lit up and he exclaimed: "That's okay, then I have no reason to go crazy". Thea Schönfelder served tea for the family, they were silent, and the boy "never had problems again". Before, that secret had led to systemic madness for this family member. "He was involved," she emphasizes (Schönfelder et al., n.d., p. 420).

This account is vital for understanding Thea Schönfelder's epistemological shift from what was historically known as family sculpture, which she had learned in her training with Virginia Satir and used as a tool in her work at the University Hospital of Hamburg-Eppendorf, towards the unconscious dynamics. This led her to develop her own work, which would be called family constellations, and later be taken up by Bert Hellinger, enriched with his philosophy of the Orders of Love, his phenomenological practices, and introduced to the world as they are known today.

The phrase "the beginning of everything" reflects Schönfelder's deeper understanding of the interconnection of the unconscious world in the cited experience. Her own childhood experience with the exclamations of the "Stürmer": "die, Jew" and her patient's family history led her to comprehend the connection between these two-family histories, but, above all, that the material emerging as an image or memory in her reveals the secret kept by the patient's family.

Thus, it is in the foundation of Schönfelder's experience with her practice of family sculpture, bodily perception, concentrative movement, and the interconnection of images and memories that emerge in a spatiotemporal field where a family constellation develops. Here, hidden contents in a consultant's consciousness that cause discomfort or even illness can be revealed or emerge, giving such images a new meaning for the patient and enabling the resolution or reframing of the symptom.

Regarding Ruth McClendon and Les Kadis, references made by Hellinger in his texts and on his official website were found. This account is named and repeated by many other texts describing the beginnings of family constellations but does not delve deeply into the history we have already learned in the preceding paragraphs. Hellinger narrates that he attended an in-depth family therapy seminar in Snowmass, USA, in the Rocky Mountains of North America, directed by them. There, Hellinger was invited again to be a representative, experiencing a somewhat confusing experience because he was not explained anything. Later, these two therapists went to Germany and offered courses in multifamily therapy, where they conducted therapies with several families at once, including parents and children. In an interview with Bert Hellinger, he narrates it as follows:

"For many years, between 1974 and 1988, I combined reconciliatory analysis and primary therapy. Then, I devoted myself intensely to family therapy. This was the new trend during the 1970s. So, I went to the United States to participate, for four weeks, in a large family therapy seminar with Ruth McClendon and Les Kadis, which allowed me to learn a lot. They did impressive family constellations, finding good solutions intuitively, or through experiments, but I could not grasp it in its entirety. Nor could they explain it, as they were not aware of the basic patterns" (Asociación Española de Constelaciones Familiares, 2018).

As we can see, being again in the role of a representative, Hellinger understood nothing, as is often the case for people who enter the field of family constellations for the first time. Hellinger affirms that he also received no explanation from the psychotherapists accompanying the process to which he had been invited, and this historical fact is of great importance for this account because Hellinger will affirm that it is in this experience where he could intuit that there was something for the future of family psychotherapy (Hellinger Ciencia, 2018b).

For Hellinger to understand what family constellations are, he needed time. It was necessary for him to immerse himself in experience and phenomenological observation, which later allowed him to find the relationships between this practice and his own training in Eric Berne's transactional analysis. In his own narrative, Hellinger references the author's text "What Do You Say After You Say Hello?" as a source of explanation for his understandings, affirming that humans have a script that is established as in a play and configured as an unconscious plan for our lives.

Some of Hellinger's understandings led him to realize that this script has already been represented by other family members and that in the new generations, there are members who assume these scripts and repeat them. With this, Hellinger understood what systemic involvement is and where it comes from (Hellinger Scienza, 2018b).

Bert Hellinger says about it:

"We are involved in the fate of people who disappeared from our family because they were forgotten or excluded. At one point, I understood what happens in a family constellation. In a family constellation, it becomes apparent through the representatives who the excluded are and how they can be reintegrated into the family and into our hearts, to the relief of many. At the same time, it occurred to me, while writing a lecture on guilt and innocence in systems, that there is a precedence or hierarchy law, that is, in a system, those who were first have priority over those who came later" (Hellinger Scienza, 2018b).

Continuing with the historical journey and the different theorists preceding Hellinger, we find Kurt Ludewig in this context, who by 1978 worked in the youth service of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University Clinic of Hamburg-Eppendorf. Kurt Ludewig was part of the hospital team and wrote about the project launched in 1978, where he references that the team found a text by the Italian Mara Selvini Palazzoli translated as "Paradox and Counter paradox," which provided them with an innovative approach to psychotherapy with psychotic young people (Ludewig, 1996, p. 13).

In this sense, Selvini's contributions were based on those of Watzlawick and communication in the family system, especially in communication games, metacommunication, and paradox. These contributions emphasize the reading and care that the therapist must have with these paradoxical and power games that occur among members of a family system where a schizophrenic or psychotic condition has developed, leading to what is known in systemic family therapy as a double bind. Because it is in these paradoxical communication games where the patient's symptoms are inscribed as ways of expressing the communication pattern acquired in the family system. But paradox can also be used by the therapist in interventions as a strategy to bring the family to states of reflection (G. Arbeláez, González, Madrid, Ramírez, & Viveros, 2016).

On the other hand, Ludewig wrote a book titled "Systemic Therapy: Bases of Clinical Theory and Practice," and it is noteworthy that he did not mention Thea Schönfelder's work anywhere, although according to the referenced information up to this point, they were colleagues at the time. Instead, he referenced Virginia Satir and her contributions to systemic family therapy with family sculpture. In his book, Ludewig mentions the technique of the "family board" as a playful therapy without words. "The board," says Ludewig, "is a means of communication, which refers to metacommunication through relationships" (Ludewig, 1996, p. 177). Ludewig is a German-

Chilean psychologist and psychotherapist, recognized for his contributions to systemic family therapy in Germany and for his technique of the "family board." This method uses a board and wooden figures, allowing family relationships to be recognized. In his theoretical constructions

Your original text is clear and well-written. However, here is a revised version for clarity and conciseness:

"It's essential to move beyond dichotomous thinking and adopt the paradigm of complexity and systemic thought to recognize synchronicities within academia. Often, multiple theorists investigate similar topics, producing comparable results, which carries significant weight in academic discourse."

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed notable shifts in psychological approaches in Germany, marked by a decline in the influence of psychoanalysis. This created an environment conducive to the introduction of systemic family psychotherapy approaches that had been developing in the United States. The contributions of Jay Haley, Salvador Minuchin, and Virginia Satir were instrumental in shaping these developments in Germany.

Meanwhile, on the European continent, the Milan School in Italy was also conducting research and developing concepts on systemic family therapy, which were later:

"[...] was introduced in Germany by teams from the universities of Heidelberg (e.g., Weber & Stierlin 1989) and Hamburg (Ludewig 1992). From a theoretical perspective, a significant and culminating moment in this development is the essay by Swiss psychiatrist Gottlieb Guntern (1981), titled 'Die kopernikanische Revolution in der Psychotherapie: der Wandel vom psychoanalytischen zum systemischen Paradigma' (The Copernican Revolution in Psychotherapy: A Shift from the Psychoanalytic to the Systemic Paradigm)" (Ludewig, 2004, n/p).

Amidst numerous developments in systemic theory and systemic family therapy, exchanges took place between the United States, represented by the Palo Alto School, and Italy, with the Milan School, through academic events and therapist meetings. These exchanges facilitated the nurturing of various techniques, each with its own style and insights, thereby fostering the development of systemic family therapy in Germany.

Contributions to the history and bibliography include Richter, the author of "Familie und seelische Krankheit" (Family and Mental Illness, Richter et al., 1976). Helm Stierlin established his team in the Department of Psychosomatic Disorders at the University of Heidelberg (e.g., Stierlin 1975, 1978). Maria Bosch founded the Family Therapy Institute in Weinheim, Southern Germany, in 1975. Schneider (1983) authored the book "Family from the perspective of Psychotherapy Schools" and in 1976, Helm Stierlin and Josef Duss-von Werdt founded the first German-language journal titled "Familiendynamik" (Family Dynamics). Finally, in 1978, the first national organization of German family therapists was founded under the title: Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Familientherapie DAF (German Working Group for Family Therapy). This historical journey is crucial because it shows how the knowledge of deep European psychology, grounded in psychoanalysis, intertwined with the contributions of systemic therapy developed in the United States. This fabric, with its encounters and

disagreements, travels, and academic events in which Hellinger participated, allows us to understand today how worlds, ideas, and thoughts intertwined, and how knowledge was built, which now forms the foundation of Bert Hellinger's family constellations.

Bert Hellinger as Father of Family Constellations

Bert Hellinger, a German theologian, educator, philosopher, and psychotherapist, is globally recognized as the father of Family Constellations. Born in Germany in 1925, Hellinger studied philosophy, theology, and pedagogy. For over 25 years, he belonged to a Catholic order, likely the Franciscan, given his position as Rector of Francis College in Marianhill. His training as a psychoanalyst and his interest in group dynamics from Kurt Lewin, Arthur Janov's primal therapy, Eric Berne's transactional analysis, and various methods of hypnotherapy shaped his theoretical and practical approach (Hellinger Scienza, 2018a).

In South Africa, Hellinger spent 16 years as a missionary with the Zulu tribe, an experience that enriched his cultural perspective and allowed him to understand the importance of harmony with nature and its laws. There, besides directing colleges like Francis College, he trained in group dynamics and adopted a phenomenological perspective influenced by Anglicans. This experience led him to leave the priesthood and continue his soul care work outside the clergy, motivated by deep personal reflection on his ideals and people (AEBH, 2018a).

Back in Germany, Hellinger married his first wife, Herta, a psychologist and former nun. Together they embarked on studies in psychoanalysis and primal therapy with Arthur Janov in the United States, exploring the significance of the body and the symbolism of human suffering. His separation and subsequent marriage to Sophie Hellinger marked a new stage in his professional life, taking his constellation work to an international audience.

Hellinger also received significant influences from Fritz and Laura Perls' Gestalt therapy, which emphasizes the unification of body and mind and the importance of the "here and now" in psychotherapy. Eric Berne's transactional analysis and script analysis, which focuses on social transactions and psychological games, were also fundamental to Hellinger, especially in his discovery of transgenerational patterns in family relationships (AEBH, 2018a).

Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and his work "Invisible Loyalties" provided Hellinger with an understanding of compensation in family relationships. This influence, along with his training in family therapy with Ruth McClendon and Leslie Kadis, solidified the foundations of what Hellinger would call "The Orders of Love," his underlying philosophy of Family Constellations (Syst, 2018).

Academic Recognition of Family Constellations: An Analysis of the Landscape in Mexico and Latin America

This text highlights the evolution of Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations in the Mexican and Latin American academic spheres. Although originally recognized primarily as a psychotherapeutic technique, over time, constellations have been considered as a theory and even as a philosophy, especially through works like "The Orders of Love." Hellinger himself describes Family Constellations as a powerful tool for analyzing interpersonal memory and the behavior of family systems.

The academic endorsement of Family Constellations is based on Hellinger's extensive body of work, which includes more than fifty books, some of which have been translated into multiple languages. However, Hellinger's narrative, which often relies on anecdotes, may not be sufficient to substantiate Family Constellations in epistemological and theoretical terms, making their acceptance in the academic world challenging.

In Latin America, especially in countries like Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia, an increasing number of professionals from various fields have been trained in Family Constellations in institutes and non-formal education centers. The work of institutions such as the SOWELU Family Constellation Institute in Mexico, founded by Íngala Robl¹, and the Latin American Center for Family Constellations and Systemic Solutions, created by Tiiu Bolzman in Argentina, stands out.

In Mexico, the Emilio Cárdenas Multicultural University (CUDEC) has led projects that link the systemic perspective and Hellinger's contributions. Since 2001, CUDEC has offered training programs in Family Constellations based on Hellinger's approach, contributing to the integration of these practices into formal university education in the country. These programs include diplomas, international congresses, specializations, master's degrees, and doctorates, all recognized by the Mexican Ministry of Public Education.

It is important to highlight that Family Constellations have become a phenomenological, systemic, and transdisciplinary tool that transcends psychotherapy and is applied in various fields of human and social life. Training in constellations in Latin America is becoming increasingly rigorous and grounded, drawing from new knowledge and experiences specific to contexts.

Family Constellations in Colombia

The history we will find in this section of the book was obtained through four interviews conducted with key professionals in the history of Family Constellations in Colombia and

¹ When searching the internet for more information about Íngala Robl, I found that she was born in Prague. She lived and was educated in Germany until she arrived in Mexico. She has written the following books: *Family Constellations for Success at Work*, *Family Constellations for Love and Couples*, *Family Constellations for Prosperity and Abundance*. Her biography notes that she obtained her degree as a sociologist at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of UNAM in 1980 with her thesis "Sexual Assault, Consequence of Social Violence." From her training in General Systems Theory, she assumes the postulates of Bertalanffy to give rise to the vision of circularity and circular causality typical of open systems, such as the family system and organizational-business systems. She did her master's degree at the Institute of Higher Studies of the Family, ILEF, in Mexico, where she graduated with the thesis "Comparative Analysis between Systemic Family Therapy and Systemic Family Configurations." She is a pioneer in uniting the phenomenological approach of Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations with Systemic Theory, creating a training model that she has taught for more than 15 years in Central America and South America from her Sowelu Training Center. In this training, she also incorporates the contributions of Humberto Maturana. Her training model is internationally recognized by the International Forum of Systemic Constellations in Organization of Germany. (Sowelu, 2018)

Medellín². The interviews were carried out with the objective of complementing the history, as what was found in the books and official web pages of the Constellation institutes or the therapists who brought them to Colombia was not enough to understand how Family Constellations arrived in the country. The first interview was conducted with Marianela Vallejo Valencia³ on May 3, 2018, in the city of Bogotá, Colombia.

According to Marianela Vallejo's account, it was at the end of 1994 when she met Íngala Robl. They met during a seminar held in the city of Bogotá. For a week, Marianela hosted Íngala, and during this time, they shared about Family Constellations, which at that time were unknown to Marianela and were not yet known in Colombian territory. Marianela recounts:

"I attended the 4 opening lectures of the seminar and I loved Íngala⁴. I told my friends, I want to be her host [...] She stayed in Colombia for a week, and one fine day she told me, Marianela, you who have such an open mind, should get to know Family Constellations. And I said: no, thank you very much, Íngala, [...] and I shared with her that I had had some difficulties or some resistance in the psychoanalytic group precisely because I had a very open mind [...] I had done training in Rebirth with a German and an English person and worked the technique in adoption, not only for diagnosis but also for treatment. Rebirth in adoption seemed very pertinent to me, and that was outside the psychoanalytic line. Besides that, I had created a psychological preparation methodology for surgery [...] the foundations were psychoanalytic. I prepared patients and gave some lectures to surgeons and nurses. That was not classic psychoanalysis either [...] I had brought neurolinguistic programming to Colombia and took a lot from neurolinguistic programming for surgery reprogramming. That was not psychoanalytic either. So, I told Íngala, no. I have some resistance with psychoanalysts, but Íngala said: 'But you have a great reputation.' And I said: yes, it is true, but that is why I am under scrutiny. So, I am not interested in bringing astrology into the consultation (laughs). That was my first reaction, and she said: 'No, that's not astrology' (laughs). 'That's not astrology? What is it then?' And she said: 'It's called constellations, but I can't explain what it is.' When I later went to the congress in Acapulco called 'Explaining the Inexplicable,' I said, 'No wonder Íngala said it couldn't be

² To facilitate reading in this section of the book, the interviews have been edited for clarity, ensuring that the information provided by the interviewees remains faithful to what is recorded in the testimonial documents that are part of the documentary archive supporting the theoretical thesis conducted by the author to obtain the title of Master in Systemic Psychology at the Universidad Multicultural Emilio Cárdenas in Mexico in 2019.

³ Marianela Vallejo Valencia is a "Psychologist from Universidad Javeriana with doctoral studies in Psychological Sciences at the Universidad Libre de Bruselas. Psychoanalyst for couples, families, and groups. Master in 21st Century Management Skills with Neurolinguistic Programming and in Systemic Pedagogy from CUDEC" (F. M. Vallejo, 2018). Dr. Vallejo is certified by Hellinger Ciencia in Family Constellations in Mexico in 2008, but since 1995, she has been recognized as a pioneer in Colombia in this field. She is also a Therapeutic Member of the Spanish Association of Family Constellations, AEBH. Author of the books: *If I Can, You Can*, *Family Constellations to Liberate the Energy of Love and Life*, *The Courage to Undertake*, *How to Discover Your Professional Stamp*, *Moments of My Life and Soul Dialogues*, *Life Lessons*. Some of these texts were written in collaboration with other colleagues.

⁴ Íngala Robl is a "Sociologist, Gestalt Therapist, with training in Master's in Systemic Family and Couples Therapy, Family Constellations, Systemic Therapist" (International Forum of Systemic Constellations in Organizations, 2018).

explained.' I told Íngala: How can I get to know this? It was more out of courtesy to her than my own interest." (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 2)

And that was how Marianela Vallejo first heard about Family Constellations. Listening to this story was very interesting, as it helped to understand that the name given to it, Family Constellations, due to the translation from German to Spanish, imbued the tool with a mystical aura that has created inappropriate interpretations for those who have not approached the psychoanalytic field, as we will see in the foundation. The term "constellation," which refers to placement, is well-known in the jargon of the psychoanalytic school.

At the end of 1994, Marianela decided to organize a group of psychoanalyst friends to perform a personal constellation with Íngala Robl. She said:

"And Íngala told me: 'Bring 10 colleagues, and I'll do a constellation for you.' I took ten psychoanalysts (laughs) [...] And then I was impacted. I was impacted because I had many years of individual therapy, had been a patient in couple therapy, was a couple therapy teacher, had been a family therapy patient, was a family therapy teacher, had been a patient in Melanie Klein's line, was a child psychoanalysis teacher [...] at Javeriana as well and in my private training groups. Yes, at Javeriana when I returned from Europe [...] I think the first constellation that was done in Colombia was mine [...] and it impressed me a lot because I understood that my psychoanalytic work had been extraordinarily long. In psychoanalysis, one saw my part from the perspective of personality and history in relation to my parents fundamentally. But no matter how much family psychoanalysis I had done as a patient and teacher, it did not get to the perception of the influence of ancestors as quickly as I perceived it in the constellation [...] At that moment, I decided I would learn constellations and bring them to Colombia." (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 3)

In this journey through Marianela Vallejo's narrative, it is important to highlight that the reaction of her peers and psychoanalyst friends was not positive regarding her interest in this new tool. Marianela continues:

"I had been at the University of Leuven with Lipot Szondi, who had been my professor, in the 70s, and I had understood with him that there were 5 destinies. He was the analyst of destiny, and I trained with him in his diagnosis and therapeutic methodology. He said that we did not have an idealization of drives but a socialization of drives. That fascinated me [...] Szondi had investigated five thousand genealogical trees and told Freud, I think the thing does not stop at three years old, but it comes from generations back. So, he went his way. Szondi was a geneticist and a doctor. He invited me to the 5th International Congress of Destiny Psychology in Leuven. I lived in Brussels because at that time I was doing a doctorate at the Free University of Brussels [...] I studied a lot and learned many things with Szondi. He sent me to study in Paris, and I did Szondi training for children, and when I returned [to Colombia], I used a lot of that with children. That was knowledge I had on the back burner, and when I saw the representations in the constellations, I said: this is scientific because it is equivalent to the photos Szondi took to make the choice and diagnosis [...] the Szondi test for diagnosing transgenerationally inherited problems. I said, if the photos have that scientific foundation, the representatives do too [...] and this is understood through the mechanism of projection. I argued this to the psychoanalysts, but they were classic from Bogotá and did not understand. They said it was not possible. Where did I get that? And I told them, from Lipot Szondi, I was with him in Leuven. And they said: 'Oh!

No, Marianela, we are sorry you lost the science' (laughs). And well, I was incredibly happy to have found the Constellations because they contained all the psychoanalytic knowledge I knew. They provided an amazingly fast, deep, and effective manifestation. They used the same language of the unconscious, which was phenomenological and visual, and the paradigm was spatial. Unlike all psychoanalysis, whose paradigm was verbal [...] When I met Constellations, I said: this is Szondian. This is the couple and family psychoanalysis of Isidoro Berenstein, of Janine Puget, put in a spatial and visual paradigm, which is the language of the unconscious and therefore faster. This integrates all Lipot Szondi's discoveries. And I said: I am bringing this to Colombia." (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 6)

In this part of Marianela Vallejo's story, it was inevitable not to feel admiration for a great woman and professional who, at the time, took a chance on knowledge that she could only comprehend through her broad and complex thinking capacity. From her accounts, we can see that from her first encounters with Family Constellations, she had a clear understanding thanks to her knowledge and clinical practice based on psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theory, which, as we have seen, are part of the roots. It was the training she received from Lipot Szondi that allowed her to broaden her perspective as a psychoanalyst and give Family Constellations a place in her psychotherapeutic practice, with the conviction that there was something there that enabled speed, depth, and effectiveness in her clients' treatments. This discovery also motivated her to train with Íngala Robl and later with Hellinger himself, becoming a pioneer of the Family Constellations movement in the country. Vallejo recounts:

"I went to study in Mexico [...] I went to study because Constellations were just beginning [...] At that time, there was not a systematic training. There was training that followed the Hellingerian guidelines, where one saw constellations and some basic principles. We constellated and constellated, repeating the basic things. I continued in Colombia with Íngala, and it turned out that I had many psychologist patients at that time, and I invited them to do a course during Holy Week and [...] we had seventy-nine psychologists from many parts of the country. Also, from Medellín, there were Luz Marina Bravo⁵ and her partner Olga Betancourt⁶, who later brought Íngala to Medellín. And that is how they came, and we started traveling around Colombia because we had people from Cali, Manizales, Medellín, Barranquilla, and we planted many seeds." (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 7)

It was at this initial moment, which I have called the diaspora of Family Constellations in Colombia, led by the mind and heart of Íngala Robl and Marianela Vallejo, that Family

⁵ Luz Marina Bravo Restrepo, Social Worker UPB. Specialist in Industrial Relations EAFIT, Systemic Family Constellator Sowelu Luminous Center. Ontological Coach Newfield Chile. Certification as a transgenerational therapist. Emotional Rebalancing and Body Awareness. Director and advisor for organizational culture and human management for 38 years. Transgenerational systemic therapist for 25 years.

⁶ Olga Betancourt Maya, Clinical Psychologist, with training in Family Constellations, coaching, and systemic management. Conference Speaker and Organizational Consultant on culture, quality of life, and human development with 30 years of experience facilitating transformation processes in leaders and teams, to energize organizations generating corporate value and employee well-being. 1989 - 2019

Constellations reached territories such as Medellín. This territory will be discussed later in this historical journey and is part of the spatial delimitation of the study that gave rise to the history narrated in this book. Without failing to recognize that in the expansion of Constellations throughout Colombian territory, there are psychology professionals like Tere Rosales⁷ from Barranquilla, who was part of the first Family constellation facilitator trained in the country. Together with Marianela Vallejo, they traveled through the Colombian Caribbean, bringing Family Constellations to more than seven departments in northern Colombia. However, under the scope of the research that underpins this writing, it is not possible to delve into this history or that of other territories. Still, in a written conversation with Tere, the following was recorded. Tere says:

"I discovered Family Constellations in 2001 when I attended a workshop with Dr. Olga Susana Otero, and since then, Family Constellations have been a tool included in my professional practice as a clinical psychologist from Javeriana University, trained in Link Psychoanalysis, Systemic Psychology, and Transpersonal Psychology. From there, I began studying them with Dr. Marianela Vallejo, and I started opening the field of Family Constellations in Barranquilla. Then I extended the field of action to Cartagena and Santa Marta. In this way, from the SERcaPAZ Foundation, we are recognized as pioneers in the sensitization, inclusion, development, and evolution of Family Constellations in the Caribbean region of Colombia and Panama City."

In this process, a path for expanding knowledge unfolded, involving encounters with Bert Hellinger in Germany to attain Hellinger Ciencia Certification as a Family Constellation facilitator, certification from CUDEC in Mexico as a Specialist in Systemic Pedagogy, and training with Cecilio Regojo, Matthias Varga Von Kibéd & Insa Sparrer, Jan Jacob Stam, and Guillermo Echegaray as an organizational Family constellation facilitator. Additionally, I underwent training with Joan Garriga through the Gestalt Institute of Barcelona as a couples Family constellation facilitator, and with Stephan Hausner in Health Constellations, among other certifications. Furthermore, I pursued a master's degree in Systemic Psychology from CUDEC in Mexico.

This journey became a continuous exploration of the systemic and phenomenological world in all its facets, leading me to various workshops, meetings, and conferences held in many places around the world.

Since 2001, we have continuously conducted Family Constellation Workshops open to the community, Organizational Constellations & Systemic Coaching in Organizations, Systemic Pedagogy & Family Constellations Programs in Educational Institutions, large-scale Social

⁷ Tere Rosales is a Clinical Psychologist from Universidad Javeriana, trained in Link Psychoanalysis, Systemic and Transpersonal Psychology. Trained in Family Constellations initially with Olga Susana Otero and Marianela Vallejo, certified as a constellator by Hellinger Ciencia and CUDEC of Mexico. Specialist in Systemic Pedagogy and organizational and couple constellator, she is currently in the process of defending her Master's thesis in Systemic Psychology from CUDEC in Mexico.

Transformation Projects, and the Training of Family constellation facilitator, through which we continue to contribute to the strengthening of Constellations at both regional and national levels.

Returning to the narrative of Marianela Vallejo, in 1995 she decided to establish her own Family Constellations training institute in Bogotá called Neopsicología Sistémica, which for several years represented Hellinger Ciencia in Colombia. The Marianela Vallejo Foundation and the Neopsicología Sistémica Institute, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in April 2020, currently offer a constellation training program that integrates psychosomatic and psychoanalytic elements. This program was designed by Marianela Vallejo and her daughter Ana María Cardona Vallejo⁸. It is important to note that this constellation training program was endorsed by Hellinger Ciencia until 2018. Part of the history narrated here, her training processes, and her intellectual contributions to Family Constellations can be found on Vallejo's website (Vallejo, 2018).

As a professional, Marianela Vallejo is distinguished among her colleagues and students for her solid theoretical background and strong inclination towards research. After five years of training and practicing Family Constellations in Colombia, she decided to pause her practice as a Family constellation facilitator to focus on research, as her observations in the field of Constellations led her to questions about their foundations. She said:

“I began to ask myself questions and there were no answers, so I decided to close the chapter on Constellations in 2000 [...] It had been five years. In three years, we traveled across Colombia, in Barranquilla with Tere Rosales and in Medellín with Margarita Herrera and Jhon Jairo Saldarriaga. I worked on researching, started observing and questioning, but I had no answers [...] the scientific answers I was looking for. Where does this come from, what is its scientific basis? So, I stopped practicing and began to research. I researched for four years, and the result of those years of study is the book called Family Constellations to Liberate the Energy of Love and Life (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 8).”

In 2004, Bert Hellinger made his inaugural visit to Colombia. A seminar was orchestrated in Bogotá. According to Marianela, this seminar was coordinated by María Eugenia Rosselli de Aschner, a psychologist holding a master's degree in family therapy and serving as the director of the Centro Terapéutico Relacional. Additionally, Rosselli de Aschner is a founding member of the Asociación Red Colombiana de Psicoterapia e Intervención Sistémica (Relational Therapeutic Center, 2018). Regarding this event, Vallejo remarked:

“In 2004, Bert Hellinger was invited by María Eugenia Rosselli de Aschner, and the first seminar was held at Camerín del Carmen. There, I met Olga Susana Otero, who told me she had a large and strong institute for Family Constellations at that time [...] Hellinger said on the second day

⁸ Ana María Cardona Vallejo is an integrative body-centered psychotherapist trained directly by John Pierrakos in Core Energetics in New York, and in Core Evolution by Siegmund Gerken in California. Therapist in expressive arts of the Tamalpa Institute in California. She is also a Containment Therapist at the Prekop Institute Mexico and representative of this institute in Colombia. She also certified as a family constellator in Systemic Neopsychology when said model was endorsed by Hellinger Ciencia.

of the seminar that he was surprised by the level of knowledge about Constellations in Colombia [...] (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 9).”

During this event, Marianela Vallejo was recognized by Hellinger as the professional who brought Family Constellations to Colombia, and from the encounter with other professionals such as Elizabeth Corredor, Jorge Llano, and Jorge Botero, they decided to open the International School of Transgenerational Therapy of Colombia. Vallejo expressed about this moment:

“Hellinger said, there is a lady named Marianela Vallejo in the audience who brought Family Constellations to Colombia several years ago, Mrs. Marianela Vallejo please come up. And I sat next to him. So, I rejoined. Because Liz Corredor, Jorge Llano with Hellinger’s endorsement, and Jorge Botero, who was the logistical administrator of that event, opened a school in Colombia [...]” (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 9).

One of Marianela’s books chronologically shows that “in 2006, Posicionamiento Sistémico Colombia was established, comprised of Juana Vanegas and Claudia Linares, sponsored by Liz Corredor and in association with Raquel Schlosser” (Vallejo & Cárdenas, 2017, p. 101).

By this time, the CUDEC Group in Mexico with the Emilio Cárdenas University had supported Bert Hellinger, and training in Family Constellations with academic endorsement from the University had begun, as mentioned in the previous section. It was at this moment that university-level training became a formal option for Family constellation facilitator in the country. Marianela Vallejo explains:

“It happened that with Neopsicología I started going to Mexico [...] and one day they told me they wanted to open Colombia with systemic pedagogy, and we published a book on Systemic Pedagogy, edited by CUDEC. And when that happened, one day Angélica Olvera called me and said: Marianela, Hellinger wants to open Colombia, and he wants to do it with you [...]” (Arbeláez, 2018, p. 11).

And although Family Constellations in Colombia are currently not endorsed by the Colombian College of Psychologists, the profound historical journey presented by Marianela Vallejo reveals that psychology professionals have been crucial in adopting this technique as part of their psychotherapeutic tools. Moreover, there is a significant commitment to training, which has evolved from informal levels in private training centers to a more formal education through the offerings provided by Hellinger Scienza in its alliance with the Emilio Cárdenas University in Mexico.

In Vallejo's vibrant narrative, several pioneering professionals in the field of Family Constellations emerged. According to the extensive database provided by the SAVIA Corporation, an organization currently partnered with CUDEC Mexico to train family constellation facilitator in Colombia, another essential figure in this rich history is Olga Susana

Otero⁹. She is also referenced by Marianela in her captivating story. Thus, the next person to be interviewed was her, who, in addition to being a trailblazer of Family Constellations in Colombia, is the esteemed director of the Hellinger Group in the country.

Regarding the moment she first encountered Hellinger's Family Constellations, Otero passionately stated:

"Let's say that Family Constellations entered my life at a time when students prompt one to question and study many different therapies. It coincided with a near-death experience I had, which is detailed in one of my books [...] That event drove me to delve much deeper beyond the strict scientific methodology. I worked extensively with perception, with different states of consciousness. I started studying again. Following that and a series of perceptual reactions, it was pure development of intuition, influenced by chemical changes but also my personal analysis. Everything came together. The physical experience, the emotional experience, my formation history – it all aligned. I began seeking new therapies." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 4)

In her evocative book, *Journey to the Depths of the Soul* (2016), Otero affirmatively states:

"I discovered Hellinger's first three books on the constellation method in 1997: *The Dual Happiness*, *Achieving Love in Relationships*, and *Religion, Psychotherapy, and the Healing of Souls*. In them, I found that the relationships between family members described in clinical psychology as families with serious emotional problems, such as alcoholism or drug addiction, made perfect sense to me." (p. 19)

Olga Susana attended two profound training sessions with Bert Hellinger in Venezuela in 2001. After the first training, she received a heartfelt letter from Hellinger, asking her to create the Hellinger Group Colombia, which now proudly celebrates 18 years of existence. This illustrious history allows us to understand that Olga Susana Otero has been practicing Family Constellations for approximately twenty-four incredibly impactful years. The training workshops led by Olga Susana Otero had begun earlier, but from two thousand, when Hellinger authorized the creation of the Group in Colombia, they adopted the Master's name and gained significant momentum.

⁹ Olga Susana Otero is a Psychologist from Universidad Javeriana with over 25 years of professional and therapeutic experience. Constellation Therapist. Practicing Member of Family Constellations, accepted by I. A. G., Director of Grupo Vínculos Terapéuticos Colombia and Grupo Hellinger Colombia. Author of the books: *Journey to the Depths of the Soul*. The successful therapy of Family Constellations and *Successful Family Constellations*. She currently works as an individual, couple, and family therapist and has worked in university teaching at universities such as Universidad Javeriana, Universidad Santo Tomás in Family Therapy, and Universidad de los Andes in Couple Therapy. She is a pioneer in the integration of Psychology professionals into the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. And in the organization of the guild of Javerian psychologists, along with Dr. Marco Tulio González, who was dean of the psychology faculty at Universidad Javeriana, they created the Association of Javerian Psychologists and Olga Susana was president of this association for two terms, between 1986-1988, and from this position, she was a representative to the National Professional Council. (Personal communication of May 4, 2018, Bogotá Colombia)

As we see, it was the openness to other forms of knowledge, not necessarily within the strict framework of the positivist science paradigm, that enabled professionals like Olga Susana, with a distinguished career as a psychotherapist and university professor, to embrace Family Constellations in their professional practice.

In Otero's intriguing narrative, her first direct contact with Family Constellations was through Marianela Vallejo during the first seminar on Family Constellations conducted with Íngala Robl in 1995:

"My first contact was because Marianela Vallejo, with Neopsicología, brought Íngala Robl [...] She is someone who has been doing Constellations for a long time. She is a sociologist, remarkably interesting, very didactic, very profound. Íngala conducted a seminar here; we were about 40 or 50 guests [...] She did Constellations. That was the first time I saw Constellations in action." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 4)

At this pivotal historical moment in the country, there was no formal training in Family Constellations yet, but it is crucial to highlight that the psychoanalytic training that the pioneers had was fundamental for understanding the principles that provide clinical insights during a Constellation. Otero refers to this:

"I had a family case. I asked for an appointment, as one would pay for separate sessions, and she would find time to help us. We did a supervision of a family case. When I showed her, I showed her what I knew, which was analytical. She said, 'But you have all the training needed to do Constellations.' And since I was young, I believed her [...] That youthful boldness made me take the plunge in 1996, and I immediately started doing Constellations. With that case and what Íngala told me, I began doing Constellations." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 5)

By the year 2000, Hellinger himself requested in writing that Olga Susana Otero create the Hellinger Group Colombia, as Otero recounts:

"I have always had groups because I love studying in groups. A group of people decided to take the plunge. These people are what I call the founders of the Hellinger Group Colombia or Hellinger Therapy in Colombia. On the Hellinger Constellations Colombia page, it is [...] after Hellinger asked me in writing to form a group here [...] In 2000, there was a letter [...] the proposal to form a study group. Carola Castillo also received this in Venezuela. All of this happened very simultaneously" (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 5).

The way Olga Susana Otero understood Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations is related to the unconscious dynamics within the family system and a conception of the human soul and its development. She explained:

"We saw that the constellation was—and this is one of my definitions—a representation of the unconscious dynamics of the family. It's not something conscious, which is why often, when one wants to work on a topic, what appears is what, in our terms, the soul needs to move to continue its development." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 6)

Olga Susana's training in dynamic psychotherapy, both individual and family, provided her with the foundation to observe potential disturbing situations in a family constellation that generated the reason for the consultation. She confirmed this during the first seminar Hellinger held in Bogotá when Bert told her:

"Olga Susana, do me a favor and come here. During the case, during the constellation, stand here, and I want you to perceive whether on the father's or mother's side there is something, something that might be a systemic knot. Of course, I stood up, and since I have a perception, but beyond perception, sometimes the image appears before your eyes because you are already trained. I saw an image. I told him: Bert, it is on the father's side, three generations back. So, they did it, they constellated it, and that was it." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 9)

Regarding the body as a mechanism of representation used in Family Constellations, Olga Susana has clear insights:

"The body is an antenna, but it receives information in terms of vibration [...] one can know what the emotions are because the representative feels them in their body. We can read the body, but we can also learn what anger, joy, sadness, fear, closeness, distance, anxiety, all emotions feel like [...] That's where the field for Constellations begins to open." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 7)

Olga Susana mentions that the first two books by Hellinger that helped her understand the psychodynamic principles of Family Constellations were:

"The first book that came into my hands [...] Without Roots, There Are No Wings [...] and The Dual Happiness. The latter attempts to outline Hellinger's concepts. When you read these ideas, you see that it is dynamic psychology, talking about defense mechanisms without explicitly naming them as such, describing projection, identification, repression, the whole psychoanalytic model. I studied dynamic psychology because that is what the analysts taught us; for me, that language expressed in different words was common." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 7)

Other professionals mentioned by Olga Susana Otero, and referenced by Marianela Vallejo in their respective interviews as pioneers of Family Constellations in the country, include:

"At that initial moment of the arrival of Family Constellations, Liz Corredor and María Eugenia Roselli were also there. They led a team of very bright people, and I am immensely grateful to them." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 8)

Like other professionals from various parts of the world, Olga Susana also began her university-level training in Family Constellations with Bert Hellinger's approach at CUDEC Mexico. She recounted this moment in history:

"He came twice to Colombia, and then in Mexico, he continued because CUDEC opened its doors for him. At CUDEC, which is the Emilio Cárdenas University Center [...] after that, many of us, many from the Hellinger Group, started going to CUDEC for training." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 12)

In her commitment to training psychology professionals in the country, she continues to conduct training through the Hellinger Group Colombia:

"After that, I continued with my Hellinger Group Colombia because I have a commitment to teaching, and I do something called Learning Through Constellations. I have my groups, and anyone who wants to come to study and practice. I have trained approximately sixty-five people. I have a position, which I have never explicitly shared with Hellinger, but my actions make it clear: I believe that this should be managed by psychologists or specialized psychiatrists. Now, it could be someone with complementary psychological training, but I do not think an architect or an engineer, who now all call themselves healers and therapists, should be doing this [...] I have never said it aloud, but I act accordingly." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 14)

Currently, Olga Susana has a training program called Learning Through Constellations with four training levels and twelve experiential workshops, made up of professionals specializing in different human issues. When asked about the lack of approval for Family Constellations in Colombia by the Colombian College of Psychologists, she affirmed:

"Constellations are not recognized in Colombia by the College [...] but since I was educated in a school with a biomedical stance, and because all the doctors and psychoanalysts of that time in Bogotá and the country knew who I was, recognized me as an excellent therapist, analyzed by the Psychoanalysis Society, they still acknowledge me, and at that time, I was a patient of a didactic analyst [...] all these professionals in that generation said: 'I don't understand what Olga Susana is doing, but if she's doing it, it must be serious.' I faced no opposition. People believed [...] They said: 'I don't really understand what she's doing, but you should go see for yourself and come back and tell me about it.' Psychoanalysts, and it still happens, call me and say: 'Olga Susana, this analysis process seems stuck; would you like to hear about it?' I say, no, do not tell me anything, just send the person to me. Do not tell me anything because the history does not matter here. What matters is what the soul has. The person comes, does their constellation, and often, I tell those who want, 'you can accompany your patient.' Then the psychoanalyst, doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist comes, sits with their patient, and the process is carried out in front of the therapist. Then they go back and work on it together." (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 17)

This account is important for understanding the history, as it allowed for the emergence of other questions for new research. These questions pertain to what types of health science professionals have trained in Family Constellations or use them as a diagnostic and intervention tool, either by practicing them themselves or referring their clients to recognized Family constellation facilitator in their regions.

Regarding her intellectual output, Olga Susana Otero explained:

"With this awareness, I sat down to write; I spent countless hours on the first book. However, I already had many things analyzed and worked on, so I integrated them and said: I want people to advance in the application of the Constellation, but also understand everything that lies behind it, the analytical and systemic aspects [...] one day I received a call from the Book Club saying they wanted to visit me [...] and they told me they knew about the therapeutic method of Family Constellations, that they had been told I was the expert, and asked if I could please write a book. I said okay because it meant putting on paper what I was experiencing [...] in 2010, the first book was published: *Journey to the Depths of the Soul*. It sold so well and so quickly that [...] a second edition was made and corrected. Then they asked me for another book on cases, which is called *Successful Family Constellations*. I called it 'successful' because I wanted people to know

the development of the Constellation. That was the word the publisher said could precisely spark curiosity. And it includes all the theoretical approaches of what I understand underlies the Constellation, what needs to be known, learned [...]" (Arbeláez, 2018b, p. 21)

These two psychology professionals are the pioneers, and their stories were crucial for understanding how Family Constellations arrived in Colombia. The interviews conducted became testimonial documents that support the history of Family Constellations in the country. Both Marianela Vallejo's and Olga Susana Otero's accounts reveal that Íngala Robl was the first professional to bring Family Constellations to Colombia. From this point on, professionals from various parts of the country, especially psychologists and doctors, became acquainted with the tool and many decided to train in the intensive seminars facilitated by Hellinger in Germany and Mexico. Later, some with more training opened centers for psychotherapeutic care from Hellinger's approach, using the Family Constellations tool at a transdisciplinary level, as well as offering non-formal education courses.

Currently, there are centers created by professionals trained by Hellinger, not only in Medellín but also in Bogotá, Cali, and Barranquilla. Many of these professionals are also psychology practitioners who have found in Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations a psychotherapeutic tool that provides great support in therapeutic or organizational counseling work.

Today, Family Constellations continue to advance in the country, with more professionals from various fields of knowledge using them as a systemic and transdisciplinary phenomenological tool, based on Bert Hellinger's philosophy and enriched with other knowledge outside the framework of psychology, such as Quantum Physics and its current advances, which are not covered in this book as it is framed solely in the psychological tradition.

On November 24-25, 2018, the First National Family Constellations Meeting was held in Colombia, and on September 21-22, 2019, the Second Meeting took place in Bogotá. Both meetings were promoted and organized by Luz Adriana Valle Santa¹⁰. Professionals from various disciplines participated in both events with their respective presentations. Following the first meeting, a group of constellating professionals emerged, interested in creating a Manual of Best Practices and Ethics, to ensure that the use of Family Constellations is regulated by the organized guild. This is to guarantee the appropriate use and rigorous training of Family constellation facilitator in the country for the well-being of the clients and to preserve Family Constellations as a legacy that allows us to serve life in multiple systems throughout Colombia. The first draft of this manual was presented by the initiating group at the Second Meeting, where it was very

¹⁰ Luz Adriana Valle Santa is a Psychologist from the National University-1993. Specialist in Human Development at the District University. Expert in Regressive Therapy. AETRA. She has 16 years of experience as a constellation facilitator. She participated in the Family Constellations Workshop and Supervision Seminar with Bert Hellinger in 2004. She has participated in numerous trainings, with Olga Susana Otero, the Vértice Foundation, and the Grupo Hellinger Colombia. She has training in Transgenerational Systemic Therapy. Systemic Positioning from the Hellinger Institute of Mexico. She trained in the theoretical and methodological bases of Organizational Constellations with Gunthard Weber, Mexico 2010. She participated in the International Congress of Systemic Constellations. Explaining the Inexplicable in 2013, as well as other seminars with Íngala Robl, Carola Castillo, Teresa Fauconnier, Cesar Corona, and Marianela Vallejo.

well received by all participants, leading to the creation of the Network of Systemic Family constellation facilitator of Colombia.

Family Constellations in Medellín

In recent years, many professionals in the city of Medellín attended short courses or weekend seminars and began using Family Constellations. This raised concerns about the lack of deep and rigorous training in the tool. In this context, the SAVIA Corporation and its founders, Margarita Herrera and John Jairo Saldarriaga, decided to create an alliance with CUDEC Mexico to train family constellation facilitator at diploma and postgraduate levels. Currently, both are faculty members of the master's program in Systems Psychology with an emphasis on Family Constellations from the Bert Hellinger approach at CUDEC-Mexico.

According to Margarita Herrera and John Jairo Saldarriaga, they were introduced to Family Constellations at the Association of Bioenergetic Doctors and Researchers of Antioquia, known as AMIBIO. Dr. Mika Widmanska attended this organization in 1999 and spoke about the tool.

John Jairo Saldarriaga's account highlights this part of the history:

"I remember that in 1999, a doctor named Mika came [...] she was part of a study group led by Dr. Jorge Carvajal on Bioenergetics at that time in AMIBIO. She was invited, she was known to them, and she came two or three times... I participated as a representative. She explained the workings of Constellations, and from there, I was motivated by this philosophy. Previously, I had been part of a music therapy and sociodrama group at the University of Antioquia with Professor Fabio Gómez, which made it easy for me to understand and feel in the field. So, when Constellations arrived, I felt it was a very welcoming space for me." (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 2)

In the context of Medellín, bioenergetic medicine has gained recognition and respect among the medical profession, and some of its techniques have been included in the Mandatory Health Plan as part of alternative medicine. Therefore, Family Constellations arrived in a context surrounded by medical professionals who were open to receiving other forms of knowledge that, while not part of rational scientific knowledge, are recognized today as valuable in integrative medicine.

Additionally, Margarita Herrera's account acknowledges the moment Marianela Vallejo and Íngala Robl arrived in Medellín. Herrera stated:

"Well, we first met them at AMIBIO; a woman from Germany named Mika came around 1999. Later, a friend told me about Íngala Robl. Íngala came here to Medellín, brought by Olga Betancourt and Luz Marina Bravo. Before that, she had come to Bogotá with Marianela [...] I do not know how their connection was made, but they came here to Medellín when I was doing a specialization in Family Therapy. A friend told me: 'Hey, imagine that a woman is coming who is doing Constellations[...]' and explained it to me as if it were a live genogram, and I said yes, it was like studying the family genogram, but with people, and that's where it ended for me." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 2)

The study of Family Constellations began in a self-taught manner through Hellinger's book, *The Orders of Love*, as Margarita Herrera recounted:

"And while being part of Ser Abierto, which I also founded, a friend brought the book *The Orders of Love*, and I started from there. That book practically captivated me; I saw it resonated a lot with me, with my history [...] that was the foundational book that truly sparked SAVIA's work. After I graduated as a family therapist, I concluded my time with Ser Abierto and invited some people to form SAVIA [...] We started 18 years ago, studying the book before beginning [...] Back then, there was no formal training, and information was very scarce." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 2)

The first training session attended by John Jairo and Margarita was with Echi Dacak, as Herrera recounted:

"We also brought a person from Uruguay named Echi Dacak. She is a pioneer in Constellations worldwide. We invited her and held a workshop on Constellations at the Gran Hotel. I do not remember how we connected with her, but she is a woman who has a school in Uruguay. She was one of the first people to bring us qualification in this work, a woman with a lot of experience. She started with Hellinger when he began in Germany because her husband is German." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 3)

Saldarriaga's account highlights several moments in their initial training: a self-taught phase, training with Olga Susana Otero and Elizabeth Corredor, until they managed to attend a seminar with Echi Dacak. Saldarriaga's narrative captured the history as follows:

"Self-taught, during the first year we began to study intensively. I made summaries and written reports, presented them to the group, and we began to constellate. One Thursday or week Mágara would constellate, the next week I would, and that is how we acquired the tool. I also realized that Olga Susana Otero was constellating in Bogotá, and we decided in the group to go to Bogotá. In the end, only I went, and during that trip, I attended a workshop she gave on Saturday and Sunday, where I learned her methodology and got to know her. Later, she invited me to give two modules in a training she was conducting there. Then, in Medellín, a doctor from here, Elizabeth Corredor, very well-known and a friend of the bioenergetics group of Dr. Carvajal, invited us to work with Constellations. She came, did some constellations, and we opened a space for her at SAVIA to constellate, forming two groups, which established our connection. After Liz (Elizabeth Corredor) [...] we brought Echi Dacak from Paraguay, an elderly woman who had worked with Bert Hellinger. We held the first seminar here in Medellín at the Gran Hotel, and from there, many connections began." (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 2)

After this initial contact with Liz Corredor, Margarita Herrera and John Jairo Saldarriaga began their ongoing training in Family Constellations in Bogotá. Along with Elizabeth Corredor, trainers included Marianela Vallejo and Jorge Llano.

In his interview, Saldarriaga narrated this moment as follows:

"And there is another movement in Bogotá with Marianela Vallejo. [...] When Liz Corredor came to Medellín, we also connected with Marianela Vallejo, and thus we managed to form a group with Liz Corredor and other people in Bogotá, like Jorge Llano. We formed a large group and went to get trained, that was in the second year of SAVIA, and we began our training [...]"

Later, we traveled to Argentina for the week-long intensive workshops by Bert Hellinger, which lasted two years." (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 3)

In 2004, during Bert Hellinger's first visit to Colombia, the emerging group from Medellín participated with around 20-30 people. Herrera recounted:

"When they brought Hellinger to Colombia in 2004 [...] we took about 20 or 30 people from Medellín [...] the experience of direct contact with the master, because the closest group, the organizers, had meetings with him. For me, there are two moments, as I mentioned in this process of connecting with the philosophy and field of Constellations. For me, meeting the master, being so close to him, was an experience that connected me with the depth of this movement. Because it is one thing to be reading but being with the master is an initiation. For me, it was like an initiation [...] from then on, we followed him [...] when he went to Argentina and later when he started going to Mexico, we attended his seminars every year." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 4)

The seminar held in Argentina, which Herrera and Saldarriaga attended, and which is noted as a significant moment for Family Constellations in Medellín, was conducted by the Latin American Center for Family Constellations and Systemic Solutions, led by Tiiu Bolzmann, an important figure in Family Constellations in Latin America.

At this seminar, Margarita Herrera and John Jairo Saldarriaga from SAVIA Medellín-Colombia met Angélica Olvera and Alfonso Malpica from CUDEC-Mexico. This meeting later paved the way for the training provided by the Multicultural University Emilio Cárdenas in Mexico in Family Constellations from the Hellinger approach to reach the city of Medellín. Herrera narrated this moment as follows:

"After he came to Argentina, we continued traveling to Mexico and there was a moment when we connected with Angélica Olvera and Alfonso Malpica to bring the training to Medellín. That was the first training [...] a group of trainers was formed in Mexico, of which all the centers in the world aligned with the master are part, and we also get updated there." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 5)

The training in Mexico with CUDEC opened the opportunity for interested professionals to access a process recognized by the Ministry of Education of Mexico, providing support for the training carried out through the SAVIA Corporation in Medellín for family constellation facilitator. Saldarriaga explained:

"And then in Mexico, also with CUDEC, but at CUDEC it was already at a university level. They brought Systemic Pedagogy training to Colombia, Constellations training, and then we went directly to CUDEC to do the training at the master's level [...] Because before that, we had other training here, the two CUDEC trainings in Colombia. How did we do it? By traveling monthly to Bogotá, paying module by module, and it was very intense work as well. From there, we made a connection with CUDEC, with the University, and started establishing the training in Colombia [...] in Medellín for approximately six years." (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 7)

In this historical context, in 2013, the SAVIA Corporation began a formal education process with the first cohort of professionals in the Family Constellations diploma with the Bert Hellinger approach. Some of these professionals continued their training in the Master's in Systemic Psychology, based on Hellinger's theory and supervised practices by CUDEC University professors, an institution of higher education and postgraduate studies that has adopted Family Constellations and Bert Hellinger's Orders of Love as the foundation of its pedagogy and systemic psychology approach.

Herrera and Saldarriaga's commitment to formal education in Family Constellations stems from their concern that the tool be used responsibly, understanding that Hellinger's contributions require serious education that provides not only the tools but also training in the philosophy and allows CUDEC-trained family constellation facilitator to undertake personal work and be supported by a follow-up process that backs us professionally. This work also involves addressing our own history so that our clients have ethical and responsible professionals when using Constellations in any field of knowledge.

Regarding the ethical implications of training professionals in Family Constellations, Herrera said:

"I think that within our cultural context, experience alone is not enough, but also respect for the formal. Because look, this has made it possible to build a professional image of this process, and I think it really gives security and confidence because behind it, there is also personal growth and commitment [...] the orders of help are very important to me, that order of the therapist's responsibility for their own ongoing education and personal growth to have full support to provide a professional service [...] This also makes training accessible to more professionals because not everyone can afford these trips and the costs in dollars, plus the travel, food, and everything that entails. Bringing the training here reduces costs for people and gives them the opportunity to professionalize in this work and knowledge. We saw it as a fantastic opportunity to help people who want to commit to this process and improve their work [...] we are an example; we are not judges, but we are an example. And the example speaks louder. Because we can't go around pursuing anyone, people can choose, if they already know us, they can choose if they want to take a 12-module training that has no 'academic' backing, people will choose based on their own understanding [...] this is a huge responsibility and for us, it is a challenge, don't think it's easy to contain these student processes for two years, with everything that is revealed, everything that comes out, all the shadow and darkness that surfaces and we as coordinators somehow contain, so it's not easy, it demands a lot of personal development." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 9)

In 2018, Margarita Herrera and John Jairo Saldarriaga reported in the interview that the SAVIA Corporation-Medellín, in partnership with CUDEC-Mexico, started the third cohort of family constellation facilitator training endorsed by Hellinger Ciencia.

"This is the second cohort, we finished in August and started the next in September, which is the third. I think it has been well received, it is respected, the students are incredibly happy, their families too. I am very pleased to contribute so that each person who leaves here becomes a multiplier." (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 10)

According to Saldarriaga's account, the evaluation of the training offered by the SAVIA Corporation-Medellín is as follows:

“Well, for example, we could say that at the SAVIA Corporation, we have already had two cohorts of professionals trained in Family Constellations with a university level and endorsement provided by the Emilio Cárdenas University of Mexico through CUDEC University Extension. Our students and graduates are highly regarded for the level of training they received in Mexico. They know what they are studying, speak well of what they were taught, and their example, daily work, and passion for what they do show that their dedication to the training leads them to use their personal input as raw material for learning in the field of Constellations. [...] There have been doctors, psychologists, a few lawyers, a few engineers, two or three educators, but generally psychologists and doctors.” (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 8)

In the first two cohorts, around forty-five professionals from different professions and parts of the country have graduated, according to Herrera:

“What happens is that many start and do not finish, they did not graduate. I think from the first cohort there are about twenty-two and from this one as well. About forty-five, I would say. [...] Look, for example, in this group (2018) there are many lawyers. It is very striking to me. There are psychologists, administrators, someone from occupational safety or something like that, a professor with a master's and a doctorate from Cuba, who comes from Barranquilla. [...] Yes, they come from Barranquilla and Cali.” (Arbeláez, 2018a, p. 11)

Regarding the use of Family Constellations from Hellinger's perspective, Saldarriaga says that not everyone trained at the SAVIA Corporation-Medellín applies them.

“[...] One of the objectives is to train them as individuals capable of acquiring expertise in handling Constellations with all the levels of progress and evolution they entail, but it is not mandatory to apply them. There are also people who do it for personal growth, to transform their lives, to learn how to view it, to learn how to be and exist, to learn to take their place. Not everyone. I might venture to say that out of the twenty-five who graduate from each training, about ten dedicate themselves to doing Constellations, but I might be wrong, around eight or ten people are practicing.” (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 8)

Finally, John Jairo Saldarriaga was asked how Family Constellations had changed his life, and this is the answer he gave in his interview:

“Immensely, because I was very intellectual and quite involved in the art world. Constellations moved me a lot because I learned to break away from the patterns of being a savior, of carrying my own family, of being a parent to my parents, for example, of enjoying life for myself, of learning to let go of being compliant and to do what corresponds to me as well. It helps me a lot to enjoy life. To know that each person is a reality. I always felt and said it, but it is a reality that each person is a teacher for oneself, that no one is better or worse than another, neither bigger nor smaller, and that we simply have information to help us grow. It helps me a lot because I can move through life more fluidly, more calmly, to assent to everything that exists, knowing that everything that exists has the right to exist without judgments. That everything

that happens to me, that comes into my life, helps me grow, it is an opportunity to keep growing as an adult, giving my all.” (Arbeláez, 2018c, p. 9)

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