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CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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Editorial

Social work intervention in critical times

When Penelope Deutscher and Cristina Lafont published *"Critical Theory in Critical Times"* in 2017, a common sense was already emerging around the notion of "critical times": a dystopian present-future was taking shape as a result of the global crisis - environmental, economic, demographic, of states and their incapacity to guarantee political rights and social protection; together with the lack of confidence in political action and in the rulers in office to face these overlapping crises on a global scale. Years before, the crisis of the financial system, the bailout of banks and the dismantling of welfare states in Europe, the crisis of social protection in Latin America and the collapse of social services due to the new public management approach, racism and xenophobia in the face of massive waves of migration, unemployment, all manifested themselves forcefully in a generalised malaise that began to turn into indignation. The idea of multiple crises, or a constellation of overlapping, mutually reinforcing crises, emerged from within and with neoliberal capitalism (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018).

However, the authors also sought to emphasise that there was a more hopeful sense in the notion of "critical times": they also represent a historical window of opportunity for the emergence of proposals for the transformation and improvement of people's living conditions; that is, "propitious times for critical theory" (Deutscher and Lafont, 2017, p. xiii). The social movements at that time, for example the occupation of Wall Street in the United States, the Arab Spring, the orange tide in Spain, among other organised political actions of the people, showed that crises were not only danger or risk, but also change, flux and uncertainty, and that therefore, crises harboured the possibility of social transformation.

We know a lot about crises in Latin America: crises of economics, inequality, debt, the state, democracy, development, just to mention the main angles from which this issue can be viewed. At the same time, the peoples of the region have had a historical tradition of resistance in the face of these crises, of creating collective strategies, of advocacy, of survival: in the face of colonisation first, then dictatorships, imperialism, and today stark

neoliberalism. In other words, the crises have put people at the crossroads, allowing them to imagine other possible worlds and to fight for them.

Today, the notion of "critical times" -in this overwhelming and hopeful sense- which is at the heart of what we call "critical theory", remains an interesting category for exploring the challenges of the present. That is why we wanted to dedicate this third issue of our journal to reflecting on the critical times we are currently living through: the crisis of neoliberalism, the health crisis as a result of the pandemic, the political crisis expressed in the popular uprisings, and the deepening of reactionary neoconservative ideologies in the face of all these crises. Particularly in the Chilean case, the turn to the left with the triumph of Gabriel Boric as president-elect - in the face of an alarming increase in votes for the extreme right - and the possibility of writing a new political constitution as a consequence of the popular revolt that began on 18 October 2019, shows perhaps the most hopeful side of this notion of "critical times" that we have sought to emphasise in this issue.

The question around which the works compiled in this third issue revolve refers to the possibility of thinking about social intervention in these critical times: to think, historically, of social work as a profession and discipline that has emerged and developed through multiple crises: from the opening of the first schools in the midst of the social question, where socio-political and health crises overlapped; to the confrontation of bloody dictatorships and totalitarian regimes that placed at a vital crossroads - literally, by risking one's life - in the face of dogmatism, censorship, torture, disappearance and death. Thinking about social work intervention today, in the midst of the effects of the pandemic and the popular revolts, observing the turning points in the institutional frameworks and the possibilities of making critical turns in intervention there, asking ourselves about the possibilities of generating knowledge from social intervention, are some of the emphases that the works presented here aim to propose to contribute to the debate that is already taking shape in social work - see for example Iturrieta (2021) or Martí and Pérez (2020) who advance the idea of "convulsed times", the social work of resistance in times of pandemic proposed by Michael Paul Garrett (2021) and the discussions that took shape in the cycle of seminars "Thinking Social Work in Critical Times" that we at the Nucleus for Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Work developed during 2020 in the most desolate moments of the pandemic which inspire much of the work presented here.

Thinking about social intervention in the midst of pandemics and popular revolts

The recent popular revolts in Chile and Colombia, also called "social outbursts", the struggles for women's right to decide over their own bodies in Argentina; or in the face of Bolsonaro's neoconservative offensive in Brazil, among many other protest and mobilisation actions in the region, continue to deepen. However, the COVID-19 pandemic intercepted these processes of discontent and struggle. They did not disappear, but they changed in their intensity and form. The articles by Professors **Elizabete Mota (Brazil)** and **Ximena Baráibar (Uruguay)** that open this issue show us how the crises once again overlap: the pandemic confines, impoverishes, deteriorates mental health, and above all, reflects the injustice at the base, which manifests itself in the unequal access to vaccines, to financial security, to the basic right to stay at home with an economic income that allows us to satisfy the most basic needs. Both articles analyse the responses of neo-conservative governments in their respective countries to the health crisis, its impact on social policies and the possibilities for critical social interventions in this scenario. The article by Elizabete Mota, entitled *"The context of the Coronavirus pandemic and its implications for the Brazilian Social Service"* shares a reflection on the general dynamics of capitalist production relations and their impact on the social intervention of the state in these times of emergency, where the responses of the Bolsonaro government have gone in the logic of dismantling social protection instead of guaranteeing the right to health. Alluding to the inability of Luis Lacalle Pou's government to address the results of national and international studies that pointed to the need to strengthen public policies to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the populations most affected by poverty, Ximena Baráibar presents *"I warned you and you didn't listen to me: poverty and inequality during the pandemic in Uruguay"*. The title could not be more suggestive, in a context in which the government, consistent with its neoliberal approach, has tended to reduce state intervention and shift the responsibility for the health and social consequences of the pandemic onto individuals.

The pandemic brought stark evidence of the cruellest face of neoliberalism: the inequalities about which people had been demonstrating in the streets, demanding radical changes in development models, were abruptly exposed. With the spread of COVID-19, social struggles were hampered. Quarantines and curfews slowed down social mobilisation. However, new channels for participating in resistance actions in the context of the uprisings began to emerge, as presented by **Carolina González**

(Colombia) and **María Soledad García (Argentina)** in this issue - social networks, virtual assemblies, forums, street protests with physical distance and the correct use of masks, material and emotional support at points of resistance, among many other forms of political participation, took shape in this desolate context in which death and government neglect were being felt, as Mota and Baráibar emphasise. Carolina and María Soledad discuss the forms that social intervention can take in times of political and health crisis, reflecting on the professional place - and the professional disputes - that became even more visible during the crisis in Colombia. How do social workers manage to position themselves publicly, generate knowledge from their professional intervention and influence political issues through their intervention? These are some of the questions that guide the conversation between the two.

Closely linked to the above, a second line of exploration in this issue refers to the construction of the professional position by social workers in the institutional spaces from which they face the overlapping crises. The article by **Ana Arias (Argentina)** precisely highlights a central aspect of this discussion in her work entitled "Social Work and Institutions: social control, transformation and escape routes in critical times". The author proposes to enhance the value of criticism - and of critical approaches in social intervention - in order to make contributions and have an impact on institutional spaces, which in these convulsive times, represent dissonant, uncomfortable and even controversial values for professionals involved in social intervention. Professor Arias' reading helps us to think of ourselves as "inhabiting the institution" with all of the difficulties and tensions involved in thinking about intervention, in her own words, not from the outside or from above, but from within, in order to find a place and make room for those who have been permanently excluded from the spaces where decisions are made. Problematising the relations between intervention and institution, Cristian Fernández, **Cristián Ceruti, José Miguel Garay and Borja Castro-Serrano (Chile)** propose to identify the potential of other modes of existence, which challenge hegemonic positions on the very notion of intervening. In their article, the authors invite us to a rich philosophical journey that dialogues with the political, aesthetic, historical and practical dimensions entangled in the processes of subjectivation that underpin social intervention and the ways in which it is 'instituted' in the social world.

While we look at the relationship between social intervention, professional position and institutional frameworks from the challenges that the current crisis brings to the debate, it is certainly not a new issue in social work. The dark side of the profession or "horror

stories" in social work have been well documented (see for example Ioakimidis (2021)). In the same vein, and recovering a critical notion of history, with the lights and shadows of the professional past in the face of the socio-political crises of the 20th century, Professor **Carola Kuhlmann (Germany)** proposes in her article *"German Social Work in times of totalitarian regimes, a comparison between the 'Third Reich' and the German Democratic Republic"* a reading of the past as a gift and a burden that opens the prison of the present. The text introduces readers to an understanding of the history of social work in Germany, and leads us to reflect on the impacts of dictatorships, left-wing populism and new extreme right-wing movements in the world on the shaping of the professional position of social workers. This is an urgent debate in these times when totalising thoughts re-emerge in new forms, for example through the dissemination of conspiracy theories and fake news, political and religious fundamentalisms or the attack on progressive ideas under the discursive terrorism of the so-called "gender ideology".

A third line of exploration in this issue refers to the possibilities of generating knowledge in these "critical times". **Belén Ortega-Senet (Chile) and Telmo H. Caria (Portugal)**, in their article *"On the subalternity of Social Work and the theory-practice duality (as the source of all evils)"*, argue that the disconnection between theory and practice, reinforced by the neoliberal onslaught and the depoliticisation of the discipline, has contributed to delegitimise social work as a source of knowledge. Based on their research experience with social workers in Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC), Belén and Telmo propose critical routes, situated, polyphonic and transformative proposals to generate knowledge from the experience of professional intervention.

From a very different and less explored epistemological perspective in Latin American Social Work, **María Inés Martínez Herrero (England)** proposes a different approach to the problem of generating disciplinary knowledge. In her article "*Employing critical realism in times of crisis. A study on human rights and social justice in social work training in England and Spain"*, the author presents her research, which is developed within the framework of the global economic crisis that began in Europe in 2008, which resulted in countless austerity measures in England, Spain and other countries, and which led to the dismantling of welfare in these countries, with serious effects on the lives of the most vulnerable population groups, as well as on the resources to intervene from public social services. In this context, she develops her study on professional training in both countries, introducing the approach of critical realism by Roy Bashkar and detailing the main epistemic and methodological implications of this perspective.

Finally, this third axis closes with the work of **Gabriela Rubilar (Chile)** who examines the position of researchers in periods marked by processes of political transformation. Her article, entitled *"Critical research in critical times: actors, authorship and authority in the production of knowledge in social work"*, addresses the links between critical qualitative research and critical social work and its debates on the production of knowledge on sensitive issues such as political violence in the wake of the October 2019 uprising and the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasises the relevance of discussing the role of researchers in the process of researching sensitive issues, the creation of strategies to resist the neoliberal imprint of research, and the visibility of the unique contributions of research participants to the production of knowledge.

In our Translations section, this issue includes an article by Professor **Yolanda Guerra (Brazil)** *"Expressions of pragmatism in the Social Service: preliminary reflections"* originally published in Portuguese at the Katálysis Journal in 2013, which allows us to identify important nuances when debating what we mean by "critical" in these "critical times". Elaborating a historical review of the foundations that traverse the trajectory of Social Work, identifying the conservative bases and the intentions of rupture, she analyses the implications of pragmatism in the profession and discipline, arguing that there has been what she calls "a pragmatic invasion of Marxism" - alluding to Consuelo Quiroga's 1991 reading of the "invisible invasion" of positivism in Marxism. This is undoubtedly a key text for discussing the frontiers and also those liminal spaces between positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism and critical realism, and their points of contact with the critical impulse of the profession and discipline.

Finally, we would like to thank **Paz Valenzuela (Chile) and Patricia Carrasco (Chile)** for their respective book reviews. These are two key works to think historically about social work and in this framework, the limits and possibilities of its intervention. The first book, reviewed by Paz Valenzuela, edited by Paulina Morales and Daniela Aceituno, is "La resistencia de las memorias: Relatos biográficos de vidas truncadas de estudiantes y profesionales del servicio social desaparecidos y ejecutados durante la Dictadura en Chile (1973-1990)" [The Resistance of Memories: Biographical accounts of the truncated lives of students and social service professionals who disappeared and were executed during the dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990)], published by RIL in 2020. Patricia Carrasco, meanwhile, invites us to read "Trabajo Social en Chile: Un siglo de trayectoria" [Social Work in Chile: a century of trajectory], a book coordinated by Paula Vidal and published by the same publishing house in 2016.

As you will have been able to appreciate, this issue offers tools for analysing the current moment, examining the political interstices of popular revolts, reading the context and the shortcomings of governments in dealing with crises, always from a historical perspective in order to understand social intervention. These "critical times" represent turning points that make it possible to discuss the models of society we want to build, junctures where resistance can emerge (Garrett, 2021). They raise the impossibility of sustaining not only development, but life, under neoliberal capitalism and the expansion of colonial ideology on a global scale. As Deutscher and Lafont said, these are propitious times for critical theory, and here we are, from social work, thinking about the possibilities of reading the context, generating knowledge at this juncture and proposing alternatives for the times to come.

We hope it will be an inspiring read.

Gianinna Muñoz - Arce,
Editora en Jefe
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ARTICLE

The context of the Coronavirus pandemic and its implications for the Brazilian Social Service

El contexto de la pandemia de Coronavirus y sus implicancias para el Servicio Social brasileño

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Abstract

This article addresses the socioeconomic and political context of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil and its implications on social policies, class sociability and demands to the Social Service. It affirms that the general dynamics of capitalist production relations - the productive economic model

Keywords:
COVID-19 pandemic, neoliberalism, rights, social policies social service

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that destroys nature and environmental balance, the consequence of neoliberal measures in the definition of economic and social policies - are factors that have influenced the emergence and management of the health crisis. The social intervention of the State is questioned, in particular the dismantling of social policies, the withdrawal of rights and the precariousness of social protection systems, in an environment in which the increase in the concentration of wealth is also responsible for poverty and social inequality. Against this backdrop, we identify aspects of the Brazilian reality that have affected and continue to affect the professional practice of social workers at this juncture of the pandemic and emergency professional demands.

Resumen

Este artículo aborda el contexto socioeconómico y político de la aparición de la pandemia del COVID-19 en Brasil y sus implicancias en las políticas sociales, la sociabilidad de las clases y las demandas al Servicio Social. Afirma que la dinámica general de las relaciones de producción capitalista -el modelo económico productivo que destruye la naturaleza y el equilibrio medioambiental, consecuencia de las medidas neoliberales en la definición de las políticas económicas y sociales- son factores que han incidido en la aparición y gestión de la crisis sanitaria. Se cuestiona la intervención social del Estado, en particular el desmantelamiento de las políticas sociales, la retirada de derechos y la precariedad de los sistemas de protección social, en un entorno en el que el aumento de la concentración de la riqueza es también responsable de la pobreza y la desigualdad social. Frente a este cuadro, se identifican aspectos de la realidad brasileña que han afectado y afectan el ejercicio profesional de las/os trabajadores sociales en esta coyuntura de demandas profesionales de pandemia y emergencia.

Palabras Clave:
pandemia de COVID-19; neoliberalismo; derechos; políticas sociales; servicio social

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Introduction

This essay, written from the Brazilian experience, will broadly address the context in which the coronavirus pandemic arose, its relationship with the capitalist crisis, its implications for social policies and its effects on the professional practice of Brazilian social workers, assuming that the pandemic triggered a health crisis whose manifestations are related to the dynamics of the unequal and combined development of capitalism in peripheral countries. In addition to the greed for the production of private and lucrative wealth at the expense of the exploitation of labour, other processes triggered by and linked to capitalist relations of production are related in a mediate and immediate way to the emergence and confrontation of the COVID-19 pandemic: the destructive production of nature, the concentration of wealth, the tendencies of State intervention guided by neoliberal guidelines that guide economic and social policies and that result in the aggravation of poverty and social inequality.

This conjuncture of social catastrophe, marked by deaths, diseases, social isolation measures and emergency actions, also evidenced the weight of the world market in the production and distribution of vaccines, the priorities of governments, and trade disputes between economic powers such as the USA and China, deepening the historical contradictions and asymmetries between central and peripheral countries. The fragility of public policies after 30 years of neoliberal offensive is inevitable, especially in the peripheral regions, whose most evident results are the dismantling of social policies, the subtraction of labour and social rights and the precariousness of social protection measures. Against this backdrop, new situations have arisen that allow us to identify issues that have an impact on the daily work of social workers and that will be the subject of reflection, allowing us to identify some professional challenges that we will address in the final part of this text.

Health crisis, public policies and sociability

The COVID-19 pandemic, a phenomenon affecting all regions of the world, has caused the illness and death of millions of people, becoming a humanitarian catastrophe that is spreading globally as a health, economic and social crisis. However, like any human-social phenomenon, its understanding requires a historical contextualization to place it in the macro-social conditions of the capitalist dynamics that govern the production of social wealth and the lifestyles of the world's population.

It is possible to argue the existence of overlaps between the metamorphoses undergone by capitalism in the 21st century and the emergence of the global health crisis which, under universal determinations - concentration and centralization of capital, expropriation of the means of life for the production of commodities, exploitation of labour and accumulation of private wealth - imprints particular characteristics on its manifestations and means of confrontation in each region and country.

Although the dominant discourse attributes the COVID-19 pandemic as the main cause of the economic and social crisis, whose manifestations in the central and peripheral countries are very different, the truth is that the pandemic is not the source of the contradictions of the capitalist world. Examples of this are cyclical crises, such as the one that broke out between 2008-2009 in the USA regarding real estate debts.

On the other hand, it is the health crisis that is seen as the source of the contradictions of the capitalist world: it is the health crisis that is enhanced by the strategies of confrontation of the crisis of capital, carried out by the bourgeoisie to reverse the fall in the rate of profit through initiatives that redefine the international division of labour, establishing renewed forms of labour exploitation, having as main accelerators the financialisation of capital and the transnational predatory action of natural resources to lower the cost of raw materials and expand exports of primary products, especially in countries with large agricultural and mining frontiers, which favour the emergence of environmental catastrophes and the emergence of pandemics in, among others, the Brazilian Amazon region.

Based on this statement, we return to the problematisation of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic at the opening of this article, to put forward the hypothesis of the existence of a social determination of the pandemic if we consider the relationship between the increase in pandemics in recent decades and the transformations linked to the circuit of capital. As Behring states:

> *A new pattern of reproduction of capitalism is instituted (...) by the acceleration of capital turnover, triggering advertising, marketing, optimal management of stocks of goods, planned obsolescence of goods (...) movements that seek to compensate for the decline in the rate of profit (...) by the increased intervention of the State through the constitution and allocation of the public fund, socializing losses, redirecting expenditures (...) and triggering a series of measures for capital (...)* (2021, p.131-132).

While this dynamic acquires particular characteristics in the central and peripheral countries, its effects are overwhelming in the dependent countries -among which are the Latin American ones, including Brazil- already historically marked by subordination to the interests and needs of imperialist capital. The unequal and combined development that articulates the modern with the archaic, sets in motion the historical plundering of their natural resources, the transfer of values and the overexploitation of labour, producing and reproducing inequalities within these countries and in their relationship with the central countries (Brettas, 2020, p.96).

In the case of Brazil, whose social formation has its roots in the colonial system, in slave labour and latifundia, capitalist modernization was historically based on dependence and subordination to imperialist capital, under the domination of bourgeois autocracy, characterized by the political exclusion of the working and subaltern classes, whose ways of being and living bear the marks of gendered, racialized, overexploited and socially unprotected class social relations. As Mauro Iasi systematizes,

> *(...) Brazil has developed a complete capitalism in the frames of its subordinate and dependent insertion in the capitalist and imperialist order, and this implies its adaptation to the patterns of capital accumulation that now predominate in that order, that is, a so-called "flexible" form to ideologically hide its extremely predatory aspect, precarising labour relations and contract, intensifying exploitation and the extraction of more value, commodifying all spheres of life. (2019, p.423)*

This socioeconomic and ideopolitical context has become fertile for the deepening of the consequences of the pandemic, on the bed of a situation of crisis of capital (Behring, 2021) and of the unprecedented regressiveness of the current extreme right-wing government of President Jair Messias Bolsonaro, organic ally of Donald Trump in the USA, of Netanyahu in Israel and of the Latin American conservative governments. The greatest expression of this catastrophe are the more than 550,000 deaths (July/2021) that could have been avoided if it were not for the insufficient and disastrous measures adopted by the government, among them, the delay in vaccination, the lack of supplies, scientific denialism and its consequent apology for ineffective early treatments; occurrences aggravated by the precariousness of the infrastructure of public health services, subject to budget cuts and dismantling in the last decades of this century, under the sign of usurpation of the public fund (Behring, 2021). As summarized in a recent editorial in the journal Temporalis,

> *In Brazil, the foundations of the financialisation of capital are based on public debt, which explains the huge public fund resources directed annually to state creditors as a way to feed the profit margins of domestic and international financial capital. To enable the channelling of these amounts, the fiscal austerity scenario got a major boost after the legal parliamentary coup of 2016. Through Constitutional Amendment 95, the constitutionalisation of fiscal adjustment was made possible, freezing the federal government's primary spending for 20 years. (Irineu et al., 2021, p.9)*

Broadly speaking, it can be stated that in the current Brazilian scenario elements converge that give unity to the expressions of this crisis of capital - its economic, social, political and health dimensions - whose ideopolitical spectrum is a true organic crisis[2]. This scenario, I reiterate, is revealing of the entrails of contemporary capitalism in its eagerness to accumulate wealth at the cost of overexploitation of the workforce (Luce, 2018) and the absolute impoverishment of the working classes, in a scenario of barbarization of life: death by the virulence of diseases and living conditions and insufficient health services. According to data from the Brazilian Research Network on Food and Nutritional Sovereignty (PENSSAN, 2021), unemployment reaches over 14% of the working population in the country, with greater impacts on women, black and brown people, while 59.3% of Brazilians (125.6 million people) are not fed in sufficient quantity or quality with the arrival of the coronavirus. As David Harvey (2020) states, COVID-19 presents all the characteristics of a pandemic of class, gender and race.

It is in this environment that the opportunism and strategies of the ruling classes gain momentum: either through the action of the State, under the leadership of a proto-fascist and militarized government, or through the private apparatuses of hegemony in a climate of fierce class political conflict, led by insurgent manifestations although weakened by the social isolation of COVID-19. Indeed, coercive and consensual strategies are unleashed, both in the ideocultural field and in the field of repressive apparatuses. The main highlight of this cultural offensive is the use of social media and robotized communication technologies by the Internet, whether in the form of fake news or advertising appeals, through the action of digital influencers, affecting all aspects of everyday life (Rodrigues and Mota, 2021).

[2] La The organic crisis is conceived by Gramsci as that which, originating in the economic sphere, transits into the political sphere. Therefore, as it expands to the field of political, ideological and cultural relations, its effects reach the essence of class relations, affecting the content of social struggles. The crisis demands a permanent process of transformation of both the pattern of capital accumulation, including the role of the productive forces, and the strategies of domination that shape the private apparatuses of hegemony. One of the characteristics of the organic crisis is the concomitance between the economic crisis (of accumulation) and the appearance of a political crisis, determined by the intensification of conflicts between classes and, within them, between class fractions. For Gramsci, this organic crisis affects all social relations and is the condensation of the contradictions inherent in the social structure (Voza and Liguori, 2017, p.162-164).

With the acquiescence of the National Congress, Brazil is also witnessing the implementation of changes in the Federal Constitution that, by constitutionalizing fiscal adjustment measures (Behring, 2021), subtracts rights, operates the defunding of public policies, and modifies environmental, labour and social security legislations, in addition to privatizing companies and commercializing public services. In short: capital implements the necessary measures to its ways of operating to face the capitalist crisis, subordinating to its financial and patrimonial interests the means to face the health crisis. It is worth noting that, during the pandemic, the wealth of Brazilian billionaires increased by 34 billion dollars (about 177 billion reais), according to a study by the NGO Oxfam. As Professor Sara Granemann rightly reminds us:

> *(...) the economic crisis of big capital, in its line of expansion, seems to have found in the eruption of COVID-19 -it must be borne in mind that the planetary pandemic and the economic crisis come from the same capitalist mode of production- the "almost perfect" conditions and justification to impose, on working men and women, more sacrifices, in such depth, that include the very right to life. At present, government policies that oppose "economy" to "life" deepen to the limit one of the structural characteristics of capitalism, with the explicit valorisation of the former over the latter. (...) found in the pandemic a fertile ground to apply the guidelines of its ultraneoliberal government program and build profitable solutions for big capital. (2021, p.4-5)*

Reality shows the effects of this process in the daily life of the subaltern classes with the increase of poverty, hunger, precarious work, in its particular expressions of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and generation. The impoverishment of the working classes advances due to the lack of income, in a scenario of suppression of rights and social guarantees. Among other aspects, there is the reduction of social benefits, the insufficiency of emergency aid during the pandemic and the difficulty of access to the means of social protection of social security, reinforcing, for example, the expansion of voluntarist practices, including religious and corporate philanthropy, in the same proportion that transforms public goods and services into commodities.

These social reversals occur alongside measures that facilitate the appropriation of wealth, fuelled by the financialisation of capital, especially through the appropriation of public funds and workers' livelihoods (goods, services, wages and income), taxing, commodifying and financing them. What is clear, among the tendencies of contemporary capitalism and as a determination of the regression of social protection systems and the human abandonment of the impoverished segments is the appropriation of public

funds by rentier capital and international banking; in addition, the commodification of public services (Huws, 2017), through outsourcing, public-private partnerships, and the expropriation of the rights and consumption of public services in its dimension of values of social use for the population (Mota, 2018).

This statement reveals the subordination of the State to the interests of capital - although without annulling the contradictions - and exposes the limits of the political organization of the subaltern classes to fight for the maintenance of their civilizational achievements at this juncture. These limits were determined and aggravated by the genericized and racialized labour precariousness, by the expansion of the relative overpopulation, composed of men and women housed in unemployment, in informality, in paid or unpaid domestic work and in self-employment. This panorama has been aggravated by the pandemic, affecting head-on the political and organizational capacity of workers to resist and fight against the dismantling of their rights and access to goods and services, as evidenced by the slogans of the recent street demonstrations in Brazil: "vaccine in the arm and food on the plate", demanding vaccines, emergency aid and jobs.

This social environment is mediated by a true cultural war, carrier of a reactionary and ultraneoliberal neoconservatism, shaper of ideologies that are all the rage in the Brazilian present and permeable to the subaltern classes (Mota, 2019), such as the disqualification of social movements and political parties, especially those of the left spectrum, the denial of science, the preventive treatments of COVID-19, the incentive to use weapons as a means to combat violence, the prevarications about the size of the State, the privileges of public officials, in addition to the persecution of critical thinking in public universities, artistic manifestations and alternative media, to mention the main ones.

These ideologies are rooted in the historical conservatism of our social formation, with a clear racist, patriarchal and anti-democratic content, full of prejudice against women and the LGBTQIA+ community, linked to social class relations. These are ideas and customs propagated by the private apparatuses of hegemony of the right and extreme right, in order to subjectivise the objectivity of the demands of capital and the bourgeoisie in the implementation of measures necessary to their ways of operating to face the capitalist crisis (Mota and Rodrigues, 2020) and, within it, the health crisis.

It is worth explaining that the experience of social inequality by the subaltern classes, particularly the failure to meet their most basic needs, pushes these class and lumpen

segments to the search for means of survival (their simple reproduction), where the space for the formation of critical consciousness is restricted and the possibilities of reproduction of the rationality of the dominant classes are expanded (Iasi, 2019).

Thus, the spoils of the capitalist crisis and, within it, the social and health crisis we are experiencing, materially, socially and culturally affect fractions of the working and subaltern classes, bringing to light new demands, situations and contexts that have implications for social policies and the daily work of social workers in Brazil, as we will address below.

Implications and challenges for the Brazilian Social Service

Within the international panorama, the Brazilian Social Service has some particularities inherited from its historical development, whose main characteristics are the political-professional organization of social workers throughout the national territory[3], the existence of national parameters to guide professional practice[4] and a set of national resolutions and directives of a political, ethical and technical nature related to professional training and to ethical-political and professional orientations[5]. Such particularities are not continental exclusivity, but reveal expressions of the professional culture of the Brazilian Social Service in harmony with the socio-historical conditions that determined the struggle to overcome the traditional Social Service, with empiricist, confessional and philanthropic-assistance roots present in the genesis of the profession in Brazil, as well as its previous and current conservative features.

Thus, the development of the profession in Brazil, in addition to its status as a technical-professional area, responsible for the existence of a consolidated professional labour market, constituted an area of knowledge production, strengthened by the development

[3] We refer to the "political-professional organizations of Brazilian social work - the Federal Council of Social Service (CFESS), the Regional Council of Social Service (CRESS), the Brazilian Association of Teaching and Research in Social Service (ABEPSS) and the National Executive of Social Service Students" (ENESSO) -, who have a strong legitimacy rooted in their democratic decision-making procedures and in the definition of a broad agenda of professional struggle linked to the demands of the progressive wing of Brazilian society" (Behring, 2021b, p.63).

[4] Parameters for the Work of Social Workers in Health Policy (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/Parametros_para_a_Atuacao_de_Assistentes_Sociais_na_Saude.pdf), Social Assistance (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/Cartilha_CFESS_Final_Grafica.pdf), Grants for the Work of Social Workers in Education Policy, (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/BROCHURACFESS_SUBSIDIOS-AS-EDUCACAO.pdf), Social Workers' Work in Socio-legal Policy - Grants for Reflection (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/CFESSsubsidios_sociojuridico2014.pdf), Work of Social Workers in Urban Policy (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/CFESS-SubsidiosPoliticaUrbana-Site.pdf), Health and Social Service Residency - Grants for Reflection (http://www.cfess.org.br/arquivos/CFESS-BrochuraResidenciaSaude.pdf).

[5] Code of Ethics of Social Workers (1993), in the Law of Regulation of the Profession and in the Curricular Guidelines of the Brazilian Association of Social Work Teaching and Research (Behring, 2021b, p.63).

of graduate programs in the area and by the existence of researchers recognized by federal and state agencies for the promotion of research and undergraduate and graduate education. Such particularity, indicative of political and theoretical-methodological pluralism, reveals the permanent effort to overcome the pragmatism and empiricism that mark the origins of the profession, endowing its objects of direct intervention (practice) with the status of objects of research and knowledge production in a critical and prospective perspective (Mota, 2013). This investment allowed the profession to advance in the construction of a critical political and professional culture, preserving the unity between its different dimensions: theoretical, ethical, political and technical-operational. It is from this unity that it will be possible to ensure resistance to conservative, technicist and modernizing thinking, both in research and in professional training and practice, consolidating values and contributions that guide the ethical-political-professional project of the Brazilian Social Service.

It is worth noting that the confessional and anti-modern origins of the profession were challenged by the insurgence of social workers during the exhaustion of the military business dictatorship in the late 1970s, initiating what was called the process of renewal of the profession (Netto, 1991): either challenging the traditional Social Service or pretending to break with conservatism. It opposed the place that monopolistic capitalism had reserved for it, embracing a social direction opposite to that for which it was created, as inscribed in the code of ethics in force, in the training guidelines and in the trends of knowledge production, where the Marxist orientation predominates in opposition to the dominant hegemony (Mota, 2016).

We do not deny practice as a function of prioritizing theory. It invests in the theoretical and historical treatment of the singularities of practice, referring them to the totality of social relations as a means to glimpse strategies of articulation with the social struggles of the working and subaltern classes in their social relations of gender, race and sex (Cisne, 2014); in the expansion of policies and the exercise of rights and the formation of sociabilities and respect for diversity.

Thus, since the 1980s, the profession has been building a progressive professional culture in organic articulation with the agendas of struggle of the subaltern classes. This process, however, does not include any linearity since it is related to the historical context of each period, as was the case in the post-military dictatorship period and the events derived from the political processes that have taken place since the 1990s, more precisely, the context opened by the social-liberalism (Castelo, 2013) of the Latin American centre-left governments and the neoliberalism of the past decades.

Not without reason, since the mid-1990s, the struggle of the professional collective is based on the defense of this legacy of struggles and achievements facing the "new reason of the world" (Dardot and Laval, 2016, p.30-31), permeated by neoliberal attacks that "far exceed the mercantile and financial sphere in which capital reigns [...] extends the logic of the market far beyond its borders, extending to the formation of subjectivities". This context is deepened in the current situation by the ultra-conservative thinking of the extreme right and by the expedients used to implement the ultra-neoliberal agenda of the current Bolsonaro government, which deepens the pre-existing labour and social protection precariousness and greatly aggravates the economic-social consequences of the pandemic of the new coronavirus in a clear process of barbarization of social life.

In this environment, social workers, especially the organized and vanguard segments, have participated in both the more general resistance movements and those directly affecting the profession, in tune with the social, partisan and professional struggles of the progressive sectors of Brazilian society. In the context of more general struggles, they have positioned themselves in defense of public social security, social and labour rights, democratic freedoms, against neoliberal adjustments, in defense of agrarian and urban reform, against structural racism and LGBTQIA+phobia, women's rights and the rights of native peoples, among others. In the professional field, social workers have positioned themselves against private, commercial and distance education, responsible for the formation of a professional reserve army with very low salaries and at the mercy of professional unemployment. In the ideopolitical sphere, they have confronted conservatism and postmodern thinking that affects theoretical frameworks and professional ideologies, in addition to denouncing and confronting the transformations in the work environment that affect the working conditions and relations of social workers.

Thus, the Brazilian Social Service, which even before the pandemic was involved in the resistance and struggle against neoliberal threats, changes in work and theoretical, political and cultural conservatism (Mota and Rodrigues, 2020), is now doubly threatened by ultraconservative and ultraneoliberal mandates, derived from the extreme right-wing leadership of the current government and by the implications of this context in the health crisis, with reflections in the daily professional work.

The implications of the health and social crisis on the profession affect social workers at two main levels: at the level of daily demands, whose volume and nature of the situations demanded are directly related to public social unprotection, violence and deficiencies in meeting the basic social needs of workers and their families; and at the

level of professional activities involving conditions, labour relations and singularities of professional practice in times of catastrophe and social isolation.

As for the professional work, in addition to the situations already mentioned, it is observed that the improvisation and mistakes in the conduct of the measures to face COVID-19 greatly affected the professional performance, marked by the pragmatism of the emergency measures and the dependence on the market moods, in a regressive and conservative cultural environment.

As for the demands originated in the pandemic catastrophe and the human-social abandonment, we witnessed, within the Brazilian Social Service, the reappearance of experiences that we considered overcome, particularly in the care of material and immediate needs of the population, such as hunger and lack of income that reach the health and social assistance units and socio-legal agencies as unusual, urgent situations of unpostponable solution, directly linked to the lack of livelihood, violence and disease.

They are demands directly related to changes in the protocols for access to services/ benefits and aids and in the operability of policies, such as: administrative referrals for the qualification of users to various programs, regularization of civil documentation and identification, resolution of difficulties caused by the lack of access to computers and cell phones, as well as guidance and monitoring of families during treatment and hospitalization for COVID-19 treatment. Most of these demands are pandemic-related. However, these demands occur simultaneously with other pre-existing demands, which were enhanced in the health crisis, linked to violence against women, racial discrimination, protection of the elderly, children, street population and LGBTQ+, among others. Activities to address these situations are largely carried out remotely, under health protocols and with extensive use of communication and information technologies, through interactive platforms or via cell phones.

This set of situations and processes has greatly affected professional activity, either due to the insufficiency and precariousness of the means and services available, or due to the increase in the demands of the population -whether or not submerged in the health crisis, and not always identified as such due to the context of social emergency. But, in any of the possibilities, the insufficiency of policies, means and social teams has gained visibility, even in the bourgeois media, bringing new elements to the professional universe. The aftermath of the lack of funding and the dismantling of policies, especially Social Assistance (Carneiro et al., 2021), whose specificity accounts for a huge range of

actions, no longer being addressed, reveals the lack of responsibility of the State. Also in the field of health and social assistance there was a kind of centralization of professionals working directly with the population, such as doctors, nurses, psychologists and social workers in the public sector, who were forced to cover the shortcomings of the services with the precarious means at their disposal, in a scenario of discouraging helplessness.

From the countless accounts of experiences, coexistence with professionals, publications and impact research carried out in the field of Social Service[6], it is observed that the professional universe of social workers has been affected by the restructuring of public institutions and the creation of emergency services implemented under public-private partnerships, in which: the supply, management and execution of services are transferred to for-profit or non-profit entities; changes are made to the content of professional work through the standardization of routines, goals, protocols and activities that may detract from the relative technical-political autonomy of the profession. In addition, in the professional labour market, it has become recurrent to hire people to perform specific tasks, such as socioeconomic analysis, social studies, individual consultations, interviews, home visits, preparation of reports and social opinions, with pre-established norms and standards.

This context is directly related to the counter-reforms of the State and the tendencies towards new expropriations, given that part of the public services can become spaces of mediation for the valorisation of capital.

The impact of these circumstances of catastrophe and health crisis on the work of Social Services professionals is very worrying, either because of the lack of working conditions and the precariousness of services and equipment that overload the social services provided by these professionals, or because many of these activities, episodic in nature, may become permanent.

There are ample possibilities that this type of action subtracts the pedagogical dimension of the profession, whether in the mediation of the exercise of rights, or in the instrumentalisation of access to goods, services and policies, or even in the identification of needs (subsumed or not to the pandemic) that require new means of protection and public action by the State. These aspects are related to the commoditization of public services and the socio-technical fragmentation of work, restricting professional action to the performance of pre-established procedures, with the help of communication and information technologies, the ICTs.

[6] Among recent publications, we highlight the thematic issue of the journal Temporalis, v. 21 n. 41, 2021.

This reality, presented here in general terms, has been the subject of discouragement on the part of professionals; however, the possibilities of overcoming and facing this situation are contained in the reality itself. The impacts on professional attributions and working conditions are the most significant in terms of the daily work of social workers, but they may make invisible other issues involved in this totality of phenomena.

The professional reality changed by the pandemic and by ultra-liberalism is the starting point of our discouragement and, dialectically, also the starting point to face this reality, as long as we can identify, in the capillarity of demands, needs that require new actions and initiatives - the result of the exercise of new professional competences, tuned to the real needs of users, in line with the ethical-technical and political commitments of the profession.

The issues that arise in the singularity of the demands require a more precise and totalizing referral to the field of State counter-reforms, common sense ideologies, rights, public policies and other issues, such as racism, prejudice, discrimination and violence of all kinds. Apparently individual and punctual, the phenomena in course (they have conjunctural and structural dimensions) must be worked prospectively and pedagogically in the countercurrent of the "pedagogy of hegemony"[7] of the dominant classes that unload in the Coronavirus pandemic all the justifications of the social and economic crisis, presenting the real historical process in the pandemic pauperization.
If, from an objective point of view, this warning may sound "abstract" in the face of the real process that crosses the daily practice of social workers, from another perspective, that of rational and political-professional confrontation of this contextuality, in the bed of our ethical-professional protagonism, radically critical and restless, it offers other possibilities: that of moving away from the routes of professional catharsis that socializes discouragement, from the fatalism of impotent professional practice and/or from professional political messianism.

In other words, our sharpness in identifying new and old issues, underlying the capillarity of the demands in the current pandemic and which have implications on professional competencies and attributions, may be carriers of needs that justify new proposals, beyond the context of the emergency.

In the statements of social security and social assistance professionals, there are frequent references to the demands of users, such as: lack of registration and civil identification

[7] The new pedagogy of hegemony aims to obtain the passive consensus of a broad contingent of the population to the project of bourgeois sociability and to conform more directly massive segments of the urban proletariat to the ideas, ideals and practices of bourgeois expropriation and domination (Neves & Sant'Anna, 2005, p.37).

documents; situations related to functional and digital illiteracy; inability to use computers, insufficient data transmission packages through the Internet, necessary for registration on digital platforms to receive aid, benefits, etc. These situations cannot be characterized simply as bureaucratic and out of reach of professional attributions: it is necessary to recognize them as signs of the inexistence of public programs that could be proposed in states and municipalities, such as free document services related to the exercise of citizens' civil rights; the implementation of free public offices for access to computers with available technical follow-up, universal and free access to data networks (internet), as part of the services that are at the heart of the sociability of this century and that are inaccessible to the impoverished population. This context is prodigal in the emergence of intermediaries who usurp the meagre salaries, incomes and benefits of the elderly and illiterate population, to dispose of the realization of these activities. We need to gather new research to reflect on this new contextuality that contains ongoing trends.

Final reflections: professional challenges in the face of the health crisis

Our knowledge of reality can contribute to the criticism and formulation of public policies and mechanisms that respond to the real needs of the population, as part of the initiatives and the creation of new policies and programs in the period of the health catastrophe. It is in this sense that we need to carry out a pedagogical counter-offensive that confronts the attempts to endow the Social Service with a mere technical-operational action that can extend beyond the pandemic. It is a matter of exercising this pedagogical dimension through the investigation of concrete situations, the systematization of data and information, the commitment and involvement in the struggles of social movements, as well as the information, training and instrumentalisation of resistance and denunciation, whether in the institutional sphere or in alternative media, which allows the theoretical and pedagogical unveiling of the relationship between the macro-dimensions of reality and the fragmented professional demands.

Although health crises contain emergency demands of their own, they entail an enormous paradox: they reveal pressing needs that require rapid measures, but in the process they can also perpetuate merely instrumental and pragmatic professional practices. They are initiatives that solve problems on an ad hoc basis, although their origin is earlier and is not due to the pandemic, as we pointed out earlier. The means to legitimize the social irresponsibility of the State are carried out through the use of schemes aimed at the exercise of the pedagogy of bourgeois hegemony.

As has already been said on other occasions, the ideocultural bed of these measures of adjustment, dismantling and counter-reforms is that of the formation of a culture of crisis[8] (Mota, 2019). Under certain relationships and using some mediations - in this case, the health crisis - the pedagogy of the culture of the crisis carried out by the dominant classes and their State consists of metabolizing objectively and subjectively the production of active and passive consensuses of the subaltern classes, required in the implementation of measures necessary for their ways of operating to face the capitalist crisis and, in it, the health crisis. Among its axes, now redefined, we highlight the idea that poverty, lack of protection and hunger are determined by COVID-19, affecting the entire population, regardless of their class status and the measures of barbarization of life that preceded the pandemic, implemented by the ultra-liberal and conservative project.

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ARTICLE

I warned you and you didn't listen to me: poverty and inequality during the pandemic in Uruguay

Yo te avisé y vos no me escuchaste: pobreza y desigualdad en tiempos de pandemia, en Uruguay

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Abstract

In Uruguay, the arrival of COVID-19 coincided with the beginning of a new right-wing government replacing the Frente Amplio. This article analyses the social impacts -particularly the increase in poverty and inequality- that have occurred in the country since the beginning of the pandemic. It concludes that the worsening of the population's living conditions is related to the global crisis situation, but also to the government's responses to the expressions of this crisis in the national context. The government did not listen, despite having been warned: national and international studies, immediately after the beginning of the spread of COVID-19, made clear recommendations on the importance of reducing the

Keywords:
COVID; poverty; inequality; social protection; Uruguay

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impact of the pandemic on the populations most affected by poverty, alerting the need to reorient public policies in this direction. But the government, consistent with its neoliberal approach, has tended to shift the responsibility for the health and social consequences of the pandemic onto individuals, reducing state intervention. The responses implemented - mostly monetary aid - are limited in terms of amount and duration, and have been accompanied by a discourse of suspicion towards the recipient populations. In this sense, the government has focused on economic growth -for which the reduction of state intervention is key- and on the generation of employment, without discussing the conditions of existence of the working poor or the characteristics of the jobs that would allow them to live effectively out of poverty. Problematizing these aspects of social policy in times of health crisis is relevant for Social Work, given its professional insertion, as the demands of the population grow and become more acute at the same time as the resources to respond to them weaken.

Resumen

En Uruguay, la llegada del COVID-19 coincide con el inicio de un nuevo gobierno de derecha que sustituye al Frente Amplio. El artículo analiza los impactos sociales -particularmente el aumento de la pobreza y la desigualdad-, que se han producido en el país desde el comienzo de la pandemia. Se concluye que el agravamiento de las condiciones de vida de la población tiene relación con la situación de crisis mundial, pero también con las respuestas del gobierno frente a las expresiones de dicha crisis en el contexto nacional. El gobierno no escuchó, pese a haber sido avisado: estudios nacionales e internacionales, de manera inmediata al comienzo de la propagación del COVID-19, realizaron claras recomendaciones sobre la importancia de reducir el impacto de la pandemia en las poblaciones más afectadas por la pobreza, alertando la necesidad de reorientar las políticas públicas en este sentido. Pero el gobierno, consecuente con su impronta neoliberal, ha tendido a trasladar a las personas la responsabilidad por las consecuencias sanitarias y sociales de la pandemia, reduciendo la intervención estatal. Las respuestas implementadas –ayudas monetarias en su mayoría- son acotadas en términos de monto y tiempo de duración, y han estado acompañadas de un discurso de sospecha hacia las poblaciones receptoras. La apuesta del gobierno, en ese sentido, ha estado centrada en el crecimiento económico -para lo cual la reducción de la intervención estatal es clave- y en la generación de empleo, sin discutir las condiciones de existencia de personas

Palabras Clave:
COVID; pobreza; desigualdad; protección social; Uruguay

trabajadoras pobres ni las características de los empleos que les permitirían vivir efectivamente fuera de la pobreza. Problematizar estos aspectos de la política social en tiempos de crisis sanitaria es relevante para el Trabajo Social, dada su inserción profesional, en tanto crecen y se agudizan las demandas de la población al mismo tiempo que se debilitan los recursos para responder a las mismas.

Introduction

On March 13, the first cases of COVID-19 were announced in Uruguay. This was done by President Lacalle Pou, candidate of the National Party, who had assumed the presidency on the 1st of that month. His election was made possible by the agreement made with four other right-wing parties, putting an end to 15 years of leftist and/or progressive governments under the Frente Amplio.

This paper aims to analyse the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Uruguay, one year after the announcement of the first case of infection, focusing on the significant growth of poverty, indigence and inequality in the country. This is considered relevant in itself given the current crisis, but also as an indication of the way in which the government conceives access to social protection. It is concluded that this increase has to do with the world situation, but also with the government's responses, which -despite the announcements- have been very weak, and fundamentally relate to its strongly liberal orientations. This is even more serious as these impacts were highlighted by national and international research.

This discussion is considered very relevant for Social Work given the close link between the profession and social policies. These policies are, at the same time, a space for the provision of goods and services, but also for professional insertion. This ever-present reality becomes particularly relevant in situations of crisis and change in government orientation.

In order to construct this article, secondary sources were analysed, which made it possible, on the one hand, to account for the information available to the government at the onset of the pandemic, and on the other hand, to identify the measures implemented and the governmental discourses built around them. In the first case, it includes national and international research on the probable effects of the pandemic. In the second, it analyses existing information on the website of the Ministry of Social

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Development, press conferences held by government authorities and press releases, in order to reconstruct the measures that appear scattered and reiterated. The Budget Law is included, since it expresses the general political orientations of the government.

The first part of the article conceptualizes social protection and its relevance. Then, it is analysed in Latin America and particularly in Uruguay. This is followed by the main outlines of the projections and policy recommendations made during 2020. The fourth part focuses on the social situation in the country, one year after the beginning of the pandemic and the government measures adopted. The discussion of these measures, identifying issues that transcend the Uruguayan reality, is carried out in the following section. The document closes with a conclusion.

What is meant by social protection?

Danani and Hintze (2011) understand social protection as a central part of the conditions for the reproduction of the labour force, which implies the life of the entire population in capitalist societies and which, from the point of view of individuals, compromises the needs for the reproduction of life.

Thus understood, social protection systems serve contradictory interests, are built in processes of disputes and correlations of forces (Bueno and Preuss, 2020). They depend on theoretical, political and ideological conceptions, which translate into different ways to meet basic human needs. This means that they are not static, having moments of expansion and retraction, depending on conjunctural and structural elements.

Beyond expansion or retraction, the capacity for social protection must be questioned, which will imply criteria of greater or lesser socialization in the satisfaction of needs. This implies considering which needs, how much and to what extent they are satisfied and for which sectors they are provided by the system. Then, focusing on the quality of this satisfaction, its modalities and guarantees. These express the degrees and types of security of protection and, therefore, the reduction or not of the uncertainty to which people are exposed. Finally, it also includes the political-cultural contents that emerge from the processes of construction of legitimacy, policies, institutions and demands, cutting out the problems that require State intervention (Danani and Hintze, 2011).

The ways in which these disputes are settled will give rise to state institutions and policies that may tend to provide security to the lives of all people, or make it depend on

the private capacity for individual assurance. This occurs in the liberal orientation, where the citizenry sees itself as having the capacity to take advantage of market opportunities. In this market, those who work would have the possibility to choose. This justifies the restriction of public benefits and services with a universal orientation, limiting state intervention to vulnerable populations. This perception will also lead to valuing extreme effort or survival strategies as merits of individuals. To this can be added the solidarity of civil society, organized to assist these vulnerable sectors (Grassi, 2018a).

This centrality of the State and access (or not) to welfare does not imply that it is the only area to be considered. According to Martínez (2008) the capacity to manage risks depends on socioeconomic and gender stratification. The former refers to the different possibilities people have to generate income and possess different resources. It is strongly conditioned -although not totally determined- by labour markets. The second assumes that resource allocation practices are organized around the sexual division of labour. Thus, the incorporation of women into paid work, without sharing unpaid work, stands out.

In capitalist societies, mercantile exchange is the main practice of resource allocation and access to goods and services depends, fundamentally, on income. But this allocation also takes place through the State and through unpaid work (mainly female) in the family (Martínez, 2008). When the state expands its participation in welfare, the role of the family and the community is reduced. This contributes to the autonomy mainly of women, historically responsible for care (Bueno and Preuss, 2020).

Social protection and welfare in Latin America and specifically Uruguay

It is of interest here to visualize the form that protection and welfare have taken in Latin America, focusing on the Uruguayan reality.

Sátyro et al. (2019) point out that Uruguay presents a relatively stable social welfare matrix over time. Filgueira (2015), analyses what happened during the Import Substitution Model, where the State acquired unprecedented centrality in most of the countries of the region. This has very diverse expressions, distinguishing between stratified universalism, dual and exclusive regimes. Uruguay, together with Argentina and Chile, belongs to the first group. These authors point out that, in these countries, the social protection matrix -based on the formal labour market- was historically characterized by high levels of coverage of goods and services, including health and social security, but with highly stratified

quality and extension. They also had a public education system with the highest levels of expenditure and coverage in the region, being the first policy to achieve universal status.

From the 1980s onwards, new development strategies were put into practice, under the guidance of the Washington Consensus (Bueno and Preuss, 2020) and the weak welfare state was deeply questioned. The deregulation of the labour market, the reduction of labour costs and the partial remercantilisation of the coverage of the risks of active life are promoted, creating or extending private management (Midaglia and Antía, 2017). In addition, social security, health and education benefit the capabilities of individuals in the market and encourage individual insurance (Filgueira, 2015; Sátyro et al., 2019). The social protection agenda focused on poverty reduction. The State would only intervene when the family, the community and even the market failed. This intervention was to be punctual, emergent, selective and focused (Bueno and Preuss, 2020). One of the major expressions of this was the creation of Conditional Transfer Programs (CTP) with strong support from multilateral agencies.

Based on the reform processes, Martínez (2008) distinguishes three types of welfare regime: the productivist state, the protectionist state and the informal family-based regime. It is in the latter that the author places Uruguay together with Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama. The author argues that all Latin American regimes are, to some extent, informal, which implies that part of the population depends on family and community arrangements to assume practices that correspond to markets (particularly labour markets) or to the State. This is particularly acute in the third cluster, although the countries of clusters 1 and 2 also have large contingents of the population unprotected from the labour market and public policy, and families and social networks deploy strategies to fill these gaps. Likewise here, unpaid female work makes an important contribution to the production of well-being. This is expressed in the performance of each regime, indicating greater effectiveness in state regimes than in family regimes, with higher levels of poverty and worse social indicators (Martínez, 2008).

At the beginning of this century, several countries in the continent took over left-wing and/or progressive governments, with greater State responsibility as a central axis. They promote more redistributive and universalist reforms than in previous years and affect the agenda implemented (Sátyro et al., 2019). This greater responsibility, according to Quiroga and Juncos (2020), is observed in economic, social and international policy. This was favoured, starting in 2003, by the increase in prices and volumes of agricultural exports, extractive industries and metals.

Bueno and Preuss (2020), Midaglia and Antía (2017) and Sátyro et al. (2019), highlight the investment of the State in education and health; also in social assistance, incorporating excluded sectors. Together, these processes led to a decrease in poverty and extreme poverty. Although the tone is expansive, according to Filgueira (2015), the openness and liberal model will not be totally suppressed. The period also escapes that of the import substitution model and involves non-contributory components and the expansion of coverage and risks covered by the State, such as care and support in reproductive stages.

Martínez and Sánchez-Ancochea (2016) note that the transformations were positive in terms of coverage, but gaps persist in sufficiency and equity between contributory and non-contributory programs. This promotes a highly segmented social incorporation in the continent with great inequality in income distribution and with large socioeconomic gaps in the distribution of women's time between paid and unpaid work.

Cantu (2015) constructs a typology of welfare regimes for this period. He groups the countries into four, with Uruguay together with Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica. These have less informality, even though one third of the economically active population is not formalized. They also have a structured participation of the State in social protection, although stratified by the fragmentation of social security and informality. Within this protection, social assistance makes it possible to contemplate those excluded from the previous model. Beyond this, the private sector is relatively important, given the private social security regimes. In short, the author characterizes this group as state-owned, stratified and liberal. This differentiates it from the second group, which is moving towards the construction of a liberal state. In the remaining groups, the State is weaker and, therefore, the scope of social policies is smaller and informality is greater. One group responds to this reality with emigration and remittances, and the other with family-based strategies.

It will be in this long-term scenario and with a change of government, in the short term, that COVID and its management will arrive, where the actions arising from the change of government are also important.

International and national projections and recommendations

Poverty, indigence and inequality were realities in Uruguay before the pandemic. So were unemployment, informality and low salaries for formally employed people. Although they existed, they were exacerbated by COVID (National Institute of Statistics, INE, 2020; 2021; Salas and Vigorito, 2021).

This situation has not been reached because of a lack of adequate and timely information. In April 2020, analysing the situation of the continent, the Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLAC, warned that it was very likely that extreme poverty and poverty would grow in the short term. It assumed that the former would go from 11% in 2019 to 15.5% in 2020 and poverty would increase from 30.3% to 37.3%. Likewise, in May, it indicated that there would be a growth in inequality between 1% and 8%. Without considering the effect of the measures announced to mitigate the impact of COVID, it places Uruguay among the countries with a projected increase of between 4 and 4.9% (ECLAC, 2020a; 2020b).

In April and in relation to labour, it indicates that the number of jobs and their quality would be affected. In July, it proposes an upward revision of unemployment, implying an increase of 5.4% with respect to 2019 (8.1%). It adds that, in 2019, unemployment benefits only existed in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay. A year earlier, only 47.4% of employed people contributed to the pension system and more than 20% of them lived in poverty (ECLAC, 2020a; 2020b).

The organization understands that the crisis disproportionately affects poor and vulnerable people such as those who work informally, have health problems, and are elderly. It also affects young people who are unemployed, underemployed, unprotected and migrants. It also considers that women are in a particularly vulnerable situation, due to their more precarious labor insertion and the increase in unpaid domestic work (ECLAC, 2020a; 2020b).

With the onset of the pandemic, ECLAC (2020a; 2020b) indicated that the faster and more forceful the response, the lesser the negative effects will be and for the short term; it points out two relevant measures. To guarantee income, it proposes monetary transfers, with a minimum duration of three months, although six months or one year would provide better protection to the population. The transfers would be for each person and for an equivalent of one extreme poverty line or one poverty line. In addition, as the crisis affects access to food, it proposes the implementation of an anti-hunger voucher to complement the basic emergency income for the entire population living in extreme poverty, with a value equivalent to 70% of an extreme poverty line.

Similar studies developed in Uruguay raise warnings along the same lines. Bai et al. (2020) analyze unemployment insurance and observe that it does not protect and is not distributed in the same way according to income. Many working people with low wages, even if they have unemployment insurance, could fall below the poverty line, given the

drop in income involved and the composition of households. Likewise, beneficiaries tend to be located in the central part of the income distribution. This implies that those who live in more deprived situations will not have access to social protection through this device, or it will be a partial protection. This is a relevant aspect, since vulnerable groups are particularly affected by the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

In May 2020, Brum and Da Rosa (2020) estimate the short-term effect of COVID and highlight that the number of households and individuals below the poverty line would increase rapidly. They also analyse the measures implemented by the government. At that date, they estimate that transfer policies cushion the increase in poverty by about 20%. In the scenario of poverty increasing to 12.3%, that percentage would fall to 11.6% with the policies. They add that many of the new households that fall into poverty do not receive transfers outside of unemployment insurance.

They understand that this increase can be neutralized with cash transfers that keep all affected households above the poverty line and that the amounts for this are within economic and logistical reach. They conclude by indicating that energetic and sustained action through public policies is key (Brum and Da Rosa, 2020).

Finally, in April, De los Santos and Fynn (2020) pointed out that informality is also a problem in the country, reaching 25% of working people at the beginning of the pandemic. Distance and social isolation are particularly relevant constraints for the informal sector, who need to work daily for subsistence and, in addition, have the largest number of work activities affected by confinement. They note that 69% of those who work informally would not be able to do so in the context of social distancing.

In addition, they also consider other factors. Among those who work informally and could work remotely, the rate of overcrowding is 13%, being 5% for those who work formally and can work remotely. In addition, one out of every five informal workers with the theoretical ability to telecommute live in households with at least one Unmet Basic Need related to housing. Among those who are formally employed and are able to telecommute, the figure is 6%. On the other hand, 42% of those who work informally and are able to do so remotely do not have an Internet connection at home, and 36% do not have a computer. These figures drop to 11% and 15% respectively for those who work formally. Finally, they analyse the burden of unpaid work, which is mainly borne by women. Thirty-five percent of those working informally and with the possibility of telecommuting live with at least one child under 12 years of age. In the case of informal women workers, the figure is 41% and 17% live with more than one child (De los Santos and Fynn, 2020).

ARTICLE

Poverty and inequality in Uruguay one year after the pandemic and responses to the pandemic

Consequences of the Pandemic in the Country

In March 2021, the first official data on poverty was announced after the start of the pandemic in Uruguay. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2021), the total number of households below the indigence line was 0.3% in 2020 and 0.4% of people were in that same circumstance. On the other hand, 8.1% of total households and 11.6% of people are under the poverty line. In the Latin American context, these figures are small but imply a very significant increase for the country. They represent 100,000 more people living in poverty, the largest increase in the last decade and a half[2].

The poverty gap is also growing and, therefore, poor households need more income than in the previous year to reach the poverty line. Finally, inequality is also increasing, with the Gini index rising from 0.383 in 2019 to 0.387 a year later (INE, 2021).

A central element in this increase is the labour market. In 2020, some 60,000 people lost their jobs and unemployment reached 10.3%, being mitigated by the withdrawal of labour activity. The contraction of real wages must also be added, which implies an average loss of purchasing power of 1.7% in 2020. This deepens the decline in average household income, which, having fallen during the previous two years, was 7.1% below the 2019 level[3].

One of the visible expressions of this process has been the emergence and permanence of soup kitchens and snack bars. A study carried out last year by Rieiro et al. (2020), within the framework of the Universidad de la República, identified about 700 experiences. They add that it is possible that the experiences in small towns in the interior of the country may have been under-recorded, due to their poor communication with other soup kitchens and picnic centres. At that time, on average they operated three days a week, serving 180 portions of food per day for the former and 124 for the latter.

The liberal government's responses

This increase in poverty, indigence and inequality must also be explained in terms of the government's responses. As mentioned above, these should be analysed from the point of view of their capacity to generate, or not, security and the processes of legitimacy to which they are associated.

[2] https://ladiaria.com.uy/economia/articulo/2021/3/de-los-derechos-al-yoga-un-ano-en-el-mides/

[3] https://ladiaria.com.uy/economia/articulo/2021/2/el-mercado-laboral-balance-de-2020-y-perspectivas-para-2021/

One month after the beginning of the pandemic and with a call for the restriction of mobility, the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) announced the doubling of the amount of the main monetary transfers: the Uruguay Social Card (TUS) and the Family Allowances (AFAM)[4]. Although relevant for families, these amounts are tremendously reduced. La Diaria, referenced in footnote 3, indicates that AFAMs represent about 8% of total income among lower income households and this figure drops to 4% in the case of the TUS.

This measure was in line with the recommendations presented, but it also distanced itself from them in an important way; on the one hand, because of the amount involved in the increases and because it was announced as duplicated and unique[5]. The payment was made in two months, not being, therefore, a duplication. This measure, and in this form, was repeated five more times, the last time in January of this year. In March, a duplication was announced, to be collected in April and May, and then extended until July. Thus, the increase in transfers was not announced for the recommended periods, thus nullifying the possibility of becoming a minimum support that would generate a certain degree of security. In a context of uncertainty and crisis, it is difficult to understand the reasons that led the government to this decision. The interpretation that emerges is that of competition between parties, which adds to the government's orientations. The 'announcement of the announcement' and 'announcement of the announced' are installed, which implies that the measures to be taken and those already taken are reiterated on more than one occasion through press conferences and/or communiqués, disseminated through the mass media. In this way, the government appears to be acting in a substantive and permanent manner, which is not observed when announcements are made.

Despite the institutionalization of transfers, their expansion was not the path chosen by the government. The central response has been the emergency food baskets, which was also supposed to go in the direction proposed by ECLAC, although it quickly distances itself. This is due to the amount (approximately U$ 27 and without considering the number of members) and the time in which the measure remains, which also does not allow it to operate as a support that provides minimum future predictability. The baskets began in April and continued during 2020 and 2021. In May of this year, its doubling was announced for that month and for June, when its extension to July was announced again. La Diaria, indicated in footnote 3, questions that the targeting is individual and not per household, generating situations of inequity and inclusion errors. As an example, a young person, living in a high-income household,

[4] https://www.presidencia.gub.uy/comunicacion/comunicacionnoticias/fondo-coronavirus-conferencia

[5] https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-desarrollo-social/comunicacion/noticias/gobierno-duplica-monto-tarjeta-uruguay-social-canastas-alimentos

dedicated to his or her university education and without formal employment, meets the requirements to access the emergency basket. However, a person who is unemployed and receives a disability pension for his or her son or daughter does not meet the requirements. There is no public information that -beyond the number of baskets delivered- indicates the profiles of those who have received them, nor how many have actually been received by each recipient. The decision not to expand AFAM and TUS is very striking for Salas and Vigorito (2021). They understand that in the context of the crisis there should be a rapid increase in the number of AFAMs and TUS.

The situation is also no better in relation to soup kitchens and snack bars. The former Undersecretary of MIDES[6] indicated that they were not encouraged by that agency, as they went against health recommendations. He adds that people will want to continue doing them, although without advancing the reasons that would lead to this attitude. A few days later, the same authority indicated that six days of coronavirus were enough for people to resort to the soup kitchens and picnic areas, expressing the weaknesses of the Frente Amplio governments[7].

The pandemic did not generate inequalities, but rather made them more visible and exacerbated them. However, this realization has not translated into a self-interpellation of the government. The government has not been able to understand the social reality generated by food problems and, therefore, does not problematize the responses it offers to address these problems. It continues to reaffirm that the solution to these problems lies in solidarity. This is indeed shown by the soup kitchens and picnic centres, but they do so mainly in the face of the social drama and the absence of the State, aspects that do not challenge the government either.

This has led to the fact that support for the soup kitchens and picnic centres has been practically nonexistent, a year after the beginning of the pandemic. This can be seen in Rieiro et al. (2021), who analyse the donors of the soup kitchens and picnic centres. The State is in fifth place and tends to focus on four departments of the country, where specific support strategies were developed.

In addition, from its discursive deployment, the government raises suspicions about those who actually attend. The former Undersecretary indicated the need to have records, given that by starting to control this information, the number of people attending would decrease. He considers the registry to be relevant, given that it is necessary to ensure that

[6] 14 meses después de haber asumido, las tres principales figuras del MIDES (Ministro Pablo Bartol Subsecretario, Armando Castaingdebat y Nicolas Martinelli como Director Nacional de Secretaría), fueron cambiadas.

[7] https://www.elpais.com.uy/informacion/politica/castaingdebat-seis-dias-coronavirus-gente-haciendo-ollas-populares-pidiendo-comer.html

people who do not receive assistance elsewhere are actually attending[8]. He had made a similar statement a month after the beginning of the pandemic, indicating that two days after the recharge of the TUS, the number of soup kitchens decreased by half in some areas[9] . Likewise, in August 2020, the former National Director of the Secretariat stated that the number of soup kitchens had surely decreased due to the measures taken by MIDES[10] .

These are statements that call attention. In November, the President ordered MIDES to carry out a registry of soup kitchens. If such a registry exists, it is not public knowledge. What is more, difficulties were raised by this organization to carry it out. It is not known on the basis of what information a government authority makes such statements such as in April of this year, let alone in the past.

Another aspect attracting attention generates deep concern, since it refers to the construction, or not, of the legitimacy of social protection. The aforementioned statements are not based on the legitimacy of the assistance and the right to guaranteed minimums, but on the suspicion of abuse of the people receiving assistance and attending the pots. It is strange what attracts their attention and/or what they affirm. Given that people resort to the pots, in the absence of resources to solve basic needs, it is very reasonable that, by collecting the transfers for a few days, people solve their food problem at home. It is worth asking why the same reflection is not made more days after the collection of the TUS or the food basket. The assessment of benefits is made without any questioning of their quality and their capacity to reduce insecurity. The insufficiency of the benefits is never mentioned as an explanation for the need to resort to more than one of them.

These guidelines are expressed in budgetary terms. ECLAC (2020b) examines the fiscal effort of the measures announced in 17 Latin American countries and places Uruguay in last place. It also analyzes the adequacy of the measures, comparing the amounts of emergency cash transfers with the poverty and extreme poverty lines. Between March and December 2020, in no country in the region was the average monthly amount equal to the value of the poverty line, and in only 6 of 16 countries did it border or exceed the extreme poverty line. In Uruguay, transfers not only did not exceed the extreme poverty line, but also ranked in the worst position. It also does so in relation to the poverty line. Estimated spending as a percentage of GDP on non-contributory measures

[8] https://www.teledoce.com/programas/desayunos-informales/primera-manana/armando-castaingdebat-no-podemos-politizar-la-asistencia-alimenticia/

[9] https://www.presidencia.gub.uy/comunicacion/comunicacionnoticias/conferencia-castaingdebat-acuerdos

[10] https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/la-comida-solidaria-menos-ollas-populares-pero-aun-son-miles-los-que-necesitan-un-plato-de-comida-20208291723O

and monetary transfers in 28 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean shows that in Uruguay it is 0.14, among the countries with the lowest values (ECLAC, 2021).

Discussion for Uruguay and beyond

What has been presented so far allows us to visualize four key aspects to problematize the Uruguayan reality, but also beyond it.

In the first place, it should be emphasized that history does not deny politics. Uruguay is one of the countries on the continent with the greatest development of social protection mechanisms, associated with the broadest labour formality. Beyond the 'path dependency' -as it was presented-, the governments' orientations advance (or try to do so) in different directions. Among other aspects, the pandemic confirms the limits and inequalities involved in cutting back protection and welfare in the market and the family, and the centrality of the State -even with its limitations- in these matters.

In Uruguay, COVID and the government started within a welfare regime, which expanded the actions of the State, with impacts (albeit insufficient) on the labour market, sectoral policies and monetary transfers. The government transforms these results into data, isolated from the action of the State, which is permanently questioned. Clearly this will not address persistent inequalities, and instead will tend towards a welfare regime centrally oriented to the market, families and communities. The consequences of these processes have never led to an improvement in welfare for the great majority.

Secondly, the way out of poverty is centrally placed on work, and for this, the relevance is in economic reactivation. This is not due to chance, but to the ideological orientations of the current government. Even in the context of the pandemic, the Budget Law indicates that it seeks to stimulate economic activity and thus generate employment in the private sector. For this, it is necessary to reduce the fiscal deficit and a sustainable trajectory of public accounts (Poder Ejecutivo, 2020). Grassi (2018b) will say that the economy is an inescapable terrain of social problems, but politics channels and distributes the benefits and sacrifices. This distribution is not natural and involves entirely political considerations, even if expressed in anti-political terms.

This bet is made without analysis of the experiences of economic growth, which did not translate into improvements in welfare, nor of the failure of policies that bet on 'spillover', nor the conditions that jobs must have to make it possible to live out of poverty.

[11] https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/gobierno-anuncio-apoyo-explicito-a-ollas-populares-pero-mas-de-un-mes-despues-no-lo-concreto-202148144440

As Grassi (2018a) points out, employment problems are centrally treated as issues of economic performance. A bet is placed on work without taking care of those who work.

The third aspect arises from the way in which public responses are announced by the government and amplified by the media. Public statements focus on the number of beneficiaries and the total amounts invested or to be invested. But it is necessary to problematize the responses, not only from the point of view of their existence, but also from the point of view of the capacity of social protection. Recognizing here the importance for those who receive them, the minimal socialization of the responses to the needs that poverty entails should be highlighted. Contributing to the denial of this discussion is the suspicion of abuse on the part of the poor. The prejudices in relation to these seem to be shared and confirmed by the authorities, and therefore also, the prejudices that this entails. As Grassi (2018b) points out, assistance has been accompanied by concern about the abuse of those who live on it without working, and therefore, the demand for control and unique records of beneficiary people. He notices in the government of Mauricio Macri an aspect also present in Uruguay, and it is a gradual and imperceptible sharpening of this look:

The State's social interventions once again play a decisive role, but not in the dismantling of safety nets, but in the reinforcement of an individualistic view of social life, which is stretched like a dark cloak over the conditions in which they are generated, reproducing the assumption that everything depends on one's own effort (Grassi, 2018b, p. 173).

The last aspect to be noted also arises from the government's orientation, which focuses on freedom and autonomy, understood basically in opposition to the State. The Budget Law proposes a new approach that seeks to empower people and provide them with greater freedom. To this end, the least possible coercion from the State and social policies, which are seen as generating dependency and welfare (Executive Branch, 2020), should be sought. It is the responsibility of the people who know the behaviors to be adopted, and it is a personal matter not to do so. The unequal conditions for freedom and autonomy are not discussed, nor the responsibility that corresponds to the State.

This orientation is maintained even in pandemic contexts, even in the face of dramatic expressions. Returning to Grassi (2018a), he will say that the public discourse of the former President of Argentina ignores the empirical reality. This is not improvisation, but the result of an elaborate strategy that avoids talking about reality and politics, while reaffirming to tell 'the truth'. A truth in which one can (must) believe, but there will be nothing to prove, because its contents must be left out of the communication (p. 88).

Conclusions

The new Uruguayan government took office on March 1 and immediately declared the presence of the pandemic in the country. This article analysed the responses that the government has developed in relation to the pandemic, particularly those oriented towards those living in poverty. Poverty, as in the rest of the continent, has increased, along with problems in the labour market and inequality. These responses are seen as indicative of the way in which access to welfare and social protection is understood.

It is understood that the problems mentioned have to do with the reality generated by COVID, but also with the measures adopted by the government. These, announced on several occasions by the authorities, install the image of a permanent response to reality. Moving beyond the headlines, it is observed that many of them take a long time to be implemented, others are for minimum terms and all of them are tremendously insufficient. In addition to the image of a government responding, there is the idea of doing so adequately and sufficiently.

Analyzing the orientations of governments and their expressions in social policies is very relevant for Social Work, given the close link between the two. As a space for the provision of goods and services, in the current context, social policies tend to weaken, based on the questioning of the State. This occurs at a time when the demands on public responses are increasing. Given its professional location, Social Work is witnessing the worst expressions of the crisis, with weakened resources to respond to it.

But social policies are also a space for professional insertion. In addition to the aforementioned tensions, there are those arising from the working conditions themselves. The change of government implies a redesign of social policies, which also has an impact on the continuity, or not, of professional work and its conditions. This may generate effects on the possibilities of making one's voice heard, resulting in the restriction of margins for action. It is necessary to consider the conditions in which the work is carried out, not as a fact external to the professional practice, but as a constituent part of it. From this double circumstance, it is necessary to advance in the denunciation of the living conditions, the insufficiency of the implemented answers and the denunciation of the working conditions. Beyond individual actions, these are essentially collective processes.

It is necessary that social workers, and more broadly the citizenry, remember that the song that gives its name to this article, then indicates 'I warned you and you did not let me convince

you'. This is the reality of the Uruguayan government, of course, but here the costs of not being convinced are infinitely more dramatic, since many of them were and are avoidable.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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ARTICLE

Social work and Institutions: Social control, transformation and escape routes in critical times

Trabajo Social e Instituciones: Control social, transformación y vías de escape

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Abstract

Since the sixties, social work has had a complex relationship with "the institutional", especially with public state institutions. Critical perspectives have consolidated a view in which the denunciation, the rupture, if not the generation of alternative instances, was the "critical way" of positioning itself. We discuss the relationship between social work and institutions by putting in tension several of the assumptions traditionally considered critical in the social work tradition. I will start by discussing the definition of institution from various levels and tensioning traditional readings, or traditionally critical perspectives, from the approach

Keywords:
institutional social work; institutional intervention; state workers; state

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proposed by Gianinna Muñoz Arce to critically analyse social work interventions (Muñoz-Arce, 2018). Far from proposing a conservative turn on institutions, it seems important to us to enhance the value of criticism to make a contribution to "the institutional" from a place that makes it possible for us to inhabit it. We are not interested in proposing an analysis "from outside and from above" but from "inside", to create a space where we can build, where we can find a place to be and to make room for others to enter.

Resumen

Desde los años sesenta que el trabajo social ha tenido una relación compleja con lo institucional, especialmente con lo público estatal. Las perspectivas críticas han consolidado una mirada en donde la denuncia, la ruptura, cuando no la generación de instancias alternativas fue el "modo crítico" de posicionarse. Nos proponemos discutir la relación trabajo social e instituciones poniendo en tensión varios de los presupuestos considerados tradicionalmente críticos en la tradición disciplinar. Para esto partiremos de discutir la definición de institución desde varios niveles y tensionar lecturas tradicionales, o tradicionalmente críticas, a partir de la matriz propuesta por Gianinna Muñoz Arce para el análisis de intervenciones desde orientaciones críticas (Muñoz-Arce, 2018). Lejos de proponer una vuelta conservadora sobre las instituciones, nos parece importante potenciar el valor de la crítica para hacer un aporte a lo institucional desde un lugar que nos haga posible habitarlo. No nos interesa proponer un análisis desde "afuera y desde arriba" sino desde "adentro", que nos haga posible un espacio donde construir, donde encontremos lugar para estar y para dar lugar a otras y otros a ingresar.

Palabras Clave:
trabajo social institucional; intervención institucional; trabajadores estatales; estado

Introduction

In times of crisis such as the current one, the complexity of the relationship between social work and institutions is once again highlighted. In the pandemic situation, which in several Latin American countries coincided with economic and political crises, the place of the State, the place of large public systems and social institutions is revealed in its complexity. In this article we address the relationship between social work and

institutions by discussing some assumptions of our discipline in order to think about this relationship. We are interested in reviewing and contributing to the discussion of our place and our stake in the institutions in which we intervene professionally, since we understand that an important political position is defined there, which must be hierarchized in the debates.

In the first section we will begin by discussing the definition of institution from traditional and also traditionally critical readings. We will focus on identifying some characteristics of the definition of the relationship between Social Work and Institutions.

In the second part of the paper we will analyze from the common characteristics of the interventions considered critical (Muñoz Arce, 2018) what elements need to be updated in our positions to effectively build, from criticism, a contribution for the relationship between social work and institutions. We will conclude by synthesizing our position on the bet on criticism at this stage to consolidate interventions that contribute to the construction of social institutions that guarantee rights.

Institutions and social work

The definition of institution has been a central object of concern of the Social Sciences. Institutions thought of as systems of rules, as restrictions, as anticipations of action, as reproductive machines of inequality and oppression, as natural organizers, as scenarios, as builders of citizenship have occupied social scientists in different ways (Durkheim, 1987; Merklen, 2013; Loureau, 2007). Institutions are ways of regulating common life (Dussel, 2012), and one's own life as well.

And this implies talking about power relations. Without power there is no possibility of modifying life. Without the ways in which this power structures life, 'institutionalizing life', there is no possibility of transforming and it can only be denounced (Dussel, 2012). In this sense, sustaining, modifying and extending life is a concern related to power, it is a concern related to institutions.

From a philosophical perspective, Enrique Dussel defines institutions as "conditioning conditioned conditions" (Dussel, 2012, p.73), necessary as a space for the construction of popular options; although, he warns of the possibility of fetishization in their exercise insofar as forgetting the delegated nature of power and the idea that power comes from institutions or people and the consequent consolidation of institutions as only oppression.

> *(...) However, by their nature and in the first moments of their creation, institutions generally respond to some popular demands. Very soon, although it may be centuries, institutions give evidence of fatigue, of an entropic process, of wear and tear and, on the other hand, of the inevitable fetishization that bureaucracy produces by usufructuating the institution (the potestas) for the survival of the self-referent bureaucracy (...) In this case, alienation as mere objectification becomes negation of the delegated exercise of power, that is, in fetishized exercise of such power.*
>
> *(Dussel, 2012, p.43)*

For social work, the institutions, which are singularized in organizations or establishments, also represent a sphere of intervention or a place from which to intervene. Hence the relevance and special complexity of the institutional dimension of social work practice.

This complexity of social work can be read within what Francois Dubet called work on others (Dubet, 2006). The author argues that a set of disciplines were created within the framework of modernity to operate on the socialization and subjectivation of populations and that the form of work they acquired can be presented as an "institutional program". This institutional program implied that the work on others was proposed as a mediation between universal values and singular practices; it was carried out by means of workers who were recruited on the basis of the idea of vocation and, finally, the exercise of the institutional program, while socializing individuals also subjectivized them, building individuals with greater degrees of freedom and autonomy.

In recent decades the institutional program is, according to the author, in decline because, like all the institutions of modernity, it would have limited its ability to regulate common life in the context of new forms of individuation (Merklen, 2013; Dubet, 2006).

The ideas put forward by Dubet rescue institutions as complex, contradictory but at the same time necessary spheres to think about social practices of recognition of rights or generating greater degrees of equality.

Social work as a discipline has a history associated with other disciplines, such as paralegal or paramedical. Achieving professional status implied and still implies a defense of the specificity of the discipline. However, and perhaps this is a first issue to be addressed in this development, it is often thought, and this has correlates in the forms of teaching, planning, etc. as an institution in itself (Dubet, 2006), and therefore, it thinks of its practice as a space with high levels of autonomy in relation to the institution/organization where it is generally developed.

Reviewing the canonical texts of the discipline, this issue emerges clearly. To cite an example, in the text "The Practice of the Social Worker", compiled by CELATS in the 1980s, social work appears as a mediator between users and institutions. Graphed with the idea of a triangle in which social work occupies almost the same size as the other two angles (users and institution), it is placed in an equidistant position. This idea of mediation is complicated for several reasons, but the most complex of them is that it identifies the social worker outside the institution. The critical forms of the discipline, in the reconceptualizing stage and immediately after, have led to thinking of the link between professional practice and institutions in a way that is not only distant, but also superior (Arias, 2020).

Having said the above and defined the institutions, it is worth asking about the construction of a critical option to analyze and intervene in them. Or to put it another way: since the denial, rupture or escape from the institutional does not represent, for the writer, a critical position, but often an evasion of the possibility of intervention, what would be the positions or critical stances towards the institutional or the institutions from social work, and does this criticism have specificity from the disciplinary?

Criticism and positioning vis-à-vis social work institutions

The definition of critique is a matter of dispute and we do not intend to settle this discussion here. We simply want to briefly present what we are referring to when we talk about criticism and the ways in which it has been deployed in some relevant moments in the history of social work.

The idea of critique as erudition or as analytical capacity has been replaced by perspectives that identify it with the negation or unveiling of naturalized situations. In particular, the "perspectives of suspicion", identified with Marxism and psychoanalysis (Lobos, 2020), constructed a view of the institutional that since the 1970s has placed the institutional on the axis of the traditional, of the oppressive. Recognizing that there was nothing natural in the functioning of institutions entailed the denunciation of the situations of injustice and oppression that their practices generated.

In the case of Social Work, it was undoubtedly the reconceptualization movement that expressed the commitment to critical positioning with greater power, and in some of its developments, proposed the exit from the institutions as a liberating form of intervention

close to the popular (Alberdi, 2013). The options for the territorial, considering it contrary to the institutional, partly reflect these positions.

The institutional analysis approach has significantly influenced social work. One of its founders, René Loureau, placed in the idea of "unveiling" part of the task of analyzing institutions (Loureau, 2007). Influenced by psychoanalysis in his work, and together with other intellectuals, such as Felix Guattarí (1994), he constructed the idea of institutional intervention tied to the idea of unveiling or denaturalization and identified foundational categories for the field, such as the concepts of analyzer, implication, transversality, polysegmentarity, etc. The approach, typical of the 1970s —which considered the instituted as oppressive, as social control, and the instituting as liberating if not revolutionary, as transformer of the conditions of reproduction of the prevailing social order (Loureau, 2007) —has also been part of the disciplinary common sense, and has also given a positive character to the idea of social change.

To summarize, although there is no single type of critical thinking, the idea of criticism is polysemic; in the disciplinary history of Social Work there is a prevailing idea of critical thinking linked to the idea of institutional unveiling, which places the intervention in a reflective place on the institutional, as well as distant. This idea of criticism has had deployments that have substantivized and dehistoricized this thought, turning it into a problem as an isolated position unrelated to institutional practices. The Mendoza-born philosopher Nicolás Lobo will call this the "hydroponic cultivation of criticism" (Lobo, 2020), referring to a type of self-validated intellectual exercise that is alien to the developments of intervention practices.

How does this critical position relate to the discussion on the State? It should be said that in the Argentine experience there has been a relevant expansion of state social policy and a concordant expansion of the public institutions that carry it out. The presence of social workers in the State is a constant. Since the State is the main employer and there is currently a presence of social workers in the most diverse areas of the State (the presence of social workers employed in NGOs and social movements is very low), the discussion of the institutional aspect in Argentine social work is mainly a discussion within the framework of the public State.

Experience has shown that neoliberal social policies dispense with traditional state institutions. Intervention processes through projects, or transferred to social organizations for management, are usually much cheaper and easier to manage than

sustaining institutions considered as part of the "ballast" of statism. Likewise, this neoliberal redesign of institutions implied both privatizations, transfer of functions to organizations within the framework of fiscal adjustment policies and the precariousness of the working conditions of public workers in general and social workers in particular (Merklen, 2013).

This has placed state workers in the position of strong defenders of the school or hospital, as well as questioners of them. Professional collectives have spoken out against neoliberal advances and many colleagues have been part of social and trade union organizations that defended school, health or social security institutions from the adjustments to which they were subjected. This has complex effects insofar as it seems possible to defend against an attack, but is not transformed into a reconstructive action later on or a bet on the increase of institutional capacity.

These characteristics make it urgent to position oneself in the face of the institutional, also because of its political and trade union implications. What is the place of criticism in this complex position?

Criticism and professional intervention

Gianinna Muñoz-Arce (2018), in a suggestive text called Critical Epistemologies and Social Intervention, wonders what it implies to assume a critical perspective in the processes of social intervention. The colleague goes through different theoretical schools that disputed the idea of critique and proposes some key elements relating to the field of intervention:

a) Intervention as a contradictory movement.
b) The dialectic between subject and object
c) Historicity
d) Contradiction between individual and structure
e) The theory-practice dialectic
f) Telos of transformation

We will take up these elements in order to link them to our question about the place of critique in the framework of the intervention-institutions relationship, or rather, in the framework of the institutional dimension of social intervention.

a) Intervention as a contradictory movement

The control-emancipation relationship may be one of the issues where our students tend to position themselves more quickly. Not only students, but also practicing colleagues often position themselves not wanting to be "an instrument of social control", and by definition on the axis of emancipation. As an example, we can highlight that in 2015, on the occasion of the sanctioning of the National Law of Social Work in Argentina, a group of colleagues present at the event chanted the slogan: "I do not want to be a manager, nor a social controller".

The problem with those who hold this position is that they place themselves on the opposite axis to social control and lose sight of a fundamental element, which is that intervention, in the event that it aims to transform an order of things, needs to consolidate another order of things. It may go against one form of social control, but it necessarily builds another, if it succeeds in effectively modifying the order.

In the framework of the institutional dimension of intervention, this option against social control appears even more complex, since the institutional function is to sustain and form within the framework of a culture; institutions necessarily regulate and control.

Dubet (2006) states that the paradox of the institutional program rests on this double function, at the same time as it subdues it liberates; in terms of the language we have been using, the institutions in the same movement control and emancipate. This paradoxical idea is very clearly visualized in the framework, above all, of institutions dedicated to children and young people. Their participation in routines, workshops, the establishment of links, etc. seems to be the best strategy for them to become emancipated persons, "masters of themselves". The regulation carried out by these institutions often has the function of building an emancipated subjectivity. In the case of the institutions in which we practice as social workers, in many cases they have explicit objectives of subjectivity transformation. Without transformation of that subjectivity there is no institution. It emancipates them insofar as it "subjects" them to the social.

These positions that claim to be opposed to the idea of control ultimately tend to lose sight of the negativity of their position. They do not recognize that this form of regulation, however emancipatory it may seem, is a form of imposition and thus loses the conflictive character of intervention per se, regardless of the place in which a person wants to position themselves. And they confuse an analytical issue (discriminating

emancipatory or controlling elements) with a singular position. It is an analytical resource to think of the social control - emancipation tension, but there is no intervention that only constructs one of the poles of this tension. No intervention is only regulatory or only emancipatory.

Other classical positions in the discipline put forward the idea of the crack, or the interstices, as the possibility of finding the place where this control breaks down in order to be able to carry out emancipatory interventions. This place, which can be seen as a strategy or as an ingenious trap, is usually a naive place insofar as, together with the pretension of control, it abandons the pretension of "institution". In other words, it thinks of its intervention as deinstitutionalized, using the institution as a starting point or as a platform, but without transforming it.

b) The dialectic between subject and object

On this point, the Chilean colleague we have been following proposes the recognition of power relations within the intervention processes or, better said, of the intervention within the framework of power relations, as a requirement for critical positioning: the observation of the place constructed by the intervention itself, identifying how much of an objectified intervention it is. We fully agree, but it seems to us that this self-observation must take place within an institutional framework of analysis. To tend to think of social work as an institution in itself and not in the framework of an institutional whole runs the risk of denying how much of the intervention is objectified.

Gregorio Kaminsky (1990) proposes the concept of transversality to think about the relations between horizontality and verticality, between instituted practices and instituting practices. He presents the idea of object or subject groups as analytical resources (there are no empirically entirely object or subject groups). Object groups have a very low capacity to institute; they are, in Kaminsky's terms, spoken by the institution, while subject groups have the capacity to institute, the capacity to speak. For this author, working on the optimization of the coefficient of institutional transversality is a challenge related to democracy in institutions, since it allows us to move away from the excesses of the instituted (here he places the problem of the bureaucratization of practices) and from the excesses of the instituting, which he describes as self-managing, but unproductive, strategies.

This self-observation is an important element of institutional practices; it implies the constant revision of the objectified and the instituted. It is a tension to be assumed, assuming that one's own task is not always on the plane of the instituting.

In this sense, it seems relevant to us that it is not just any exercise of self-observation, but an exercise of reflection on the institution, among other things, that builds other institutional forms. It is also interesting as an exercise in self-observation to analyze how conflicts are processed according to the actors or actresses involved: how much of the conflict is related to the capacity of the users, how much of this tension is linked to the internal power demands of the professional or political groups that run the institution?

We can see in recent research (Arias and Di Leo, 2020; Arias and Sierra, 2018) that those who are in better conditions to produce opening practices for the incorporation of people from the popular sectors are usually those who have the capacity to review their institutional dimension, permanently tensing routines, norms, putting as an objective the encounter, the opening towards the "other" who generally is the one who has greater difficulties to participate in the institutional proposal. The exercise of institutional reflexivity (Giocoponello and Gonzalez, 2019) as the possibility of reviewing the mechanisms that make it possible to adapt/transform to the demands or needs of the population, is evidenced as a requirement in institutions that guarantee rights.

Taking our reflection to social work, it is not about social work or social workers in isolation, but about the institution as such, the institution as a whole and social workers as an institutional group or as part of these groups, that this self-observation is powerful. Isolated self-observation only reinforces a false illusion of autonomy and limits the powers of criticism.

c) Historicity

This requirement of critique is central in order to understand some of the problems of "dehistoricized" critical positions.

The tradition of critical positions, with special mention here for the reconceptualization in the field of social work, has contributed to a reading of the institutional which, as we have already pointed out, is centered on the idea of suspicion, of unveiling.

The 1960s and 1970s were times of denunciation of the strong oppression of traditional modern institutions. In an intertwined manner, the relationship between institutional

functioning and the reinforcement of the conditions of oppression inherent to capitalism was read as a need to subvert an order. Demonstrating how the family, the school, the hospital and the factory and their articulation produced an unjust order implied a call to break with that order.

In that historical moment that allows to denaturalize the role of institutions, to put in discussion, but above all to break the forms of regulation of these institutions, it was presented as revolutionary and undoubtedly it was. An example of this are the "rigid family forms in times where divorce was denied, parental authority was not shared, job stability was also seen as an unelected sentence, the hospital required a certificate of poverty to be treated and schools were seen as iatrogenic mechanisms and limiting the possibilities of expression and student participation.

This, which Mariana Cantarelli (2005) called "the era of the great bonding" was also the guarantor of a form of integration that had, to appeal to the metaphor, the problem of a lack of oxygen in the bond, a type of social bond that constrained alternative forms of personal unfolding and replicated a form of classist, colonialist and patriarchal control. Rising up against these forms opened up unprecedented possibilities of action in social terms, and were identified, at that historical moment, with a future of overcoming these forms of domination.

In this scheme, the contributions coming from the French current of institutional analysis (Loureau, 2007; Guattari, 1994) that we presented at the beginning of the article had great influence on Argentine social work. I say "in this scheme" and not "at this time", since it was more clearly in the 1980s that these currents influenced the curricula by the hand of teachers who returned from exile with these formations.

To this was added the influence of Argentine institutionalists such as Pichon-Rivièreo Mario Blejer, or later Fernando Ulloa, who contributed much to the construction of elements for the reading of the institutional and its process of analysis, bringing into play the place of hierarchies, groups, unconscious dynamics, etc.

The neoliberal transformations of the 1980s and 1990s brought about changes in institutional functioning. The search for redirecting the power of the state and its institutional dimensions, the defunding, the privatization of growing public spaces, together with the devaluation of the public state and the predominance of consumer logics (Lewkowizc, 2004) generated other scenarios for thinking about the regulatory capacity of these institutions.

The weakness of these institutions in common life, an issue that appeared as a libertarian quest in the previous scheme, was presented in the neoliberal scene as a problem of lack of protection for large majorities (Dubet, 2006).

The weakening of the regulatory capacity of institutions and the political need to defend public institutions, however, do not seem to have transformed some critical positions. This has led to situations in which the same collectives that participate in the defense of public institutions, such as schools and hospitals so that they are not defunded, participate in the denunciation of their social function without proposals for their reorganization.

At some point, dehistoricized critical readings have unintentionally contributed to favor neoliberal deployments that needed to weaken institutions for their societal project, considering their deployment with effects only associated to the oppressive or repressive. On the other hand, the search to unveil the hidden institutional functions, such as the construction of an order or the denaturalization of the social function, seems to be a fairly accomplished social process. Nobody (or almost nobody) thinks of the school as a temple anymore, or does not doubt the authority of the social workers, being an important task to build conditions of possibility for the intervention of a dilemma that was previously given by the institutional belonging itself.

This does not mean that institutions are not builders of inequalities, but what the historical stage requires is no longer simply their unveiling, a public social fact, but requires other forms of institutional reconstruction that have in the consolidation of new forms of protection one of their great challenges.

d) Contradiction between individual and structure

The contradiction between the individual and the structure has been, as Muñoz-Arce rightly points out, a key not only to interpretation, but also to action. Identifying the determinants or conditioning factors of the structure in the problematic situations of intervention made it possible to present this situation as an element of work. At some point, moving from individual approaches to collective actions was a reconceptualizing key that built an idea of progress in group and community approaches, as opposed to the old social case approaches that will remain on the adaptive axis. As an example of this, the power of thinking about conscientization, organization and mobilization became, during the reconceptualization, the ways of overcoming the approaches

considered adaptive and non-transformative. Here, we have very rich elements of the critical tradition in Social Work.

This tendency to privilege the collective over the individual was seen as a fundamental element of political options aimed at justice and equality.
However, the current forms of combining the struggles for equality and justice have given hierarchy to the forms of recognition of differences over standardized or normalized ways of thinking about social collectives. The struggle of women, the discussion on abortion and the control of one's own body, the possibilities of recognition of sexual diversities, the recognition of needs, but also of the productivities of other stages of the life cycle, have placed new problems and new struggles that, without abandoning the collective dimension, present in the individual experience (Martuccelli, 2017) a new way of constructing experience and of thinking about intervention.

While writing this article we find ourselves in Buenos Aires in a moment of preventive isolation, where a collective call is made to perform individual actions and, as if this were an example thought for the article, we are being asked to stay in our homes; it even appears as one of the problems of the Argentine distributive injustice that the people who suffer the most from urban poverty cannot isolate themselves.

The possibility of individuation also appears today as a horizon of struggle, to lose this dimension is to lose part of the dispute for social justice today.

Stubborn positions that only identify forms of individuation as evidence of neoliberal individualism will miss out on understanding much of what is happening today, which in some cases is interesting and with liberating potential, even if it is often developed at the scale of individuals (Martuccelli, 2017). And this does not mean that the collective has lost anything of what it could have meant as a bet of intervention, but that the new forms of the collective are only liberating when they incorporate other struggles that strongly include the individual or personal (not necessarily individualism) as a value. The example of the current pandemic may be illustrative of what we have been suggesting and poses interesting challenges for thinking about the relationship between the individual and the collective.

At the institutional level, the incorporation of the recognition of the demands that imply particularizing the intervention is presented in different ways in the public sphere. While the middle and upper sectors have access to benefits in the private sector, which

are increasingly individualized with the possibility of choice (from the hours and places of attention to the professional and the forms of service or attention), the public system appears as a more rigid system in which choice does not appear to be possible.

This is a complex element, since private providers appear, based on the need to attract clients, to be more permeable to identifying these demands for individual choice; the problem is that they do so from a market need and not from a search for protection or the fulfillment of rights.

On the other hand, in public health care providers there are more rigid schemes of choice from their design, which in many cases leads to the expulsion of those who can afford to pay for these services. Undoubtedly, the main problem has to do with the over-demand for services and budgetary shortages, but there is also a logic that continues to think of the public and the collective with little possibility of personal choice, especially if it is for low-income sectors.

In addition to this, the profound impairments brought by people who have been violated are increasingly serious and require individualized approaches. In highly complex situations, they require thinking "to all" but "one by one" (Zerbino, 2008). In our research with popular sectors (Arias, 2018; Arias and Sierra, 2018) the need to discuss expectations about what "subjects should be or should demand" was a key to the possibility of adequacy of the institutional proposal to the populations.

It involves a complex tension for institutions to adapt to these increasingly individualized demands, a tension difficult to process especially if one starts from a dehistoricized conception of the individual - structure contradiction.

To be able to read the epochal keys of the individual-structure contradiction and to intervene in them is today a central element for the critique to be a support and possible in social intervention and not only a declamation, at some point conservative.

e) The theory-practice dialectic: can there be state thinking?

As Gianinna Muñoz-Arce (2018) rightly points out, identifying the relationship between knowledge and power is central as an element of criticism and also of the relationship of silencing knowledge of different actors in the field of intervention.

In our institutional practices it is necessary to ask ourselves: how do we link ourselves with the knowledge that the institution itself generates? How can we place them in the framework of this tension between the instituted and the instituting, and value them in the framework of the general discrediting of what institutions produce?

One of the contributions to the critique of decolonial thought has been to recover the idea of situated thought, the discussion that thought responds to a place of enunciation. If we accept this requirement of critique and think about intervention from the spaces in which we work/intervene, we raise again the question: can there be state thinking? Does critical thinking include the possibility of generating a way of thinking from there, from the place of state workers?

How does this knowledge relate to the knowledge of users, to territorial practices, to the academic field?

In Argentina there is a frequent call from positions critical of neoliberalism identified with the popular national tradition for the idea of "recovering the State". With this image it is proposed to "recover" the regulatory capacity of the State in the face of the privatizing and limiting advance of the State's capacity to regulate. We agree with Abad and Cantarelli (2013) that this is only possible if we can "inhabit" the State. And for this we must think, and we have already said that we think from a place, so we return to the question: Can there be state thinking, what silenced knowledge should this thinking hierarchize? In this exercise, will those of us who find ourselves working as state actors have something to say, to propose, or will we only be able to mark the limits of this thinking? If thinking is an exercise of actors, and of situated actors, do we think from Social Work outside the institutions which we are in? In the Argentine case, in which labor insertion is massively state-led, do we think from the State?

Something of the state exists and is evident when it is occupied by the so-called CEOs (acronym for Chief Executive Officer), as in the recent Argentine experience, or when it is occupied for clientelistic purposes, but it is more difficult to think about its substantive specificity without thinking about what it is not.

We understand that it is possible (and complex) to build from the critical traditions of state thinking. If we could not, we could not recover the State as a sphere. Then, to continue proclaiming the need for state intervention on social problems would sound like a slogan.

The problem of the theory-practice dialectic is complex and interesting.

f) Telos of transformation

The imperatives of transformation are part of the definition of intervention for social work; interrupting a trajectory from action to generate an effect is undoubtedly a transformation; effects are always generated when intervening, but it is not about transformation in general, but a transformation tending towards values such as those of emancipation. To know in order to transform, to seek social transformation, to emancipate from different forms of domination become needs that are projected onto the others of the intervention and become a measure of the validity of the intervention: what was transformed?

The value of transformation in the professional common senses corresponds to an optimistic idea towards the future, in which transforming means abandoning a previous state to go towards an evolved one in the developmentalist version and a revolutionized or liberated one in the critical versions. It coincides with an idea taken to the institutional level in which the idea of the instituted remains on the axis of the negative, of the oppressive, and the instituting remains on the plane of the positive, of the liberating. If in the first part of the 1970s this could represent a shared imaginary, today, perhaps because of the experience of the end of the 1970s onwards, we think that the future is not necessarily better and that not all transformation or instituting contributes to increased justice or freedom or protection. Neoliberalism was and is an instituent with great transformative capacity.

Likewise, the quests for transformation are in good health in the ideologies of the better part of our students and colleagues. And if this sounds quite logical, why intervene if reality cannot be transformed?

In a previous article (Arias, 2018), we posited that the idea of subject to emancipate that had/has greater pregnance in Argentine social work is heir to the contribution of Paulo Freire and his version of intervention as liberating from forms of oppression. Working with the subject so that he/she recognizes his/her ties, and therefore commits to his/her transformation by means of political action, appears as the prevailing ideology. This often translates into intervention proposals in which the aim is to generate a subject with the capacity to make demands, a subject aware of his or her rights.

The enormous efforts that different colleagues make to achieve these transformations often do not lead to possibilities of deploying their strategy due to a set of structural restrictions that determine trajectories that are not governed by the presence or absence of awareness. What do we mean by this? That people do not change their reality not because they cannot, but because of an important set of conditioning factors; not because they do not know how to or because of a lack of awareness.

In this perspective of transformation, which focuses on changes in subjects in terms of the politicization of their actions, other institutional issues that imply guarantees of social rights are often obliterated. Perhaps as an example, in the interviews we conducted with institutional referents, when we asked them to identify rights-building practices in their actions, they reported practices in which the subjects recognized themselves as subjects of rights, in which educational tasks aimed at generating a type of awareness of rights were carried out, but the institutional practices that effectively made rights possible did not appear. The teaching of classes or the delivery of food (which is an institutional obligation for the access to rights) did not appear, but the work for the subjects to demand the right to education, assistance, etc., did appear.

This search for transformation sometimes becomes a complex issue when it is addressed to users who come to an institution and do not want, do not demand, and even resist "being transformed". This is often the case when the recipients of assistance actions demand a resource and are forced to participate in training or capacity-building programs because of their situation of need and not because they are seeking to reflect on or change their way of thinking about some issue.

Updating the critique implies reviewing the imperatives of transformation and reviewing this search at the level of proposals or institutional responses according to the response to rights, especially according to the demands of the subjects who are excluded from access to these practices, placing in the institutional proposal a centre.
Taken to the state level, placing coverage, quality, treatment, cultural adequacy and accessibility on the transformation agenda is of major importance to the certain possibility of exercising rights. Emancipation, becoming a subject, is a complex process that requires institutional support. Working on it today requires a major critical contribution; we speculate that it is greater than transferring the responsibility of the demand to the users.

Conclusions

We are living in a stage in which our critical accumulation has made us distrustful of institutions and at the same time demanding of them. We know of their reproductive nature, we know their complex history, we read in their practices forms of domination and, nevertheless, we need them and demand more and more from them.

Far from proposing a conservative turn on them, it seems important to us to enhance the value of criticism in order to make a contribution to the institutional, but from a place that makes it possible for us to inhabit it. We are interested in proposing a committed analysis from the inside, which overcomes the place of alienation.

Using the contributions of the matrix proposed by Muñoz-Arce, we made a critique of our critical tradition in order to contribute to its updating, focusing on a set of elements specific to this stage of institutional issues.

Making one of the first efforts to synthesize a position, we understand that a critical exercise for social work in its institutional dimension cannot be carried out from a false place of autonomy. Criticism must be carried out from the full awareness that it is from within the institutions that social work has certain possibilities of transforming common life. This implies assuming the contradictory process of building regulations and not only denouncing them.

The requirement of historicity of the critique must allow us to read at the stage that the weakness of current institutions, both in their material and symbolic dimensions, implies another floor, another reality than the one assumed in other stages of the critique. Today, contributing to the dismantling of institutions by thinking about how to get out of them feeds forces contrary to the search for rights guarantees.

Consolidating institutions then, contributing to their defense at a time when neoliberal transformations take away their power and where institutional identities are liquefied in the figures of consumers, requires betting on other forms of work that can recognize forms of demands and identities where the singularization of trajectories becomes imperative, both because of the pressing problems of rights violations as well as the struggles that different collectives have carried out for the recognition of individual rights. Therefore, the importance of individualized approaches where the subjects have the possibility of choice, not from a consumer logic, but from a logic of rights must also be a commitment to institutional transformation.

If we agree that any emancipation process requires institutional support and that today these supports are weakened, we believe that betting on their consolidation requires placing the institutional as a main object of transformation, even before the transformation searches of the subjects. Let us generate good support and let the subjects enjoy the autonomy to undertake their searches.

Continuing with this proposal to validate the idea of criticism from within, we think that it is necessary to propose the question, or the bet, to state thinking (Abad and Cantarelli, 2013). This is a requirement if we identify the importance of the state as a way of guaranteeing rights. What is the knowledge that we as state workers have to build? How does it dialogue with the forms of thinking generated by social and trade union organizations? To bet on building a State without thinking is impossible, to think that this thinking can be generated from outside is for us undesirable. We believe that here too criticism has a contribution to make.

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ARTICLE

Variations on intervention and institution: other modes of existence and minor compositions

Variaciones sobre la intervención y la institución: otros modos de existencia y composiciones menores

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Abstract

This article considers the possible relations between intervention and institution that, from certain experiences and registers, avoid the intents of being translated from hegemonic epistemic positions of capture and homologation. With this purpose, it aims to describe, fly over and show the potency of other modes of existence that, being crossed by the conceptualization of 'the minor' (without

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ignoring precariousness and suffering), make possible the variations of both intervention and institution in the 'traditional' ways of conceiving them; in their ways of registering reality and, therefore, making possible another statute between intervention and production of subjectivity. In this intent, first we inquire into some forms of registering reality made in Didi-Huberman's People exposed, people as extras (2018) and Survival of the fireflies (2017), to continue to enhance the potency of the notions of other modes of existence and a certain right to exist that is expressed in Souriau's (2017) instauration philosophy. In this philosophical path we show some incarnations, practical experiences and brief narratives of an ongoing research project, conceiving them as political, aesthetical and historical resonances that, from their minorness, allow us to question some of the contemporary subjetivation processes, and reflect on the questions and potencies related to the way in which the present is intervened, and the ways in which it is socially instituted. Consequently, and from a critical commitment, we open other places and territories that allow us to take other paths to those in which the epistemic violence of hegemonical interventions and institutions are present. In this way, with a firefly light with which we intend to follow the footprints of the minor, this article ends with some elements to think about the professional intervention of Social Work and its way of intervening in the social.

Resumen

El escrito pretende pensar relaciones posibles entre la intervención y la institución, de sus experiencias y sus registros, que eviten ser traducidas desde la captura y homologación de posiciones epistémicas hegemónicas. Para ello se pretende describir, sobrevolar y mostrar la potencia de otros modos de existencia que, atravesadas por la conceptualización de 'lo menor' (sin obviar la precariedad y el sufrimiento), desfondan las 'tradicionales' nociones de intervención-institución, posibilitando variaciones en sus modos de registro de toda realidad y, con ello, de otro estatuto posible de la institución y sus producciones subjetivas. Se indaga primeramente en algunas claves de lectura emprendidas por Didi-Huberman en *Pueblos expuestos, pueblos figurantes* (2018) y en *La supervivencia de las luciérnagas* (2017); para luego relevar la potencia de los *modos de existencia y el derecho a existir* que se expresan en la filosofía de la instauración de Souriau (2017). En este trayecto filosófico mostramos algunas encarnaciones, recortes de experiencias prácticas e incluso breves narraciones de un proyecto de investigación en

Palabras Clave: *institución; intervención social; modos de existencia; composición menor*

curso, en tanto guiños políticos, estéticos, históricos y prácticos que, desde su minoridad, permiten problematizar los procesos de subjetivación de nuestra época contemporánea y reflexionar sobre los modos de intervención del presente y las maneras de instituirse en lo social. Consecuentemente, y desde una apuesta crítica, abrimos otros lugares y territorios que trazan recorridos alternativos a la violencia epistémica asociada a ciertas formas hegemónicas de intervención e institución. Por último, premunidos de una *luz luciérnaga* con la que se intenta seguir ciertas huellas de lo *menor*, se cierra con algunos elementos para pensar la intervención profesional del Trabajo Social y su forma de intervenir en lo social.

Introduction: for the invention of a theoretical-practical problem

Some of the challenges that motivate us to think about this work are directly linked to the possibilities of intervention and its practices in the interstitial and inventive fields and textures of the social. In order to understand this, we believe it is necessary to clear some concepts of meaning, allowing us to broaden the frontiers, redraw the boundaries and problematize the plots that have allowed them to materialize in the ways of doing in the world. It is necessary to make this gesture with the concept of intervention: by giving it a philosophical treatment we can empty it of meaning by critically unraveling it as a certain social ontology based on practices, an issue that highlights the political that flows in it to enhance its theoretical-practical dimension. In this way, the normalizing attempt, fabricated under a "pure description" of reality, is discarded. In this way, following Donzelot (2007), it is possible to go beyond a technified social reality, to be attentive to how intervention practices could be transformed once we move from assuming the *inventiveness of the social* always as an interstitial space between the State and the individual, and we open ourselves to consider it as derived from a certain aesthetic-political overlapping.

In this sense, in the ontological approach between normalization-transformation, intervention and its practices in the inventive field of the social has been co-opted in favor of technical normalization from different professions, among which is Social Work. In its way of making the epistemic, methodical and political "object" of intervention in

different fields, the notion of "social intervention" came to be coined (Castro-Serrano, 2020; González-Saibene, 2014). Thus, intervention and institutionalization have been taken for technical-discursive instruments that have defined intelligibility frameworks and structured reality frameworks, in which the installation and emergence of observation fences, modes of interrogation, problem registers, differentiation mechanisms, image production and modes of action have been established according, in their variations, to a governmentalization of social life. By way of an anamnesis, we state that in these practices are installed -as actions of subjection of habits, rhythms and vital gestures of the social field to discipline, to a normative system or to a system of *government-diverse* forms of subjection to a program (Foucault, 2014).

In this way, intervention and its institutionalization can be thought of as articulated violences that, between hegemonic knowledge and instrumentalized practices, have allowed forms of subjection, differentiation and integration of social life to explicit mechanisms of production and administration in contemporary capitalism. That is to say, in this framework, intervention and institutionalization are constituted as forms of epistemic violence that are not necessarily exercised on a particular subject, nor on a specific quantitative minority, but act, precisely, through the homogenization and normalization of social life. From this position we can argue that the intervention in the social and its modes of institution have operated in the modern production of subjectivity from "technologies of assistance and social security, hygienic-sanitary technologies, pedagogical technologies, among others" (Chignola, 2014, p.74). As it is known, despite the fact that social disciplines -such as Social Work and Psychology, among others- have installed strong debates, both epistemological and political as well as methodological, their interventive practices still prevail due to their practical and scientific disciplinary eagerness, institutional, individual and/or therapeutic actions that favor the construction of a type of subject that requires these techniques and strategies to sustain the modes of modern suffering. Therefore, rather than transforming these conditions, their interventions often operate from epistemic and methodical plots that rather rigidify their practices within the political-institutional frameworks (Pérez Soto, 1997; González-Saibene, 2021).

For this reason, we consider it necessary to continue deepening the problematic affectations in the processes of subjectivation that take place in our contemporary era, and that have articulations in the modes of intervention of the present and its way of being instituted in the social. As pointed out by Guattari and Rolnik (2005) "(...) what we have is simply the production of subjectivity. Not only production of individuated

subjectivity - subjectivity of individuals - but a production of social subjectivity" (p.28). It becomes pertinent to articulate conceptual tools and critical apparatuses that serve to dismantle the forms of violence that are carried out from these different mechanisms and their territorializations and historical, political, aesthetic, ethical and social inscriptions. It is urgent for us to recognize alternative interventions that invent and can create different *effects* on the social in order to bring out other theoretical-practical articulations; that is, other political understandings and ways of instituting these practices, considering configurations associated with other forms of life and modes of subjectivation unmarked from a mere critical will, from an individual creator or from a profit-oriented business in our capitalist context. This is why we understand the inventive as the creation of modes of reorganization as an agentive and desiring capacity as "living vibration" (Berardi, 2019, p.241). In this sense, it is not strange that a whole line in Social Work articulates politics and criticism to think about intervention, since it is necessary "to question the established institutions" as well as "to question the representations collectively admitted" (González-Saibene, 2021, p.103). However, an attempt will be made to extend this critical and political gesture beyond the modern subject, its wills and its critical capacity.

Having said the above, from what multiple places and territories can we question and think about other ways of conceiving intervention (in the social) and, with it, another status of the institution and its subjective productions? From what other places can we make this critical bet as an alternative to the epistemic violence inherent in the hegemonic positions (state/institutional), which assume the task of translating and speaking for the minor knowledges? The central pretension of this paper is to describe and illustrate the potency of other modes of existence that, from a conceptualization of the minor (without ignoring precariousness and suffering), may enable variations of both intervention and institution in their modes of registration (Deleuze and Guattari, 1978; 1980; 2008)[2] . Inquiring into the notions of other modes of existence and a certain right to exist that is given in every composition or minor becoming, opens, empowers and shows us other forms of life that, from all precariousness, defondate the traditional notions of intervention-institution, and from there make the particularity of a critical other emerge (Lapoujade, 2016; 2018). In this way, the question of minority as an opening to multiple processes of subjectivation can, in its potency, register intervention in another way.

[2] Before Mille Plateaux, already in 1975, when writing Kafka. For a minor literature, the French present the question of the minor in literary creation. In the tenor of a philosophical invention, he wants to undermine the social conditions of the major language-norm by showing a strong coefficient of deterritorialization that acquires a collective value. But, as we know, it is not restricted to the socio-linguistic, but comes to present a becoming that puts in continuous variation and drags with it the supposed constant and invariable extractions of a majoritarian system. Let us say that minor uses inwardly fragilize a major language in favor of a pragmatics that creates a new language (Deleuze and Guattari, 1978, p.28-29). No wonder, then, that Lapoujade (2016, p.276-277) quotes the French to insist that all "Becoming minoritarian is a political affair, and requires a whole work of potency, an active micropolitics (Deleuze and Guattari, 2008, p.292)."

Thus, power and registration become relevant to show other interventions, which show the emergence of minor practices that not only make her vary, but also the institution that sustains her.

To carry out this objective we will investigate in two fields: the first installs a dialogue with some reading keys that generate an epistemological renewal on the studies of art, history and image undertaken by Didi-Huberman (2017; 2018), particularly from some profiles present in his "Pueblos expuestos, pueblos figurantes" (the exposure and underexposure of peoples) and his "imagen-luciérnaga" (firefly-image). And, in the second, we highlight the potency of "modes of existence" and "the right to exist" expressed in Souriau's (2017) philosophy of instauration, in articulation with other contemporary commentators. Philosophical imprints both of which we will seek to make, constantly resonate with some embodiments, snippets of practical experiences and even brief narratives of an ongoing research project[3], pointing out political, aesthetic, historical and practical winks that, from their minority, illustrate possible variations on intervention and institution. The following path opens up interesting elements for the professional intervention of Social Work.

Variations in intervention and institution: an epistemological renewal of art and history as a minor composition

Let us first clarify an element necessary to understand the two sections that follow. The limits of critical thought in modern philosophy deal with a delimiting instance, as a framework of intelligibility, which brings into play normative principles that would guide thought. In this sense, critical thought is shaped from and with a normative horizon that would make possible the practice of thinking. However, this problem installs the subject in a relationship that exceeds this simple delimitation, placing him in a double position: "as subject-agent of his own reason and, at the same time, as external spectator of the happening of his own history" (Moscoso-Flores and Fuster, 2018, p.29). Braidotti (2015) illustrates it well by pointing out that, even pretending to dissociate ourselves from conventional humanist positions -in the promotion of

[3] The current research project is entitled "Everyday energies and energy transition: an ontopolitical reflection from the La Campana-Peñuelas Biosphere Reserve, Valparaíso Region, Chile".

certain becomings that would transcend human agency alone, we enter into this double position: on the one hand, by abandoning the agency that is inherent to us and, on the other, by assuming a role of spectators from where that subject-agent of his own reason continues to appear, when from that box he still conceives himself as moral custodian of the course of progress. In this way, insisting on repositioning the individual from that external place, he is perpetuated as the center of the possible boundaries of movements and relations. Following Foucault (1995), we could say that the notion of critique and that of a critical thought, in this sense, is traversed "by the question of the relations between the structures of rationality that articulate the true discourse and the mechanisms of subjection that are linked to it" (p.12).

That said, we can reconsider in another way the notion of a critical thought that is far from the sense delimited by a certain modern philosophy, to rather exalt a relevant operation of thought, composed of effects of practices and techniques - alluding to the relations between humans and non-humans - in a specific geo-historical ordering, which would mobilize points of convergence and divergence between epistemological and ethico-political regions. Thus, critical thinking could instead be outlined as a system of relays and assemblies "in a multiplicity of pieces and of practical and theoretical fragments at the same time" (Deleuze, 2005, p.268), rather than as a guide of universal principles for a reason determined by a subject (Moscoso-Flores and Fuster, 2018). With that we open a way of thinking and acting that retakes in another way the way in which we relate to what exists, to what we know, to what we do (Foucault, 1995).

Thus assumed, let us begin with a critical thinking of the intervention and the institution from which Georges Didi-Huberman works with respect to the image. In his epistemological analyses he seeks to decipher the status of the image and the relationship we keep with it, reviewing the clashes and separations that occur in conceiving the image as that which represents a status as a massified historical source today, with that which, at the same time, actualizes a singular and essential order of knowledge of historical character that takes into account the processes of memory (Villalobos-Ruminott, 2018). His analysis reviews the tensions of the times with which history is made and the times of the relationship that we keep with it. Not from the fullness of a historical knowledge sure of its sources (reduced and rigidified to a simple document of history), but rather from the interrogation of a fragile condition.

Let us say that this perspective accentuates the assemblies of intelligibility that have served and serve for the recording of a historical memory and of the intertwined

temporalities that continue, still, to resonate in our present. It would then be necessary to understand the becoming of the image at the crossroads of survivals, that is to say, of the pretended persistence of a certain image and the survival of remnants of images capable of reappearing from their vestiges. This also articulates our way of imagining and doing politics, collapsing our certainties regarding the stability of the visible world. It is then "a politics of survivals, which accompanies all politics of images and of political exposure in general" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.83).

Considering the constitutive precariousness of these images and the relation to the past that defines them as interrupted presence, this politics of survivals accompanies another way of interpellating the meaning of the image and of history. If we allude to Villalobos-Ruminot's (2018) politics of registration, the exposure of these images can interrupt, in their fragile babbling, the truth of the present. "(...) It is rather as if the image were always an allegory of its own caducity, a weak testimony, a trace, of its impossible contemporaneity with that which it shows or 'represents'" (p.191). A politics of the register that takes these images, *despite* their fragility, shows an unresolved historical event. Here lies part of the potential of the question of the register, insofar as it allows us to inquire into the problem of a political epistemology of normativity and to resist against the operations of regimes of representation that expose a principle of identification that acts as a unifying, sovereign form, functioning through classification and attribution. This favors unity, the personal, the stable norm and the established trait (Sauvagnargues, 2016), an issue that is not far from the modes of intervening that we are so often monolithically instructed by institutions. It is well illustrated by Stengers (2019, p.44) when he critically points out our approach to the devastation of the lives we live, as we are removed from certain capacities to invent "dignified lives" for ourselves sheltered in "solidarity, interdependence and cooperation with one another".

In this logic, a politics of the register that welcomes the stammering images to dismember our relationship with history, requires the exposure of these fragile images, but always avoiding overexposure. This Didi-Huberman (2018) does in analyzing the political and aesthetic representation of peoples, who mobilize perceptual and affective horizons that would disarm and dislocate a linear logic and organization of historical time. Here he notes various modes of appearance of different collectives that interrogate the configuration of the common, and that immediately notice that the appearance is differentially constituted in the same exhibition. We are dealing with *exposed* and *underexposed* peoples, in the sense that not all the forms in which peoples appear operate

in the same way: "(...) peoples are exposed by the fact of being threatened, precisely, in their representation - political, aesthetic - and even, as happens all too often, in their very existence. Peoples are always exposed to disappear" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.11). Exposed to disappear by the overexposure of a certain image, of a certain history sustained in the so human and static incandescences of lights, media, devices; a way of life is perpetuated in permanent expansion that overexpose them, making a figure of some peoples and exposing others to their disappearance. Didi-Huberman (2017) questions us, asking, "what to do, what to think in this state of perpetual threat?" (p.17).

We believe that these philosophical, political and aesthetic analyses on the image of overexposure abut with the frames of intelligibility that we give to interventions and their institutional imprints, when we perpetuate the inclusion, integration, reinsertion of those who are different, of those who have erred along the way, of those who have disintegrated from the overexposed mass of a certain way of life and, as Stengers (2019) puts it, have been left behind, whether at school[4], at home, in life. We remain disposed, thus, to perpetuate the overexposure of those subjectivities of the "paradisiacal light"; that "light that will spread everywhere in sublime concentric circles: it will be a light of cosmos and glorious dilation" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.8). In this light nests a promise, of capitalist order, that makes it possible to correct, subsidize and morally judge (undoubtedly in an intervention), placing us as spectators of the price to be paid for a certain future redemption. In this, the thought of overexposure or work under threat may imply that there is no alternative to the logic and organization of historical linear time that we install with the figurative images. There would be a sort of abandonment of time, or in Lapoujade's (2011, p.11) reading of Bergson, we would say that we abandon ourselves to the affections of time in melancholy, where "the whole time is already past...everything is already over, it is always too late", or else we are thrown into waiting where "all time is ordered around an event that is to arrive but does not arrive".

The journey opens up an unfathomable risk, as illustrated by the story of Pedro's father[5], a farmer and community member of one of the four communities that have persisted in the Olmué-Limache valley since 1612, when he remarks upon seeing the news that "humanity is cursed", referring to the fact that the only thing left is its self-extermination. Or, the songs about the debacle and the end of time written by Jorge, teacher and musician from Limache, when he declares that his melancholy was melancholy of

[4] Having mentioned Stengers, it is worth referring to the relationship between education and intervention stipulated by the Lost Toys Collective when reading Deligny (2017, p.70) and his way of intervening with autistic children. In a critical gesture to what we have been pointing out, they establish the need to allow a zone and a temporality that is neither of the intervenor nor of the intervened, but rather an "interval of the tacit" where the intervening field is rewritten.

[5] The names are fictitious. The first excerpt corresponds to a conversation within the framework of a daily accompaniment, participating and observing, in ethnographic exercise, their daily activities (April 17, 2019). The second corresponds to an open interview conducted on September 10, 2018. Both are part of the aforementioned research project.

the future. There, the risk is perpetuated in other durations, such as those that distill a wait, or those that come to confirm that the world is cursed, crystallizing certain institutions or political representations, an economic system or certain religions, which subject us to guilt or sacrifice because that which we expect will arrive posthumously. Subjectivities emerge incapable of criticism as they have "no perspective of opening the horizon in incessant imperatives" (Lapoujade, 2011, p.11), a question that installs the urgency of the present in the context of the exhibition. How can the overexposure illustrated by these brief situated stories be eluded? What becomes possible in this scenario and how does the intervention in the social and the institution participate in the becomings that unmark the exposed/overexposed places?

There is no doubt that this critical support is relevant to consider in order to think about other images of intervention from its aesthetic and ethico-political drifts, trying to question the logics already mentioned insofar as they cut out and distribute the real in significantly different ways. These other images of the intervention, raised under the politics of registration, are articulated with Didi-Huberman's (2017) analysis and his politics of survival: a resistance emerges in the so-called *firefly-image*. This image emerges from the constitutive role of survivals that, in their fragile persistence, connect imagination and politics to evidence other memorial dispositions of which they reveal themselves to be bearers, not linked to an all-powerful entity. Such an image, bursting into its various expressions, poses us the problem of ephemeral existences that were condemned to silence and disappearance, insofar as "one renounces to follow them" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.35). This is why firefly-images are always synonymous with resistance: they rise up and establish themselves in hostile contexts. Hostile contexts, as were the times and images that we can associate with the coal mining works in Lota in the first decades of the twentieth century; or also with the images prior to October 2019 in our Chilean revolt. It is in the face of these contexts of onto-epistemic violences, of the threatening exposure that supposed and supposes waiting and urgency, that these *firefly-images* emerge as a minor composition with that "small painful glow of the faults that drag under endless accusation and punishment" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.8).

It is necessary to look at the firefly-images, since they question the sense of a historical hegemony without pretending to exhaust in them the truth of what happened; they operate to "open with them the closure that every past imposes on the political and indeterminate time of the present" (Villalobos-Ruminott, 2018, p.185). Exposing oneself to them is a challenge, implying to distinguish them in their minor composition and potency among so many lights, among so much truth, among so much habit and

so much dazzling in which we are. There is the danger of their disappearance by not seeing them. For this reason, it is necessary to take into account the deterritorializing function of this image and its politics of registration: their disappearance occurs when we lose track of them. Concretely, following the cases just mentioned, we do not know what would have happened to the rights won by women after Berta Recabarren and the images opened up in the twentieth century; she, in her work as a social visitor, was supposed to be in charge of the welfare of coal miners, but she reconfigured her intervention approach by prioritizing women's literacy: that is, "she emphasized an elementary tool for female emancipation in a literate culture by making them enter the codes of a 'political subject'" (Arellano-Escudero and Castro-Serrano, 2022, p. 122). Nor do we know what would have happened after that October if we had not followed the firefly images that, for years, emanated their lights in the midst of the violence exercised in our political transition. However, we can say that, by following these fragile images, intervention and institution have been challenged in the hegemony of their registers and times, being mobilized by a set of heterogeneous temporalities that run through this crossroads of survival, and that at least have opened history to a temporal porosity that invites us to think of it from new vital forms, capable of doing justice to its exercise of establishment.

The brief accounts and stories mentioned here illustrate ways of making, thinking and living history on the part of those who see and follow the *firefly-images*. In their minor actions they can elude the overexposure of the sedimented and reterritorialized organization of life, in an attempt to promote, also, a political and epistemological potential of the registry that considers variations of the intervention and its institutional imprint. In this line, as Santiago Arcila (2020) comments on Stiegler, it would enable a different way of thinking the institution from other modes of composition, allowing other variations in this appearance of peoples, linked to "practices that go through the reconfiguration of habits and relationships with the land and others, the care of certain traditions, the reformulation of their self-image, the planning of the future or the reappropriation of practice and legal knowledge" (Arcila, 2020, p.90). It becomes quite clear to us that these fragile, blurred, minor and poorly delineated traces can open the field of practices of intervention and interveners, daring to be crossed by this aesthetic, political and epistemic register that imposes another way of ordering the factors.

Other variations in intervention and institution: modes of existence, practices and minor becomings

The discussion proposed above between image, thought, history and experience, allows us to see some folds for a critical thinking, where we have visualized that the reference to the minor and its perspective in the key of becoming becomes relevant. Let us say now that the becoming-minor, being a mode of intensification of the powers of existence, in its fragility and precariousness can be constituted as an artifact of memory of an imaginal texture. This allows us to trace forms of inhabiting the violence and resistance of irreducible modes of existence, which are at play in this politics of the register described above. In this sense,

> *(...) the politics of the register at stake here would involve taking to the extreme the critique of historicism and of the conventional ways in which politics, community, meaning and truth are thought of. That is to say, such a possibility requires at the very least a reflexive displacement with respect to the sovereign principle that founds all politics of the subject, of history, of knowledge and of meaning. (Villalobos-Ruminott, 2018, p. 192)*

From this approach, we consider it suggestive to think about minor interventive practices and the establishment of the institution as a minor composition, in order to open up both the powers of the register and also to deepen the question of a different epistemological and political field. Alongside all these languages of peoples that persist in a history that does not allow itself to be explained in simple terms of evolution or obsolescence, one "draw(s) zones or networks of survivals at the very point where they declare their extraterritoriality, their marginalization, their resistance, their vocation of revolt" (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.55). Here would be added, in our opinion, those powers and coefficients of deterritorialization of the minor for other institutional compositions, which are embodied in the disengagement or discomfort already described by Faleiros (1993) around intervention and institutional compositions from the perspective of Social Work. Although we know that these discussions were outlined from a staunchly modern mode of institutionalization without critical possibility, passing through processes of "denial of institutional work" that have created alternatives from social movements, to certain "counter-institutional" deployments (Faleiros, 1993, p.19-20), we consider it necessary to show institutional disengagement that can be illustrated by rethinking minor interventional practices.

In this regard, we find suggestive the research of Verónica Gago (2015) around the La Salada fair in Buenos Aires and the notion of body-territory as keys that denote another way of understanding political pragmatics in the global South. Her analyses map practices that think, from a context of precariousness and exploitation, governmentality and processes of subjectivation from below. Here she shows how mechanisms of resistance unfold in the informal, a question that can be read as a pragmatic vitalism that undoes the political and epistemic methodics of the national-state[6] towards minor practices that destabilize the major, being able to generate new forms of life. We believe that our philosophical, political and epistemic journey can be seen embodied in this set of interventive practices shown by Gago (2015; 2019), insofar as they are installed under existential logics that resist the ways of life of the hegemonic subjectivation of the governmental neoliberal model. In fact, to be even more graphic, the notion of body-territory exposes the conflict and confrontation of diverse communities to extractive and industrial projects (urban, suburban, peasant and indigenous) related to the discourses of neo-development, as visualized in the tension between the peasant community and the electric transmission project of "national interest" that recently took place in the La Campana-Peñuelas Biosphere Reserve. This notion would explain a new mapping of the dispossession of common goods in the conditions of daily life of these communities by the imposition of developmentalist subjectivations and, in turn, shows the strategies of resistance carried out by various communities, most of which are led by women. This scaffolding of active resistances gives rise to new modes of organization and to a "creation of existential territories" (Gago, 2019, p.99)[7] .

In this sense, the active resistance punctuated by Gago (2019) allows us to turn our gaze towards the thought of Étienne Souriau (2017), as it delineates this meeting of the potencies of the lesser in networks of survivals and their coefficients of deterritorialization with a "philosophy of instauration". It is relevant to see that here a thought is articulated that explores different modes of existence and the recognition of the right to exist. This philosophy of Souriau's instauration outlines powerful questions, as Arcila (2020) points out to us.

> *What exists and what does not, who exists and who does not? (...) how can we think of contemporary ways to enter into litigation, to witness and deputize the right to exist of ways of being and ways of life that are invisibilized, denied or actively destroyed? (p.97)*

[6] Some of these illustrations and others are discussed in more detail in another of our recent papers: Moscoso-Flores et al. (2022).
[7] It is not superfluous to mention that some of the scope of this reading can be found in Bolados and Sanchez's (2017) analyses of resistance in the "sacrifice zones" in Quintero Bay, Chile.

From the establishment, therefore, we can come to understand the formulation and problematicity that interpellates an irreducibility of existences as part of a philosophical, ethical, aesthetic and political reflection. In this sense, the dimension of the irreducible is played in the conquest, not from a simple fact or factual data, but from a process of expulsion of its very reality, Souriau (2017) will tell us. We can follow this point from what Lapoujade (2018) expounds in his Existencias menores regarding the right to exist as a problem

> *how could existence constitute a problem if it is an irreducible datum? (...) To exist with the permanence of a thing, to exist with a "rheic" existence, according to Souriau's terms, is not enough to "situate" the existence conceived according to another way. It is to disregard any distinction between law and fact. One is not real by the mere fact that one exists; one is only real on condition of having conquered the right to exist. (p.83-84)*

This involves a political potential oriented to the forms of composition of collective enunciations and modes of the sensitive that cross political and social relations to which a politics of registration would not be alien. We believe we can see these social and political articulations and the conquests for the right to exist in the written expression that appears in the sites of community resistance to the installation of high tension towers in the La Campana-Peñuelas Biosphere Reserve: "if you see a task, it is yours". This slogan applied from washing the dishes and keeping the site clean to carrying out inspections, ensuring compliance with the project's commitments, and making the complaints that, strictly speaking, should have been made by the environmental[8] institutions themselves.

From the exposed cases we see how this framework is being articulated with the philosophy of the establishment of Souriau (2017). It is a policy that takes into account specific experiences of "impossible" spaces and identities, which lack the identity of a privileged subject from a more traditional political composition. It envisions an integration of another possible way of life. This, undoubtedly, is an important issue to consider, since in its impossibility lies the potentiality of a becoming that exceeds the majority systems of signification and inscription. This potentiality would be mediated by a problematic affectation, where we can think of a process of political subjectivation related to the process of becoming-minor proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1978; 2008), in which virtualities are introduced against and outside the distributive and differential

[8] From the same project already referenced, here we are facing a participant observation of resistance to the installation of the LT 2x500 kV Cardones-Polpaico LT 2x500 kV transmission line in Cerro Las Vizcachas, on February 2, 2018.

positions of the majoritarian system. It is necessary to think, then, of modes of registers and mechanisms of visibility of these other non-categorizable, non-distributable forms of life that constantly disturb the binary oppositions of the majoritarian systems. Thus, these modes of minor existences could, in our opinion, claim a particular right to exist, where

> *(...) to make exist is always to make exist against ignorance or contempt. We always have to defend the subtle against the coarse, the second planes against the fuss of the foreground, the rare against the ordinary whose mode of knowledge has for correlate the densest ignorance." (Lapoujade, 2018, p.75)*

By collecting this type of experience we think it is possible to consider the problematic of intervention and institution from the implications and consequences that contract the forms of territorial and subjective claim, from different events that remake territories, multiply their borders and, ultimately, constitute a mutant composition of a whole sensitive field that affects and institutes multiple practices and ways of life, taking place far from the sovereign tradition. Thus, in the descriptions made so far, including what is referred to by Gago (2015; 2019), suggestive elements seem to be available that can re-understand the relationship between intervention and institution, both for Social Work and for other intervening social professions. It is required to rearticulate the relationship between the interventive practices we want to outline and their ways of instituting them. It is for the same reason that Lapoujade (2016) states that a certain combat is at stake here, for "if it is a combat or a struggle, it is because it is about making common cause with what does not have the right to exist, against the powers that deprive them of that right" (p.276).

Now, it seems relevant to us to say that these experiences in their composition, populating and territorializating differentially determined space-times, even when they are provisional or mobile -in the same line as what Didi-Huberman (2017) posited in networks of survivals- exist in an attunement with the gesture of instauration or institution; the latter, clearly, in a terrain that aims to decenter the institutional organic, which also forces us to rethink the question of intervention. Thus, the way of instituting or instantiating the question of the institution is set against the idea that this type of experience is explained by means of a transcendent foundation, in order rather to

consider them by the folds of their constitution that witness and intensify the gestures that sustain them. It would be to think the establishment against transcendence:

> *What is the difference between establishing and founding? The foundation preexists in law the act that nevertheless situates it; it is external or superior to that which it founds, whereas the establishment is immanent to that which it establishes. The instauration is only sustained by its own gesture, nothing pre-exists it (...) In other words, to found is to make pre-exist whereas to instaurate is to make exist, but to make exist in a certain way, each time (re)invented. (Lapoujade, 2018, p.72-73)*

Undoubtedly, our philosophical, political, aesthetic and epistemic premises have impacts to think an intervention and another institution from a critical thinking that does not focus its exercise from the guidance and imposition of normative horizons, but from the experience of the variation of the power to exist that leaves room for an inventiveness, planes of individuation, virtualities and textures that allow to retake diverse modes of existence to which it is necessary to direct the gaze (Arcila, 2020). More emphatically, we are far from denying from our position an approach to the institution and the law, but it is a matter of composing through other practices-knowledges the recreation of possibilities of life in rupture with the sovereign capital-State domination device (Gago, 2015).

A preliminary closing: the openings and potencies of the minor for any institutional process of intervention

The journey undertaken shows two terrains regarding how the minor and its compositions, both existential and aesthetic-political, open possibilities for another set of practices that we see in different ways of understanding intervention and its ways of instituting itself. In other words, this brief opening of possibilities from this theoretical-philosophical reading, when articulated with possible incarnations, opens a power to establish other forms of life, other ways of existence that from minority (insisting: without ignoring the precariousness and suffering) can open up views of both the intervention and the institution in its modes of registration. This shows that in every intervention process the transforming dimensions of the institution operate, as long as other types of registers can be strengthened in the epistemic, political and methodical fields.

In the light of the path followed, with special emphasis on the thematization of potency and register, we have tried to think of a field and a possible method that traces and makes visible the planes of mobile, flexible and precarious corporeality, which escape or interrupt the governmental devices of control and valorization that are installed in the intervention and the institution. It is visualized that the resistances that they glimpse allow us to develop another logic of reappropriation: they make perceptible other struggles in these spaces and conditions in which they are cornered, since in their vacillating compositions they can deploy forms of freedom and affect the landscape of the common, instituting other forms and human, social and political relations. As we have pointed out, this opens up interesting elements for thinking about the professional intervention of Social Work and the epistemic and methodical plots that sustain its form of intervening in the social, showing that within the discipline there are places from which to invent new forms of life and other ways of existing, rewriting the common and the collective (Campana, 2021).

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ARTICLE

German Social Work in totalitarian regimes: a comparison between the 'Third Reich' and the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

El trabajo social alemán en tiempos de regímenes totalitarios: una comparación entre el "Tercer Reich" y la República Democrática Alemana (RDA)

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Abstract

Can we learn from history, especially German history? The author agrees with Jill Lepore that the past is a legacy, a gift, and a burden and that it opens the prison of the present (Lepore, 2019). German history in the 20th century provides sufficient reason to reflect on the dangers of dictatorships and their influence on the history of social work. Given the growing influence of populist dictatorships

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in the world and new right-wing movements, this debate is urgent. By way of introduction, the article describes the historical lines of the development of social work in Germany. It then focuses on two historical phases in which a dictatorship ruled. The de-professionalisation and political subservience of Social Work in the period of the National Socialists `Third Reich' (1933-1945) and the development in the eastern part, the German Democratic Republic, GDR (1949-1990) were traced. The National Socialists were a right-wing extremist movement that came to power in Germany under Adolf Hitler, destroying the democracy that had only existed since 1918 and establishing a fascist regime. In this context, the discipline and profession of social work were involved in the implementation of the eugenic policy and the enforcement of the associated new ideals of the unequal worth of human beings in many forms. The Nazi period was incomparable in its human rights violations to those of the GDR. But part of the ideology of this time was not only carried on in the West Zone of Germany, but also and again differently in the Russian-occupied East Zone. The GDR suffered from the ideologic continuity especially in the treatment of the so-called 'asocial' clients of social work. Finally, an attempt is made to understand the common ground of the regimes with the modernisation theory of Zygmunt Bauman.

Resumen

¿Podemos aprender de la historia, particularmente de la historia alemana? Concuerdo con Jill Lepore (2019) cuando plantea que el pasado es un legado, un regalo y una carga que abre la cárcel del presente. La historia alemana del siglo XX ofrece suficientes motivos para reflexionar sobre los peligros de las dictaduras y su influencia en la historia del trabajo social. Dada la creciente influencia de las dictaduras populistas en el mundo y los nuevos movimientos de derecha, este debate es urgente. A modo de introducción, el artículo describe las líneas históricas del desarrollo del trabajo social en Alemania. A continuación, se centra en dos fases históricas en las que gobernó una dictadura. Se traza la desprofesionalización y el servilismo político del Trabajo Social en el periodo del "Tercer Reich" nacionalsocialista (1933-1945) y en el desarrollo del comunismo en la parte oriental, la República Democrática Alemana, RDA (1949-1990). El nacionalsocialismo fue un movimiento de extrema derecha que llegó al poder en Alemania de la mano de Adolf Hitler, destruyendo la democracia que existía desde 1918 e instaurando un régimen fascista. En este contexto, la disciplina y

Palabras Clave:
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la profesión del trabajo social se vieron implicadas en la aplicación de la política eugenésica y en la imposición de los nuevos ideales asociados a la desigual valía de los seres humanos. El periodo nazi fue incomparable en sus violaciones a los derechos humanos respecto a las sucedidas en la RDA. Pero elementos de dicha ideología emergieron también, aunque de forma diferente, en la zona oriental ocupada por Rusia. La RDA sufrió la continuidad ideológica del nacionalsocialismo especialmente en el tratamiento de los llamados "clientes asociales" del trabajo social. A partir de esta revisión, se intenta comprender la base común de ambos regímenes con la teoría de la modernización de Zygmunt Bauman. .

History of German Social Work up to the beginning of the 'Third Reich'

Social work in Europe and so also in Germany has its roots in Christian charity, Jewish teachings on justice, civic engagement, and socialist and feminist solidarity movements, as will be explained below. In the Middle Ages it had been done in Christian monasteries, hospitals and with almsgiving. Later on, communal care of the poor and orphans was created alongside state penitentiaries and poorhouses. With Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) came a new idea in European welfare. In his book "On the Assistance of the Poor", he called on city leaders, especially the rich, to protect the weak and avoid oppression and injustice. This was also in their own interest, since failure to help could lead to thefts, robberies, civil wars, or epidemics. However, not all poor people should receive assistance. Giving money to "gamblers" and "whores" was like "throwing straw on the fire" (Vives, cited in Kuhlmann, 2014, p. 23).

So from about 1500 the idea spread that poor people had to be examined to see whether they were "worthy" of support. Honorary municipal officials proved the willingness to work and the way of life of the poor. The idea of dividing into "worthy" and "unworthy" clients has a long continuity – till today. However, the criteria by which worthiness was and is measured have changed throughout history. In the following we will explore two different historical phases with very different political ideologies. Before that, however, events from 1800 onwards should be presented in order to understand how the fascist dictatorship came about in Germany.

Industrialisation and social reforms

In the 19th century, educational institutions, nursing homes, asylums for the insane and asylums for drunkards developed. The emergence of a specific social profession is closely linked to the so called "social question" that had to be answered as a result of industrialisation. The communal care of the poor, which had come from the Middle Ages, was no longer able to cope with the misery of the growing class of workers. So new forms of organisation emerged to check the claims of those seeking help (Sachße & Tennstedt 1998). A multitude of private charitable associations took over most of the tasks of social work during the time of the politically emancipating bourgeoisie, which were initially mainly supported by private donations. Rescue associations for poor children, neglected youths, the elderly, the sick, prisoners, underage mothers or addicts came into being (Franke-Meyer & Kuhlmann 2018).

Private welfare work was influenced not only by Christian and civic, but also by Jewish and interdenominational associations, such as the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ethische Kultur" (German Society for Ethical Culture), founded in 1892, in whose framework Jeanette Schwerin (1852-1899) and other Jewish fellow citizens had a great influence on the society's welfare commission. Schwerin early on opposed thoughtless charitable women who would do great harm as "extras in charity" and founded a welfare information centre, where Alice Salomon (1871-1948) later gained her first professional experience. Schwerin rejected the concept of almsgiving and advocated a conception of welfare that "finds expression in the language usage of an ancient cultural people who would describe 'justice and benevolence' with one and the same word": the Hebrew word: "Zedakah" (which still shapes the Jewish understanding of welfare today). Schwerin became Alice Salomon's mentor and the concept of Zedakah implicitly exerted great influence on her work: shaping social vocational training in Germany after 1899 (Kuhlmann, 2000, p. 259).

A milestone in the development of social work was the social insurance and labour protection laws which arose very early in Germany (including the 1839 ban on child labour in mining and factories, 1878 factory inspection and first maternity protection regulations, 1883 health, 1884 accident, 1889 invalidity and old-age insurance, 1904 ban on child labour in the trades, commerce and load service, 1900 obligation of illegitimate fathers to pay alimony, 1911 employee, widow and orphan insurance, 1927 unemployment insurance). These insurance benefits ensured that many social risks no longer resulted in dependence on poor relief. However, it also meant that professionals

were increasingly needed who knew and could enforce these laws and entitlements, as this was often not the case for people in social distress (Kuhlmann, 2014).

Social Work as a profession begins

The first courses for so called "social helpers" emerged in connection with the women's movement and the movement for social reform (1899 for the "Girls' and Women's Groups for Social Help Work" led by Alice Salomon in Berlin), but also in Christian associations (1904 Women's School of the Inner Mission Berlin) (Reinicke, 2012). In 1917, Alice Salomon founded the "National Conference of Women's Social Schools" together with eleven other headmistresses in order to achieve a standardisation of the curriculum, training methods, job placements, salaries and state recognition of the profession, which succeeded in 1918. By 1925 the number of schools had risen to 27 (in 1945 there were a total of 73 in the German Reich). The main subjects of the curriculum were health care (infant care, tuberculosis care, housing care), youth welfare (work at municipal or church youth welfare offices, youth welfare, etc.) and general social and economic welfare (vocational office, work certificate, scientific assistance work in social organisations). The duration of the course was four semesters, three of which were devoted to theoretical instruction and one to practical training. The curriculum also included various factory and flat tours.

For Alice Salomon, social education always meant bringing concrete living conditions of classes, genders and one's own privileges and prejudices to consciousness. It meant giving the students not only the cognitive insight into social injustices, but also an emotional awareness of them. Through a concrete comparison between their own living conditions and those of the "needy", they should come to the realisation of an obligation to help. A "conscience" should emerge from the "knowledge" (Kuhlmann, 2000, p. 248). Salomon, who herself had a doctorate in national economy, saw economic and sociological knowledge about the origins of injustice as the basis of this formation of conscience (Kuhlmann, 2008).

World War I: Poor relief becomes welfare

The First World War and its consequences were a major factor in the development of Social Work. Women were supposed to defend the "home front". This included the provision of crèches for female munitions workers, care for war widows and orphans as well as the so-called war cripple care for wounded soldiers. With the deterioration of

living conditions, which now also affected the middle class, care for the poor changed into "war welfare": before 1914, those who had received poor relief had not only lost the right to vote but also the right to freedom of movement and were obliged to repay the relief (Sachße and Tennstedt, 1998). Now benefits were created that suspended these conditions and were not only oriented towards the necessities of life but were to have the preservation of the previous standard of living as a yardstick. However, many communities lacked money, so that support was often given in food, clothing donations and people's kitchens (Lindemann, 1917). Almost every second soldier died or was wounded in 1918. Thus, many families lacked income even after the war. Therefore, war welfare remained a component of public welfare. This contributed to the fact that the despised care for the poor became care for the "welfare" of the population. In addition, health care (tuberculosis, sexually ill and drunkard care), but also youth and housing care had acquired a political and demographic significance during the war that also lasted beyond 1918.

Weimar Welfare State (1918-1933)

With the Weimar Republic and the first participation of the Social Democrats in government, a "welfare state" emerged, which further expanded the state's obligation for individual emergencies with the introduction of the "Wefare Duty Act" (Reichsfürsorgepflicht-Verordnung 1924) and the "Youth Welfare Act" (Reichsjugendwohlfahrtsgesetz 1922). The primacy of private welfare work was enshrined in legislation - also for compulsory state tasks. The state was (and is) not allowed to provide social assistance on its own if there are smaller communities (i.e., welfare associations) that do so. However, the state must co-finance the activities of these associations. This "subsidiarity principle" is an internationally unique interweaving of private and public responsibility. It resulted in a great influence of the church, but also other civil society associations in social work (Hering and Münchmeier, 2000, p.125). During the Weimar Welfare State there were six welfare associations in Germany: The Protestant "Innere Mission" (since 1849), the German Red Cross (1869), the Catholic "Caritas" (1897), the Jewish "Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden" (1917), the Social Democratic "Arbeiterwohlfahrt" (1919) and the liberal "Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband" (1920). They were organised in an empire-wide association and had a great influence on legislation and social work practice (Kuhlmann, 2014, p.74).

From the beginning, the workers' movement in Germany represented competing utopias of a more just society; at first it was oriented towards the Marxist idea that only

revolution and the nationalisation of the means of production could bring about the liberation of the working class and that "bourgeois" welfare was an obstacle on this path (Klönne, 1989). After advocating the first World War, the communists split from the Social Democrats (SPD). The SPD took the path of social reform and founded its own welfare association, the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO), in 1919. In contrast to the other welfare associations, the AWO advocated the priority of state or municipal aid over private. From a communist perspective, both political social reforms and social work were further rejected. Only self-help (Red Aid) for persecuted comrades was considered legitimate. In the Weimar Republic, the institutions of the AWO and politically committed social democrats brought a reformist impulse with many progressive ideas to social work (f. e. democratic group work).

However, social work was still most strongly influenced by the women's movement. In the 1920s, the concept of women's "social mission" (Alice Salomon) and "cultural mission" (Gertrud Bäumer) changed the idea of "spiritual motherliness" (Schrader-Breymann, 1868) and called for active socio-political intervention. They criticised the one-sided male politics primarily determined by power interests and too little by social responsibility. Most of the protagonists of the newly emerging women's social profession saw welfare work as an area in which they wanted to contribute their special female responsibility and competence. In the Weimar Republic, women increasingly occupied leadership positions in welfare associations, in ministries and in educational institutions and had thus achieved an important step on the path of their "cultural mission": to make welfare a publicly respected and responsible field. Both progressive concepts of social work, the social democratic and the feminist, ended in 1933.

The increasing legalisation and institutionalisation of social work and the differentiation of the fields of action had ambivalent consequences for the professional social workers and their clients. On the one hand, the process enabled greater social security for the population and more efficient methods of help; on the other hand, it also led to stronger state control of the former private welfare work. In larger cities, the newly created welfare offices after 1918 increasingly employed full-time social workers. Family welfare - as presented by Marie Baum in 1927 in the book of the same name - considered that complex problems from professional experience in the areas of health, housing, education or unemployment often existed as one and the same family. From a professional point of view, "social diagnosis" (Salomon, 1926) became more and more prevalent as a method for analysing complex connections between environmental and personal problem situations. The first reformist concepts were tried out in many

fields of social work, especially in youth welfare under the influence of the "social pedagogical movement". But democratic projects were rare and short-lived, and largely ended by the Great Depression.

About one third of Germans became unemployed between 1929 and 1932. Unemployment insurance, which had just been introduced in 1927, collapsed. By 1930, impoverishment had reached large sections of the population, including the bourgeoisie (Sachße and Tennstedt, 1992).

This became the breeding ground for the acceptance of the "brown revolution" of the Nazis - also in the field of welfare work. In addition, however, decades of anti-Semitism, education in Prussian obedience and an increasingly influential ideology of the importance of Germany and of the superiority of certain "races" played important roles (Kuhlmann, 1989, p.78).

National Socialist 'Volkspflege' (People's welfare) 1933-1945

As early as 1927, Hitler had left no doubt about his position on welfare. In his book "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle) he criticised the "humanity" of welfare work, which he considered to be a mixture of "stupidity, cowardice and imaginary knowledge" (Hitler, 1934, p.148). He thought that mankind had become great in an eternal struggle for survival. For this reason, Hitler also opposed avoidance of procreation, as proposed by Thomas Malthus in the 19th century. Hitler advocated a "natural", i.e., cruel, "selection" so that one's own race would become "superior" (Hitler, 1934, p.144). Following this ideology, later on after 1933 the head of the Main Office for People's Welfare, Erich Hilgenfeldt, demanded that people be made to understand that struggle and suffering are the necessary conditions for the higher development of one's own people, and that those who are too weak have no right to life:

> *"Everything that survives the time of adversity is the selection of the people, selection that we find everywhere in life. Everything that is alive is tested by life and is rejected if it is weak." (Hilgenfeldt, quoted in Althaus, 1937, p.5)*

The possibility of a National Socialist seizure of power was underestimated by other political parties as well as by critical intellectuals as late as 1932. But a few months later it became clear in which direction the National Socialists wanted to expand their rule.

The banning of magazines, the burning of books, the dissolution of democratic bodies and committees at the state, provincial and municipal levels, the smashing of the trade unions through the open terror of the "auxiliary police" force, the 'Sturmabteilung' (SA), the organised boycott of Jewish shops, the law on forced sterilisation, the establishment of the first concentration camps (which was even mentioned in the newspapers) and last but not least the brutal persecution of the opposition - all this happened in the first half of 1933 and would not have been conceivable at this speed without the public support of established elites and power groups. Despite these events, the conservative bourgeois milieus, which included many people working in welfare, welcomed the new state because it would restore conservative values and save them from a supposedly threatening communist takeover (Roth, 2015).

The director of a Protestant reformatory wrote in his newsletter in 1933:

> *"Wherever an educator attempted to cultivate patriotic feelings ... or even to adorn the rules of the home with strict military forms, not only did the Marxist press revolt every time, but also the state moved away from such an educator as a 'reactionary' and 'militarist'". (Paul Bellingrodt, quoted in Kuhlmann, 1989, p.58)*
> *And he ended in expressing that the seizure of power by the National Socialists had brought about better conditions for his work.*

"Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt" (NSV) - "National Socialist People's Welfare"

From the very beginning, the National Socialists tried to eliminate free welfare and the principle of subsidiarity and undermined the latter by founding their own welfare association. Even if they rejected "welfare", they believed solidary help for innocent families of "Aryan" origin in need (e. g. through unemployment) should be supported. They called this not welfare, but "Volkspflege" (People's care), which should be characterised by prevention on the one hand and leadership on the other. The association "Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt" (NSV) was recognised as a party organisation on 3 May 1933 and established throughout the Reich.

Immediately after its foundation, it claimed the leading role in the association of the welfare organisations, but that was not all. The Workers' Welfare Association (AWO) was banned, and the Jewish Central Welfare Office was excluded from the association; the liberal association was forcibly dissolved, and its assets confiscated. Only the church associations and the Red Cross (which operated exclusively in the health sector) were

able to maintain their influence on further developments, partly because they were very cooperative (Hammerschmidt, 1999).

The NSV was to focus on preventing social emergencies and in particular on strengthening the health care of the population. Employees of the NSV took over the collections for the "Winterhilfswerk" (Winter-help) and the relief organisation "Mutter und Kind" (Mother and Child). These funds were used to finance soup kitchens, heating material, convalescent cures, and family counselling. The central starting point of the NSV activities was the more than 6,000 community care centres, which offered antenatal and maternity counselling and care services. All these measures had already existed during the Weimar period; what was new, however, was the extent and the comprehensive expansion. The self-declared aim was to build up a close-meshed observation network (Sachße and Tennstedt, 1992, p.177).

Particularly in maternal counselling, the aim was to enforce a specifically National Socialist infant care, which aimed at a "maternal front" against the child. They campaigned against "monkey love" and propagated a schematic and child-hostile four-hour "breastfeeding rhythm" that was supposed to lead to an early habituation to obedience (Dill, 1999). In addition to counselling mothers, the NSV was involved in the kindergarten sector (permanent, harvest, auxiliary kindergartens), especially during World War II, when many mothers were needed in the armaments industry.

There are retrospective studies from the 1990s in which former social workers were asked about their memories of their professional activities during the Nazi era. It is noteworthy that many of them were subjectively convinced that they were to implement reform projects from the Weimar Republic (maternity counselling, recreational care, health education for the rural population, Schnurr, 1997; Haag, 2000). The year 1933 marked the beginning of an improvement in the social situation of the clients and the professional framework conditions. What happened to non-Aryans and disabled people during this time was not approved of in retrospect but was hardly ever discussed. So, we have to discuss it here.

Youth Welfare

The Nazis claimed that children should no longer be educated according to their needs "or even wishes", but from the people (Ernst Krieck, quoted in Althaus, 1937, p.31). In order to realise this educational goal, politically left-wing youth associations were

banned, and all the others were transferred to the Hitler Youth, which all children over the age of 10 had to join from 1936. This process took place without major disruptions, as the Hitler Youth had already adopted many forms of youth movement: tent camps, singing together around the fire, home evenings, etc. Also, the majority of the youth associations that had emerged from the youth movement (e.g. the Boy Scouts) had already developed increasingly in a militaristic direction around 1930 (Giesecke, 1981). In addition to paramilitary exercises, the Hitler Youth also offered sports and training in National Socialist ideas. The girls had their own association, the "Bund deutscher Mädel" (BDM), which focused on educating them to become German housewives and mothers.

In contrast to the nationalised youth work, most of the youth welfare continued to take place within the framework of Catholic and Protestant institutions and associations. The Nazis believed children with educational difficulties were hereditary ill and therefore hardly usable for a national socialist education.

The reasons for being judged as hereditarily ill were different for boys and girls. Repeated theft crimes and oppositional behaviour was more often the reason for the boys, the so-called sexually conspicuous behaviour for the girls. While aggressive sexual behaviour in boys was judged normal, girls were assumed to have sexually abnormal development if they had once had premarital sexual intercourse. And if there was sexual violence in the family, they were also treated as a hereditary sick person, because the "immorality" of the father was hereditary and therefore also affected girls (Kuhlmann, 1989, p.95).

In the widely distributed brochure by Albert Friehe "What must the National Socialist know about heredity?" it was claimed that half of the children in reformatories were uneducable. They should not only be sterilised, but "after the end of their compulsory education, they should preferably be placed in preventive detention before they cause mischief". An adoption from an orphanage with an unhappy outcome served Friehe as proof that even philanthropists and do-gooders cannot do anything against the "hereditary power" of an inferior clan (Friehe, 1935, p.41).

About 12% of the inmates were forcibly sterilised and those who were considered completely uneducable – even in the reformatories of the churches - were sent to youth concentration camps from 1942 onwards. Also, young people who loved jazz and swing music were sent to those camps (Kuhlmann, 1989, p.202).

The function of these camps consisted primarily in the threat of being sent there, as well as in being the "final stop" for those who no longer seemed to be tolerable in the reformatories. In Moringen, a camp for boys, there were six different blocks, from the block for the so-called unfit to the so-called permanent and occasional failures to the block for those "capable of being educated". Differentiation was apparently such a necessary part of the National Socialist educational system that even in the "final station", in the youth concentration camps, it was not dispensed with. Boys who were considered uneducable as an adult were sent to the concentration camp (Kuhlmann, 1989, p.221).

Welfare – now called 'Volkspflege'

Just as national economics around 1890 and social pedagogy around 1925 had exerted a decisive influence on the theoretical debate and on the patterns of interpretation of social work, medicine became the new leading discipline after 1933.

Welfare administration was now under the rule of the health department. The family welfare workers, who were working with the municipality created files that traced "hereditary health" back to the grandparents' generation. If someone in the family had committed suicide or had been in prison, this was considered an incriminating hereditary disease. Thus social workers did their part in denunciation of the poor. In many cases their records became the basis for forced sterilization and later in 1938 it became the basis for classification as an 'asocial' person (above all addicts and prostitutes). 'Asocial' persons were no longer subordinated to the municipal welfare offices but directly to the police (Ayass, 1995, p.224). Many of them were transferred to concentration camps with a black triangle on the convict's clothing. So-called non-Aryans (Jews and Gypsies) were also excluded from welfare benefits and locked up in concentration camps as a deterrent (Gruner, 2002).

The mentally ill and disabled were the main target of National Socialist propaganda against the so-called "ballast existences". From 1939 onwards, many of them were killed in so-called Euthanasia programmes. Beforehand, they were assessed to see if they were still fit for work and if they required a lot of care. 250,000-300,000 adults and children of the so-called insane asylums or idiot asylums or sanatoriums were gassed or poisoned. The Nazis later used the experience of gassing to set up the extermination camp at Auschwitz. There was only rare resistance (Kuhlmann, 2020). In this context, two people must be remembered who paid for their resistance with their lives or

imprisonment: Cathedral Provost Bernhard Lichtenberg and Pastor Paul Gerhard Braune, who sent letters of protest to responsible authorities and refused to transfer the sick. In recent research we found about one hundred people who had resisted in the form that is called 'rescue resistance', what meant organising help for refugees or children of persecuted people. Half of them were professional social workers, others were pastors, lawyers or Kindergarten teachers (Amthor, 2017). At that time, the fields of work described above were largely not yet staffed with trained social workers; this did not happen until the 1970s, so the role of social work in (youth) welfare was a subordinate one and they had to follow instructions from doctors, lawyers, theologians or teachers. In addition, the education at the schools of "Volkspflege" no longer met the standards of 1918, since the curriculum had been changed in 1934 and now subjects such as racial studies were placed in the foreground.

Social welfare in the GDR

After the end of the war, Germany was divided into different occupation zones. The Eastern zone, occupied by the Russian army, became the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949 and from 1951 pursued the "construction of socialism" according to the doctrine of Josef Stalin. In 1961, a wall was built across the entire country, it was strictly guarded, and no one was allowed to leave. Welfare or people's care was considered obsolete under socialism, since in the planned economy there could be neither unemployment nor poverty and - so the erroneous conclusion - no social problems. (Kuhlmann, 2014, p.114). Therefore, there were no more associations dealing with the classical field of "welfare", but only a kind of welfare association, the "Volkssolidarität" (People's Solidarity), which dealt mainly with problems in old age. Just as the Nazis, the SED left the care of the disabled to the churches.

Youth welfare

Like all other party organisations, the Hitler Youth had been banned by the victorious powers in all occupation zones. Democratic youth organisations were soon allowed back in the Western zones, but not in the Russian-occupied zone.

In the GDR, the "Free German Youth" (FDJ) was founded in 1946, which after 1949 became obligatory for all as state youth. The FDJ was subordinate to the Socialist Unity Party (SED). This party was founded through the forced unification of the communist and social democratic parties under the clear leadership of the communists. It represented

the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and was made up of many communists who had fled to the Soviet Union during the Nazi era and now wanted to advance the construction of German socialism. But also, former members of the Nazi party NSDAP could become members of the SED after a few years.

The FDJ was given far-reaching competences in education and upbringing (but also representation of young people's interests in the workplace). They organised tent camps, holydays, concerts, and other cultural activities. The FDJ should also – like the Hitler Youth – educate the young people in the spirit of the state party. Leading goals were also obedience to the leadership. But we should not forget that the spirit was one of humanity and equality of all people: diametrically opposed to the values of the Nazis. Because the SED had an absolute claim to education, the reformatories of the churches (and the kindergartens) were nationalised until the mid-1950s and pedagogically oriented towards collective education according to Anton Semyonovich Makarenko (1888-1939)

Makarenko was a teacher from the Ukraine who, after the Russian Revolution, ran a rural educational institution for several years in which juvenile lawbreakers, some of whom had already been homeless for months, were committed. He was a socialist of the first hour of the Russian revolution. With Marx, he assumed that the material situation in which man finds himself essentially shapes consciousness. He was convinced that only the implementation of a socialist mode of production would produce morally responsible people. So, he built a factory with the young people, where they later produced cameras and other technical equipment together (Makarenko, 1980).

Collective education - according to Makarenko - is something like, but in one crucial point different from, group pedagogy or community education. A collective is more than a group, a collective is defined by the fact that the members work together. By giving the young people a perspective and addressing them in a humorous tone, the project succeeded - at least in his own presentation. However, despite the self-administration and the comradeship court, the education was only conditionally democratic, as Makarenko decided when a collective was mature enough to make its own decisions. Democracy was therefore only an apparent one, co-administration allowed as long as it did not contradict the educational goals of work and school discipline, conformist fashion and cultural regulations.

Eberhard Mannschatz, advisor in the People's Education Ministry and (later) the only professor of social education at Humboldt University in Berlin, owed his career to the

implementation of collective education, according to Makarenko, into the institutions of Germany. At the beginning of the GDR, he made it clear that the "planned, systematic progress" towards socialist attainment required "the leading role of the educator" (Mannschatz, 1951, p.20).

In the decision of the People's Education Ministry of 9.5.1951 on the "reorganisation of work in the field of youth welfare" it was stated that residential care education had lagged behind in terms of success. The reason given was the orientation towards reform pedagogy: this was without a plan, idealistic, and open to "reactionary influences of objectivism, cosmopolitanism, social-democratism as well as the various pseudo-sciences" (Krause, 2004, p.77). The attachment theory, for example, was judged to be such a pseudoscience.

A closer look at the practice in the 1950s and 1960s shows that the reasons for placement into residential care on the one hand ("work dodging", "sexual conspicuousness", neglect) and the authoritarian educational practice on the other hand differed little from the West – and also was not very different from the Nazi era. In the GDR, as in the FRG, there was a differentiation of the institutions according to the degree of educational difficulties (frequency of running away, "bed-wetters") as well as similarly humiliating punitive practices, compulsory work and sexual violence, especially in the so-called special homes and "Jugendwerkhöfe" (Youth working camps). These institutions were for young people who showed deviant behaviour, which was attributed to influences from the "West" and was rigidly punished by incarceration (Zimmermann, 2004).

Welfare – now called *'Sozialfürsorge' (social welfare)*

According to the state constitution, those unable to work, war wounded, widows, orphans and refugees could receive "social welfare benefits". However, this support was to be cut back in favour of a socialist labour and social policy. In the GDR, the granting of benefits was decided by social commissions staffed by volunteers like before 1900, this time with a party-political influence by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). Fearing being considered "asocial", many took up working in a factory instead of applying for social welfare. This was also more likely to be possible in the state-owned enterprises, especially for disabled people, since here, despite propaganda to the contrary, the productivity of the labour force had little relevance in everyday life (Willing, 2008).

Leisure time and social activities as well as social assistance and support were arranged through the workplaces (company social work). Social workers were mainly employed in the health sector and had preventive and accompanying tasks in schools and factories (e.g. vaccinations).

In the GDR's Family Code, the educational goal was prescribed, which did not focus primarily on the well-being of the child, but on the "socialist personality". This included education in work, love of the Soviet Union and the willingness to defend the borders with weapons. Like the Nazis, the SED tried to intimidate those who questioned these educational goals or their order by denying them the ability to educate, since they (like Jehovah's Witnesses before 1945) offered no guarantee that they would bring up their children in the regime's interests. Especially if the parents had attempted "Republikflucht" (escape from the Republic) and therefore had to go to prison, children were even forcibly given up for adoption (Warnecke, 2009). Others were placed in foster families. The families in which the children then lived mostly belonged to the SED. The children were told that their parents had voluntarily given them up for adoption. The exact number of children is not known, but it is estimated at several hundred. Research on this is still ongoing.

The term "asocial" continued to be used in both German states as a "mental remnant" after 1945. In the FRG, this term and the concept behind it were abandoned in the 1960s, while in the GDR there was a simultaneous tightening of the treatment of so-called 'asociality' (Lorke, 2015, p.100, see also Benz and Distel, 2016).

Punks, "tramps" ("vagabonds") and "beatlers", "people willing to leave the country", drug addicts, homosexuals (till 1968) and parents who neglected their children were treated as criminals. They were forcibly committed to workhouses and later according to the "Asocial Paragraph" of 1968 to psychiatric wards, where they had to perform forced labour. Military drill and rigid rules prevailed in the workhouses, which were intended to re-educate the inmates into socialist human beings (Willing, 2008, p.316). This also applies to the corresponding institutions for young people, the "Jugendwerkhöfe". Just as there were no more youth and social services offices, volunteers had taken over their former tasks. And also work with the "Asocials" was not a field for social workers but for prison wardens. In 1958, only 40% of the full-time staff had pedagogical training and there were nine volunteers for every full-time youth welfare worker (Zimmermann, 2004, p.32).

The academisation of social work, which took place in the West around 1970, was not carried out in the East and thus no new fields of action developed there; for example, while social psychiatry developed in the West, the treatment of the mentally ill in the GDR concentrated on medication and "work therapy" (Gross, 1996).

Nevertheless, there was a profession of "social welfare worker" who was trained in the subjects Marxism/Leninism, cultural theory, health and social policy, hygiene, nutrition, socialist leadership, statistics and Russian, but also sociology and psychology (Glimm, 2006). Social workers should always educate their clients on socialism as well. This always meant education for work readiness in socialist production. They worked primarily in the health and education sectors. After the reunification of East and West Germany in 1991, many social welfare workers had to catch up on their university of applied science education.

Conclusion

The Nazis claimed to be creating a 1000-year 'Third Reich' in Germany, but they were only in power for 12 years. Nevertheless, during this time, they changed the political situation in Germany and later in Europe radically and lastingly. They killed six million Jews in an industrially organised mass extermination camp in Auschwitz, Poland, millions of civilians and prisoners of war during World War II, mostly in the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of other groups such as the disabled, Sinti and Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, recidivist criminals and so-called "asocials".

The historical uniqueness of a planned, industrial mass extermination of millions of people must remain in historical memory. It cannot be separated from the moral appeal that Auschwitz must not be repeated (Adorno 1966).

National Socialism was not a relapse into anti-modernism, but a culmination of the projects of modernity: the fulfilment of the Enlightenment dream - at least of the part that strived for rational efficiency and functionality. The eugenic utopia that the National Socialists adopted had the goal of creating "better, more social, healthier and happier people" through rational human production (Auguste Forel, quoted in Dörner, 1988, p.32).

Tragically, the totalitarian regime of the National Socialists was indeed able to realise this social-technological "utopia", which had already been developed in the 19th century,

with cruel consistency. The Nazi state became the "Great Gardener" and "eliminated" "disturbing" population groups previously defined as "weeds" in order to give more space to the "useful plants", obsessed by the awareness that the existing "chaos" had to be defeated (Baumann 1995). The "Volkspflege" (Peoples' Care) played a prominent role in this, as it was supposed to push back the so-called inferiors for the good of the people through "eradicating hereditary care" (Althaus, 1937, p.8).

Also the GDR had a dream of a better society, created not from the struggle against a race, but from the struggle against a class. The 'new human being' in the socialist vision was not the biological superman, but a human being in solidarity. Nevertheless, there were parallels, which were particularly evident in the area of education and social work. Discipline and obedience to the leadership of a party remained important educational goals. Social conformity was also required here, as non-conformist behaviour was defamed as a lack of class consciousness. Enemies in the Nazi era were other races - especially in the East; in the GDR, it was the capitalist class in the West and its sympathisers in the East.

State education had a particularly high priority in the GDR - as it had in the Nazi era - because the state appeared with the claim that it wanted to educate children differently than parents had done before and as they might therefore continue to do. The GDR saw itself doubly justified in continuing this primacy of state education, since only in this way could the struggle against fascism and capitalism be waged consistently. Overlooked in this were latent continuities in their understanding of society:

Both systems were about the primacy of the community over the individual, the glorification of the "worker" and the military, the rejection of the "intellectual" and the stigmatisation and persecution of the "work-shy", the "asocial" and the "uneducable". And in both regimes, a de-professionalisation of social work took place because volunteer help from comrade to comrade was preferred. According to today's definition, there was no "social work" either in the Nazi- era or in the GDR. However, it would be too easy to simply free ourselves from the legacy and burden of this past with this claim. In fact the fields of work and target groups have remained similar, only answered with inhumane methods of "elimination" or barracking.

What are the reasons for these similarities despite the obvious different political goals of the Communists and the Nazis?

In his book "Modernity and Ambivalence", Zygmunt Bauman sees the common ground between communism and National Socialism in the fact that both are gripped by the modern idea of bringing order into a supposed chaos. After the "collapse of the divine world order", chaos and order have become modern twins (Bauman, 1995, p.17). He calls socialism the last project of modernity (Bauman, 1995, p.320). As a counterculture to modernity, it remained bound to its logic and, like capitalism but also like Nazism, claimed to create a better life: it was about further increasing the productive forces, improving technology, conquering nature. Under socialist, not capitalist auspices, modernity was led to its limits, among other things, by unlimited social technology:

> *"Communism was modernity in its most determined mood and most resolute attitude; streamlined modernity purged of the last vestige of the chaotic, the irrational, the spontaneous, the unpredictable." (Bauman, 1995, p.326)*

As the capitalist West reformed, communism wasted its energy fighting "loose trousers, long hair, rock music" etc. (Bauman, 1995, p.327). The notion of equality had increasingly become close to uniformity, "fraternity too often smacked of enforced unity and a demand that the supposed siblings sacrifice their individuality in the name of a supposedly common cause". (Bauman, 1995, p.333) The postmodern consciousness that characterises many western countries today is - according to Bauman - tolerant. It no longer tries to convert people. Its freedom, however, is only the freedom of consumption. And the irrelevance of cultural otherness is also an expression of indifference.

Social work however cannot be indifferent towards social injustice because the struggle against social inequalities is one of its roots and part of its identity (Kuhlmann, 2008). Neglecting that would mean a new de-professionalization. Countering indifference is today's task. And there is a new danger posed by right-wing and other fundamentalist movements, which again calls into question the tolerance we have acquired.

We can learn from history about what happens if individual problems do not count; or even worse, when the right to live is denied by state policy. The history of the 20th century teaches that the dignity of a human being is undividable, like it is after World War II written in the Code of Ethics of social work. However, this is not enough: We need to create historical awareness in the training of social work to prevent a repetition of collaboration with dictatorship.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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ARTICLE

On the subalternity of social work and the duality of theory and practice (as the source of all evils)

De la subalternidad del Trabajo Social y la dualidad teoría-práctica (como fuente de todos los males)

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Abstract

Both the research that gives rise to this discussion and other studies carried out in Social Work reveal that there is still a theoretical and practical disconnection in professional performance. In this article, which is shown as a hybrid between research and discussion paper, this disconnection is problematized as the origin of the profession's subalternity, articulating it with serious consequences such as the neoliberal instrumentalization of the profession, the depoliticization of the discipline and the delegitimization of Social Work as a source of knowledge.

Keywords:
social work; subalternities; theory-practice; autonomy; sexual commercial exploitation of children

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Based on specific research with social workers in Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC), we put forward some of the problematic hypotheses of the theory-practice relationship in Social Work in general, and of the work of protection and guarantee of rights with children in particular. One of the fundamental theses of the argument revolves around how these two dimensions are constructed in separate dualities as distinct worlds and how this disconnection places them, comparatively, at a disadvantage when it comes to enunciating proposals for action. To conclude, we propose an exit door that leads to an encounter between both theory and practice from critical self-observation. In this way, we offer as an alternative of reflection-action the investigative systematization of experiences; betting on its critical and complex version as a way of finding points of inflection, questioning and individual and collective conscience, from which to construct situated and also founded, polyphonic and transforming propositions.

Resumen

Tanto la pesquisa que da origen a esta discusión como otros estudios realizados en el Trabajo Social, revelan que permanece la desconexión teórico práctica en el desempeño profesional. En este artículo, que se muestra como híbrido entre documento investigativo y de discusión, se problematiza esta desvinculación como origen de la subalternidad de la profesión, articulándola con graves consecuencias como son la instrumentalización neoliberal de la profesión, la despolitización de la disciplina y la deslegitimación del Trabajo Social como fuente de conocimiento. A partir de una investigación concreta con interventoras sociales en Explotación Sexual de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes (ESNNA), planteamos algunas de las hipótesis problemáticas de la relación teoría-práctica en el Trabajo Social en general, y del trabajo de protección y garantía de derechos con niños y niñas en particular. Una de las tesis fundamentales del argumento gira en relación a cómo estas dos dimensiones se construyen en dualidades separadas como mundos distintos y cómo esta desvinculación les posiciona, comparativamente, en desventaja para enunciar propuestas de acción. Para finalizar la discusión, planteamos una puerta de salida que lleve a un encuentro entre ambas líneas, teoría y práctica, desde la auto-observación crítica. De este modo, se ofrece como alternativa de reflexión-acción a la Sistematización Investigativa de Experiencias; apostando por su versión crítica y compleja como forma de encontrar puntos de inflexión, cuestionamiento y consciencia individual y colectiva, a partir de la cual construir proposiciones situadas y también fundadas, polifónicas y transformadoras.

Palabras Clave: *trabajo social; subalternidades; teoría-práctica; autonomía; explotación sexual de niñas, niños y adolescentes (ESNNA)*

Introduction

The debate around the origin and consequences of the separation between theory and practice in Social Work seems to be anachronistic and never-ending. The role played in this problem by the neoliberalization of social intervention is important. The political conjuncture in which Social Work develops is based on technical criteria rooted in logics of effectiveness according to institutional objectives; although contradictorily, it exalts the individual responsibility of program participants in the "success" of the intervention (our quotation marks) (Harris, 2014; Hicks, 2016; Muñoz-Arce, 2019). All these elements account for the existence of a commodification of the profession anchored in the neoliberalization of intervention; however, we must clarify that not only neoliberal dynamics play an important role in the constitution of contemporary Social Work.

By emphasizing the personal responsibility of the "user" for the resolution of problems in a world of uncertainties (Abad Miguélez and Martín Aranaga, 2015), where people are at the mercy of circumstances and their situations are valued in terms of vulnerability, the capacity of the State to guarantee rights as a universal good is minimized (Güendel, 2015). This minimization of state role contributes, greatly, to hiding the social contingency (Butler, Laclau and Zizek, 2000) and the political, economic, social and ecological dimensions of the intervening action (Ortega-Senet, 2017, 2020).

This scenario conditions power relations -between positions in the structure, between disciplines, between participants and professionals-, which directly impact the performance of Social Work and which are not always evident; but, in any case, they strongly limit the autonomy of the profession, both for the exercise and for the epistemological creation of practical knowledge. In this discussion we will understand autonomy in Gramsci's way as "the subjective emergence from the experiences of insubordination and gestation of spheres of independence and emancipation" (Modonesi, 2010, p.27).

In the context of the protection of children's rights in Chile, plunged into a deep and alarming crisis (Sánchez and Villarroel, 2017; Sanfuentes and Espinoza, 2017; Solar, 2015; Centro de Políticas Públicas UC, 2017), the theory-practice separation exceeds the mere epistemological discussion. This is an essential recursive dyad, since it is where the 'how', 'why' and 'what for' of social actions aimed at their comprehensive welfare are inscribed. Bringing analysis and (critical) awareness to the daily work with children has become urgent; not doing so has entailed terrible costs for them.

The theory-practice relationship in the protection of rights has reached a serious point that evidences populations of social sacrifice[2] . In them are located especially polyvictimized children (Finkelhor et al., 2009), those who accumulate traumatic violence in their life histories and are involved in the wide network of services and programs, where social workers have played controversial roles; sometimes as part of the problem, sometimes trying to counteract, as they can, an incoherent and violating protection system (Hicks, 2016; Sanchez and Villarroel, 2017; Muñoz-Arce, 2020).

The discussion proposed here is connected to an empirical investigation; however, it is not presented as a results article. This means that the following reflections have their origin in the findings and in the new questions that the study has been procuring about what happens in the intervention with children whose rights have been violated and the role of Social Work. Thus, from a study of social intervention in such a complex problem as the so-called Sexual Exploitation of Children (hereinafter SEC)[3], it was possible to identify critical knots, tensions and resistances in the daily professional work (Ortega-Senet, Gómez and Tierney, 2022). The findings that emerged were not necessarily related to the difficulty and complexity of SEC situations, but to the limitations and contradictions of the national protection system -including judicial systems- and its autonomous capacity to work on a daily basis (Ortega-Senet et al., 2022; Ortega-Senet, Concha and Rivera, 2021).

From the above, the question that opens this reflection is whether these limitations of autonomy are related to the well-known and insistent separation as distinct worlds of theory and practice, to which other authors have contributed in other discussions (Muñoz-Arce, Hernández and Véliz, 2017; DeLuca-Acconi, 2016; Caria and Pereira, 2016; Hicks, 2016; Hothersall, 2019). From this text, the intention is to complement the discussion by articulating it to the subalternity of the discipline, understanding it as the experience and subjectivity of the subalterns themselves in a relationship of domination and hegemony, from Gramsci's understanding (Modonesi, 2010).

The intention is to make concrete proposals and achieve steps towards a progressive overcoming of this dichotomy, enhancing the generating and transforming role of professionals and people involved in the processes of social intervention. Thus, after

[2] We use "populations of social sacrifice" in terms analogous to environmental sacrifice zones, used in Chile as those territories offered for extractivism and contamination for the sake of economic "development" and the economic capitalization of entire habitats.

[3] We refer to this sexual violence as Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (SEC) and not Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (CSEC), following the terminology recommended by the Inter-American Institute of Children and Adolescents-Organization of American States. We will use the term CSEC when it is so used by the referenced source or institution.

a previous contextualization of the SEC and this study, a space for problematization is opened on three axes: i) the separation of theory and practice as dual worlds, where intuition and experience play fundamental roles to make up for the scarce epistemological and theoretical basis; ii) the review of the tensions and consequences of this separation; and iii) a proactive defense of the possibilities of learning and knowledge constituted from practice to confront a critical and vigilant Social Work.

Contextualization of the intervention against SEC

We do not want to miss the opportunity to introduce readers to this field of social intervention that is so socially and disciplinarily invisible, where social workers have not yet been able to develop all the potential for action and praxis that the problem involves.

The SEC "occurs when an adult takes advantage of the condition of vulnerability (age, social, emotional, gender, among others) of a girl or boy under 18 years of age to satisfy their sexual and erotic desires, giving them in exchange a payment in money, gifts or something as intangible as shelter or protection" (Consejo Nacional de la Infancia, 2017, p.12). The forms of manifestation of the problem are diverse, and we have few studies on them (ONG Raíces, 2010; Salazar, Álvarez and Vega, 2012; Consejo Nacional de la Infancia, 2017), however and in general terms, in Chile the following are recognized: sexual abuse and violence in exchange for money, gifts, favors or others with intermediation of third parties, called Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children; material with content of sexual abuse of children and adolescents, also called pornography; commercial sexual exploitation in the field of tourism; marriages and adult domestic partnerships with children and adolescents; and trafficking, the most common internal trafficking with a single trafficker, transitory trafficking or self-managed trafficking. In recent years, there is also the alarming prominence of the Internet as a space of violence and an antechamber for exploitation, such as grooming and sexting (Consejo Nacional de la Infancia, 2017). In fact, terms such as "online sexual exploitation" or "sexual exploitation facilitated by ICTs" are already part of the terminologies of the phenomenon (Grejer and Doek, 2016).

Today we do not have up-to-date data on the possible extent of this terrible sexual violence. The last specialized study (National Service for Minors-International Labor Organization, SENAME-ILO, 2004) evidenced 3,719 NNA victims in the country, a figure that, possibly even then, was a small percentage of the actual cases.

We do know how many children have been assisted in the Specialized Programs (hereafter referred to as SP) on CSEC[4]. The data indicates that 1,502 girls, boys and adolescents participated in the SPs according to the Statistical Yearbook conducted by the Servicio Nacional de Menores (SENAME, 2018) in 18 programs spread over 11 regions. The SPs are all managed by SENAME Accredited Collaborating Organizations (ACOs), thus constituting a programmatic framework that, in ideal terms, is nurtured by the principles and guidelines stipulated from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The complexity of the phenomenon, the clandestinity and the relationship with private and virtual spaces, also makes it difficult to classify sexual violence against children, and to differentiate it from other forms of violence, such as Sexual Abuse (SA). This difficulty to differentiate between violations is not a trivial point: how we name and determine them is directly related to the visibilization, their judicialization and preventive, restorative and post-restorative policies (Grejer and Doek, 2016; Reisel, 2017); that is: the conceptualization and delimitation that reaches the ESNNA completely determines all the intervention and its criminalization.

The problem highlights the requirement for specialized work in this type of sexual violence due to the particularities of the victims and of the violence itself. In Chile, unlike other countries, a specialized program exists. These SPs are self-conceived as "islands of good practice" within the general framework of the Protection Network (Ortega-Senet et al., 2020, p.10); however, there are many gaps for reflection. At the national level, despite having social workers in all the SPs, we have not yet carried out a deep reflection on how the strategies and actions of intervention are being developed in this specialized framework. Hence the importance of building the social work discipline not only from good practices, but also from the critical analysis of what we do, where it comes from and the (theoretical-critical) basis of our daily practice.

Participants and methodology of the study

As we have already pointed out, the reflections we propose in this article arise from an exploration we carried out with young people that finished program of the SP on SEC and with professionals working in two SPs in the Biobío region, Chile. This research, which

[4] These programmes depend on the National Service for Children (Servicio Nacional de Menores –SENAME) Protection System, which is detached from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and is constituted as the National Service for the Specialized Protection of Children and Adolescents, which includes the Specialized Programs on CSEC. SENAME's protection area was renamed Mejor Niñez (Better Childhood) and has depended on the Ministry of Social Development and Family.

began with a small internal fund of the Católica de la Santísima Concepción University, has been shaped in the manner of Russian dolls that, starting from the smallest, we have been expanding: spectrum of work, incorporation of actors, perspectives and axes of analysis. Today we are carrying out a greater deepening through a research project funded by the National Agency for Research and Development (Chile) at the national level.

Although the research experience in the national project has already begun nurturing these ideas, we describe here the methodology of the primary study, the first exploratory research, which focused on the experiences of young survivors of sexual exploitation who participated in two SPs in the Biobío region, and on the perspectives of the interveners on specialized work. In order to incorporate the latter group, an objective was determined: to analyze the controversies - tensions, contradictions, dilemmas, ambiguities - of the professionals in the different dimensions of the intervention process in CSEC, for which we had the support of three Social Work students in their thesis phase.

The participating professionals were mainly social workers, psychologists and educators, all of whom were considered social interveners. In total, 19 experts (n=19) from the region took part in this study, of which 16 were direct workers connected to the two programs under study, and 3 who did not work directly, but belonged to, the Regional Roundtable against CSEC in the same region of Chile.

Two fundamental techniques were used with the professionals: a) 11 semi-structured interviews that explored their experiences as specialized workers and experts on the topic; and b) a group technique called flowchart (Villasante et al., 2009). The flowchart is an ideal tool for the identification and analysis of the critical nodes of the intervention. This activity was completed in two sessions with all the direct work professionals (n=16).

For data analysis, the interviews were recorded, transcribed and organized depending on the source and using Nvivo 11. For the analysis we used open coding, focused and axial coding, according to Charmaz's (2006) Grounded Theory proposal. Emerging responses were grouped in relation to the axes: critical nodes, tensions and resistances. On the other hand, the Flowchart technique involves its own participatory analysis based on the interpretations built by the group itself in the same work process. With this tool, a reflective analysis is carried out during the same work process of the technique, in which the participants point out with arrows how the critical nodes are related in terms of cause and effect, and what control, in terms of influence, they have over these nodes.

Of course, all ethical safeguards were carried out under conditions of information, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntariness, gratuity and respect, which were recorded and agreed upon by informed consent, and the report of the study results was shared with the participants. The parent study was approved by the Ethics Committee of UCSC.

The findings were presented in a results article (Ortega-Senet, Gómez and Tierney, 2022), but important discussions have been progressively developed, and are well worth exploring, in order to respond to the urgent task of problematizing Social Work, not only in the current serious situation regarding the protection of children's rights, but also to contribute to the open and still ongoing debate on what it is and where it is heading as a (trans)discipline.

The theoretical-abstract level and the practical-emotional level of social intervention as divergent worlds

Following the theoretical developments previously elaborated in this regard (Caria, 2014; 2017; 2020), we have two symbolic worlds that do not necessarily meet in the intervention: (1) a theoretical, rational and conscious form that knows and explains, in an abstract way, the place of things, intended to feed legitimate disputes about the truth of social and physical worlds; and (2) another practical one, which is nourished by collective knowledges in action, not very conscious. These have a predominantly moral and pragmatic content. They are attributed to the management of beliefs about what can be real, building intersubjectivity in collective and cultural action from everyday experiences and life trajectories.

In the context of professional work, the use of theoretical knowledge is materialized through a discourse that allows the justification of the reasons, the principles that support the empirical evidence and the objectives/means of social intervention. And, for its part, the use of practical knowledge is shown through everyday life, allowing putting into action social beliefs and pragmatically acquired wisdom, commonly sustained from the nonconformity of professional standards. In parallel, tension, disturbance and latent conflict are contained in the face of what is considered "unnatural" about what is done and said in social interaction (Caria, 2017).

These two ways of knowing are considered to contain a double epistemology, so that social workers operate within "a duality of socio-cognitive systems" of intervention. In

this dynamic, a subordination of "practical knowledge" to "knowledge" is established: an unequal relationship that arises from the hierarchies established by rational scientism. This subalternity renders professional knowledge invisible, being relegated to pragmatic purposes that never acquire the status of knowledge (Caria, 2014; 2017). Those pragmatic actions that are developed on a daily basis are configured as their own strategies, sometimes shared as a team and that gestate professional culture (Caria, 2017), sometimes as individual tools that they can use in their performance.

When we locate this separation in the specific case of work against SEC and this subalternity of the practice of Social Work is observed, we see how this everyday knowledge -practical, linked to face-to-face relationships- is connected with the most emblematic space of work performance: that of human and personal relationships. This positions the social practitioners in that imperceptible world of silent, intuitive, but also often improvised work, as has been seen in other research (Hicks, 2016).

In this dynamic that has been proposed, professional knowledge is therefore out of focus (for other disciplines and for the social interveners themselves), and instead highlights the emptiness of strategies, the lack of clarity of actions and, above all, the contradictions; these being almost as implicit characteristics of professional work. Moreno and Molina, (2018, p.8) point out regarding contemporary Social Work: "Through the observation of the relationships established by these actors, tensions, paradoxes and fissures in the discourse of contemporary social intervention are revealed". This reflection of the work of social workers impacts not only on the external vision, but also on the disciplinary recognition and self-confidence, which ultimately determines the autonomy, the field of action and recreation of praxis.

Indeed, in the findings of the original research, the intervention teams pointed out some critical knots that especially affect Social Work and are related to the lack of specialized tools and strategies in the various dimensions of the work from the sexual body to the community; the limited scope of family and community work (levels of intervention where they are assigned), the over-intervention experienced by the families with whom they work in the sense of re-victimization, and the lack of reflection on their own practice.

The lack of awareness of the place it may be occupying in socio-political terms places the discipline in a social position that is counterproductive to the objectives of Social Work.

The professionals against SEC, like any intervention professional, run the continuous risk of being part of the intervention devices (Saavedra, 2015; 2018) and being part of the reproductive game of domination and inequality in everyday life, turning the Programs and their actors into an operative of deployment of the "microphysics of power" (Foucault, 1993). When we think of the Protection Network, we are struck by a network involved in violence against children who are "sacrificed" with impunity (Agamben, 2006). At this point, the social interveners are caught in a fundamental tension between the Rights Approach (understood as fundamental theoretical principles of the work of protection and restitution of rights) and the practical consequences of the deployment of the protection network, where they are once again violated and naturalized as loss (Bustelo, 2005).

And can this entire problem be solved by bringing together theory and practice? In part, yes. On the one hand, because dismantling that dangerous assumption of both as an irreconcilable division frees us to be able to carry out a practice capable of generating knowledge and, therefore, situated and grounded knowledge; and on the other, to emphasise that the issue is not only theory, but what theory, understanding this epistemological crossroads as a political issue (Hicks, 2016). At the base of this potential we find that the elimination of the division between both worlds can contribute to the generation of key moments in practice: the practitioner's conscious moment of his or her own performance, and the conscious moment of the people who participate in the programs. That is, the places of all of them in a problem that transcends, that extends beyond their own experiences, and that is shaped as a social contingency (Butler et al., 2000) and not as an individual or family problem.

The tensions that have been evidenced in various studies on the practice of Social Work in any of the fields of action (Gianna and Mallardi, 2011; Ferguson, 2016; Frost, 2017; Ornellas et al., 2019), as well as in childhood (Contreras, Contreras and Rojas, 2017; Sánchez and Villarroel, 2017) are interrelated and connected to the gaps of specifically critical theory. These tensions, even, begin to be unveiled already in the same processes of formative practices of students, where similar difficulties and contradictions are reproduced (Parola, 2020).

The reviews conducted on the theory-practice relationship evidence that theory does not always have a reflective and epistemological function, but is also used with a functional character to explain people's behaviors (Hicks, 2016). This functional theory is highly dangerous, in that it is seen as "technified", performance and efficiency oriented from parameters external to the children and their families; but contradictorily, focused on the participating individuals as responsible for their own achievements.

As already pointed out in other writings (Ortega, 2015), theory for Social Work has to have dynamic, feedback features, allowing us to understand that a given action is committed to a way of thinking about reality, of interacting with it and finding meaning. Hence the importance of this meaning being connected to the people involved in a given phenomenon to which we want to respond. In the case of severely damaged children, it is essential to know all those factors, histories and conditions that allow for concrete situations of violence and connect all those involved, in order to sustain collaborative work with victims and survivors.

The urgency to break down the boundaries between both worlds -theory and practice-, allowing the between practical knowledge and theorical knowledge, has its reason in that both are understood as a whole composed of inductive and deductive perspectives that complement each other, creating spaces for questioning in both directions (Velez Restrepo, 2003). Relieving the knowledge of the protagonists is fundamental, but the critical analysis must also ensure a micro political revision of Social Work as a reproductive apparatus of inequalities, of domination and hegemony relations (Gramsci, 1977), and a questioning of what is imposed as the real, the appropriate, the normal, the possible and the thinkable in sociocultural and political frameworks (Carañana, 2016; Ortega-Senet, 2017).

Overcoming tensions between theory and practice

Some authors have related the preference of social workers for the public area to this separation between theory and practice. Ahmed-Mohamed (2013) points out that the fact of working for public agencies may have been a determining factor, due to the bureaucratic and normativist logic of public institutions, producing in the long term a disciplinary stagnation that admits only functional proposals.

Indeed, the difficulties to which most social action professionals are subjected, in general, are due to an organizational bureaucratic hierarchy that has also been legitimized by a large part of academia and the professionals themselves. Thus, the valorization of work has been raised from a search for "efficiency" in the provision of technical services (Caria, 2014; Vivero, 2017). This situation has been exploited by universities to offer undergraduate and graduate training that does not question in which positions Social Work is being left within the devices, and does not prepare students to monitor their own social action (Vivero, 2017), as well as develop professional autonomy, nor to establish a horizontal level of collaborativity in interdisciplinarity.

In this context, interveners in child protection, as well as in other areas, are pushed towards a professional status as a giver of a technical service and not as producers of knowledge. In this structure, children and families who are involved in problem situations or violations, take an even more subordinate place, which is reflected in the categorizations as "users" or "beneficiaries" (Ortega-Senet, 2021), an even more difficult position, more subaltern to contribute to knowledge, not even to professional knowledge: that knowledge that is mostly constituted from the same daily interaction and daily performance (Caria, 2014).

This pragmatic compression of social intervention ends up disqualifying social workers, to the point where there is no difference for the employer (and for much of society) between technical and university graduates (Iturrieta, 2017). Faced with this situation of subalternity, often plagued by complexes, there are reactions on the part of social workers.

One may be an anti-intellectualist, or have an anti-theoretical attitude, which despises the possibilities of theory as misplaced, which locks professionals in a circle of learning feedback limited to their teammates or other like-minded colleagues. It also happens that the social worker is involved in technical courses with little relation to critical theory. This rejection of the theoretical and search for technical training as the only possibility of improvement, ends up being a submission to the neoliberal logic, which also despises theory and extols quantitative data and "objective" evidence over experience and ethical-political relations of intervention (Hicks, 2016), circumscribing social workers to a functional task.

Another form of reaction are the daily resistances (Scott, 1985), which, arranged from denial (Holloway, 2011) -denying something to seek the opposite-, stand as a dialectic with "constituent power" and creative against what is not wanted (Negri, 2001, p.84). In these acts, professionals self-form, read and construct alternatives from their common senses of applied work based on their practice, their ethical principles and their values. It may be clearer than ever in child protection systems what is not wanted, but what we do to reverse it from our professional positions is perhaps the critical point yet to be resolved.

Resistant actions in social praxis, although they may have alleviated certain tensions in terms of micro-achievements, have not had the capacity to transform the work in child protection and redirect the intervention towards the logic of the Rights-Based Approach. Neither has it succeeded in building public policy from the bottom up, nor

in undoing the fictitious separation between theory and practice. Rather, many other colleagues have mechanized their work by the "habitus in various aspects of their practices" (Bourdieu, 1994), and have not been able to impose well-founded reflections that nurture the theory of intervention from critical positions. On the other hand, in the academy, despite the increase in research from and for Social Work, social theory connected to professional praxis and intervention research does not have a privileged place in disciplinary training.

It is essential to build sufficient autonomy for the creation of subjectivity situated in the daily life of the intervention (Guattari and Rolnik, 1999). This means seeking a deconstructive vigilance of the intervention in all its dimensions. For decades the Systematization of Experiences and its sister Participatory Action Research (PAR) have constituted, in various areas of critical Social Work, a prolific form of acute, analytical and propositional reflection on objects— epistemological, political, ethical and methodological foundations of social intervention (Villasante, Montañes and Martí, 2000; Barnechea and Tirado, 2010; Cifuentes Gil and Kauffmann, 2019). These methods seek a reflective practice that can be contrasted theoretically and reconstituted to return to the task inquisitively, in a wheel that should never stop.

Systematization of Experiences is advocated here, particularly from among other forms of intervention research, considering the (poorly grounded) contempt it suffers in some academic spheres (Mallardi and González, 2013), and because it is one of the critical knots relieved as a loss of opportunity by interveners working against SEC (Gómez and Cid Arias, 2019; Ortega-Senet et al., 2020). Certainly there are other ways to achieve a research immersion in professional practice, such as ethnography, which is especially suitable for praxis research (Ortega, 2015; Silva, Sacramento and Mendonça, 2015). However, the Systematization of Experiences as an inquisitive and participatory analysis of the intervention has its own particularities that, precisely, aim to undo this division that we have been pursuing throughout this paper between the theoretical and the practical.

The Investigative Systematization of Experiences allows for the disclosure of professional knowledge in terms of experience, which implies a practical and symbolic mastery of the use of knowledge oriented by action (Shön, 1998), but observed from its protagonists, including the participants of the programs. This facilitates the break between practical knowledge and theorical knowledge, but also between professional experts and experts from the experience of the problem and, by the latter, I mean the people

who suffer the consequences of the social contingency. This opens up the possibilities of collective empowerment in relation to what is happening in intervention practices, in order to define them, explain them and seek creative alternatives in and beyond the micro-social levels of the relationship with people. Another of the possibilities it offers is that it allows for transformations in power relations, by involving all actors in the process of recovering experience, in its analysis, in its investigation and, especially, in the decisions of what to do with what is found.

Alfonso Torres-Carrillo, in his last article (2021), recalls that the Systematization of Experiences in its more investigative versions, is constituted as a complex tool for the critical understanding of the transformations and knowledge generated by the practice, from the critical appropriation of that same practice, being able to enunciate itself from its own subjectivity.

Research-reflective strategies of professional intervention, such as the Systematization of Experiences, when they are critical, emphasize that human (relationships, values, emotions, beliefs) and social (political, economic, cultural) processes are articulated categories of analysis in research. We mean "critical" systematization, that the process of systematization should be reflective and questioning of power relations in all symbolic, relational and practical dimensions; encourage the construction of utopias of social change enunciated among the protagonists involved; and maintain alertness against mechanics that are technified, functionalist, dominant, emotionally detached and habituated without awareness. These methods imply a vindication of the conjunction of all of them, giving each one the right role they play in a specific problem. It is thus constituted as multidimensional, polyphonic and articulating between the subjects who act and the critical consciousness of these actions (Cifuentes-Gil, 2021).

These methodologies are mainly determined, as Rosa María Cifuentes (1999) points out, by the context and practical developments, the intentions given to them and the working conditions in which they can be carried out; therefore, the author points out, rather than proposing a concept on systematization, she establishes meanings and a way of forging the claimed encounter between the task, the production of knowledge and its conversion into knowledge. In this approach there are many proposals and possibilities, where Latin American methodology activists such as Oscar Jara, Rosa María Cifuentes, Rocío Cifuentes, María Mercedes Barnechea, Alfonso Torres, Patricia Castañeda or Cecilia Aguayo make diverse and interesting work proposals that can help to constitute their own ways of systematizing experiences.

The important thing is to observe and self-observe Social Work as a dynamic, as a heterogeneous collective in movement, "in connection with its historical and structural processes, its resistances and strategies in the face of inequalities" (Ortega-Senet, 2021, p.100). The systematization of experiences not only visualizes good practices and innovations, but also produces the self-questioning of the profession as part of a political culture that generates and reproduces inequality.

The idea of collecting, questioning, reflecting and discussing from the experience and the theoretically current can respond to the ambitious processes from "below" for the generation of inputs for public policies. Why not? Possibly taking into account the experience of those who live and suffer the child protection system in our country would have avoided a lot of drama, pain and injustice. When we look at the childhood network, in general, in its entire framework, we deeply understand the need for theoretically discussed strategies and a social response that is founded, situated and continuously questioned.

Conclusions

This theoretical-practical dissociation is related to the status and recognition of social interveners, i.e., the greater the dissociation, the lesser the disciplinary recognition. It seems that this relationship is proportionally linked to the profile of "technician", and a progressive detachment from the theoretical models of intervention learned in their academic training, which would confirm that the dissociation between theory and practice favors a loss of symbolic power among professionals. This increases and is related to the marginality of the areas of social action. Somehow, Social Work accompanies the people with whom it works to the social margins also in a symbolic way in the production of knowledge. This marginality of knowledge also has no alternatives created from the practical knowledge o practical wisdom, pushing everyone to the alienation of their own practice, closing the perverse circle.

Faced with this panorama, it is considered that the Systematization of Experiences, or the critical participatory analysis of social interventions, could provide a useful tool to overcome this dichotomy between the two levels of relationship with work: the abstract theoretical level and the emotional practical level, generally dissociated, being able to find ways to generate interesting learning. Consciously establishing bridges and feedback paths between both levels would allow us to find strategies that undermine

the power relations between social workers and their programmatic contexts -plagued with contradictions and tensions-; between the interveners themselves from different disciplines, and for the "users" to stop being "users" and become participants in the action.

Francisco Escobar (1972) said, in a text that never loses validity, that in order to achieve liberation, Social Work must first liberate itself. This liberation involves undoing the false struggle between theory and practice, and this can be done by "looking inward". That is to say, looking at oneself as those who participate in the challenges of reversing unjust, unequal, excluding, anti-ecological social orders and doing so without complexes. This critical subjectivization facilitates the necessary task of recovering our autonomy and, with it, ontologically and teleologically reestablishing Social Work as a legitimate source of knowledge and wisdom. After October 2019, the whole country is in a new position of possibilities. The professionals of transforming social action, together with all the inhabitants of the Chilean territory, have, without losing sight of what has already been done, new opportunities to think big, with substantial changes in the forms of coexistence and relationship; we have a new great opportunity to reinvent ourselves.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

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ARTICLE

Employing critical realism in times of crisis: a study of human rights and social justice in social work training in England and Spain

Empleando el realismo crítico en tiempos de crisis. Un estudio sobre los derechos humanos y la justicia social en la formación en trabajo social en Inglaterra y España

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implications of adopting a critical realist philosophical approach to social research; specifically, through a study on human rights and social justice in social work education in England and Spain. Critical realism, linked to both critical theory and a realist philosophy of social sciences, offers, it is argued, great potential to enhance the depth, rigor and critical values of

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social work research. Nevertheless, critical realism is underdeveloped in this field. Seeking to address this gap, the paper offers an introduction to the core tenets of critical realism and outlines the main methodological and practical implications of its use.

Resumen

Este artículo aborda las implicaciones de adoptar la aproximación filosófica del realismo crítico en la investigación social, concretamente en un estudio sobre los derechos humanos y la justicia social en la formación en trabajo social en Inglaterra y España. El realismo crítico, enfoque vinculado a la teoría crítica y a la filosofía realista de las ciencias sociales, ofrece un gran potencial para dotar de coherencia, profundidad, rigor y valores críticos a la investigación en el trabajo social. No obstante, el realismo crítico carece de desarrollo en este campo. Buscando contribuir a su desarrollo, el artículo ofrece una introducción a sus bases fundamentales y detalla las principales implicaciones metodológicas y prácticas de su uso en el estudio de referencia.

Palabras Clave: *trabajo social; realismo crítico; metodología; derechos humanos; justicia social*

Introduction

This article aims to provide an introduction to critical realism in social work research and to explain the implications of adopting this philosophical approach to social research in an empirical study of human rights (HR) and social justice (SJ) in social work education in England and Spain. It is argued that critical realism, an approach linked to both critical theory and realist philosophy of the social sciences, offers great potential for endowing social work research with coherence, depth, rigor and critical values. However, critical realism is scarcely developed in this field at the international level and particularly in Spanish-speaking countries. Therefore, it is hoped that the theoretical and practical aspects discussed in the article can contribute to the development of this approach in social work research and be useful for other researchers in different national contexts.

This article offers, first of all, a brief introduction to the reference study and a detailed introduction to the bases and fundamental ideas of critical realism, explaining the reasons for its choice as the philosophical and methodological foundation of this research. The

text then details some of the methodological and practical implications of adopting critical realism in the study, including a discussion of the steps and processes followed. Finally, it presents in a very summarized form some of the results of the research.

The research study

In order to focus this article on the philosophical framework of this study, critical realism, the text will limit itself to introducing as briefly as possible the context, objectives and research methods employed (as indicated, the results will be summarized at the end of the text). However, the full research (Martínez Herrero, 2017) is available in English in the virtual repository of Durham University. The study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of this university, and was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom.

Research Context

As detailed below, framing this study within the philosophical framework of critical realism entailed taking into account and applying the main postulates of the critical paradigm of social research. One of them is that values and ideology cannot be separated from research processes. Therefore, and in contrast to the position of traditional positivist research (in both natural and social sciences), which advocates this separation and the search for objectivity, social research from critical theory consists of a "self-conscious critique" in which social researchers try to understand the ideology and epistemology that guide their research, as well as their own perspectives and subjectivity. As Kincheloe et al. (2017, p.243) point out, in the critical paradigm researchers "go into an investigation with their assumptions on the table, so that no one is confused about the epistemological and political baggage they bring with them."

In accordance with the above, the following lines point out some data that could help contextualize this study and "put on the table" the author's perspective and the origin of the motivations that gave rise to the design of this research and that mark several aspects of its development.

Thus, it is important to point out that the author, currently a social work teacher and researcher in England, studied Social Work in Spain and acquired her first professional experiences there as a social worker in municipal social services. This professional practice took place in the period when both the global economic crisis that began in

2008 and the first austerity measures in Spain were beginning to have serious effects on the lives of the most vulnerable population groups, as well as on the resources of public social services (Ioakimidis, Santos Cruz and Martínez Herrero, 2014), which could be observed and experienced first-hand in social services.

Practice in this context would sow in the author's mind a series of doubts and concerns about how she could or should, as a professional, materialize in practice the profession's ethical commitment to social justice and work to ensure the dignity and respect for the rights of users in such an adverse professional context. These concerns contributed to her decision to further her studies in social work at the graduate level in England. These studies brought, in fact, new knowledge and perspectives on human rights and SJ in social work and also represented a very different and complementary educational experience to that received in Spain. All this awakened in the author an interest in comparing research from both educational contexts, and continuing to expand knowledge about human rights and SJ in social work, motivating the development of the research project on which this text is based.

Aims of the study

The overall aims of this study on human rights and social justice in social work education in England and Spain were to: 1) explore how social work's global commitment to promoting and respecting the values of HR and SJ (as embodied in the declarations and agendas of international social work organizations such as the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) or the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)) materialize in social work training in England and Spain; and 2) contribute to critical thinking about the role of HR and SJ in social work training. The more specific research objectives of the study were:

1. To study how the concepts of HR and SJ were understood with respect to social work in these two countries.

2. To study, from the perspective of critical theory, the ideology and possible governmental interests regarding HR and SJ in social work education in these two countries.

3. To study the mechanisms used to transmit the values and contents of HR and SJ to social work students in these two countries.

4. To develop a series of recommendations to help social work teachers to integrate HR & SJ in their regular teaching.

To achieve these objectives and answer a series of related research questions, we chose to employ critical realism as a philosophical framework, along with the following specific data collection methods:

1. An electronic survey addressed to social work students and teachers, sent to all institutions offering social work training in the two countries (a total of 224 valid surveys were received in response). This survey collected descriptive statistical data and a large number of short qualitative responses to open-ended questions.
2. A limited number of qualitative interviews (7) with social work faculty from one university in each country.

The Critical Approach in Social Research

In the context of the social sciences, the term "critical" is used today to refer to social research that explicitly seeks to address the oppression of human beings and to provide moral and philosophical foundations for social science, as opposed to the traditional positivist stance of the natural sciences, which would demand a quest for objectivity by separating scientific research and such moral foundations (Bohman, 2016; Kincheloe et al., 2017).

Sociology, whose origins date back to the late 19th century, was originally aligned with a positivist philosophy of the social sciences, assuming that this young discipline could adopt the method of the natural sciences to discover the prevailing scientific laws of society. However, positivism and its assumption that social scientists could and should separate observation and measurement of facts from values and theory was challenged by various schools of thought throughout the twentieth century. Critical theorists were part of the early currents of reaction against positivism in the social sciences (Bohman, 2016; Buch-Hansen and Nielsen, 2020).

Critical theory has traditionally been linked in the social sciences to Marxist work and thought originating in the Frankfurt School in the 1920s (Friedeburg, 2011; How, 2017). However, since its first formulations in the first half of the 20th century, critical theory has expanded widely across social science disciplines and interacted with numerous

intellectual traditions and social movements globally. This has led to the development of a variety of perspectives within critical social science, some of which may differ significantly from the strands of Marxist class analysis (Kincheloe et al., 2017). This would be the case, for example, with different feminist, post-colonialist or post-Marxist currents (Sim and Van Loon, 2009).

As we will see below, a fundamental particularity of the critical realism on which this article focuses is that, rather than being an alternative critical current, it consists of a philosophical and methodological perspective "on and for the social sciences" (Buch-Hansen and Nielsen, 2020, p.136) compatible with numerous theoretical perspectives and traditions of critical social science research such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph. The limits of this compatibility would be marked by the basic notions about the nature of social reality of critical realism (such as the existence of an external and stratified social reality) and its fundamental methodological principles of research, detailed in the next section. Thus, as Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (2020, p.141) state, "while Bhaskar was a Marxist, other key figures of critical realism such as Archer, Sayer or Lawson have not been". Sayer's position, for example, the authors explain, is post-Marxist and Lawson links critical realism both to the Marxist perspective and to other non-Marxist thinkers such as Veblen or Keynes.

Kincheloe et al. (2017, p.237) argue that, roughly speaking, contemporary critical social researchers are characterized by using their research work as a cultural or social critique and by sharing a series of postulates such as: that human thought is conditioned by the social and historical constitution of power relations; facts cannot be separated from values and ideology; capitalism affects (negatively) social relations; language is key in the construction of the experience of subjectivity; in societies, certain groups are privileged at the cost of the oppression of others; oppression manifests itself in many interrelated ways (on the basis of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, culture, colonialism, religion, etc.).

Thus, critical social science, and especially critical social work, would be committed to social justice and human rights, would recognize the complexity of social problems, and would aim to uncover and confront their root causes, from their roots in the unjust and oppressive social structures prevailing in the neoliberal global order. This commitment is fully consistent with the global definition of social work (IFSW and IASSW, 2014), the ethical codes of the profession worldwide (Banks, 2006; Lundy, 2011), and the reference documents and messages of international social work organizations, including the global standards for social work education (IASSW and IFSW, 2020).

Social work thus understood is both a moral and technical activity, related to the study of social phenomena in order to transform the world and pursue emancipatory projects. To this end, social workers need access to quality knowledge and training, and must also employ the tacit knowledge and ethical reasoning necessary to interpret and manage the open and complex social realities in which they intervene (Pease, 2010).

Critical Realism as the philosophical framework for this research

In this study on human rights and SJ in social work training in England and Spain, we chose to use the more specific philosophical and methodological framework of critical realism, which, being situated within critical theory, was considered to fit particularly well with the moral commitments of social work and, in turn, offered great potential for facilitating the approach to the broad and complex object of study. Employing such a complex and underdeveloped philosophical framework in social work as critical realism was not without its difficulties (which will be discussed below). However, the notions and reasoning processes of critical realism made it possible to develop a broad and holistic, as well as coherent and deep, understanding of the field of research. Critical realism further endowed this research with solid philosophical (epistemological and ontological) foundations for the combination of multiple methods (electronic surveys and qualitative interviews) in this study and, it is argued, fruitfully guided the process of data collection and analysis, enabling answers to the questions posed and the achievement of the stated objectives. The following pages provide an introduction to critical realism.

Critical realism: Definition and fundamental ideas

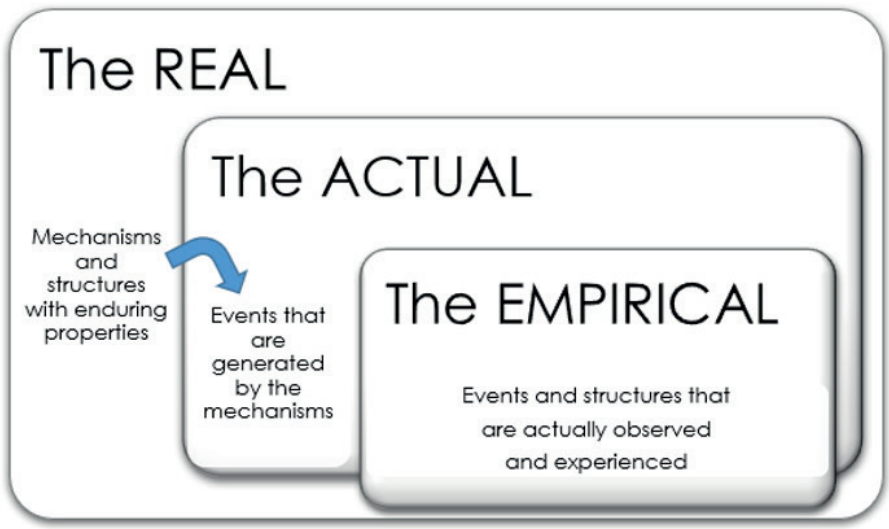
The origin of critical realism as a philosophical approach to the social sciences is attributed to the work of Roy Bhaskar in the 1970s. Critical realism, as will be seen below, redefines and links elements of positivism as well as interpretivism and constructivism. However, it is important to note that it would be philosophically and methodologically incompatible with the purest or most radical positions of these perspectives. A fundamental notion of critical realism, shared with positivism, is the assumption that there is an external social reality, independent of the perception of the subjects, which the social scientist seeks to discover by acquiring and accumulating increasing knowledge about this reality (Buch-Hansen and Nielsen, 2020). Discovering

and understanding social reality makes it possible to generate changes in the status quo and pursue goals of social justice (Bhaskar, 1989).

Unlike positivism, however, critical realism rejects the idea that scientific knowledge obtained from the study of social reality directly reflects this reality (Bryman, 2016). Social reality, inaccessible through direct observation, consists of a "network of interacting forces, complex, multi-causal and formed by multiple layers" (Oliver, 2012, p.374) where social phenomena are the result of a series of "generative mechanisms" (Bhaskar, 1989) in interaction, in specific contexts.

The approach proposed by Bhaskar (1975), that social reality is stratified or divided into the three domains of "the real", "the actual" and "the empirical" is another key foundation of the ontology (or theory of reality) of critical realism, and at the same time one of its most complicated ideas. In essence, the real (deepest) domain consists of enduring mechanisms and the deepest social structures, the actual domain consists of the events that such mechanisms activate or generate, and the empirical (and most superficial) domain consists of events that can be observed or experienced. To visually illustrate the three domains of reality proposed by Bhaskar, the following is a slightly simplified and translated version of a figure made by Mingers (2004, p.94).

Figura 1: Bhaskar's Domains of Social Reality



Source: Mingers (2004). Translation and adaptation by the author

Craig and Bigby (2015, p.313) use the following example to explain Bhaskar's conceptualisation of the three layers of social reality.:

> *We can understand the real and actual domains by making inferences from the effects that are experienced. For example, if we were to observe a series of incidents in which single mothers are repeatedly denied access to the private housing [rental] market (empirical level), we might infer that there is some level of prejudice (actual level) operating against them. The "prejudice" is not seen, but inferred, and the proposition of its existence is tentative, since another unobserved factor, such as the fact that they have pets, could have led to their being denied access to housing (actual level).*

Thus, the mechanisms and structures of the real domain and many events of the current domain are not observable, but can be inferred from the effects that are. However, in social reality, the relationships between (often unobservable) generative mechanisms -which may include language and subjective interpretations of particular situations (Nightingale and Cromby, 2002)-, are multidirectional and extremely complex. This makes it impossible from the perspective of critical realism for social scientists to pretend to explain and predict social phenomena through logic of linear causality. Therefore, human scientific knowledge of social reality, necessarily mediated by the inescapable "filters of language, individual interpretation and social contexts" (on which constructivist research perspectives focus), is based on provisional and incomplete explanations of it and it is accepted that the gap between the subjects' perspectival knowledge of reality and reality itself will always remain (Oliver, 2012, p.374).

However, it is precisely the complex causality and nonlinearity of social reality that opens the door to the possibility of designing and implementing a multiplicity of alternative interventions with the aim of achieving a desired social change (Robson and McCartan, 2016; Oliver, 2012). Therefore, in critical realism, different interpretations of the same social reality and alternative proposals on the best ways to intervene in it to promote social justice must be evaluated in light of real-world experiences and observations. The best ways to achieve social justice should, for Bhaskar, begin by trying to uncover the mechanisms (including false beliefs and discourses) that sustain exploitation and injustice (Bhaskar, 1986).

Interpretations and explanations about social reality are formulated in critical realism through a form of logical reasoning called retroductive reasoning, which involves making inferences about the underlying causal mechanisms that might be responsible

for the patterns observed in social reality (Bryman, 2016). The process of retroduction combines successive cycles of deduction (from theory to observations) and induction (from observations to theory), whereby it becomes increasingly firmly established which generative mechanisms might be giving rise to the social phenomena of interest (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Retroductive thinking involves asking, in relation to observed phenomena, "how can we explain the pattern of events we find?" (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.32), or "what must be true for this to be so?" (Oliver, 2012, p.379).

Robson and McCartan (2016) clarify that in realist research, the term "theory" refers to proposals about mechanisms capable of generating observed events. The proposal of generative mechanisms tends to be "significantly speculative during the early cycles of retroduction, becoming more firm as the research progresses" (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.371). While it has been proposed that retroduction is a research method in itself, the observation of the phenomena it requires can be done through different research methods (surveys, interviews, documentary analysis etc.), which may come from other research approaches or paradigms, such as positivism or constructivism (Oliver, 2012).

Several authors have highlighted that critical realism fits particularly well with research in practice-oriented, value-driven professions in open social systems and complex contexts, such as social work (Anastas 1998, cited in Robson and McCartan, 2016). However, the influence of critical realism, although growing (and as reflected in significant and relatively recent developments such as the launch of the international scientific Journal of Critical Realism in 2002), has so far been very limited in social science research in general and social work in particular (Buch-Hansen and Nielsen, 2020; Kjørstad and May-Britt, 2017; Craig and Bigby, 2015; Oliver, 2012).

Some of the explanations put forward in this regard point to the complicated and excessively theoretical language of many of the reference texts, starting with Bhaskar's work (Pratt 1995, cited in Oliver, 2012); to the limited development of the methodological implications of putting critical realism into practice compared to the extensive methodological development of other traditional philosophical approaches in the social sciences such as positivism or constructivism (Lipscomb, 2008); or to the lack of examples of research projects in social work in which critical realism is employed (Craig and Bigby, 2015) -hence the interest in sharing this research experience from this approach.

Certainly, designing and carrying out this research project entailed these difficulties. It was not easy to find relevant literature on critical realism, so literature from other disciplines such as nursing (Lipscomb, 2008) or the field of information systems (Mingers, 2004) was used instead, and it was necessary to invest time and effort on the part of the author to reach a good understanding of critical realism, including understanding its main philosophical positions, its origins, and the methodological implications of incorporating this philosophical approach into this project. However, it was considered that the effort to face these difficulties would be worthwhile, considering that critical realism would bring great benefits to the research and taking into account the possibility of contributing with this work to bringing critical realism closer to social work research.

Integrating critical realism into the methodology of this research

More specifically, in order to integrate critical realism into the methodology of this research, a simplified version of the scheme of social research from critical realism formulated by Danermark et al. (2019) was used in the processes of data analysis and interpretation. This scheme is composed of six phases or steps, through which the authors claim it is possible to get from the concrete (phase 1) to the abstract (phases 2-5), finally returning to the concrete (phase 6).

The steps proposed by Danermark et al. (2019) are:

Phase 1: description of the event or situation we want to study.
Phase 2: analytical resolution - or separation of its components, aspects or dimensions.
Phase 3: abduction/theoretical redescription: interpretation and redescription of the components from hypothetical conceptual frameworks and theories about structures and relationships.
Phase 4: retroduction: based on the previous stage, searching for answers to the research questions.
Phase 5: comparison of the different theories and abstractions.
Phase 6: concretization and contextualization.

Danermark et al. (2019) indicate that their model should not be understood as a fixed template, but can be used flexibly. They recognize that the proposed stages may be intertwined and that researchers may have reasons for choosing to focus on some of them.

The simplified outline used in the data analysis and interpretation was as follows:

Stage 1: Description
Stage 2: Analytical resolution
Stage 3: Theoretical redescription (abduction) and retroduction
Stage 4: Concretization and contextualization

Stage 1: Description

Once the data collection through the electronic surveys and qualitative interviews was completed, the first step was to synthesize and describe the data. Specifically, on the one hand, the qualitative data from the electronic surveys and qualitative interviews were thematically coded and summaries of the data, illustrated with tables, were developed. On the other hand, descriptive statistical graphs were used to summarize and describe the quantitative data obtained from the electronic surveys.

Stage 2: Analytical resolution

In this stage, a deeper analysis of the qualitative data obtained in the interviews was carried out through a critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough's (2010) method of interdiscursive analysis, which made it possible to identify in the interviews a series of underlying discourses (shared and persistent ways of representing social realities and collective imaginaries) and social structures reflected or mentioned.

From this point on, the data from the electronic surveys and the interviews began to be used and presented together.

The combined exploration of the survey and interview data (already synthesized in the previous phase) made it possible to identify a series of incipient patterns, in relation to:

1. how the concepts of HR and SJ were understood with respect to social work in England and Spain.

2. the ideology and possible governmental interests regarding the role of HR and SJ in social work training in these two countries.

3. the mechanisms used to transmit the values and contents of HR and SJ to social work students in these two countries.

Based on the data obtained and the theoretical knowledge on the subject of the study developed up to that point of the research, it was possible to identify a series of broad areas of generative mechanisms with potential "explanatory power" (Danermark et al., 2019) on the similarities and differences found in England and Spain in relation to the previous points. Among these, three stood out and were selected for further study:

- The ideology underlying international social work ethical frameworks.
- The neoliberal ideology.
- Culture: a) the culture of the academic social work field; b) broader social cultural differences between England and Spain.

Stage 3: Theoretical redescription (abduction) and retroduction

Theoretical redescription involved interpreting the components or aspects of the object of study that had been identified from "conceptual frameworks and hypothesized theories about structures and relationships" (Danermark et al., 2019, p.129). Retroduction, on the other hand and as explained above, involved seeking explanations for the patterns of events encountered. Danermark et al. (2019) point out that, very often, the theory and concepts employed themselves provide adequate explanations, with theoretical redescription and retroduction being closely related. Therefore, during the interpretation of the research data, explanations from theory were sought first and only when adequate theoretical explanations could not be identified were new explanations of their own put forward, recognizing their provisional and speculative nature and making an effort to transparently indicate the reasoning processes that had led to them.

Stage 4: Concretization and contextualization

The "concretization and contextualization" stage is the final stage in Danermark et al.'s (2019, p.129) model for data analysis and interpretation and consists of "examining how different structures and mechanisms manifest themselves in concrete situations," studying how they interact with each other "under specific conditions."
Given the more global comparative nature of this research, the processes of contextualization and concretization were present at all stages of the research process, playing a central role.

Notes on research quality criteria

Pease (2010, p.111) states that for social work research to be able to "promote social change and social justice ... (according to the moral imperatives of our profession)," social workers must seriously analyze the epistemological and political assumptions involved in their research practices:

We need to be clear about our own beliefs regarding the phenomena we are investigating and our relationships to them ... [and] think about the implications of our theories of knowledge and our structural and discursive locations on the ethics and politics of how we do research (p.111).

For this, D'Cruz and Jones (2014) assert that we need to be well versed in the criteria for quality in the research paradigm in which we position ourselves and ensure that we are conducting ethically and methodologically sound research.

As explained, this research was characterized by being framed within the epistemology of critical realism and was based on a multimethod strategy for data collection, using research instruments traditionally aligned with positivist (electronic surveys) and constructivist (qualitative interviews) research paradigms. However, the primarily interpretive (or qualitative) nature of the knowledge about human rights and social justice in social work education that this research contributes can be highlighted. Therefore, although the quality criteria of quantitative research (internal and external validity, objectivity, etc.) gained importance and were applied in relation to various aspects of the design and use of electronic surveys, the research quality criteria of qualitative methodology and philosophy were paramount in guiding and justifying the quality of this research.

There is, however, much debate surrounding the most appropriate quality criteria for qualitative research (Bryman, 2016, p.387). The specific qualitative research quality criteria framework adopted was that proposed by Yardley (2000), focusing on the aspects of 1) context sensitivity, 2) engagement, rigor, transparency, and coherence, and 3) impact and significance. During the development of the study, the necessary steps were taken to ensure quality in relation to each of these aspects.

Research Results

The remaining sections of this article are then devoted to indicating some of the main findings of the research, the result of the joint interpretation of the data obtained in the surveys and interviews. It is important to note that in the original research report the results were presented extensively and systematically in two chapters or parts, following a structure marked by the four phases of the social research model presented above (which simplifies the work of Danermark et al., 2019). Part 1: Descriptive and analytical presentation of the data obtained in the surveys and interviews (stages 1 and 2). Part 2: Interpretation using existing theories and the author's hypotheses (abduction and retroduction respectively, stage 3). This interpretation was characterized by an emphasis on a continuous search for concretization and contextualization (stage 4). In the following sections of this article, for reasons of space and the need for synthesis, the results of all these stages will be integrated into a single discussion, focused on the research objectives. While it is important to keep in mind that this paper offers, necessarily, a very simplified version of the results, having to obviate many details about the contexts and in-depth discussions that would be relevant, it is expected to provide some interesting brushstrokes on the results and conclusions to which this research gave rise (full report of results in Martínez Herrero, 2017).

How the concepts of HR and SJ are understood in social work training in England and Spain

The first objective of the research was to study how these concepts are understood in social work training in England and Spain. In this regard, several differences were found between the two countries. The descriptive analysis of the data from the surveys and interviews (stages 1 and 2) showed that in England, social work teachers and students tended to understand HR and SJ as distinct concepts and separate areas of knowledge. Teachers in particular had a very legal view of human rights, focusing on civil and political or "first generation" rights, and understood the role of social workers with respect to human rights to be focused on fulfilling their legal responsibilities in this area. They referred to social services' legal responsibilities under the UK Human Rights Act 1998 (Human Rights Act, 1998), which incorporates into UK domestic law the "first generation" human rights established by the European Convention on Human Rights. When interpreting these data (stages 3 and 4), it was striking that the existence of a specific national law on human rights, which nevertheless contemplated only a part of

them (civil and political rights), seemed to have enhanced the development of a limited, legal and individualistic view of the concept of human rights and its implications for social work, criticized by key authors in this field of study of social work such as Ife (2016) or Sewpaul (2016).

Continuing with the descriptive analysis (phases 1 and 2), in Spain, on the other hand, social work teachers and students understood the concepts of HR and SJ in a more interrelated way, either as part of the same continuum or as separate but intrinsically related concepts. For them, human rights included, in addition to the "first generation" civil and political rights, the rest of the individual and collective rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Educators and students in Spain tended to consider that human rights responsibilities were shared by governments, civil society and the professions, with social work in particular having a major responsibility in line with the mission of the profession as set out in the global definition of social work.

In relation to social justice, a variety of views existed in England, from a limited and individualistic concept whereby promoting social justice would consist of "helping those on the margins of society" (The Centre for Social Justice, CSJ, 2015, p.3) without considering the structural dimensions of social problems, to more radical conceptions focused on tackling the "public causes of private suffering" (in the words of a teacher interviewed in England). However, the participants in Spain expressed understanding and commitment from the profession to the structural, activist and preventive dimensions of social justice development.

Ideology and possible governmental interests regarding human rights and SJ in social work education in England and Spain

The second objective of the research consisted of studying, from the perspective of critical theory, the ideology and possible governmental interests regarding the teaching of human rights and SJ in social work training in England and Spain. This objective takes us fully into the field of theoretical redescription, retroduction, concretization and contextualization of the research results (phases 3 and 4 of the methodological model for research from critical realism employed).

Several issues were identified in relation to contemporary and historical governmental interests in the social work profession in both countries. With respect to Spain, an important aspect to highlight was the deep and complex historical interrelationship

between social work and Catholicism (Méndez-Bonito, 2005). In the case of England, the existence of a historical trajectory in social work, marked by constant attempts by the central government to reform and control the profession, was emphasized (Bamford, 2015).

Regarding the analysis of the ideology(ies) that would be influencing the way of understanding and materializing, in social work training, the commitment to HR and SJ, two ideologies were identified as particularly influential in social work training in both countries: 1) the neoliberal ideology and 2) the ideology underlying international social work ethical frameworks and ethical codes of the profession worldwide (Banks, 2006). This second ideology was referred to in the study as the "ideology of (international) social work ethics".

In a critical realist analysis, these two ideologies can be considered deep generative mechanisms with the capacity to influence the way human rights and social justice are understood in social work, as well as the teaching practices of social work educators. Another area of generative mechanisms, which was identified as affecting how HR and SJ are understood and realized through teaching practices by mediating the effects of the above two ideologies, was cultural in nature: the prevailing norms, beliefs and values in the social work education systems in the two countries, along with broader national cultural patterns. Thus, the study argues for the idea that neoliberal and social work ethics ideology are contradictory (Higgins, 2015); as one gains acceptance in the profession, the other becomes less influential. The study provides explanations for the fact that neoliberal ideology has had a strong influence on social work training in England and a more moderate influence in Spain, while the influence of international social work ethic ideology has been and remains stronger in Spain than in England.

This research documented the fact that both the related literature (see Martínez Herrero, 2017) and the testimonies of the research participants reflected a great concern about the growing effects of neoliberalism on social work in England and about the increasingly oppressive nature of the profession in this country, whereas in Spain such concerns were reflected to a much lesser extent, and both teachers and students in Spain openly stressed the importance of resisting neoliberalism, seeing the profession as a key agent in the struggle for the advancement of human rights and SJ.

This revealed the importance, with the case of Spain as an example, of opposing the advance of neoliberalism in all areas of social work, through active engagement in the social work profession with an alternative ideology based on human rights and social justice and legitimized by the ethical codes of social work, as advocated during the last decades by the main global social work organizations and authors such as Dominelli, (2007), Ife (2016) or Sewpaul (2016).

Teaching practices and recommendations to transmit the values and contents of HR and SJ to social work students

The last two objectives of the research were: a) to study the mechanisms used to transmit the values and content of HR and SJ to social work students in England and Spain, and b) to develop a series of recommendations to help social work teachers integrate HR & SJ into their regular teaching.

A number of teaching practices were identified that, based on the experiences of the teachers and students participating in the research and the existing literature, would be of particular importance in teaching knowledge and values of HR and SJ to social work students, including in contexts increasingly marked by the challenges imposed by the influence of neoliberal ideology. To go into detail about each of these areas of teaching practice is not possible in this text, but we conclude by highlighting how they revolve around the importance of the following aspects:

1. To facilitate, through appropriate theoretical and legal frameworks, a deep, holistic and politically informed understanding of social problems.
2. To be aware of and teach about the history of the profession.
3. To teach about international social work and promote international collaboration, empathy and solidarity among students from different countries.
4. To include the experiences and perspectives of the users.
5. Support collective action and student activism.
6. Activities oriented to the struggle for social justice and human rights outside the classroom.
7. Teachers to act as role models for these values.
8. Create safe spaces (seminars, group activities, debates, supervision, etc.) for discussion, reflection and support for students.

These recommendations, considered and detailed in the research, would make it possible to address and confront social mechanisms and structures (including oppressive discourses and ideologies) contrary to human rights and social justice in all areas of social work.

Conclusion

Critical realism is a methodological approach to social research that is practically unexplored in social work research. However, there is great potential for synergy between the two perspectives. Critical realism and social work share an explicit commitment to social justice and seek to understand open, changing and complex social realities, the ultimate goal of both being to generate knowledge that enables the development of interventions capable of modifying problematic or oppressive social realities.

Subject to its own criteria of research quality, and not without its own limitations and difficulties (aspects discussed in this text), critical realism offers an alternative methodological approach to positivist research, allowing the study of social realities from a more holistic, flexible and speculative perspective that, as has been argued, is worth exploring in the field of social work.

The potential of critical realism acquires special relevance in the face of situations and research questions that, due to their complexity, do not fit with a methodology based on the exploration of research hypotheses (necessarily reductionist) and on the measurement, control and/or manipulation of variables. This article has offered a practical example of the use of critical realism in a study of a complex nature on human rights and social justice in social work training in Spain and England, together with an introduction to the foundations and methodology of this approach to social research. It is, however, content that is expected to be of interest and of use to social work research in other countries and contexts, particularly those of predominantly Spanish-speaking countries.

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ARTICLE

Critical research in critical times: actors, authorship and authority in the production of knowledge in Social Work

Investigación crítica en tiempos críticos: actoras, autorías y autoridad en la producción de conocimiento en Trabajo Social

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Abstract

This article analyzes and discusses the position of researchers in critical times, characterized by processes of societal transformation and research efforts aimed at shedding light on sensitive topics such as those that emerge in these contexts such as political violence, pandemics, and transformation processes. To do this, we present the core elements of a research current known as critical qualitative

Keywords: *knowledge production; critical qualitative inquiry; critical times; research authorships*

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research, its connections with social work, and its debates around knowledge production. We then analyze three approaches to reflection on female actors and authorships, each of which activates a different empirical research experience. This is done to illustrate the elements that we wish to analyze critically and challenge within the context of current research, focusing on debates on knowledge generation and the role of researchers in this process. The results presented in this article indicate that, in critical times, it is necessary to strengthen reflective strategies for discussing these matters, deemed to be "sensitive" to research and to researchers, develop devices that not only visibilize the voices of the participants of each study, but which also highlight their singular contributions to knowledge production, and generate resistance strategies and efforts to democratize access to the products of social work research.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza y discute la posición de las/los investigadores en tiempos críticos, haciendo referencia a aquellos períodos caracterizados por procesos de transformación societal y por un quehacer investigativo que aborda temáticas sensibles, como las que surgen en contextos de violencia política, pandemia y transformación. Para ello se exponen los elementos centrales de una corriente investigativa denominada investigación cualitativa crítica, los vínculos de esta con el trabajo social crítico y sus debates en torno a la producción de conocimiento en temas sensibles. Posteriormente se analizan tres encuadres para situar la reflexión acerca de las actorías, autorías y autoridad; cada uno de ellos activa distintas experiencias investigativas empíricas con el propósito de ilustrar los elementos que se ponen en cuestión en el contexto de la investigación actual, tomando como foco los debates en torno a generación de conocimiento y el papel de las/los investigadores en este proceso. Los resultados de este artículo nos indican que en tiempos críticos se precisa potenciar estrategias reflexivas para la discusión de asuntos considerados "sensibles" para la investigación y para las/los investigadores. Esto implica desarrollar dispositivos para visibilizar no solo las voces de las/los participantes de los trabajos investigativos, sino de sus contribuciones singulares a la producción de conocimiento, generando estrategias de resistencia y democratización de acceso a los productos que se derivan de las investigaciones en Trabajo Social. En este sentido, desarrollar investigación crítica en contextos neoliberales implica comenzar a plantearse algunas de estas cuestiones y tomar decisiones al respecto, acerca del trabajo académico que se espera realizar y las tensiones que esto supone.

Palabras Clave: *producción de conocimiento; investigación cualitativa crítica; tiempos críticos; autorías investigativas*

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Introduction

This article discusses and analyzes the issue of actors, authorship and narrative authority in qualitative research, specifically in studies that use the biographical approach as a theoretical-methodological research perspective. These aspects are little considered or are poorly understood when defining the intellectual property of the products derived from research with people in general and in the biographical approach in particular, where life stories, narratives or personal accounts are constructed.

To develop this debate, some of the approaches developed together with Cornejo and Zapata (2019) on sensitive issues in research are taken up again and the role of the participants in the research processes that include from the delimitation of the study topics, the design decisions to what, who and how the results of the work are presented. Sensitive issues in research include dilemmas that arise in the course of research processes, but also contextual elements that stress the research itself, hence the emphasis in this article, regarding research in critical times (Rubilar et al., 2020) and the demands of knowledge production in contexts that question the ways of doing research and make new demands on researchers.

The reflexivity on the topics under investigation or the role acquired by the participants in the research process is an issue that is usually limited to questions on ethics or research protocols, but in this article it is considered a sensitive issue given the relevance acquired today by the question of authorship in the indicators of academic productivity and in the parameters with which the production of knowledge is measured in neoliberal contexts, and which has not ceased to be valid in the current political and health crisis.

What do we do with what we research? With whom do we write? For whom do we publish? Who is the author of these materials? How are these products returned to the participants? These are some of the questions that have arisen in the development of a longitudinal study that has constructed more than 70 biographical testimonies of social workers and whose results essentially account for the methodological process of studying their trajectories in global terms (Rubilar, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2017). From this study emerges the debate on the authorship of these biographical materials and the questioning of the role in this process of the person who provided their testimony, the team that conducted the interviews, the responsible researcher and/or the co-researcher team, the agencies that finance them, the technical staff in charge of transcribing and coding the interview material.

This article was developed in parallel to a decision-making process on the format of publishing a book with some of the research testimonies of social workers; therefore, it collects theoretically and conceptually the notion of critical research in critical times (Rubilar et al., 2020), an expression that encompasses the position of knowledge production in academic contexts where logics, measurement systems and ways of doing research are disputed under the influence of the neoliberal university, generally little sensitive to the context and the requirements that arise from the participants.

In order to develop this debate, some theoretical contributions of Critical Qualitative Inquiry and its links with Critical Social Work are followed, to later dwell on the issue of actors, authorship and authorities in biographical research. Special attention is paid to the way these issues are approached and their tensions with the logics of appropriation and publication present in current research trends, which individualize authors and researchers and make other participants invisible, stripping them of their authorship.

In order to analyze these aspects, we have taken our own research experiences and those of others, where we have participated as methodological support, with the purpose of empirically illustrating some points of this debate. Therefore, this article intends to review the research practice from the guidelines of the biographical approach and the role played by authorship within it.

Theoretical Background: Critical Qualitative Inquiry & Critical Social Work

Qualitative research is a current that has several exponents, the most widespread and taught in Social Work research training in Chile being Valles (1996), Flick (1998) and lately Creswell (2009, 2015) regarding his proposals on mixed research designs (Veliz, 2021). However, in this article we focus on the contributions of Denzin (2002, 2015, 2017) and his collaborations with Giardina (2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2018) and Lincoln (1994, 2008), followed by Lincoln (2010), Lincoln and Cannella (2004), Lincoln and Guba (2009), Spry (2016), Cannella (2015), Pelias (2015) and Tilley (2019) for the purpose of critical qualitative research, including some exponents of Critical Social Work such as Garrett (2018), Gray and Webb (2020) and Webb (2019).

We wanted to emphasize Critical Qualitative Inquiry, since this current dialogues with the debates on knowledge production in critical times, promoting transformations in the way of thinking and doing research in contexts of crisis marked by the neoliberal influx.

In a contribution by Denzin for the Journal Qualitative Inquiry, he pointed precisely to this aspect when he mentioned:

> *"Recent decades have seen a resurgence of interest in interpretive methods in the study of culture, biography, and collective human life. At the heart of this view has been the argument that societies, cultures, and expressions of human experience can be read as social text (...) Thus, questions have arisen concerning how texts are "authored" read and interpreted (Derrida, 1981). How lives, authors, societies and cultures enter into interpretive texts is today a highly debated topic (Geertz, 1968)." (Denzin, 2017, p.83)*

The authored, which in this article we have chosen to call authorship, includes a debate on the forms of contemporary knowledge production and the appropriation of this by researchers, stressing a central dimension of qualitative research, which is interested, among other aspects, in the lives of people, their behaviors, their interactions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), while at the same time inscribing this interest in a debate on legitimate/valid forms of knowledge production in schemes of cognitive capitalism. This perspective clearly collides with the way of understanding the indicators of academic productivity and research production in neoliberal contexts.

In this sense, critical qualitative research changes the research process, interrogates its own work (Rubilar, 2013), reflects on the ethical and political scope of the knowledge generated, while interpreting its results and findings in the light of the contexts in which it is inscribed. It emphasizes the interrelationships that occur between research subjects and the researched, hence the relevance of the actors who are or are not part of the research processes. Thus, the critical nature of this type of approach implies a review of aspects not considered in other approaches, or approaching them from other positions that stress them. In the words of Becerra:

> *"There is a strong critique of this type of qualitative research, since according to some it follows an extractivist logic, which means that research is reduced to positive procedural methods of data extraction that are interpreted by predefined constructs, which aligns with Cartesian duality and neoliberal values about how one should know in modernity (Kuntz, 2015a, 2015b) (....) The critical qualitative perspective presents a social justice-based view of how research helps to reveal our society's problems and solve them (Denzin, 2015)." (Becerra, 2020, p.155)*

Hence some of its connections with the research concerns of Critical Social Work and the themes and lines of research that are developed within this current of the discipline,

which propose and address issues that impact relationships between subjects, contexts and structures, questioning the categories assumed as universal truths, and establishing a new mode of interaction, which in the words of Denzin (2015) implies an orientation to change and a greater awareness of power relations in the processes of production and reproduction of knowledge.

Recently Webb (2020), in The Routledge Handbook of Critical Social Work, also emphasized these elements and their linkages to feminist, decolonial, anti-oppressive and anti-racist studies. These approaches have been previously worked on in Social Work research by Dominelli and McLeod (1982) and Healy (2000); today they are picked up in Garrett (2018), as well as Gray and Webb (2020), whose work has recently been translated into Spanish. In a complementary way Levy (2014), Cannella et al. (2015) and Kuntz (2015), have advanced on these issues regarding the academy and its role in critical research.

In Chile, the works of Muñoz-Arce (2018), Muñoz-Arce et al. (2021) and Zapata-Sepúlveda (2021), who address among their questions some of these reflections around the production of knowledge in neoliberal contexts, academic extractivism and research reflexivity, could be linked to this current of research.

From critical perspectives, it is essential to assume an approach contrary to extractivism, hence the sensitive nature of the research conducted. In this framework, "sensitive topics" have been called those issues that, given the nature of what is being examined, require research processes in which each stage must be carefully designed and implemented, so that the methods used in the design, production, analysis and generation of results take into account the sensitive nature of the research topic and the power relations with the different actors involved in the research process.

Researchers have considered sensitive issues as a characteristic of the research process (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008). Fahie (2014) proposes to organize this field of inquiry into two main dimensions: i) its impact on the actors involved in the research process; and ii) the way in which researchers reflect on how research is conducted and how the decisions they make are manifested in the research processes and their results.

Adams (2008) and Ellis (2007, 2009) call for constant vigilance about ethical issues in research, given that this is a place where we will never know the results of our decisions a priori and where new questions constantly arise. As has happened with the

longitudinal study at the basis of this paper, as well as in other research illustrated in this paper.

This was what we did in a collaborative publication together with Cornejo, et al. (2019). On that occasion we focused on the effects that research has on the participants of qualitative studies. One of the conclusions of that article was to evidence the need to develop collaborative practices of written production, not only as a way to increase the performance of individual publications, -thus the criticism of the neoliberal logic in the current academy-, but also as an exercise of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance about the research already conducted.

From a biographical perspective, the actors involved are both the researchers and their teams or collaborators, including the subjects who contribute with their stories or narratives to the research; it is about the role of the latter that we reflect on in this article, providing elements of analysis about their inclusion or not in the research products, including the publications that derive from it and the possibility or right they have to dispute the authorship of those materials they consider their own.

Malacrida (2007) shows how the topics studied and the research activities carried out can affect all participants emotionally. She draws attention to the effects that an emotionally demanding project can have on the values and visions of the researchers, especially when dealing with life histories or biographical materials. The biographical approach followed in the elaboration of these testimonies emphasizes the importance of knowing and recognizing the historical-biographical coordinates in which each researcher is located (Rubilar 2013 and 2017) and the generational moment to which the study belongs. Reflexivity and self-awareness in the research process become a key dimension of the analysis, being present in the multiple phases of the research, including, by the way, the moment of making the results public.

Thus, questioning the meaning and form of research requires researchers to be aware of their position as researchers and how they approach the knowledge produced. Kavle (2011) uses the metaphor of mining and the journey to illustrate the extractivist currents and the postmodern conception of knowledge when constructing knowledge from the narratives of the subjects. This theoretical/epistemological position on the mode of knowledge production is related to the way in which the results of this process come to light, sometimes as author, sometimes as editor, sometimes as mediator.

These dimensions are the ones we are interested in approaching from three frames:

First frame: Actor - What do we do with the research? Who do we write for?

Writing is part of academic work and one of the various ways of disseminating the results of the research and studies carried out. In the academic field, research results are made public in written productions such as reports, institutional reports, books and academic articles, as well as in conferences, presentations at congresses and other formats of oral transmission.

In the written format, journal articles appear as the main means of presenting results and research. Nogués and Cabrera (2016) called it "the tyranny of the paper" and Muñoz-Arce (2018) picks it up in her writing as one of the exponents of neoliberal reason, paraphrasing Harvey (2001):

> *"Along these lines, and consistent with the neoliberal ethos, the productivity of researchers is measured in terms of their ability to publish their research results in high impact journals (indexed in Web of Science or Scopus, for which preferential scores are assigned)." (Muñoz-Arce, 2018, p.36)*

The rate of publications/yearly publications, the type of journal where they are published, the order of authors in the publication and the citation index are parameters with which the production of knowledge and the academic trajectory in universities and research centers are measured. In this sense, consolidating an academic and research career in neoliberal university contexts such as ours implies starting to raise some of these issues and making decisions about them, about the academic work expected to be done and the tensions that this entails, hence the relationship with researching in critical times.

Fardella et al. (2015) raised some of these issues in their article about the identity of academics. Under the title of identity and commitment is located a fragment of an interview with a Social Worker who comments:

> *"(...) for me it has to do with that, with the fact that one has more social and political work, in terms of how you contribute to form the new generation of professionals for your country." (Fardella et al., 2015, p. 1630)*

Some ethical issues of academic work are also addressed in this article, which has continuity in the later approaches of Sisto (2017) and Fardella et al. (2017, 2020), who discuss the neoliberal university financing schemes in a very similar perspective to that raised by Zapata-Sepúlveda (2021). In the case of Chile, universities consider in their financing schemes a basal fund for performance, which is financed based on the accreditation of higher education institutions and the scientific publications produced.

The resources from publications are related to the indexing systems of scientific production. Muñoz-Arce et al. (2021) show the insertion of Social Work in this new knowledge economy marked by logics of cognitive capitalism:

> *"The payment that must be made to access these publications -indexed in WOS and some SCOPUS- ranges from USD 40.00 (for a 24-hour access to a specific article) to USD 345.00 (for a one-month access to an issue of a journal). This situation, in addition to reproducing the elitist character of knowledge production in social work, reinforces the geopolitical reproduction of valid knowledge - which is constructed by those who can access it and question it from its own codes". (Muñoz-Arce et al., 2021, p.154)*

Simburguer and Neary (2016) and Simburguer (2020) have also critically analyzed these issues for the Chilean context, including in their latest approaches the question, for whom do we write? Undoubtedly, in the academic field we write to inform and report the results of research and to publicize the fulfillment of the proposed objectives; we also write because it is often a requirement of the agencies that finance the projects and a funding mechanism, since the universities alleviate resources by this means, which paradoxically allows us to continue developing the research work.

In other words, the knowledge produced is published at the same time as certain logics that characterize cognitive capitalism are reproduced, a situation that shows the tensions of research in critical times, and hence the importance of paying attention to certain practices and developing discussions about research publication policies with public funding. Opting for open access publications, or paying for them when journals do not have open access, is part of some of the issues that I have begun to discuss as a practice in my own career, collaborating in publications with other authors who also consider

this option, as has happened, for example, with the works published with Galaz and Rubilar (2019), or with Rubilar, Galaz and Labrenz (2020, 2021), and hence the idea of reviewing the standards for publications that are generated in publicly funded research.

Second frame: Authorship - With whom do we write? Who is the author of the research products?

This point reflects on the incorporation of other non-academic authors in the publications, which leads to a debate on the role of the participants and their disjunctions at the moment of thinking about the publication of the results of the research work.

One way to increase the academic productivity of researchers in countries of cognitive capitalism, with high levels of demand and funding systems associated with individual productivity, is to publish together with other researchers and thus multiply the acceptance rates of articles from all participants. This is certainly an effective strategy, which also has an impact on citation rates, since cross-referencing systems are generated.

When one looks at one's own career in autobiographical terms, I would say that I do not tend to publish very much, at least not by the standards expected in relation to my category (position) or academic reputation. However, my publication rate is at a sufficient level, with some highs or stronger points depending on the years.

The longitudinal study shows that the beginning of the trajectory is marked by individual publications, usually associated with postgraduate completion work (magister and doctorate). The first collective publications or collaborations are generally derived from research projects or studies with internal funding, and then from more competitive funds that include in their evaluation standards the question of publication and academic productivity metrics, including on several occasions precise indications on the type of indexing of the articles.

This sequence is not linear, there are combined schemes, which is what other Social Work researchers have also experienced when publishing articles: in national and international journals; in mainstream and professional journals; in high impact indexed and non-indexed journals; in disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals, where a diversity of publication types and audiences is observed.

Less frequent is the publication with research participants or members of the research team who do not occupy the role of researchers, and therefore do not have the expected levels of productivity. In this case the experiences are less frequent and are limited to formative contexts with undergraduate and graduate students.

In 2015 I published an article with a student. Some colleagues criticized me because I left him as first author, when for me it was quite obvious since the field work had been developed mainly by him and the study was financed with a fund for the promotion of undergraduate student research. Now in 2021 we are finalizing a collective publication that involves a broad group of undergraduate and graduate students; this time the definition of authorship was more explicit, as well as the order of the authors in the document.

Including students in the publications at an early stage not only has benefits for them, but also allows for breaking down some myths about the exclusivity of these areas and the elite conception attributed to the process of writing and publishing. In the cases mentioned in the previous note, these are externally refereed journals and, therefore, blind peer review is also a way of democratizing the production of knowledge. This is an act and a political gesture, which is not so frequently observed in academic spaces where knowledge production circulates, since in general the publication is left in the hands of more established or career actors, leaving for new or initial researchers tasks of dissemination of results to the general public.

The inclusion of undergraduate students, with no previous experience in this field, does not seem to be a widespread experience in the research practices of other disciplines related to social work. Cornejo, et al. (2011) have developed a more systematic practice in this area, although limited to doctoral students.

To close this framework, other experiences of publishing research results with students of the intermediate training cycle in the framework of R&D research initiatives are mentioned for illustration, such as Milla and Rubilar (2015), Rubilar et al. (2020) and lately with students of various training levels, which implies possibilities of intergenerational dialogue not previously considered (Valenzuela et al., 2019).

What is of interest here is to question the fact that academics are authors of student

publications only because they have guided part or all of their research work. In the examples illustrated in the previous paragraph, it is rather the opposite, a joint production that is decided and articulated in this way, including the decision of the position of the authors in the text, without it necessarily being a requirement or a requirement of work in the framework of a formative process or degree term.

Third frame: Authority and positions - Who can talk about research?

In studies that develop or address issues associated with biographical studies, including the participants of the research is not a very recurrent practice either, and they are usually limited to the acknowledgements or comments in the footnotes of the published text. Making the authors and actors of the research visible then becomes a sensitive issue, susceptible to particular analysis and discussion. In this sense there is a political issue at hand, if one follows the guidelines of the biographical approach that is promoted as a theoretical-methodological approach that guides the research work (Bertaux, 1999 and 2005; Rubilar 2017).

With Manés, Chachak and Merino (2021) we extensively debated this point before the definition of the final format of the book Vejeces y Géneros. This book published in October 2021 included the authorship of the interviewees who acted as informants in the reconstruction of memories of resistance, struggles and collective conquests of LGTB communities in Argentina. The book gathers in total fourteen biographical testimonies produced through qualitative interviews (Kvale, 2011); these testimonies that are developed under the denomination of stories that deserve to be told, were edited, corrected and reorganized following Allport's guidelines and the proposal of singular analysis sustained in Rubilar (2015).

In total, this publication makes visible as authors about thirty people, including both academics responsible for the project, research assistants and the people participating in the study. Following Beverley's tradition of constructing testimonies, this book, which reports the results of this study, highlights that:

> *"the memory of the past is circumstantial, relative, perishable, dependent on practice" (Beverley, 2012, p.111) so that it is not the search for the definitive truth that mobilizes us, since it does not exist. Knowledge allows us to access different forms of truth, and in this instance it is necessary to inquire into that which has not been addressed." (Manés et al., 2021, p.25).*

It is Beverley himself, in his original publication of 1994, who debates the problem of narrative authority, asking: can the subaltern speak for himself? Does he need the mediation of another? In this regard he points out that it: "... invariably implies that the narrator is no longer in the situation of marginality and subalternity that his narrative describes, but has now reached, precisely, the cultural condition of an author" (Beverley, 2013 p.346). Otherness, in this case, is an extension of that voice and not a replacement or erasure of its authorship (Rubilar, 2013).

A decade earlier, Spivak (1988) had developed a similar argument by saying that the subaltern, lacking enunciation space cannot speak, or at least his own voice cannot be appropriated, but is impostured by another, hence the disputes of narrative authority that we want to put in debate, also picking up the more contemporary contributions of Witkin (2002) and Spry (2016), in dialogue with the approaches of Roscoe (2019) and Larsson (2019) on the use of narrative perspectives in Critical Social Work.

In recent decades, in Chile and worldwide, we have witnessed demands and social movements that seek to make visible those voices silenced in subalternized and unrecognized identities, in terms of their gender identities, racialized expressions or ageism, as happens with children, adolescents and also the elderly.

Allowing subjects to speak in the first person is an experience also activated by other researchers. Callon (1999) highlights the role of ordinary citizens in the production of knowledge and Galinsky (1999) rescues the perspective of children in the very processes that affect them. Some years later, Saracostti et al. (2015) collected this and other publications to account for children's right to participate in research activities and how children have been approached in scientific and academic activities. Beyond ethical regulations and research protocols, it highlights that:

> *"The new sociology of childhood (Childhood Studies) argues that children and adolescents have the capacity to express themselves and are insightful observers of their lives (...) The conduct of social research from the notion of child protagonism is challenged to make a shift from previous studies." (Saracostti, et al., 2015, p. 239).*

Girls, children, young people, the elderly, people in contexts of extreme poverty or communities excluded from the recognition of their political and social rights also emerge today demanding recognition of the authorship of their productions and products

generated by research. This is made explicit by Rain (2020) with regard to women belonging to native peoples in Chile and cultural studies, making adjustments to the protocols in vogue in their research:

> *"The ethics situated in context invited us to respect the forms that professional Mapuche women adopt to relate socially, based on Mapuche practices. This implied respecting the times and rhythms of the Mapuche culture, where the establishment of trusting relationships between us as researchers and the interviewees was key. For historical reasons of the memories of dispossession (land theft by means of deceitful signatures), the request for informed consent signatures from the women was omitted. Instead, acceptance of the recording of conversations was preferred." (Rain, 2020, p.4).*

The ethical perspectives of biographical research also include the debate about authorship, the order of authors in the publications and, of course, the intellectual property of the products generated from the biographical meetings or interviews held with the participants.

The biographical approach makes it possible to capture the micro-social perspective through interviews with the protagonists, contextualizing it historically based on their own accounts (Sautu, 1998). Therefore, it is possible to affirm that biographical reconstruction is characterized by the existence of a self who is the protagonist of the events or processes analyzed in the study, which take place in historical-political and social contexts, and by the existence of turning points that signal the presence of changes or mark remarkable aspects of the course of the social and personal life of these subjects. Hence the idea of the researcher as a traveler proposed by Kvale (2011), taking into account that the task of biographical research assumes and supports the task of reconstructing contexts, without making invisible a particular becoming or the convergence of an individual life to a historicizing pretension (Argüello-Parra, 2012), hence the relevance of visualizing the authorship of the participants.

To conclude

In this article we have emphasized critical qualitative research, illustrating some research experiences in Social Work that could be ascribed to this current; however, we are aware of the possibility of approaching this debate also in a transdisciplinary way, together with the actors that participate in the production of knowledge in all its stages or phases. This is especially relevant if we consider the keys of recognition and the inversion of subalternity proposed by Spivak (1988).

Spivak's approach dialogues with Spry's proposals on the consideration of the other in the research processes and the performances that this generates in the research practice itself and the effects that derive from it. The above allows us to knot the three axes of analysis or positions that have been used to develop this article, and that interpellate the protagonism of the research participants, as actor, author and authority.

The results of this article indicate that in critical times it is necessary to strengthen reflexive strategies for the discussion of these issues, considered "sensitive" for research and for researchers, to develop devices to make visible not only the voices of the participants of the research work, but also their unique contributions to the production of knowledge, and to generate strategies of resistance and democratization of access to the products derived from research in Social Work.

Hence the invitation to review the ways in which knowledge is produced, disseminated and legitimized, to disseminate little known and unexplored research practices that are part of the research process and the products constructed to people less accustomed to participate in this type of dynamics. Making their voice visible, but above all recognizing their substantive contribution to the generation of knowledge is undoubtedly a challenge and an ethical-political imperative in these times of social transformation for those who are part of the current of Critical Social Work.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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TRANSLATIONS

Expressions of pragmatism in Social Work: Preliminary reflections[1]

Expresiones del pragmatismo en el Trabajo Social: reflexiones preliminares[1]

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Abstract

The premise from which this article starts is the necessary critical review of the foundations that cross the historical trajectory of Social Service and establish a line of continuity between its conservative base and the intention of rupture, even interfering in it. A critical analysis is made of the influence of pragmatism in the Social Service which, as an ideal representation of the bourgeois world, influences the profession from the practical-professional, theoretical and ideopolitical point of view, constituting a challenge to be faced by all segments of the category. It is concluded that without the critical reading of the foundations of pragmatism it will not be possible to advance in the appropriation of Marx's social theory, since there has been a "pragmatic invasion in Marxism".

Keywords:
social service; expressions; conservatism; pragmatism; marxism

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Resumen

Este artículo plantea que es necesaria una revisión crítica de los fundamentos que atraviesan la trayectoria histórica del Trabajo Social que establecen una línea de continuidad entre su base conservadora y la intención de ruptura, incluso interfiriendo en ella. Se hace un análisis crítico de la influencia del pragmatismo en el Trabajo Social que, como representación ideal del mundo burgués, influye en la profesión desde el punto de vista práctico-profesional, teórico e ideopolítico, constituyendo un reto al que deben enfrentarse todos los segmentos de la categoría. Se concluye que sin la lectura crítica de los fundamentos del pragmatismo no se podrá avanzar en la apropiación de la teoría social de Marx, puesto que se ha producido una "invasión pragmática en el marxismo".

Palabras Clave:
trabajo social; expresiones; el conservadurismo; pragmatismo; marxismo

We only think when we face a problem.
Learn? Certainly, but, first, to live and learn by life, in life.

John Dewey[3]

Introducción

The intervening nature of Social Work is recognized and sanctioned as Social Work has inserted itself into the realm of the social and technical division of labor as an intervening and institutionalized profession for responding to various expressions of the so-called "social question"[4], whose foundations, hidden by the very immediacy of reality, are found in the economy and politics. This intervening status confers to Social Work a realm for intervention that is conditioned by the structural components of everyday life and by its relationship with the social question, which in appearance takes place in a direct and immediate manner, but is mediated by social policies. These policies confer to the

[3] This epigraph is intended to express the spirit of pragmatism, indicating its identification with a type of thinking that became hegemonic in the bourgeois world.

[4] The social question, an essential element of capitalist social relations, is an expression of a new dynamic of poverty that appeared in the 19th century, no longer produced by need, but by abundance. The constitution of the "social question" under capitalism is a designation of conservative thinking that indicates processes resulting from a given type of exploitation of labor by capital, and refers to the rise of the working class and the threat that it represents to the bourgeois order as it comes to demand its recognition as a class. Therefore, the social question is linked to the conflict between capital and labor and for its public recognition, requires an organized working class. The development of capitalist society, by producing the "social question", produces the socio-historical conditions that require that it be addressed by social policies, allowing the creation of a socio-occupational space for the social worker as the executor of these policies.

profession a defined configuration and shapes and institutes mediations and systems of mediations that establish a certain type of intervention in the so-called "social question".

It is in this framework that pragmatism, as an ideal representation of the immediacy of the bourgeois world, finds the most suitable ground for influencing the profession from practical, professional, theoretical and ideological-political perspectives. This is because pragmatism maintains that the meaning of social things, processes and practices resides in these things themselves and particularly influences social and professional interventions. It affects not only professions and social workers, but the social subjects of the bourgeois world and the intervening professions as a whole. This article problematizes the expressions of pragmatism in Social Work, based on two interlinking focuses.

The first concerns the nature of the profession, its realm of professional intervention, demands and responses; the second is based on the incorporation of a certain rationality that is constituted to consider the real in its immediacy and in a form of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice. This rationality not only guides the professional representations and self-representations but also influences the appropriation that social workers make of social theories, in particular Marxism, while they "often become confused with it". Because the social workers are personally involved, the affirmation of the influence of pragmatism in two aspects simply serves the didactic purpose of demonstrating some particularities that pertain more to one given focus than another.

Practical and professional pragmatism

If we consider the effective insertion of the social worker in the social and technical division of labor, we see that the professional is specialized in responding to demands that require an immediate solution to problems, especially those that place pressure on and threaten the social order. Capitalist society, whose contradictions are converted into individual conflicts, and can threaten the social order, is dominated by what positivist theories denominate as anomie, which creates the need for professions that can temporize the critical situations that threaten social reproduction. Social Work appears as one of the professions called upon to find consensus for the supposed individual conflicts, to correct "deviant" and lawless behavior and take action in tense situations that threaten and place the social order at "risk". Conceived as a technique for providing help[5], for administrating conflicts or as a technology for resolving problems, the professi[5] on is required to provide immediate results that alter some variables of the social context

[5] Especially help in the psycho-social field.

of the everyday life in which the subjects who are the receptors of its professional action are inserted. Thus, beyond the determination imposed by the division of labor, the ontological ground on which the professional exercise is undertaken is daily life.

Everyday life as a space for the realization of the reproduction of individualities and of sociability is the special location for Social Work. The social worker not only has a professional everyday life, but also acts in the everyday life of other subjects, usually seeking their immediate modification. This is because "everyday life always develops and refers to the inmediate environment" (Heller, 1994, p. 25). In the realm of daily life, immediatism, spontaneity, and the point of view of common consciousness predominate. Action and thought are organized to respond to immediate demands, from the perspective of not risking the very survival of the subject and, consequently, his or her social reproduction. Given the objective demands of the concrete world, "everyone must acquire an 'average' capacity, must have a 'minimum' of practical capacity in the most important things, without which it is impossible to live" (Heller, 1994, p. 22, emphasis by the author). In this space, "the individual appropriates [...] the meaning (the function) of the generic objectivations em-si practically disregarding 'the why of the function', reacting to it as it is and without questioning what its genesis is" (Heller, 1994, p. 293-294, emphasis ours). In this way, in daily life, the subject realises the "'immediate' unit of thought and action," because

> *[...] the entire category of action and of thought are manifest and function 'exclusively' while it is essential for the simple continuation of daily life, normally, 'to not manifest itself with special depth, scope or intensity'* (Heller, 1989, p. 31, emphasis by the author).

From this perspective, we can consider that the pragmatic attitude is a characteristic specific to the immediate unity between theory and praxis. The suppression of the theoretical and ideological-political mediations specific to the grasping of reality in the immediacy of daily life, leads to an appropriation of reality as lacking in mediations. The abstraction of the mediations as a result of an apprehension of reality in its immediacy is the procedure of common consciousness, specific to everyday life, which does not question the genesis and does not reach the apprehension of the fundamentals[6].

Everyday life is characterized as the space in which common consciousness is realized, which requires that individuals be flexible and adapt to the world around them:

[6] In this respect, we indicate the interesting text of Coelho (2009). See also the master's dissertation by Brandão (2010).

> *[...] the point of view of common consciousness coincides, in this aspect, with capitalist production and with that of the bourgeois economists. For common consciousness the practice is the productive, and productive, in turn from the perspective of this capitalist production, is what produces new value or surplus value (Vázquez, 2007, p. 33).*

This is what happens with thinking which is constituted from everyday life. It acquires the content expressed in and by the determinations present in daily life, at the same time as it constitutes the content needed for the resolution of the situations of everyday life, while in daily life the correct is also true[7]. Therefore, the attitude of everyday life is absolutely pragmatic (Vázquez, 2007). As Heller affirms (1994, p. 102, emphasis by the author), everyday thinking receives the very characteristics of everyday life:

> *[...] in part because the heterogeneous forms of activity must be realized in reciprocal concomitancy and in a relatively brief time, and in part because these heterogeneous forms of activity are 'diverse' in different epochs and in various societies or social levels, for which reason 'a distinct knowledge' is needed in each case to appropriate from them and realize them. 'The general structure of daily thinking', is derived from the former and 'the concrete content of daily thinking', is derived from the later.*

We insist that everyday thinking, by acquiring the concrete content from concrete situations, is capable of providing concrete responses to these situations, to guarantee the survival of the subject. However, this does not signify any fatalism in Agnes Heller's approach when she considers that everyday life confines and conditions men to give only one type of response: an instrumental response. It is no coincidence that this is a space propitious to alienation, although it contains possibilities for promoting "disalienation", as we will argue below.

As part of the survival of the subject, the intervention in everyday life not only requires an adaptation, but must also allow the subject to make a self-transformation. In other words, everyday life, although it is constituted in a space in which common consciousness is realized, is also a space in which the contradiction, which is inherent to the social reality, is expressed:

[7] We can explain: this does not mean that common thought does not reflect the objects, but does so in their phenomenality. In this condition, the consciousness that reflects the phenomena does not do so to grasp the nooúmenon (the essence of the object) in the same way that the the object is not converted into a concrete thought, and is certainly not reflected in a critical-transformative perspective.

To the degree that man seeks to adapt to the world, he is transformed during this process, because he acquires abilities, confronts fears, overcomes obstacles etc., and, in addition, he has the opportunity to assist other men who live in this same process through education and guidance, given that he is seen as 'representative of that world in which others are born' (Heller, 1994, p. 24, emphasis by the author).

Although it is the space for individual reproduction, everyday life is the mediation necessary for the reproduction of the generic nature of man, for the realization of his generic-human dimension. Without everyday life there is no social reproduction. Heller highlights (1994, p. 25): "Everyday life conducts the mediation for the non-everyday and is the school that prepares for it." With this affirmation, we see that everyday life presumes a relationship with the conscious generic activities, which allow subjects to transcend their individual-particularity and attain their generic humanity. This is the basic material presented by the determinations of everyday life that construct a way of thinking and acting in this everyday life, but which go beyond and extend beyond it. It involves a rationality not only invading but also shaping other spheres of life of the bourgeois social being: artistic activity, theoretical elaboration, the sphere of politics, of law, of religion and others.

The incorporation of a certain rationality, which is constituted to consider reality in its immediacy and in a form of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice, invades both the professional representations and self-representations and has repercussions on the appropriation that the professional makes of theories, in particular, Marxism. In this way, we can affirm that pragmatism assaults Marxism or, using a quite fertile idea, there is an "invasion"[8] of pragmatism in Marxism.

Theoretical and ideological-political pragmatism

Like any perspective on man and the world, pragmatism constitutes a type of thinking that sustains everyday praxis, given that it incorporates a certain rationality that consists of the form of thinking about reality in its immediatism and acting upon it. This leads to a certain form of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice, influencing the appropriation that social workers make of social theories, in particular, Marxism, and often identifying themselves with it.

[8] According to Quiroga (1991).

An analysis of the trajectory of the profession and its relationship with "theories" allows for affirming that, in Social Work, pragmatism became a trend whose theoretical orientation is more common than we may suppose, influencing both the professionals in the academy as well as those involved in the execution, planning and evaluation of social policies. We find that pragmatism is responsible for the deep empiricism that the profession nurtures and for a certain way of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice[9].

In this approach, as in Social Work, there is an exaggerated emphasis on practice, which is identified as pure experience, and on habits and customs that are understood to be true if successful and if they serve the immediate resolution of problems. Pragmatism is also responsible for the deep disdain that in general some professionals feel for a critical theory, not for any form of knowledge, not for instrumental-practical knowledge, but for one that effectively looks for the fundamentals, and for this reason, does not always yield immediate responses.

The seminal authors that deal with the broad universe which in the social sciences is known as pragmatism[10] have strong differences and have not reached a consensus about its nature. For some, pragmatism

is a theory of meaning (Peirce); for others, a method or a theory to reach the truth (James and Dewey); for others, it is a philosophy. There are also those who conceive it as a lifestyle. But the scope of this trend is so broad that it encompasses not only different concepts, but also opposite ones. Its importance goes beyond the fact that, at the beginning of the 20th century, pragmatism represented the main trend in the United States. In this way it became promoted as the American *way of life*[11].

[9] It is not necessary to mention the relationship between U.S. pragmatism and the English pragmatism of Bacon, despite criticisms that Peirce, James and Dewey made of Bacon, and by considering pragmatism as an alternative to empiricism and rationalism.

[10] What we call pragmatism here was a school of philosophy in the late 19th century. In 1871, in Cambridge, in the United States, a group of intellectuals, concerned with liberating philosophy from the excesses of metaphysics and the formalism of a Cartesian theory of knowledge, came to meet under the name of the Metaphysical Club. In 1872, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), philosopher, scientist and mathematician, submitted for criticism from his colleagues a set of ideas concerning a method that he called pragmatism. Since then, it has become an intellectual movement, constituting a school of thought.

[11] It is important to recognize that pragmatism rose precisely during the passage from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism (at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century), in the United States, in a period after the U.S. Civil War. This period was also marked by the separation between church and state and by the strong development of science and technology.

[12] The field of education has been strongly influenced by Dewey's pragmatism, especially in what was called the New School Movement, whose ideas were propagated by great intellectuals like Anísio Teixeira, among others.

In this way, both pragmatism as well as neopragmatism came to be hegemonic trends in certain moments and situations. It appears to us that of its leading authors, Dewey and his instrumentalism was the one who exercised the greatest influence on the social sciences, especially on Education[12], Psychology and Social Work. For the purposes of this article, we will analyze the relationship of pragmatism with Social Work based on the three categorical nuclei proposed by Thamy Pogrebinschi (2005), an author dedicated to studying pragmatism as social and political theory. These nuclei are intrinsically related. They are: a) antifoundationalism; b) consequentialism; c) and contextualism.

In the first axis of its categorical nucleus, anti-foundationalism, pragmatism denies any possibility of basing reality on objective and universal truths considered to be abstract and left aside for being restricted to the realm of metaphysics. Here is the idea that the foundation of pragmatism is not to be guided by fundamentals. It questions a priori concepts and the role of theory in allowing any generalizing perspective to point to trends in historic development. In this concept, truth is the fruit of its practical consequences, determined by the use of the pragmatist method where "pragmatism can only be understood pragmatically, that is, by testing its consequences" (Pogrebinschi, 2005, p. 26).

Thus, it denies any knowledge that is based on universal concepts, or that is, that is not the fruit of experimentation with the method, with which it questions the existence of objectivity in reality. It is up to pragmatism to present and interpret concepts in the domain of "experience" and they are only accepted to the degree that they allow a modification of action. This involves a type of knowledge that is applied to change or to a theory of social action.

In this way the truth of concepts is in their capacity to operate changes in subjects. It is the result of the investigation of subjects and of arguments constructed from this investigation, so that knowledge cannot be indifferent to the context of which it is part, which will be addressed below.

The second categorical nucleus of pragmatism is that of consequentionalism. Charles Peirce[13], the first to coin the term pragmatism, was also the first to base the meaning of concepts on the experimental consequences derived from them (Pogrebinschi, 2005), establishing a contrast with Cartesian rationalism. Peirce's concern was to verify the consequences that a concept operated on future experiences.

[13] Peirce's Darwinian and agnostic spirit is evident.

For Peirce, the meaning of things is established by a list of conditionals, so that the meaning of a concept depends on its experimental consequences, thus making pragmatism an observational science: every hypothesis must be established by observation and by reasoning, which thus disqualifies any hypothesis that lacks experiential consequence. Pragmatism winds up being "a type of test to verify if concepts and theories are in fact related to experience" (Pogrebinschi, 2005, p. 41).

As a good mathematician, he maintained that all thought can be known through symbols. Thus, his scientific method is the method of observation through experimental procedures: to construct, manipulate, observe and test[14]. From this was derived a type of experimental rationality, we can say an instrumental and procedural one, whose final objective is to know the processes through the results they produce.

Another pragmatist who belonged to the Vienna Circle was William James. For James (1979), an idea is true to the degree to which belief in it is advantageous to the life of the subject. In this instrumental concept, what is important for the subject is truth in and of itself, and not its correspondence with reality. As James affirmed: "truth is the name of everything that proves to be good in terms of belief" (James apud Pogrebinschi, 2006, p. 44). It is not possible to separate what is best for people from that which is true for them, in such a way that truth can be defined as "what is best for us to believe" (JAMES apud Pogrebinschi, 2006, p. 127). Thus, "an idea is true to the degree to which to believe in it is advantageous to our lives" (James, 1979, p. 59). Consequently, the test of truth consists in finding that which best guides us in life, in the sense of us continuing to adapt our experience. For this reason there are no certainties in reference to the process of knowledge.

From Dewey's perspective[15] , consequentialism was converted into instrumentalism. Dewey questioned the knowledge of the foundations of things, of internal logic. For him, the relevance of knowledge is constituted to the degree that it serves as an instrument for the resolution of problems. What is important in the theoretical-practical relationship for pragmatism is not the relationship between theory and reality, but that the theoretical formulations are constituted in a guide for investigation. Thus, these theoretical formulations are valid to the degree that they

[14] "For Peirce, the mind is a practical mechanism since it is instrumental to man's survival: just as meaning is adapted to its end, the subject is adapted to its goal and the mind serves as an adaptive mechanism to cope with the external environment" (Pogrebinschi, 2005, p. 39).

[15] John Dewey (1859-1952), U.S. psychologist, philosopher, educator made an unquestionable contribution to behavioral psychology and a pedagogy of adaptation.

are useful and successful in the investigation of the reality in which the subject is inserted. In this way, it is not important that theory be the closest possible expression of reality, but that it serves as a guide to test if the theoretical concepts in fact relate to the experience of the subject, and thus gain their veracity from it.
The third categorical nucleus of pragmatism is perhaps the most significant for demonstrating its influence on Social Work. This involves contextualism. It is not by chance that Dewey was the pragmatist thinker who invested most in this idea.

For Dewey, context is something inherent to the lives of subjects; it is intrinsically related to the individual's ways of being and thinking. In contextualism, the emphasis falls on experience, considered as the context in which investigation is conducted. This context is in constant transformation, demanding from the subject a permanent process of adaptation. The biological character of education in the preparation and adaptation of subjects to the environment is notorious[16].

Pogrebinschi, based on her studies about the issue, attributed to Dewey the elaboration of a social pragmatism. According to her, although pragmatism is more than a theory of action, it involves a theory of action. It is important to mention that pragmatism in its various tendencies, especially Dewey's instrumentalism (1976, 2007), highlights the individual subject as a rational being, a protagonist of action, from which results his conviction in the articulation between reason and experience. This will result in a given way of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice influenced by the given causal conditions, so that thinking allows the subject to proceed to his own adaptation. In this way, Dewey sought to establish the basis for contemporary experimental science. His research also highlighted a focus on the individual and not on society.

It can be seen that for instrumentalism, the goal of the subjects is not knowledge, but knowledge is always mediated by action, by experiences, in such a way that the appropriation of knowledge always has an instrumental character, seeking a command of reality. The results of knowledge are the consequences that it produces.

Dewey considered the scientific method to be the main instrument aimed at the process of knowing, "which is always the result of a modification in the environment seeking the adaptation of the subjects." It is worth emphasizing here the mediating and instrumental function of consciousness-knowledge in the effort to survive. In other words: for Dewey, thinking is nothing more than an instrument aimed at the solution of practical problems, from it comes a type of knowledge that comes from what is

[16] In Dewey's approach, the view that the needed reform of society must involve a moral reform of subjects through education is unquestionable (CARVALHO, 2011).

learned by solving problems. Thus, knowledge is all thought that is confirmed by action.

The pragmatists generally maintain that the importance of an idea must be measured by its utility, success and efficiency to deal with a given problem, resulting in the conception that ideas serve as "guides for action". They consider knowledge as a type of practice (theoretical practice) which can be accredited by the success in attaining the goal that it proposes, by its practical consequences, with experience as criteria for correcting theoretical formulations. Or as Dewey said, (1950, p. 4, emphasis in the original),

> *[...] in the genuine sense of 'pragmatic', that is, that consequences function as necessary proofs of the validity of propositions, whenever these consequences are operatively achieved and are such that they resolve the specific problem that triggered the operations*.

Dewey, to the degree that he considers that all knowledge comes from experience, winds up denying theory, or a certain type of theory, that which dedicates itself to the search for fundamentals, given that he based his work on the premise that "for practical man [and professional practices also see themselves in this way], practice is self-sufficient, it does not require more support and foundation that is not inherent to it" (Dewey, 1950, p. 35).

For this reason, practice is reduced to a set of experiences and theory is seen as experience placed in practice. Thinking fulfills stages that allow for resolving certain problems in each one, of which men find effective instruments for their interaction with the world.

This concept guides the practical-interventionist professions, which are self-defined as "applied", to use an eclectic set of knowledge, selecting from each theory, method, doctrine or style that which appears most suitable to them to achieve the desired results. It is the "theory of results", the practical application of experiences reflected by the common consciousness, which does not involve the constitutive logic of experiences, and for this reason is not capable of interpreting them. Thus, "practice speaks for itself" (Dewey, 1950, p. 35). Or as Vázquez affirms (2007, p. 34), "common man is disposed to laugh at the philosopher who, absorbed by theory,

[17] This is a joke about those concerned with apprehending fundamentals.

[18] Perhaps this explains the true compulsion that some fields of knowledge, including Social Work, feel for the formulations of Bourdieu (1996): whose notion of habitus as the practical sense that gave origin to a theory that explains the generating principle of practices, establishing the primacy of practical reason, based on the notion of a theoretical practice in which "one only learns to do by doing".

walks though the sky of speculation and falls into the world of practical things."[17]. .

In this way, the "interventionist" or "applied" professions, by the condition in which they insert themselves in reality, in general, restrict truth to the concepts that can be applied in the situations of daily life[18]. In Social Work the idea has also been recurrent that truth is in the consequences achieved as a result of the instrumentality of the subjects, that is, of their ability to resolve immediate-practical situations[19].

But pragmatism, as the way of being in the immediacy of the bourgeois world and of its ideal representation, considered from experience, operates with such subtlety that we have difficulty perceiving that it is only a way to "grasp the apparency" of the real and not the way of being of the real itself. It operates at a level of praxis, whose insertion in and immediate apprehension of reality comes to be the practical attitude of common man in everyday life. The pragmatic attitude and thinking in everyday life naturalize and are naturalized by typical bourgeois rationality. Pragmatic thinking and attitudes, by allowing the insertion of professionals in reality, ratify in the profession a type of realism, which is itself naive, which is in contrast to critical realism. Thus, this "immediate and naive attitude of common consciousness" (Vázquez, 2007, p. 28), in reality, is not at all naive, although it is limited to immediacy, either as an option or as a lack of it, given that bourgeois man possesses.

> *[...] a consciousness of praxis that was forged in a spontaneous and non-reflexive manner, even if it does not lack [...] by being consciousness, certain ideological or theoretical elements in a degraded, rough or simple form (Vázquez, 2007, p. 35).*

Because in the space of everyday life expressions of the "social question" are confirmed, they are considered in and of themselves and not as a result of the class struggle. Thus,

> *[...] This structure, which in everyday life does not appear to be a phenomenon of alienation, is necessarily a manifestation of alienation 'in art, in science, in moral decisions and in politics' (HELLER, 1989, p. 39, emphasis ours).*

Nevertheless, Vázquez warns (2007, p. 35) against the contradiction found in this relation, given that the subject:

[...] is aware of the conscious character of his practical acts. That is, he knows that his practical activity is not purely mechanical or instinctive, and that

[19] From this results what we know today as the formation of competencies.

it requires a certain intervention of his consciousness, but in relation to the true content and meaning of his activity, that is, to that which refers to the conception of the praxis itself, he does not go beyond the previously expressed idea: praxis in a utilitarian, individual and self sufficent (atheoretical) sense. In this conception, the character of utility and efficiency of all knowledge is the criteria for acting in analogous situations, with provisory judgments that are crystalized in prejudices, as marks of pragmatism. A product of a consciousness that does not reflect reality in its totality, does not express the intentional praxis, but only the repetitive practice, which is typical of everyday life[20]. Thus, we also find that the social worker,

> *[...] devoured by and in his 'roles' can guide himself through everyday life by the simple appropriate compliance with these 'roles'. The spontaneous assimilation of the dominant customary norms can be converted by itself into conformism, to the degree to which that which assimilates them is an individual without a 'nucleus'; and the particularity that aspires to a good life without conflicts reinforces even more this conformism with his faith (Heller, 1989, p. 37-38, emphasis ours).*

In everyday life we often act with a basis in confidence and faith, as two modes particular to this sphere. Nevertheless, they are limited by and themselves create limits to a type of intervention in the real. In everyday life, we act as a function of provisory judgments, which even if they are denied by the social reality are not aborted due to belief, faith and habit formed by experience.

Given that everyday thinking is pragmatic, each one of our daily activities is accompanied by a certain faith or a certain trust. There is no place for faith when what is at stake is the correctness of the manipulation or of the materialized objectification; in principle, experience is enough to realize the necessary corrections (Heller, 1989, p. 34).

There is no place for faith, if a professional recognizes the theory that guides him. The professional's mistake is to conceive that he can conduct his professional exercise without theory. One who is ignorant of the social theory that guides him winds up being a tool of its manipulation. The same is true of those who think that the role of theory is to sanction and justify what exists. As Gouldner affirms (1970, p. 14):

[...] those [...] who believe they can separate the development of theories

[20] According to Vázquez, op. cit.

from the transformation of society do not act, in reality, without theory, but with one that is tactical, and for this reason, cannot be analyzed or improved. If they do not learn to use consciousness, they will be used by it.

Only by means of ontological analysis can the professional reveal the social meaning of the profession as an activity that, inserted in the social and technical division of labor, constitutes a particular manifestation of Social Work, a meaning that can only be learned

[...] by a consciousness that captures the content of praxis in its totality as historic and social praxis in which its specific forms are integrated and present themselves (work, art, politics, medicine, education) as well as their particular manifestations in the activities of individuals or groups (Gouldner, 1970, p. 36).

In light of these reflections, we recognize that the bourgeois order, despite the coexistence of various rationalities within it, suffers from a dominant type of rationality unique to Western capitalist society. Thus, by being conceived as the hegemonic form "of dominant rationality", it penetrates various spheres of social life that come to be organized based on their pragmatic, utilitarian, instrumental components, constituting bourgeois sociability itself, which is transversal to classes, class segments, institutions and social and professional practices[21].

This rationality has been running through the historical trajectory of the profession and is expressed in the socio-historic context and in the format of social policy. It is also expressed in the socio-occupational space where the intervention is realized, in its orientation and the demand placed upon it to solve problems, in the confirmation of results through qualitative goals, and in the utilitarian and instrumental use of the ethical-political professional project and its principles and orientations, and in that of the theoretical and ideological-political references that guide professional interventions. In this field, inspired by Quiroga's (1991) helpful expression, we believe that pragmatism has "invaded" Marxism, making an instrumental de-appropriation of Marxism that is expressed in the demand for a Marxism that resolves the immediate problems of professional practice.

[21] Netto (1992, p. 37) shows that "bourgeois society, with monopolies organizing and regulating the market, produces and reproduces its particular social agents". Moreover, it creates the institutional political and practical structures capable of sustaining it in the planes of its social production and reproduction.

[22] In Marxism, the categories can be ontological and logical. The former are part of the way of being of the real itself. They are modes of being, determinations of existence, captured by the subject by asking the objects of reality how they are. They constitute "forms that move and are moved by the material [conditions] itself" (LUKÁCS, 1978, p. 2-3) which is the social reality. The logical categories are the constructions that reason realizes to interpret these ways of being, from which emerge the different interpretations made by social theories. The rise of capitalism, for example, is interpreted by social theories in different ways, such as Weber's Protestant Ethic and Marx's theory of surplus value.

Nevertheless, only the analysis of the foundations of the classic theoretical-methodological formulations can allow us to determine its categories of analysis[22] and how they are chosen. As Gouldner affirms (1970, p. 21),

In sum, the problem is: what are the social and political results of the intellectual system that we examine? [and which serves as our foundation] Do they liberate or repress men? Do they bind them to the existing social world or allow them to transcend it? This rationality not only invades Marxism but becomes confused with it[23].

This pragmatic appropriation of Marxism by the profession, which is a product of the presence of instrumental reason, based on a view that the truth of a theory is directly based on the results that it produces, (re)establishes new challenges. These include: the influence of instrumental reason and the tendency to convert all knowledge into models and methodologies for intervention[24]; the constant demand for theories that permit interventional agendas (with a true compulsion for theories of result or theories of action[25]); and a deferment of the functionality of the profession in light of technical-instrumental procedures are expressions of a vision of Social Work as a social technique (to provide help, administer conflicts, resolve various problems, manage poverty, "for the application of rights"). This is where we identify, even if in a preliminary manner, the permanence of practical, theoretical and ideological-political pragmatism in the profession.

In conclusion: the necessary Marxist reading of the foundations of pragmatism

Because we live under the effects of a hegemony of instrumental reason, Marx's social theory must avoid its attacks and rid itself of its contaminations. In contemporary capitalism, pragmatic logic finds increasing space to affirm itself. Individualism and subjectivism, the "centrality on the subject" and not on the social being, the emphasis on utilitarianism and not social utility aimed at transformation, are its determining and recurringly resignified marks.

[23] For Vázquez (2007, p. 241): pragmatism identifies the true with the useful. This thesis of utility can confuse some people if it is recognized that Marxism does not see knowledge as an end in itself, but as an activity of man linked to his practical needs which it serves more or less directly, and in relation to which he incessantly develops.

[24] An example of the previously criticized BH Method (developed at the Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais between 1972 and 1975). About this, see Santos (1993), Netto (1990) and Montaño (2007).
Which is certainly related to the success that Habermas had in Social Work.

[25] Which is certainly related to the success that Habermas had in Social Work.

In terms of Social Work, the falling back on the most elementary empiricism condemns it to an ingenuous and false antirealism; as is false the conception that is increasingly present in the profession, of Social Work as social technology (for providing help, mediating conflicts, resolving problems, and guaranteeing rights). In the profession's historic trajectory, the influx of pragmatism has left its marks: on the conception of the profession as an instrument at the service of the project of capital, in the conception of the practice of psychosocial help, in its focus on the subject, in its educational function seeking adaptation and adjustment, in its obsession for techniques, instruments and methodologies of action, in the profound eclecticism, in the disdain for fundamentals.

Pragmatism is expressed, above all, as a characterization of what Netto (1990, p. 117) called traditional Social Work: "an empiricist, reiterative, palliative and bureaucratic practice". Today, these influxes are presented, for example, in the criteria for professional education that are increasingly more pragmatic, in the rationality adopted that is reduced to the logic of competencies and manipulative behaviors, in the levity and superficiality as current characteristics of knowledge, in the categories of analysis of reality that are reduced to instrumental categories, in agnostic thinking, as the negation of the possibility to ascend to the knowledge of the constitutive logic of processes and practices (social, political and professional), that is, to reach the fundamentals of social life. As Heller affirms (1989, p. 39), "modern science, increasingly shapes itself to pragmatic foundations", studies restrict themselves to mere surveys of empiric data, reducing themselves to experimental activities, mere descriptions that are limited to the realm of perceptions, sensations (intuition). The substitution of theory by belief and by faith, "the conversion of political questions into problems of sensibility", the transformation of radical criticism into romantic criticism and of the social question into problems of a personal order, of self esteem and/or of "empowerment".

The demands that we make of Marxism to give immediate responses to immediate situations cancel its practical-critical contents. This pragmatic Marxism is the result of the pragmatic influence in Marxism, converting it into an instrumental, aseptic, positivized, Marxism, totally abstracted from the perspective of coming to be, deviated from the imperative need for revolution. Only ontological criticism is capable of exposing the logic of pragmatism and its influence in the contemporary world. However

Investigation in and of itself cannot untangle the liberating potential of academic sociology or of historic Marxism. It also demands action and criticism, the intention to

modify the social world and the intention to modify the corresponding science, one and the other, profoundly interlinked, even if they only are because social science is both part of the social world and a 'conception' of it (Gouldner, 1970, p. 22, emphasis by the author).

Everyday life, as a space that synthesizes the ontological foundations of social life, demands a pragmatic attitude for individual and social reproduction, but also allows reflecting upon what determinations and needs require a pragmatic attitude for their reproduction. Concerning the profession, it is the principles that guide it, expressed in their regulatory instruments (its code of ethics, the law that governs the practice, and curriculum guidelines) that formulate the basis for a clear and forceful refusal of the pragmatic attitude and of the common sense that accompanies it.

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REVIEW

The resistance of memories: Biographical accounts of the truncated lives of students and social service professionals who disappeared and were executed during the dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990).

Daniela Aceituno Silva and Paulina Morales Aguilera, RIL Editores, 2020, 352 pp, ISBN: 9789560108715. Reference value: CLP$18.000/ US$26,00

Paz Valenzuela Rebolledo[1]

Paulina Morales Aguilera[2] and Daniela Aceituno Silva[3] have dedicated part of their professional careers reflecting on and promoting human rights. Paulina Morales has published research and works related to this topic since 2004, developing lines related to ethics, democracy, social justice and human dignity. In turn, Paulina participates in the UNESCO Chair of Human Rights Education, a chair that incorporates through research, teaching and extension the exercise of human rights in the classrooms of the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano (UAHC).

Among the works developed by Paulina Morales that are key to understanding the book to be reviewed is the chapter "Se hace camino al andar... Trabajo Social y Derechos Humanos en Chile: de la atención de casos a la denuncia documentada, 1973-2003", published in 2010 as part of a book on Histories of Social Work in Chile between 1925-2008. Although this is not the author's first work on this subject, it is the first publication where she addresses the civil-military dictatorship in Chile and specifically the professional work from the defence of human rights since 1973, recounting with some fragments of testimonies of social workers about their work done in the Pro-Peace Committee and the Vicariate of Solidarity around documented denunciation and attention to cases (Morales, 2010).

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Meanwhile, Daniela Aceituno Silva has worked for more than ten years in the INDH, as a professional for more than seven years in the Education and Promotion of Rights Unit, as well as a specialized professional in the Metropolitan Regional Headquarters for more than three years. Her work experience has been inscribed in the dissemination, education and promotion of human rights in Chile, as well as in the monitoring and follow-up of the fulfilment of rights, being linked to social interventions with vulnerable population.

The book La Resistencia de las Memorias adds to a historiographic trend of Chilean social work in permanent development, as well as to the line of construction of memories about human rights and dictatorship in Chile, a field of political deepening that has been persistent from the academy, from civil society organizations, as well as various disciplines, including social work, fighting against the invisibilisation, denial and forgetting of crimes against humanity that occurred in Chile.

Morales and Aceituno (2020) present some of the research on social work and human rights in the context of the Chilean dictatorship that are part of the battery of reflections for the elaboration of this book, which are, for example, the aforementioned book on "Historias de Trabajo Social en Chile 1925-2008. Contribución para nuevos relatos" edited by González (2010); the written experience of social workers who participated in institutions of the Catholic Church in times of dictatorship such as the publications of Victoria Baeza, Norma Muñoz, María Luisa Sepúlveda, and Ximena Taibo (1987) entitled "Trabajo Social, una experiencia solidaria en la promoción y defensa de los derechos humanos", as well as "La entrevista social en derechos humanos" by Taibo (1987); the books of the Colectivo de Trabajo Social (1990) "Concretar la democracia. Aportes del Trabajo Social" and "Trabajo Social y derechos humanos: compromiso con la dignidad"; as well as other publications that were later developed during the reappearance of institutional democracy such as the book by Eroles (1997) entitled "Los derechos humanos: compromiso ético del trabajo social: Notas para una discusión"; and more recently the works by Cáceres (2015) "De las luchas estudiantiles a las filas de la revolución. History of the MUI at the School of Social Service of the University of Concepción", "Lights and shadows of Chilean social work. Memoria desde finales de la década de 1950 al 2000" by Aguayo, López and Cornejo (2018) as well as "Las asistentes sociales de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad. A professional history" (1973-1983) by Del Villar (2018).

What does this work come to incorporate into the field of disciplinary memory production? While there is a large number of publications available that have focused on the construction of memories in dictatorship from the repressive events and judicial processes, this book contributes to the reconstruction of the historical memory of social workers and students of Social Service detained and the executed politicians in dictatorship, in relation to their biographical dimensions, alluding mainly to the political, professional and ethical levels of each of the students of Social Service and graduates of the career. This book manages to highlight the human condition of those who were persecuted and executed by the repressive forces of the State, transcending the homogenizing visions on the condition of victim, to focus on their particular lives, constituting new meanings on how they are remembered. In the words of the authors:

> *"The concern arose to know who they had been in life, how and what they thought, what dreams and desires they had, what political and social participation they developed and how it was possible to rescue the disciplinary vocation located in the difficult context in which they lived." (Morales and Aceituno, 2020, p.20)*

The prologue "Cuántas vidas en una vida" written by Ruth Lizana Ibaceta, director of the School of Social Work of the UCSH, begins with an invitation: memory is the gateway to think and to teach social work, with it we can think of lives in simultaneity, finding many lives in one life; we can look at the young people of the social revolt of 18-O of 2019 and see the young people in times of dictatorship, who were not only young people, but sisters/sisters, daughters/daughters, partners, militants, students of Social Service and social workers.

The introduction tells the story of how the authors constituted this project as an ethical-professional challenge, wanting to rescue the disciplinary vocation within the difficult context of the Chilean dictatorship, with the repression and systematic persecution of the State towards those who defended a transforming leftist project, based on their diverse militancy and positions in the social fabric. In this sense, the authors visualized that, in addition to reconstructing part of the life stories, they should generate pedagogical material for human rights education, due to the fact that the concerns of this book were born in the context of a pedagogical activity with university students, during a visit to Londres 38 in 2017.

The book consists of three main sections: the first, entitled "Preliminary considerations" integrates the first chapter of the book "Memory, human rights and social work. The meanings and convictions behind this book". The objective of this first chapter is to establish some coordinates on milestones that stressed the socio-political context

before and during the civil-military dictatorship, illustrating at the same time the role of the youth and its correlation with social work, allowing the reader to enter into the socio-political complexities of the time. This first chapter addresses some transversal categories of analysis, such as the problematisation of the homogenizing category of victim, the discussion on the written production of memory from Chilean social work, as well as the exposition of the methodological underpinnings of the research.

The second section of the book is entitled "Individual reviews" and contains chapter 2 entitled "microbiographies" in which reconstructions of the life stories of Social Service students and graduate social workers are presented. In the case of the students, there are seven people between 21 and 35 years of age. Six of them are currently detained as disappeared persons and one has been politically executed. It is noteworthy that five of them forcibly disappeared within the framework of Operation Colombo, included in the so-called "119", in the framework of the assembly carried out by the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA), under the command of the then Army Major Raúl Eduardo Iturriaga Neumann.

The seven Social Service students are Luis Jorge Almonacid Dumenez (student at the University of Chile (UCH), Temuco campus and MIR militant), Jaquelina del Carmen Binfa Contreras (UCH student and MIR militant), María Teresa Bustillos Cereceda (UCH student and MIR militant), Jacqueline Paulette Drouilly Yurich (UCH student, Temuco campus and MIR militant), Juan Ernesto Ibarra Toledo (UCH student and MIR militant), José Alberto Salazar Aguilera (UCH student, Temuco campus and MIR militant) and Gilberto de las Mercedes Victoriano Veloso (Santiago Professional Institute student and PC-FPMR militant).

The nine persons, who at the time of their disappearance or execution were graduate social workers, were between 23 and 34 years old. They are José Ernesto Agurto Arce (MIR), Rolando Gastón Angulo Matamala (MIR), Elizabeth del Carmen Cabrera Balarriz (MIR), Segundo Norton Flores Antivilo (PS), Alfredo Gabriel García Vega (MIR), María Cecilia Labrín Saso (MIR), Elizabeth Mercedes Rekas Urra (MAPU), Julieta Sonia Valencia Huerta (MIR) and Modesta Carolina del Carmen Wiff Sepúlveda (PS).

Chapter 3, "controversial cases", presents the microbiographies of María Teresa Eltit Contreras, José Fernando Romero Lagos, Susana del Pilar Sánchez Espinoza and Jaime Eugenio López Arellano, problematizing these stories in terms of the construction

of memories and at a methodological level. This is a chapter that was not initially contemplated, but that in the course of the research was configured as a section that precisely makes visible that memories are not abstract or neutral entities, but social practices where multiple versions of events emerge, certain versions are established as true and certain subjects are legitimate; remembering with this, the need to broaden the gaze and incorporate diverse temporalities and subjects of memory (Galaz et al. 2019).

The third section is entitled "Contributions of the research experience for university work in social work", and includes chapter 4 "Cross-cutting reflections on the research exercise in memory and human rights" which is aimed at deepening the relevance of the work of memories, the value of the testimonies in this subject and the political, formative and social place of researchers in the construction of memories, three axes articulated as three-dimensional memory. Chapter 5 "Pedagogical usability of this material for human rights education" proposes guidelines and pedagogical proposals for using microbiographies in human rights education processes, encouraging trainers, educational communities, students and academics to promote reflections on memory work, which implies "incorporating memories into our work that generates and transforms the social world" (Jelin, 2002, p. 14).

The contributions of this book in terms of its human, personal and professional value, as well as its methodological and ethical rigor are immeasurable. There is no other book that gathers all the stories associated with the executions or disappearances linked to the Social Service career that has set out to reconstruct the life stories beyond the imprint of State political violence, which ends up determining the identity of the people directly affected, conditioned as victims (Piper, 2005); so it is an undoubted contribution to Chilean historiography on the construction of memories and human rights in dictatorship.

This book is a meticulous artefact, built by the nuance, contrast and assembly of a diversity of resources: primary sources such as written documents, public and private archives, periodical sources (newspapers and magazines), books, theses and articles, reviews of audio-visual material, as well as interviews to relatives, friends and acquaintances of those who have been honoured by being remembered. The ethical rigor and respect with which the research team maintained communication with these families (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4) is also a contribution for those who intend to work on memories based on the construction of testimonies. The ethical-political weighting made by the researchers and their team in deciding, at different

levels, the disposition of the bibliographical sources and the way in which they are presented to those who read them, is also noteworthy.

It is not just another book. It is an encounter with the colleagues who have gone before us; it is an encounter with many lives in one life, which leads us to identify that there is also a translucent value in this encounter: The term three-dimensional memory, coined by the authors, indicates that what is collected in the text are the stories of sixteen people, the stories of the researchers who collected the testimonies and the stories behind each friend or relative who gave their testimony to make this work possible, but also, perhaps, the stories of those who read it. Students, professionals, academics of Social Work can find their own stories, desires and convictions in these microbiographies.

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REVIEW

Social Work in Chile: A century of trajectory

Paula Vidal Molina (Coord.), Santiago de Chile, RIL Editores, 2016, pp. 398. ISBN/ISSN: 978-956-01-0300-0. Reference value: CLP$17,000/ USD$22.00

Patricia Carrasco Urrutia[1]

"The past is everywhere. […] Relics, stories and memories cover the human experience. In the long run all the particular traces of the past eventually perish; however, if we consider them together they are immortal."
Lowenthal.

Close to a century since the emergence of Social Work in Chile and Latin America, the book "Social Work in Chile a century of trajectory", is an invitation to reread Social Work in Chile from memory. It immerses us in a disciplinary historical journey, from a plural framework.

When we wish to approach the exploration of a text, as we do with the phenomena in the social sciences, we must first look into its meaning. That is to say, we must ask ourselves about its foundational elements, or rather, we must answer the question of what gave rise to its emergence. In this sense, the book was born at the time of the re-foundation of the Social Work career at the University of Chile, and it is through it -as a symbol- that we seek to materialize the trajectory and meaning of the discipline through time.

The resurgence of the discipline of Social Work at the University of Chile in 2014 is undoubtedly a milestone for the profession in our country. We could well say that it marks the end of the dictatorship for the discipline, since despite the years of "recovery of democracy in Chile" in the nineties, only fourteen years later the career was reopened in the emblematic state university. In this sense, this reopening symbolizes the end of a dark period for the discipline. With the advent of the dictatorial regime, the closure, imprisonment, exoneration and disappearance of students, academics and professionals

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of the university, together with the termination - by decree - of our life as a university profession, helped to exterminate social work.

Thus, the reopening of the career at the University of Chile, in 2014, is a symbol of disciplinary rebirth. However, the challenge of the protagonists of this event was not only to return to "being", but also to unearth the history, to situate it and from it, to rebuild.

In this sense, the text coordinated and edited by Paula Vidal Molina, academic and researcher at the University of Chile, seeks to collect our disciplinary memory. It is a book that anchors us, so as not to forget who we social workers have been in Chile. An unknown past fills knowledge with uncertainty; on the other hand, trajectories order and give meaning and identities. In this way, the authors of the different chapters of the book collect the comings and goings, pluralities and dissidences, in which we have lived as a discipline for more than ninety years.

I visualize two central elements that articulate the book. Context and memory, from both of which the discipline is reviewed and revisited. On the other hand, context always emerges for Social Work as an element that challenges us. The social, political and economic frameworks that cross-cut our societies through time, have summoned us again and again to "rethink" our discipline. On the other hand, situated memory allows us to revisit the past, reread it and sometimes even rewrite it. Forgetting, on the other hand, fills us with uncertainty. Memory sifts the present as a mantle of meaning on which it is possible to continue the path, so the book "Social Work in Chile: a century of trajectory" is an invitation to continue writing our history, inscribed in a past that identifies us and from which it is always possible to rebuild ourselves.

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INTERVIEW

"The revolt" in Colombia: critical approaches from social work

By Carolina González[1] and María Soledad García[2]

"What we want is to weave together, among all colleagues, from all over the country and internationally, to make visible the violation of the rights of people who are demonstrating and resisting in the streets, and that we reflect on our role, on how we participate and how we social workers contribute in this socio-political crisis."

In this issue dedicated to the analysis of these times of crisis in the world and particularly in Latin America, we would like to share this interview conducted by María Soledad García, President of the Association of Social Work Professionals of Mendoza, Argentina, with Colombian social worker Carolina González, who has been through a powerful experience in the front line of professional intervention in the context of the social outburst occurring in that country. For her part, Soledad, through the work of the Professional Association, has participated in the organization of various activities aimed at critical reflection on neoliberalism, revolts in Latin America and the role of social work in these contexts of socio-political crisis. We hope you enjoy this conversation, which remains open to the discussion of the various forms that professional intervention can take in the current context, in the face of the "critical times" we are living in. We thank Carolina and Soledad for sharing their conversation with us.

Soledad: Hello Carolina, thank you very much for talking with us this afternoon. I am part of the College of Social Workers of the province of Mendoza, Argentina, with whom we have been working in a series of meetings on Latin American Social Work. That is why it is so interesting for us to be able to interview you, because we know that there are instances of struggle and resistance that are common to Social Work throughout the region, throughout our America. We believe that it is necessary to be able to identify them and also to be able to position ourselves as social workers in these

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times and in these challenges that neoliberalism imposes on all the democracies of the region. In the name of these democracies it is necessary to speak of human rights, and to put in tension how we understand our own democratic systems.

We think that we have to vindicate and sustain a feminist Social Work, linked to popular feminisms, decolonial, that embodies these disputes of meaning against neoliberalism, and that these are collective struggles. And it is from these keys that we have been working during this year, through discussions we have held with colleagues from both Chile and Colombia, who have been able to tell us about the experiences of the revolt and the social outbreak in their countries. Thinking of ourselves as traversed by the same struggles, it is a pleasure for me to be able to have this interview with you.

To begin with and to contextualize, I would like to ask you, first of all, about your professional career in Cali, Colombia.

Carolina: Thank you very much for this space. I graduated from Social Work in Cali more than 10 years ago. It has been a very nice opportunity to find myself in this profession since I was a teenager, because since that time I started to get involved in social projects, first in the school where I studied, then I worked as a promoter in a program for adolescent peers. That helped me to visualize myself as a social worker.

After graduating, I have worked in different sectors, such as health and education. Now I am dedicated to community work.

Soledad: From that experience, how have you lived the social outbreak in Cali, 'the capital of resistance'?

Carolina: With many emotions and mixed feelings, with nights and days of anguish, of crying, of admiration for the people who resist, but above all with a lot of anguish because I have had people very close to me affected by the violence with which what we call the "social outbreak" has been repressed.

The current social outburst began in November 2019 when some social leaders were assassinated. Among them, the murder of a social worker, Cristina Bautista, from the Nasa community, in Toribio Cauca. One begins to think from the profession, how this affects us, how our profession is also affected by the internal armed conflict that has been going on for many decades here in our country.

The social explosion in our country has not occurred since April 28, 2021. The key point or explosion point is April 28, but the unrest had been growing from 2019, when Cristina Bautista was assassinated. That generated huge indignation, and to that is added the economic situation of our country and corruption. That begins to generate in people all that collective nonconformity that makes November 21, 2019 one of the most massive mobilizations that there has been in the history of our country. As a result of that mobilization on November 22, there were also some blockades, some smaller mobilizations, and, from that moment on, fear began to spread as a way to stop those mobilizations.

Then threats began to spread in the neighbourhoods, saying, for example, that as a result of the mobilization, the protesters were going to enter buildings, apartments, attack and rob people. All this in order to give the government a tool to decree a curfew, to take groups of police and the army to the streets. At that time one of the cities most affected by this situation was Bogota, the capital, and there are lags in other cities. This situation continued to present isolated events more or less until December. In February 2020 a new mobilization was called and all the unions got ready for a great mobilization on March 25, which did not materialize due to the arrival of the pandemic. On April 28th of this year, another great national mobilization took place as a reaction to the tax reform proposal presented by the national government.

Everything stops because of the arrival of the pandemic in our country. However, cases of corruption and assassinations of social leaders continue. The pandemic does not stop that.

Soledad: Different actors are joining this mobilization that becomes massive. Who are those actors who emerge, who appear on the scene, who were more invisible in their struggles and their demands?

Carolina: Young people were extremely invisible. Their opinion was not taken into account. But they appear on the scene mobilizing all the cities, using the mechanisms we have today: social networks. That is the icon of this social outburst, which differentiates it from other mobilizations of years ago. Indigenous movements from different areas of the country, which have also been marginalized and affected by the armed conflict, are also joining in. Groups of peasant representatives began to appear in a stronger way.

The LGBTQ+ community begins to appear in this social outburst. In other words, the mobilization is no longer only of unions or workers. It is no longer only for teachers. It

is of the whole civil society from different sectors: mothers with their children, children demonstrating for a better world. I live near an upper class sector and to see how the traffic stopped on that road and how there were children, young people, adults, seniors and people of all ethnicities mobilizing was very encouraging.

Here in Cali, called the capital of resistance, there were several blockade points. Educational activities were developed to inform people, cultural activities and community kitchens for the demonstrators or people who remained at these points of resistance. Movements such as the 'Universidad Pal Barrio' began to emerge, which proposes to open opportunities for young people or adults who want to take a state test or who want to strengthen their knowledge, because this social outburst also reveals the situation of poverty, not only in terms of food but also in terms of access to opportunities. Collectives, cultural or even manual workshops are beginning to appear. There is a sector, for example, in which they are doing dance, weaving, handicrafts around the theme of the social outburst. There are also beginning to appear calls for feminist reflection on the violence that women have suffered or have suffered in the context of the social explosion.

Soledad: What is the current situation of the social outburst? At what stage do you identify this struggle and these mobilizations in Colombia?

Carolina: We feel that the outburst continues, the nonconformity continues. Yesterday (date) we commemorated 6 months of the social outburst, there were new mobilizations, a little less massive than before, but there were some. Once again there were confrontations, unfortunately, because it is thought that the agents of the state do not allow people to express themselves freely. The murders continue, the conflict continues. In other words, the social unrest in Colombia does not stop. Nothing has been fixed here. The breaking point was the tax reform, and what they did was to lower it and make some modifications that for the most part still do not benefit the Colombian people. They have just overturned a law of guarantees that says that the State can do whatever it wants with the money during this upcoming electoral campaign for different positions, but especially for the presidential election campaign. The government does not answer for the lost money of the Ministry of Technology -Mintic- and Communications.

This explosion is still latent, it is still like the heart, beating, beating, beating. And possibly it will reach a point where people will have to go back to the streets again, they will have to support those who resist. We continue without clarity regarding the processes that have been carried out by members of the state against the Colombian

people, such as what happened in Bogota with one of the demonstrators in 2019, Dylan Cruz, a young man who was demonstrating and who was attacked by a projectile from the anti-riot squad - Esmad-. But one of the statements they give is that he went through the projectile shot. In other words, the disagreements are still there and everything is still very latent.

Soledad: And in this scenario of socio-political crisis, how has Social Work positioned itself? How has it organized itself?

Carolina: First, there is the individual dimension, where as social workers we joined the points of resistance, to support by delivering food, clothes, let's say, actions of an assistance type, the immediate thing to continue resisting, to continue telling the state the nonconformities we had. Second, there are the actions to disseminate what is happening at a national and international level. Third, there is also the creation of lines of attention in psychology, legal attention, and support in communications. In this framework, for example, a colleague came up with a form to create the 'first line of Social Work'. It is disseminated by WhatsApp, Facebook, and approximately 270 colleagues at national and international level adhere and this 'first line of Social Work' is formed.

However, when we make a first call to see how we can support what we can do as the 'first line of Social Work', we realize that to contribute within the framework of the social outburst, we also have to review our situation as social workers, and review ourselves inwardly. Then we realize that there are some situations that are very strong within our profession, such as, for example, that the code of ethics is not in force, that there is no ethics committee functioning, that the union organizations, even starting from the council itself, do not have updated information in social networks or other pages, they do not manifest themselves in front of what is happening in the social outburst.

We proposed that in order to be able to contribute to this outburst, in an organized way, we had to start reviewing and we changed the name from 'first line of Social Work' to 'Social Work Weave' (Corporación Tejido de Trabajo Social), because precisely what we want is to weave together, among all colleagues, from all over the country and internationally, to make visible at an international level the violation of the rights of people who are demonstrating and resisting in the streets, and to reflect on our role, on how we participate and how we social workers contribute to this crisis. We could say

that the formation of this initiative, the Corporación Tejido de Trabajo Social, is a direct consequence of the social outburst and our intention to contribute in this moment of socio-political crisis in our country.

Our organization is made up of colleagues from various cities in the country: Cali, Bogotá, Medellín, Puerto Asís, Calarcá, well, in different areas, including abroad. We began to create strategies to sensitize students and professionals of Social Work. One of our coordinators is a professor at a university and we began to have conversations with students in one of our classes about how we can see our actions in the reality and context of our country. We started to have meetings with professionals in each zone of the country. We made a call for those who wanted to join the board or spokespersons. And we began to review our objectives as Corporación Tejido de Trabajo Social.

In parallel, several discussions are taking place based on what different colleagues are contributing and building in different parts. So, for example, some universities are calling us to participate in conversations to analyse what is happening, what is being experienced, what we are perceiving in the streets, what we are perceiving in the territories. This generates these opportunities for dialogue that had been somewhat lost due to the pandemic, but which are being taken up again from the virtual world and this is happening not only here in Cali but in different parts of the country as well.

Soledad: In other words, there is a whole new organization emerging from the profession, which has a critical position towards the federations or the more traditional spaces of the profession, let us say. There is a new discussion opening up. Where do these axes of discussion lie, and what are these turning points in relation to the participation of the profession in the mobilizations?

Carolina: After April 28, I was still working in the organization of which I am a member. We were working with groups virtually because of the pandemic. But we began to feel that there was a lot of emotional charge because of what was happening, a lot of uncertainty. So we created a strategy to be able to talk to people and communities about what was happening, to generate reflections. We used images and guidelines to work on mental health issues, for example. Some groups said 'we hadn't thought about this, not even our managers had told us how we felt about the social outburst and you are doing it, you are thinking about it'. So it was an exercise of reflection through photos of the mobilizations of the social outburst. This was very significant, and allowed us to talk about the emotions involved. In the photographs there were cultural expressions, of union between generations, of protest against the agents of the state. This allowed us to reflect on what we can do to not lose hope, to resist, to continue contributing to society.

A criticism was also raised regarding social workers who do not say 'I support the social outburst or I agree with what they are demonstrating', because somehow they are part of the system and that can limit them in terms of speaking out or participating. One tries to understand that, however, at a collective level one hopes that as social workers we are more united to accompany the whole society at this moment, even from the micro-spaces.

Soledad: It is interesting to think about these critical times, crossed by the political crisis and the health crisis due to the pandemic, because it is also a critical time for the profession, as we can rethink ourselves in the face of these challenges. Have you been able to generate different forms of organization in this scenario?

Carolina: Between April 28 and May 31, they were days of resistance, also of mourning for the loss of lives. From that moment on, the proposal of the Social Work collective was gestated. And since then we have been working collectively. We have already held three meetings at national level, where we discuss the implications of the social outbreak and the pandemic, and also the disagreements with our profession. For 5 years we have been asking the Ministry of Education to revise the proposal that incorporated Social Work in the area of health and welfare, taking it out of the social sciences. These are nonconformities that come from before the outbreak, but now we have been able to make them much more visible. The outbreak has generated that we communicate not with 10 or 20 people but with 300 people at national and international level. The associations begin to turn their heads here and say 'ah... well we are not mobilizing networks, we are not providing information, we are not meeting people, we are not doing much, we have stopped a lot... and here there is a group of professionals that is moving, that is attracting people and then we have to reach them or we have to look at them to see what they are doing and be able to call them to articulate some actions'. We have held meetings with representatives of national associations, where we have discussed the crisis that Social Work is going through, which has been evident for more than 5 years.

Soledad: And, in this antinomy that you just mentioned, generated by belonging to the field of health or social sciences, where do you position yourselves and how do you understand this position?

Carolina: Definitely in the social sciences. We were born in the social sciences and that

does not mean that we do not agree with our intervention in health, which is extremely necessary. However, we must also recognize that this limits our action: it makes it technical, deprofessionalizes it, that is, it generates conceptions that do not correspond to the bases that gave rise to Social Work. We are not saying that the social worker cannot be in the arts, because he/she is also necessary there, or that he/she cannot be in the infrastructure sector, because he/she is necessary there. But that does not mean that we should be pigeonholed or placed in an area or in a room where we were not born, we are children of the social sciences and that is where we want to stay, because that is where we can really make a comprehensive intervention and a broad contribution to society.

Soledad: Have you been able to articulate with other social or professional collectives in a collective or common front of struggle?

Carolina: Yes, for example, we recently joined the first legal line that was also developed within the framework of the social outburst, where lawyers, professors, etc. participate. Colleagues have been involved in the struggles for the recovery of a wetland, where there were not only social workers, but also different cultural and social collectives of different types. And then we also participated in these activities as a Corporation.

Soledad: Are you visualizing processes of knowledge generation from this powerful initiative you are telling us about?

Carolina: We are in this process thanks to the opportunities that other organizations have given us. We have been invited to present papers, to produce a magazine from the Corporación Tejido de Trabajo Social. We have just finished the legal formalization as a corporation, and the idea is to review each of the lines of action to project research, and also from communications, because we need to continue visualizing and generating more impact from what we do as a corporation.

Soledad: And from your performance as a social worker, what has your professional intervention consisted of during this social outburst?

Carolina: Mainly awareness-raising. That is to say, to promote that people are not indifferent to the reality we are living. From the micro level, from the family, from how an act of corruption begins, for example, from what the rules and limits are that we must have clear at home, to major reflections, such as the difference between politics and

proselytism or politicking, to recognize that we are all political subjects and therefore, we must ensure the permanence and respect for our rights. It implies promoting a reflection on the fact that the social outburst is not a response of the present, but has been brewing for a long time. The most enriching thing that I have been able to contribute at this time is to reflect, to sit down and look at our history and to be able to give the importance it deserves to everything that has happened for decades and what is happening today in our country. In one of the points of resistance I gave workshops on images and photography as a method of reflection on all this.

Soledad: Of course, and thinking about it from a critical perspective, from those workshops, and from those spaces of community reflection that you mentioned, knowledge is also being produced. From decolonial thinking and taking up Enrique Dussel, an Argentinean philosopher from Mendoza, the philosophy of liberation helps us to identify the subjectivities generated by neoliberalism and who is the other oppressed at present. It allows us to think about how to identify at each moment the oppressed others from Social Work, that other that the explosion has made more visible, and that one of the tasks of Social Work is to be able to question the devices that have historically denied that other. In this sense, I believe that there is a great challenge for Social Work in terms of research and knowledge production. How do you see these challenges?

Carolina: There are many challenges. For example, in health, it means fighting against a system that does not provide timely and comprehensive guarantees. We have many other challenges because we are also permeated by a government that does not allow us to do or speak much. I was talking about it just now, I was saying... Wednesday! When the interview is published, that is to say, it could be revealed that I have supported the demonstration and they could make me a target. Because that is what we have become. Whoever supports a point of resistance is against the State, against order and power.

Challenges are to be able to do things well and without fear, without fear, without having to be thinking 'I have to leave the country because they threatened me'. Many of those who have supported this social outburst from reflection (only from reflection), from a publication even on Twitter or Facebook, begin to be threatened, begin to be singled out, begin to be judged by the forces that are on the other side, because that is how we have been polarized in this country. If I don't think like the government, then I am a leftist, and if I think like the government I am a rightist, then I will be criticized and judged by one side or the other.

I believe that the greatest challenge is this: to be able to do things well, to be able to contribute socially and not to be afraid, not to feel afraid, not to be singled out, not to have to leave, not to be murdered as happened to our colleague two years ago. Because two years ago she said: 'if we keep quiet they will kill us and if we talk too, then let's talk'. And she was murdered. I repeat it and it makes my skin itch. Her memory is here. She had the courage to say that publicly into a microphone, and days later she was murdered. One thinks about it. And there will be social workers who say: 'I do not participate because I have a family, I have my children, I do not want to be part of the list of victims of this social outburst'. But there will be others who talk tough, and we are doing things. And there will also be those of us who are willing to say: I do not agree, and I say it in my social networks, at some time during the social outburst I had to remove my profile picture, restrict several things because, of course, we were being singled out. Then we started to restrict photos and migrate to other networks for security reasons, because the persecution continues.

It is a challenge that as social workers we can exercise our profession as it should be, from the defense of human rights, from the guarantee of dignity, from the respect for the difference of the other, but with the full assurance that we will not be attacked, singled out, persecuted, I think that is the biggest challenge. Cristina left us a very significant contribution, but many still do not listen to it.

Soledad: Fear is a big issue in these times, and hence the importance of collective organization as you are doing, aiming that these struggles and resistances are not individual, that they are of mutual protection. How do the organizations become spaces of care and protection in that sense?

Carolina: This is valid in every sense. For example, it is very difficult for a woman who is a victim of violence to speak out individually, due to innumerable barriers. But if we women all unite around the prevention of violence, economic, patrimonial, psychological, physical, we can make the problem more visible. It is a way to protect ourselves and to echo. This is also part of the work I do with women, with young people, to be able to say: the power of our struggle is that it is collective, more than what each one of us will do individually. So people want to organize collectively precisely to be able to say 'no, we must do it together, we cannot continue to do it as islands, separately'. I believe that this has been one of the contributions that I have made in my territorial work.

I have a lot of hope in young people, in the sense that they reflect and organize themselves. It was young people who took the lead in a very significant way in this outburst.

Soledad: And the mothers and the women who replaced their sons in the front line... I followed the news in the press, it was very strong...

Carolina: Women on the front line, the 'front line mothers' and that started to appear, that was great. Also men. In one of the testimonies we collected, one of them told me 'I arrived home and called my son, I asked him where are you? and he said: Dad, I'm at the point of resistance'. And then the father said 'are you coming to the house' and the son said 'no, I'm staying here'. Then the father answered 'son, I'm coming over there and I'll go with you', and when the father arrived, the son said 'dad, what are you doing here'. And the father said 'I don't have the strength to fight but I want to be your shield and I will be your shield'. He made us all cry when he gave his testimony, because we said 'my God, how, how we began to internalize that this struggle is not for young people, it is not for adults, it is not for associations, but for absolutely everyone'. There is a feeling of the collective that has to prevail above all.

The problem is that nowadays, in the context of electoral campaigns, all this has been used and the idea has been distorted. This is one of the things we have to review even as a collective within the corporation. How can we generate support with someone without getting involved in specific political campaigns?

On the other hand, to ask ourselves how we can be made visible as social workers in the midst of this crisis of social outburst, how we defend that our profession is within the social sciences and that from there we contribute with reflections and proposals on what is happening in our societies.

Soledad: Thank you very much Carolina, it seems to me that it is a good way to close with those challenges of the profession that you mention. This conversation has been very mobilizing and enriching. These strong interpellations, this capacity for criticism and self-criticism are so important in our profession. We have a very rich view in relation to other disciplines, in a transversal way in our Latin American peoples. We can think of the revolt that began in October 2019 in Chile, in the processes that are taking place in Argentina, in issues that are similar - these same interpellations to the profession and to the critical situation of our countries. How do you see Latin American Social Work and its possibilities of facing the socio-political crises that our peoples are experiencing?

Carolina: I believe there is a path to be strengthened. There are very powerful spaces that we are developing from Social Work in the territories, but nobody knows about them. The contributions made by the academic world to this territorial work in the midst of the outbreak have been very significant. We have to promote this. We need to show the knowledge that we are producing from Latin America. To be able to generate spaces for conversation on an international scale, to be able to exchange knowledge about what we are doing in times of political, social and health crises, from the different countries of our network. We need to strengthen these meeting spaces. We already know that we have tools that we did not know we had before, for example, virtual tools. This socio-political crisis has helped us to see that we have these tools to strengthen our organization.

Soledad: Undoubtedly these are critical times we are going through and the truth is that being able to meet, physically and virtually, I think is the way forward, building bridges between colleagues from different countries is one of the ways to keep you on your toes as a profession.

Carolina: Of course, and to be able to make the information visible. There are organizations that report the aftermath of this social outbreak, which continue to be updated every day, and if we are not part of the investigation, at least we should visualize, disseminate and make a public impact with that information.

Soledad: Yes, absolutely. It is about recovering those voices and at the same time fighting to be heard, as a way to defend our rights, to bet on social justice in our countries. It has been wonderful to listen to you, thank you very much for this time.
Carolina: Thank you very much.

Find out more about Carolina's and María Soledad's work:

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https://www.facebook.com/Tejido-de-Trabajo-Social-101918145568385/
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Revista Otros Cauces https://colegiotsmendoza.org.ar/otros-cauces/

Monument to the resistance, Cali, Colombia, made by ordinary citizens, remembering the young people killed during the explosion, the diversity and the resistance of a people.

Source: Carolina González's personal register.