CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

FACULTAD DE
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CONTENTS

Editorial

Critical perspectives for challenging social research and practice in the current context

It is with great pleasure that we bring you this fifth issue of our journal Propuestas Críticas en Trabajo Social - Critical Proposals in Social Work, which we have developed to discuss diverse approaches or perspectives in social research and interventions. You will notice in the following pages that certain approaches that have emerged strongly in the social sciences and humanities debates in recent times are also reflected in the articles that make up this issue: feminisms, intersectional perspectives, decolonial thought, anti-colonial and Indo-American proposals; and interpellations from feminisms to Marxism, classical hermeneutics and evidence-based approaches. Various concepts , such as "intellectuality", "evidence", "objectivity", "professional training", "critical thinking", "critique", among others, will be subjected to an elaboration from perspectives not seen or traditionally little addressed in the past: some silenced - such as feminisms and de/anti-colonial proposals - and others simply not thought of before as a conceptual option - such as the opening of elites as a field of study or the understanding of non-hegemonic motherhood as a key to social intervention.

We have decided to organise this issue according to different approaches or perspectives in order to show contrasts, controversies and contestations that have arisen from different locus of enunciation in the dialogue between authors and long-standing conceptual traditions: in the articles, you will note encounters/disencounters between Marx and Silvia Federici, Walter Mignolo and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Aníbal Quijano and Kimberlé Crenshaw, Foucault and Lacan, Judith Butler and Lorena Cabnal, among others. We hope that these texts, which are the fruit of joint research and discussion, will allow us to question the forms and contents in which we are currently proposing the work of the social, opening up paths to identify new epistemic and methodological routes to be explored.

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In addition, we take this editorial to share excellent news with our readership community: after completing the first four issues published, our journal is now indexed in the European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences - ERIH Plus. This index is very important for the research career in the Chilean context, as it is recognised by the National Agency for Research and Development. We have worked very hard to meet the quality standards in the process of editing and publication of each manuscript, therefore, we thank all the people who have made this first achievement possible: those who have participated as authors, in peer review, proofreading and layout, and of course, in the activities of inauguration and dissemination of our work. We hope to continue growing and contributing to the generation of debates and critical proposals in what is to come.

Gianinna Muñoz-Arce
Editor in Chief
Propuestas Críticas en Trabajo Social
Critical Proposals in Social Work

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ARTICLE

Between traditional and emerging epistemologies: Reflections on the construction of knowledge in Social Work from feminist discussions

Entre epistemologías tradicionales y epistemologías emergentes: Una reflexión sobre la construcción de conocimiento en Trabajo Social desde debates feministas

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How to cite

Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to present a review on emerging or non-traditional epistemologies of the social and human sciences to argue that much of the construction of knowledge in social work has its base in feminist epistemologies and experience. Indeed, as a discipline that developed on the margins, albeit from discussions in the social sciences, it has developed particular ways of knowing what social is which, like feminist epistemologies, were denied and made invisible and on which it is necessary to reflect.

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Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es presentar una revisión sobre las epistemologías emergentes o no tradicionales de las ciencias sociales y humanas, para argumentar que buena parte de la construcción de conocimiento en Trabajo Social tiene su fundamentación en las epistemologías feministas y de la experiencia. En efecto, como disciplina que surgió al margen, pero desde los debates de las ciencias sociales, desarrolló unos modos particulares de conocer lo social que, al igual que las epistemologías feministas, fueron negados e invisibilizados y sobre los cuales es preciso reflexionar.

Intoduction

This article is structured in three sections: in the first, we review the context, crisis and critique of the social sciences from the debates that identify the "crisis" of the great narratives (such as those raised by postmodernity and/or countermodernity, including postcoloniality, decoloniality, feminist critique), and from there, the main debates in the emergence and development of the social sciences on the construction of knowledge.

In the second part, we present the ways in which Social Work articulated itself in the face of such debates, while it was excluded and marginalized because it was considered not to conform to or follow the logic of scientific knowledge by focusing on the "practical world". To this end, we trace the epistemological reflection, locating from the concept of epistemology the main characteristics of frontier epistemologies, non-traditional, emerging, feminist epistemologies and the ways of knowing raised from Social Work. In the third section, we note the relevance that the epistemologies of experience and feminist epistemologies have had in the construction of knowledge in Social Work and for Social Work.

Finally, some reflections are presented by way of conclusion as issues that should continue to be reflected upon.

Epistemological Debates in the Social Sciences: Creative Destruction

The emergence of the social sciences towards the end of the European 19th century is inscribed within the framework of the civilizing model inspired by the Enlightenment project (Escobar, 2005; Dussel, 2000; Quijano, 2000). Perhaps the direct effect on the configuration of knowledge was expressed in the idea of a unified science project from the proposal of the Vienna Circle in the early twentieth century (Packer, 2013; Harvey, 1998), which defined the need for all scientific disciplines to follow the methodological proposals of logical positivism (empirical observation, logical reasoning, abstention from value judgments, neutrality, objectivity, verifiability, among others). The nascent social sciences adhered to this proposal, so that "they were differentiating themselves from philosophy and seeking their own identity, especially in the United States, but also in the United Kingdom and other countries. They adopted the logical-positivist program as their blueprint for truly scientific research" (Packer, 2013, p.29). In this way, they were configured on the basis of a paradoxical unity characteristic of modernity: unification and fragmentation; in other words, a unity that is based on disunity.

Thus, European modernity was founded on the basis of the political and economic promises of the Enlightenment (liberty, equality, fraternity); and epistemologically, on the basis of the unification of the scientific method and the fragmentation of knowledge, with full confidence in technology at its core. Unity, as with fragmentation, appears then as a paradox that will be present throughout the development of such ideas. In this way, science, morality and art were proposed as autonomous developments, while other forms of knowledge were excluded. Habermas (1988) recognizes three structures of rationality in this configuration of knowledge:

1.   Cognitive-instrumental rationality
2.   Moral-practical rationality
3.   Aesthetic-expressive rationality

While the natural sciences appropriated the cognitive-instrumental rationality, the humanities were distributed between the other two rationalities (de Sousa Santos, 2007); and although the social disciplines from the beginning were divided between cognitive-instrumental rationality and moral and practical rationality, the cognitive-instrumental rationality proper to the natural sciences of the nineteenth century became hegemonic over the others and over other forms of knowledge. Thus, adopting science as the epistemological foundation of all knowled-

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ge (unification), found in the fragmentation of knowledge a condition for access to it, while configuring, at the same time, rules of hierarchization and exclusion.

Secularization, the detachment of the individual from the communitarian world, the desacralization of nature and its consequent pretension of dominion and control, the confidence in reason, the rupture with tradition and the past, and with it the overvaluation of the future, were constitutive features of modernity, which came to impact diverse aspects of the social organization of the European world. However, for Dussel (2000), although this process became hegemonic, there are spheres of life that were not "modernized". Therefore, he defines modernity as the determinations of a part of European culture that called itself modern and that became hegemonic almost worldwide.

The modern project was possible on the basis of the paradox of creative destruction (Harvey, 1998), since modernity, insofar as it presupposes "the new" (Habermas, 1988), poses an opposition between present and tradition, that is, a rupture with the past. In this order of ideas, "how could a new world be created without destroying a large part of what already exists" (Harvey, 1998, p.31). Modernity has to destroy in order to create, to start anew. Castro Gómez (2005) refers to this process as the zero point,

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> *to start all over again means to have the power to name the world for the first time; to draw borders to establish which knowledge is legitimate and which is illegitimate (...), therefore, the zero point is that of the absolute epistemological beginning, but also that of the economic and social control over the world. (p.25).*

The author shows how, in the configuration of knowledge and the reordering of the world, reason appeared as the basis and the way to explain and transform reality, which was understood as unique, predictable and controllable. Thus, the nascent social and human sciences set out to seek laws in the social world, which was assumed to be invariable and unalterable, and at the same time developed a deep confidence in the possibility of leading society towards progress and civilization, which was possible through the intervention of society on itself. That is, through social intervention. Here we find another paradox: leading society towards progress presupposed a social world capable of being altered through intervention, i.e., the social world was neither invariable nor unalterable.

Epistemological debates from Social Work

Our starting point is the articulation between Social Work and social sciences. From this conception, we grant analytical centrality to the social forms of knowledge construction. That is to say, it is relevant for us to pay attention to the conditions in which the processes of expansion of such knowledge take place, the knowledge that is silenced, as well as the subjects involved in it (both the agents that legitimize it and the political influence and power that some groups impose on others). In this order of ideas, we consider that in the relationship between Social Work and social sciences, beyond good neighborly relations, there are determining factors in the social construction of knowledge (Lorente Molina, 2002, p.48). Indeed, in the case of Social Work, it is worth noting that although it emerged within the framework of the social sciences, it differentiated itself early on from them, especially in epistemological terms, by considering both the field of knowledge and the field of social action as the axis of its reflections. That is to say, it did not position itself from the fragmentation of knowledge and gave value to the knowledge of experience and the practical world. In other words, Social Work was considered the construction of knowledge, the definition of action (social intervention), and at the same time, the production of knowledge about the same action. For Bonfiglio (1982), this means that it defined its object as a unit of analysis and as a unit of action, i.e., it assumed the construction of knowledge and action as part of the same continuous process of comings and goings, and not as separate processes. From this condition it positioned itself in the debates of the social sciences (Soffer, 1982), and although it also adopted the questioned fragmentation of knowledge proposed by modernity in methodological terms (for example, with the classic North American models of case, group and community intervention), it proposed ruptures by positioning itself from different logics of knowing and producing knowledge, in contrast with the scientific method adopted by the other social sciences.

In the debates proposed since modernity, the exclusion of knowledge that does not operate under the rules of logical positivism is clear, so that relations of knowledge-power were established in which certain ways of knowing became hegemonic and others were assumed as subaltern knowledge, and from that place, were excluded. According to Lorente Molina (2002), in the process of configuration of social science knowledge and its consequent fragmentation (subdivision), Social Work was and has been the object of several exclusions. Thus, insofar as it is assumed that as an applied discipline it is practical and not theoretical, it is assumed that it does not construct knowledge, which

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means a clear denial of the contributions it has made to issues such as help, care, or social change, among others, which at one time were central to the understanding of the social order from the social sciences. However, it is clear that the emergence of Social Work was part of the same social science project that was initially defined from an applied vocation, i.e., close to the world of action, although later differentiations were established, considering it of little value from the point of view of scientific prestige (Miranda Aranda, 2003).

Crisis and critique of the West by the West: postmodernity

The project of unified "enlightened" science was not free of tensions and disputes, and was soon the object of multiple criticisms and debates that we identify here as the critique of the West against the West. One of the maximum expressions of this critique can be found in the so-called postmodernity. It is, in a way, a type of internal critique in which Europe examines itself "looking in the mirror", that is, a critique that emerges from its own center.

Of what did the West's critique of itself, which was largely grouped under the movement of postmodernity, consist? It can be said that it is a reaction to the ideas of modernity, whose approaches are summarized in Lyotard's (1987) statement, when he points out the disbelief in the great totalizing narratives that exclude other small non-universal narratives as the axis of the discussion; this disbelief was accompanied by a feeling of pessimism and failure, because the modern promises were never fulfilled: in the economic sphere, there was no liberation from scarcity (inequality persisted), nor was there generalized progress; in the political sphere, the arbitrary use of power was not eliminated (on the contrary, new forms of dictatorships emerged); in the epistemological sphere, the great theories proved incapable of understanding microrealities and epistemic diversity, while at the same time they ignored and excluded other knowledge and knowledges. In the face of all of the above, perhaps what postmodernity most evidenced was the concealment in the modern narrative of spheres of domination and oppression (Harvey, 1998).

The rupture with the idea of universals and homogenization redirected the gaze and the senses towards other more local issues and towards the recognition of plurality, the ephemeral, the chaotic, the discontinuous. It also questioned the idea of reason as the only way to understand social reality and human action, that is, it was interested in what modernity excluded. Thus, postmodernity as a sign of the times and of "self-consciousness" generated several shifts in the conceptions of being, knowing and doing, a process of deconstruction that, this time, did not aspire to achieve a unified vision of the world.

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It is worth noting that the West was also the object of external criticism, not only from the East but also from the global South. For the purposes of this paper, we are interested in highlighting the critique of the West posed by postcolonial studies and the critique posed by decoloniality.

Critique of the West: Postcolonial studies

The crisis of the ideas of modernity permeated other spheres of reflection. The so-called postcolonial studies are recognized as a set of theories that emerge from the identification of gaps in theoretical, epistemological and political issues, as regards the ways of understanding and explaining the social reality posed from the West. They are located in the spectrum of critical theories, as an alternative to Marxism (Bidaseca, 2010). Although this set of theories shares some of the postulates put forward by the internal critique of the West, they denounce the way in which this internal critique perpetuates and reproduces the same exclusions that generate "disenchantment". Thus, for example, postcolonial studies denounce the inability of the West to recognize a different other, and also denounce that even postmodernists remain silent and close their eyes in the face of colonialism, that is, in the face of the subjugation of a different other. In the same way, they denounce the Western incapacity to recognize Eurocentrism, in such a way that when the West looks in the mirror and observes universalism, univocity and fragmentation with distrust, this does not mean openness towards the different other, since, in any case, it continues to revolve around itself.

In other words, the internal critique of the West never abandoned certain postulates such as the myth of progress, the idea of civilization and its supposed superiority. Thus, the difference is understood from the hierarchization, from the silencing and concealment of the barbarism derived from the plundering, the violations and the aggressions present in the colonizing process. That is why Aimé Cesaire (2006) wonders why they set themselves up as superior if they are a society capable of killing, of plundering; is that a civilization or, on the contrary, is it an uncivilization?

For Castro Gómez (2005), the construction of the discourse of superiority was installed having as a place of enunciation the point zero, in which Europe stands as the only model to follow and as a criterion to measure the "development" of other societies, which, it is estimated, must go through the same process (Castro Gómez, 2005; Cesaire, 2006).

It should be noted that post-colonial studies arise from theoretical reflections produced by intellectuals from the English and French colonies, around the 1970s, who were

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trained in the hegemonic centers of power (England, USA, France) and who, being at the center of the debates, built anti-colonialist narratives that questioned the epistemological status of their own discourses and the ways in which knowledge is produced (Bidaseca, 2010). These studies come from various disciplinary fields, among which we can highlight: subaltern studies, orientalism, Afrocentrism and the Gulbenkian report. Their approaches, proposals and stakes were diverse, but in any case, questioning.

From the questions posed by postcolonial studies, they establish ruptures with what has been proposed from the West. Thus, they constitute an alternative and offer a contribution to the epistemological debates of the social sciences. On the other hand, by highlighting knowledge-power relations, they propose a clear political openness, i.e., the need for the social sciences to engage in action, a task that has been present in social work since its origins, as we have pointed out.

Postcolonial studies bring together a plurality of voices and are interested in making silenced voices visible. For Bidaseca (2010), a particularity is that their starting point is the "colonial wound", and from there "they propose a critical analysis of the center-periphery relations created by colonialism" (Bidaseca, 2010, p.95). In other words, they argue that modernity cannot be understood outside coloniality. In this order of ideas, the postcolonial perspective constitutes a possibility to explore other narratives and open other paths, silenced and/or concealed. Therein lies a good part of the current challenges of the social sciences and Social Work.

Critique of the West: The decolonial turn

For some authors, it is in Latin America where for the first time a critique of coloniality gestated (Bidaseca, 2010). Early thinkers such as Guaman Poma de Ayala, Simón Rodríguez, José Martí, José Carlos Mariátegui stand out; in the last decades of the twentieth century, thinkers such as Paulo Freire and Orlando Falsa Borda stand out, and recently we find the approaches of thinkers of the modernity/coloniality group, such as Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Quijano. Thus, a trajectory of concerns can be traced that configures a matrix of analysis in which Latin America is assumed as a category of knowledge. However, it was the commemoration of the arrival of the Spaniards in America (1492-1992), one of the main triggers to pick up, retake and rethink issues that had already been raised in the debate on Latin American identity and modes of knowledge construction from the South. Thus, the decolonial turn was proposed as "another paradigm", contrary to the great modern narratives (Christianity, liberalism,

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Marxism), and was defined as a way of thinking from the edges of hegemonic systems of thought (Maldonado Torres, 2007).

For the decolonial turn, modernity did not begin with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, but in 1492, when Europe was confronted with a different other, which was not discovered; on the contrary, it was en-covered, controlled, violated and exterminated (Dussel, 1994; Quijano, 1988). Latin America was not only erased from universal history, it was plundered of its resources and knowledge. For this reason, authors of the decolonial turn, such as Maldonado Torres (2007), argue that coloniality refers to a pattern of power that, although it emerges as a result of modern colonialism (power relationship between two peoples), transcends forms of domination in which work, knowledge, authority and inter-subjective relations are the result of the colonialist system, authority and intersubjective relations are articulated among themselves through the world capitalist market and the idea of race, so that it is necessary to see the other modes of domination, which do not necessarily pass through the economic, such as, for example, the coloniality of being, the coloniality of knowledge, and the coloniality of power.

Up to this point we can affirm that by the time of the advent of the debates proposed by post-modernity and counter-modernity, Social Work had already explored some paths that established distances from the epistemological postulates of modernity, such as the following:

1- Social Work did not opt for the fragmentation of knowledge or for the definition of a single and exclusive object. Instead, it integrated different social science knowledge, which was expressed in its training processes, thus anticipating interdisciplinary dialogue (Travi, 2006; Lorente Molina, 2002).

2- Their ways of knowing were not framed in academic canons, but they did dialogue with them and there they made a place for themselves, even if subalternized, without abandoning social knowledge (Lorente Molina, 2002).

3- Its link with social assistance, the issue of care, solidarity, and the concern for the search for alternatives to problems and social change placed Social Work in the world of politics. Indeed, as Arendt (2008) points out, action is connected to the political sphere of human life, insofar as it implies a relationship between fellow human beings. From this point of view, living implies a relationship between equals and in this order of ideas, "action always produces stories, intentionally or not" (Arendt, 2008, p.105). Therefore, Social Work has contributed to the construction of social thought having action as a starting point. On the subject, Lorente points out that "the social sciences are discovering what Social

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Work has been developing throughout its history, since the challenge of the plural gaze has been imbricated, by absolute professional and academic necessity, in our epistemological baggage" (Lorente Molina, 2002, p.54). This can be seen in the Gulbenkian report, directed by Inmanuel Wallerstein (2006), which proposes the need to "open up the social sciences". There, the author points out the importance of transcending disciplinary boundaries, the need to cross the lines, not only because the disciplinary organization is somehow exhausted, but also because that mode does not allow us to understand the multiple social realities facing the social world. Thus, he argues that

> *To be historical is not the exclusive property of persons called historians, it is an obligation of all social scientists. To be sociological is not the exclusive property of certain persons called sociologists but an obligation of all social scientists. Economic problems are not the exclusive property of economists; economic questions are central to any social-scientific analysis (Wallerstein, 2006, p.106).*

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Thus, Social Work early on crossed disciplinary boundaries, as proposed by the Gulbenkian report. In the same way, Social Work opted for the epistemologies of experience and from that place it positioned itself in the debates of the social sciences. Therefore, it is worth reviewing how these epistemologies of experience, including feminist epistemologies, have contributed to the construction of knowledge in Social Work and for Social Work.

Feminist critique as an epistemological stake

Feminism interrogates postcoloniality and the decolonial turn using the same questions that these movements asked the West: what do they cover up, what do they silence, what do they make invisible? Moreover, it wonders about the voice of the subaltern in critical theories: can the subaltern still speak in counter-modernity? This is how feminism finds a void when it becomes evident that these perspectives do not include the voices of women or sexual dissidence. Evidencing that, for the most part, critical intellectuals are men who perpetuate the phallocentric constitution of the social and human sciences (Bidaseca, 2010). In the same sense, when feminism is subjected to an internal critique, it shows that women's oppression impacts them differently. Thus, for example, a white woman can be oppressed by a white man, but she in turn can be the oppressor of a black man; a black

woman can be subject to multiple oppressions, for example, she can be oppressed by a black man, by a white man or by a white woman; in the same way, the world of private life, which can be read by a white bourgeois woman as synonymous with oppression, can be read instead by an enslaved black woman as a privilege. This is how Ochoa puts it:

> *Habib Gómez also points out another problem with the Western conception of human rights, which is that it reinforces the idea that patriarchy is the (only) form of oppression suffered by women. While many struggles led by impoverished or popular indigenous, Afro-descendant and mestizo women, who place themselves within the decolonial camp, argue that there is no decolonization without depatriarchalization, the truth is that the "multiple oppressions" faced by racialized women are not shared by white women. The capitalist oppression that weighs on white women is intensified in the case of racialized women by the experience of genocide, slavery, and servitude they have historically endured. (2021, p.20)*

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Thus, feminisms in the plural (popular feminism, Afrofeminism, postcolonial feminism) are proposed, and are interested in making visible and analyzing these multiple oppressions (such as those of sex, race, class). They recognize that in different circumstances women can act as oppressed or as oppressors, and distance themselves from the so-called bourgeois feminism. In this order of ideas, they point out that the subject of feminism is not unitary, nor does it represent a stable identity, so that it is a subject that occupies multiple positions.

These feminisms in the plural also question the category of gender, since from their point of view, this category does not allow an explanation of multiple oppressions. Thus, they affirm that when patriarchy is pointed out as oppressor and not racism, white women are somehow enabled to continue oppressing others from their privileges. Now, how is Social Work articulated in the face of these debates?

Feminist epistemologies, epistemologies of experience and social work

One of the particularities of feminist epistemologies[2] is that they not only question the way in which gender relations influence the construction of knowledge, by making visible, among others, power relations, the presence of prejudices, what is excluded and denied, but also propose alternatives for action (Blazquez Graf, 2010). Their central argument is that traditional epistemologies have not allowed us to see the place of gender in the construction of knowledge, and from there they propose to understand the way in which gender relations and practices participate, influence and contribute to this process, while showing how these norms and practices affect women's lives and are implicated in systems of oppression.

Although these epistemologies began to become visible in the 1970s and 1980s, and were born placing the category of gender at the center of the debate, it was in the 1990s when the debate was broadened and other aspects such as ethnicity, race, social class or sexual orientation were introduced. From decolonial feminist epistemologies, it is argued that these categories also act as structuring factors of power and subordination relations, and should therefore be made visible (Alcoff and Potter, 2003).

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Although it seems that there is agreement on the foundations of feminist epistemologies, they are not represented in a unified theoretical corpus and their positions are diverse. Nevertheless, some of the points on which they converge have to do with the questioning of traditional epistemologies on issues such as:

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[2] A starting point of primary importance is that feminist epistemologies were developed in contexts different from those of the South, mainly by European and North American feminists.

- The homogeneity and neutrality of the cognizing subject, arguing that this is diverse, and diversity (gender, ethnicity, class) acts in the construction of knowledge.

- The individualism present in modern epistemology, which, based on Cartesian principles, proposes knowledge as the result of the careful exercise of an individual's mental faculties. The main problem with this conception is that individual knowers are generic, whereas feminist epistemologies recognize epistemic subjects as situated knowers (Haraway, 1989).

This means that differences in knowers (based on gender, ethnicity, and class) lead to differences in perspectives and these have consequences for knowledge construction. Thus, in addition to situated knowers they also raise differentiated knowers, issues that are absent from traditional epistemologies.

- They propose that it is communities that are able to produce knowledge and not individuals alone. In this sense, they insist on the social and interactive character of those able to produce knowledge. Knowledge is a social construction in which power relations act and must be unveiled.

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- In accordance with the above, objectivity is deeply questioned. Indeed, if it is understood that knowledge is a social construction and, in addition, knowers are situated, it cannot be neutral or impartial. Impartiality is impossible due to the partiality of knowledge because it is situated, experiential and differentiated.

For racialized, Afro-descendant, indigenous and mestizo feminists, who since the 1970s have raised their voices and delved into the implications of the patriarchal and capitalist power framework, the relationship between the different systems of domination, read sexism, racism, heteronormativity and classism (Curiel, 2007), is crossed by the articulation of knowledge and action. That is, as in Social Work, knowledge and action are not assumed as separate processes and, therefore, do not separate the construction of knowledge from the processes of transformation. By not separating knowledge and action, it is important that knowledge contributes to action, and in turn, to knowledge processes. In this order of ideas, experience is introduced from feminism as an instrument for the construction of knowledge, and from that place it was introduced in the debates and devices of knowledge (Trebisacce, 2016).

It is at this point that we find a clear relationship between feminist epistemologies and the construction of knowledge in Social Work. Indeed, according to Mosquera (2005), in the processes of professional intervention, knowledge is created with a local and contextualized nature, and even when it is made up of knowledge produced from the canons of scientificity, it is knowledge that also includes experience, emotions, as well as ethical and political stakes. For the author, it is knowledge that is constructed collectively and interactively and is structured by the experiences of the subject who knows, but also by the experiences of the subjects who participate in these processes of knowledge and action. In this way, the cognizing subjects are not relegated to the neutrality of knowledge, but are bearers of experiences, identities and relationships that shape knowledge.

From our point of view, this knowledge, which Mosquera (2005) calls knowledge in action, can be recognized as such from the possibility offered by feminist epistemologies, as we have pointed out. In this order of ideas, to the extent that knowledgeable subjects are located in processes of interaction, the knowledge that is constructed is not assumed as an individual result, but is part of a collective construction in which objectivity, as understood by traditional epistemology, has no place. It is understood that knowledge is neither neutral, nor impartial, nor generalizing, but is situated, differential and experiential, as occurs with the knowledge built in action, which, according to the author, can be called the knowledge of Social Work.

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As has been pointed out, the construction of knowledge from Social Work has as its starting point the doing, the practice and the experience, establishing from there a clear relationship with the construction of knowledge. Thus, it can be stated that Social Work understands that "Knowing something is always knowing how to do something" (Beillerot et al., 1998), and that it is a knowledge-doing related to the professional intervention carried out in the wide world of social intervention.

It was not until the 1980s that the specialized literature began to refer to social epistemology, which recognized two opposing traditions in the history of philosophy with respect to the conception of science: Aristotelian and Galilean. However, this way of approaching the debate is now in crisis, because according to several authors (de Sousa, 2009; Guzmán and Pérez, 2005; Maldonado Torres, 2007), there are broad issues and facts of social life that cannot be explained from these frameworks. In other words, scientific knowledge falls short.

Thus, "concepts such as conjecture, falsification, criticism, intersubjectivity, otherness, innovation, change, have replaced old concepts such as verification, certainty, objectivity, tradition, stability" (Guzmán and Pérez, 2005, p.5) (italics added by the authors). In this regard, de Sousa affirms that the model of traditional scientific rationality is facing a deep crisis, and from his point of view, it is irreversible. For the author, we are witnessing a moment in which it is important to open up to emerging epistemological paradigms, which will also contribute to the search for global social justice; in his words: "global social justice is not possible without global cognitive justice" (de Sousa, 2009, p.38).

Conclusions

The above points out the way in which the construction of knowledge in Social Work has been closely related to the ways in which emerging epistemologies and epistemologies of experience, such as feminist epistemology, propose to approach social knowledge.

Thus, Social Work did not adopt the opposition between theory and practice, nor did it adopt the split between knowledge and action (which other social sciences did adopt in their origins and which led them to exclude the sphere of practice and experience to a secondary role in the construction of knowledge). For Social Work, doing, practice and experience became a central reference for the construction of knowledge, as also happened with gender studies.

Thinking an epistemology that resorts to experience as a tool to produce knowledge in other spheres and from other perspectives, argues Trebisacce (2016), not only precedes gender studies, but was considered as a true revolution in the way of understanding and building knowledge in the field of knowledge, mobilized critical senses, made it possible to talk about that for which science had no words and made visible from a language and method these other realities, in which the alternative subjects, their stories and their conditions were unknown.

In the same way, introducing experience as an epistemic principle implies an analysis not only of what and how knowledge/intervention is founded and produced, but also of the social factors involved in the acquisition and construction of knowledge/intervention.

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De Sousa (2009) states that what should characterize this emerging paradigm is "prudent knowledge for a decent life" (p.40). This means that it cannot be a paradigm that only supports the construction of knowledge, but a social paradigm, that is, one that contributes to the realization of life, beyond an anthropocentric perspective. In this framework of crisis of scientificity and crisis of traditional epistemology, what we know as frontier, emerging, non-traditional epistemologies arise. These epistemologies raise the need for the construction of a knowledge that recognizes our own, understood as a situated knowledge, an episteme from our own roots "that takes into account our own culture and promotes it, by becoming aware of our memory and projecting it as an instrument of communication among ourselves and from ourselves to the rest of humanity" (Vielma, 2018, p.10).

Emerging epistemologies aim at unveiling realities, as necessary realities and as a situated, continuous process, which is constituted from interactions and, therefore, is configured outside the universalizing pretensions of knowledge, of objectivity, to make room for particularity and subjectivities.

Another characteristic of these emerging epistemologies is that they recognize that the cognizing subject is also situated and inhabited by multiple categories of subordination and power that cross him/her in the construction of knowledge (such as social class, ethno-racial belonging, gender identities, nationality, generation, among others). They also recognize that human beings, in the construction of knowledge, are inhabited by lived processes that are constituted in specific socio-historical and cultural contexts.

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Recognizing the contributions and the relationship of Social Work with the debates and tensions between traditional epistemologies, and recognizing the relationship with emerging epistemologies and feminist epistemologies, opens an important panorama for reflection that should continue to be explored.

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ARTICLE

Social work and the construction of decolonial humanities. Anti-colonial listening and speaking as strategies of resistance

Trabajo social y construcción de humanidades decoloniales. Escucha y habla anticoloniales como estrategias de resistencia

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How to cite

Abstract

This article proposes a reflection on social work from the contributions of decolonial thought, arguing that ethical listening and speaking are strategic tools to dismantle the processes of dehumanization imposed by modernity/coloniality. To understand these processes, I turn to the macro-sociological analysis of long historical period according to Fernand Braudel (1965) and use Anibal Quijano's (2014) concept of coloniality to explain the current consequences of a structure of domination and exploitation of race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class that began with colonialism. The time frame is traversed by the Fanonian conception,

according to Grosfoguel (2012), that the social constructions of modernity define the dividing lines of humanity. Above the line, in the "zone of being", are the people recognized as human and below it, in the "zone of non-being", are those classified as subhuman. This division functions as a structuring element of the exclusion and subordination of persons, peoples and cultures. The central idea of the reflection defends that the "zone of non-being" crosses and constitutes the territory of intervention of social workers and that, understanding it in its complexity, it orients the daily life of the profession in the construction of humanized relationships. The essay concludes with the understanding that, as a theoretical and methodological instrument, the articulation of ethical speaking and listening in social work with a decolonial political project can be revealed as one of the spaces for the construction of humanities and the fight against the production and reproduction of the "zones of non-being".

Resumen

Este artículo propone una reflexión sobre el trabajo social desde los aportes del pensamiento decolonial, argumentando que la escucha y el habla éticas son herramientas estratégicas para desmontar los procesos de deshumanización impuestos por la modernidad/colonialidad. Para comprender estos procesos, recurro al análisis macrosociológico de largo período histórico de acuerdo a Fernand Braudel (1965) y utilizo el concepto de colonialidad de Aníbal Quijano (2014) para explicar las consecuencias actuales de una estructura de dominación y explotación de raza/etnia, género, sexualidad y clase que comenzó con el colonialismo. El marco temporal se encuentra atravesado por la concepción fanoniana, según Grosfoguel (2012), de que las construcciones sociales de la modernidad definen las líneas divisorias de la humanidad. Sobre la línea, en la "zona del ser", están las personas reconocidas como humanas y debajo de esta, en la "zona del no ser", están las clasificadas como subhumanas. Esta división funciona como elemento estructurante de la exclusión y subordinación de personas, pueblos y culturas. La idea central de la reflexión defiende que la "zona del no ser" atraviesa y constituye el territorio de intervención de trabajadores sociales y que, entendiéndola en su complejidad, orienta la cotidianeidad de la profesión en la construcción de relaciones humanizadas. El ensayo concluye entendiendo que, como instrumento teórico y metodológico, la articulación del habla y escucha éticos en el trabajo social con un proyecto político decolonial puede revelarse como uno de los espacios de construcción de humanidades y de combate a la producción y reproducción de las "zonas del no ser".

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Introduction

I was recently moved by reading the book "Memórias da plantação: episódios de racismo cotidiano", by Grada Kilomba (2020). A powerful and necessary text for life, and what I want to highlight at the beginning of this article is found in the Introduction to the Portuguese edition of the work. It is precisely because of this translation that the author discusses language, and ends up revealing its subway when she states that various terminologies present in the Portuguese language "reveal a profound lack of reflection and theorization of colonial and patriarchal history and heritage (...) [They] have a political dimension of generating, fixing and perpetuating relations of power and violence (...) [that] informs us (...) who can represent the true human condition" (Kilomba, 2020, p.14). The author deconstructs a set of words that exemplify the language still entangled by colonialism, among these: subject and object, which are reduced to the "masculine" gender without allowing variations for "feminine" or LGBTQIA+, thus we run the risk that, using x; other/o/e, will be seen as misspelling. Variation is even possible, but still does not escape the female/male, girl/boy, or even slave dichotomy, which marks a natural identity and not a political process of dehumanization, as was actually the enslavement of people. This careful and politically situated position of the writer is one more voice in the struggle to (re)write anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-colonial texts. In line with her, in the present text I will resort to italics when terminology does not allow another resource to overcome the restriction of gender variation imposed by language.

If in writing it is possible to use resources to correct or attempt to repair aspects of the colonial heritage, the challenge is greater for orality. The spoken word is an inescapable tool in professional practice which, combined with listening, is capable of reproducing processes of exclusion or constructing strategies of liberation. This is one of the challenges that are imposed daily between the lines of professional intervention, and that can only be faced with reflection and historical and critical awareness based on epistemologies that support them.

In this context, it is proposed to think, from the perspective of social constructions (Braudel, 2004), a theoretical, methodological and political articulation in which ethical listening and speaking in social work are accepted as powerful strategies of liberating actions in a societal project of transformation structured from decoloniality (Mignolo, 2010a, p.19; Walsh, 2013, p.25). Decolonial thought laid the foundations and interpretative categories of reality from experiences in Latin America. Structured in 1998 as a research program, it shares notions, reasoning and concepts that give it an identity and its own vocabulary, thus contributing to the analytical and utopian renewal of Latin American social sciences in the 21st century (Escobar, 2003, p.53). In other words, he

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understands that decoloniality "indicates that, for the colonized with direct invasion, the path to decolonization is a libertarian yearning that seeks to reverse the colonial. However, colonizing practices and colonial legacies persist"(Gómez-Hernández and Sánchez, 2018, p.141).

The reflections presented here arise from research in the field of the PhD in Social Work in progress, under the decolonial approach, and from studies developed in the PhD in Contemporary Studies concluded by the author in 2019. The complexity of the profession's field of action raises questions of study on training and contemporary epistemologies that dialogue with praxis. In this section, the text assumes the transversality of the decolonial approach to analyze institutions, research and practices from the critique of Eurocentrism (which does not imply anti-Europeanism). It adopts, therefore, as structuring categories economic, social, political and gender relations in Latin America (Martí, 2019), colonialism (Césaire, 2006), the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), of knowledge (Lander, 2011), of being (Maldonado-Torres et al., 2007) and the epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2004).

Coloniality" is a useful concept for understanding the structures of domination within the capitalist model based on the racial and ethnic classification of the world's population, which began with colonialism and extends to the present day, as a sequel. The "coloniality of power" names these modern forms of exploitation and domination, the "coloniality of knowledge" denounces the colonialism present in epistemologies and in the production of knowledge, and the "coloniality of being" refers to the lived experience of colonization and its current impacts.

This set of concepts is articulated with the conception of southern epistemologies. For Santos and Meneses (2014, p.13) the global South and North are metaphorically a field of epistemic challenges. The epistemologies of the South are configured as a key of analysis that adopts the idea that the South overlaps in part with the geographical South (countries and regions of the world that were subjected to European colonialism).

The text is divided into four sections. This introduction presents the theoretical and conceptual setting on which the essay is structured. The second section presents the macro-sociological context of neoliberal global modernity/coloniality and its colonial and Eurocentric roots, considered as the bases of the structures of inequality and exclusion forged from a racialized, sexist and classist morality that divides the world

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into a global North and South (Grosfoguel and Mignolo, 2008; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007; Santos and Meneses, 2014; Wallerstein, 2017). This framework allows us to discuss the connections established between necropolitics (Mbembe, 2021) and the "zone of non-being" (Fanon, 2018), analyzed as a privileged territory of social workers for recognition and intervention from an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 2017). The third section exposes the articulations between societal dialectics and the everydayness of praxis, where ethical listening and speaking are tools of social work in the face of subalternization (Spivak, 2010) in the perspective of the "Philosophy of Liberation"(Dussel, 2011). The last section concludes these preliminary notes with the proposition that non-discriminatory, anti-colonial and geopolitically situated listening and speaking be understood as ways of affirming an "everyday ethics, from and in favor of the immense majorities of humanity excluded from globalization, in the current historical 'normality' in force" (Dussel, 2000, p.15), in the sense of critically thinking an existential political project as a space for the construction of decolonial humanities.

The historical construction of (dis)humanity: neoliberalism and the "zones of non-being".

Understanding the construction of (dis)humanity requires a long-term historical analysis (Braudel, 1965) with respect to the social construction of modernity itself, which is not the purpose of this essay. However, and briefly, it will be necessary to situate from what historical perspective these constructions and the exclusion zones they generate are approached, considering that they are the privileged places for the action of social workers.

As Santos (2005, p.32) states, the neoliberal recipe is a "multifaceted phenomenon with economic, social, political, cultural, religious and legal dimensions interconnected in a complex way" that sustains the processes of globalization, poverty or even, as defined by Castells (2019), a sinister "ménage à trois", formed by terrorism, fear and politics. Its consequences in the last three decades are the breakdown of the Welfare State and democratic systems, exacerbating economic vulnerability and the growth of inequalities, exacerbating humanitarian crises globally.

The intensity of the measures imposed by the neoliberal hegemonic order is felt most devastatingly in the countries of the global South, making them more vulnerable, whether due to internal policies or foreign policies imposed by the coun-

tries of the global North. In this context, necropolitics at the global level has been adopted as the exercise of a sovereignty that is based "on power and the ability to dictate who can live and who must die. Therefore, kill or let live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes" (Mbembe, 2021, p.5).

Mbembe's theoretical conception dialogues with Fanon's (2018) contemporary critical thought on the construction of the "zone of being" and the "zone of non-being" within a modernity that is constituted from coloniality (Dussel, 2021). The articulation between necropolitics and the "zone of not being" allows us to understand the structures of inequality and exclusion forged from a racialized, sexist and classist morality that was established with the colonial processes and continues to this day, challenging the ethics founded on humanity.

The relations of power and domination between the metaphorical North and South of the world and, consequently, the question of the production and reproduction of social relations between individuals, groups and movements of society, points to the historical and current political and ideological issues that are required to be educated in reflection. The phenomenon called globalization is linked to the transnational and cross-border forms of interaction designed by the central states of the world system, in the mid-1980s, the so-called Neoliberal Consensus or Washington Consensus. Although economically outlined, its dimensions and consequences go far beyond this field, social globalization, or the globalization of poverty, is one of these. The reduction of wage costs, labor rights and the implementation of compensatory measures to combat poverty instead of measures to combat inequality, directly impact the poorest populations in all countries of the global South (Santos, 2005, p.41). Economic vulnerability made these peripheral and semi-peripheral countries the most subject to the impositions of neoliberal prescriptions and the exponential increase in inequalities.

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According to Wallerstein and Quijano (1992) capitalism is a non-linear historical process that does not develop naturally. It is the result of the multiple interactions of a set of phenomena that make it possible. One of these phenomena is the so-called "discovery" of America, better known as invasion/intrusion, which marks the beginning of the process of global expansion of capitalism, science and the inter-state system. The idea of America (Mignolo, 2007) inaugurates modernity founded on coloniality, designated by Quijano (2014) as a complex historical phenomenon that extends to the present and refers to a pattern of power that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural and epistemic hierarchies, enabling the reproduction of relations of domination. A pattern of

power that not only guaranteed, but continues to guarantee the exploitation, by capital, of a group of human beings over others on a global scale; the subordination and annihilation of the knowledge and experiences and ways of life of those thus dominated and exploited.

This historical and critical line, which shifts the focus to America, shifts the locus of enunciation and allows us to identify that power and knowledge made the "discoveries" a Eurocentric story, in which the discovery was based on a hierarchical relationship that affirmed that "The discoverer is the one with more power and more knowledge and, with this, the ability to declare the other as his discovery. It is the inequality of power and knowledge that transforms the reciprocity of discovery into the appropriation of the discovered" (Santos, 2008, p.181).

Such displacement reveals the history of colonial power and evidences two of its main consequences: first, it meant for all those peoples the dispossession of their own and unique historical identities; and second, the determination of new identities: racial, colonial and negative. Thus it is possible to understand how colonialism constituted Europe at the center of world history and all other cultures on its periphery. Eurocentrism is presented as the first great discourse of the modern world, which invented and subordinated indigenous populations, African peoples, Muslims and Jews (Santos, 2008). As Grosfoguel and Mignolo (2008) state, this is the nascent context of modernity that is systematically denied in the hegemonic descriptions of modernity made from Europe itself (as a locus of enunciation). In this, the idea of race and racism, which established the difference between colonizer and colonized, is the organizing principle of capital accumulation on a global scale and of power relations. A standard that marked the control of labor, of the State and its institutions, as well as the production of knowledge (Quijano, 2000; 2007; Wallerstein, 1992).

Analyzing the colonial context, Fanon (2010) states that racism and racialization[2] are part of a larger process of domination: the violent and unequal expansion of capitalist relations of production towards the non-European world that has been affected since colonization. In this, expropriation, dispossession, destruction and objective murder are deployed in a plundering of cultural schemes marked by a racial division of labor, which presupposes the place of individuals on the basis of the phenotypical and cultural marks they possess. The author's reflection allows us to perceive how this

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[2] Racialization, thought of as a process, refers to objective conditions that make possible definitions of racial classification translated into certain societies at the ideological level and generating economic, political and cultural tensions. It generates dynamics in which objective conditions propitiate ideological positions that reproduce, model and crystallize structural positions (Silvério, 1999)..

practice of denial of humanity is not restricted to colonially occupied territories, nor does it remain in the past, but has been configured and remains in force as a structuring axis of modern society. It shows that in the epidermization of places and social positions, what is understood by race has come to define the opportunities and barriers experienced by people throughout their lives (Fanon, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2012).

In this context, it is possible to understand how racialization is the subjective internalization of epidermization, that is, the moment when people cease to recognize themselves as reciprocally human/as, to see themselves and others through the distorted lens of colonialism. The binary contrasts between white versus non-white, male versus female are assumed as fixed and essential identities, which impoverish the perception of oneself and the other in the world.

> *For Fanon, racism is a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority in the line of the human that has been politically produced and reproduced as a structure of domination for centuries by the imperialist/Westernocentric/Christianocentric/Capitalist/Patriarchal/Modern/Colonial system." (Grosfoguel, 2012, p.93)*

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In different contexts, related to processes of social construction of modernity, the hierarchy of superiority/inferiority can be defined by different categories of racialization according to markers such as color, ethnicity, language, culture and religion, regardless of the region of the world. It is a hierarchy of domination sustained by the reproduction of discriminatory practices against inferiorized ethnic/racial groups that sustains inequalities, oppression and exclusion in all cultures.

In Grosfoguel's perspective on Fanonian thought, people above the dividing line of humanity are socially recognized as human beings "with subjectivity and access to human/citizenship/civil/labor rights. People below the line of human are considered sub-human or non-human, that is, their humanity is questioned and, therefore, denied (Fanon, 2010)" (Grosfoguel, 2012, p.93).

Thus, bodies bear the marks of racialization and are identified as superior or inferior (Fanon, 2010). Individuals above the line of humanity live in the so-called "zone of being" and those below the line live in the "zone of non-being", which does not mean that these zones are homogeneous. Grosfoguel (2012, p.94) states that "in an imperial/capitalist/colonial world, race constitutes the transversal dividing line that crosses and organizes

relations of class, sexuality and gender oppression on a global scale." It is these intersections, conceptually coined as "intersectionality" by the Black feminist movement in the '80s (Collins, 2019; Collins and Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 2017), that intensify the processes of interaction of class, gender, sexuality, and race relations of domination in individual contexts, collective practices, and cultural/institutional arrangements. The concept has been appropriated by the social sciences because of its scope for investigating how intersecting power relations influence social relations in different societies, as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality considers categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability, ethnicity, and age, among others, as interrelated and mutually shaping each other (Collins and Bilge, 2020).

These processes are present in the two areas of the world described by Fanon, but in qualitatively different ways. In the "zone of non-being," due to the dehumanization to which they are subjected by the racialization of their bodies as inferior, the intensity of class, sexuality, race and gender oppression promotes different degrees of oppression and exclusion.

From the perspective of De Oto and Katzer (2014) the sociological dimension on the "zone of non-being" on which Grosfoguel's conceptualization is based deserves a critical reading:

> *In no case is the zone of non-being synonymous with dispossession or diminution of the agency of the colonized, although its rhetorical figure inadvertently pushes toward that side. The zone of non-being can be understood in Fanon's description as the least favored of the two, the most harmed of the modern-colonial relationship, as long as that is the reading of a dualism from which there is no escape. In a certain sense, the translation of these zones of non-being into sociological dimensions does nothing but reinscribe a phantasmatization of experience, in the sense of stabilizing it in concrete conceptual and nominative articulations [...]. Fanon suspects that in the refusal of destiny, of the destinal, (there is only one destiny. And it is white) spectralities emerge for which there is no discursive domain available, no words of any vocabulary at hand, but that at the same time, any emancipatory journey must be initiated there. (p.58-59)*

Although divergent on the ontological question and the critique of the dualism on which some sociological dimensions are built, it is possible to find convergences between the conceptions that theorize on the "zone of non-being": that from this zone liberation actions must be initiated.

The critical reflection raised by Fanonian thought leads to the (re)knowledge that each context and each place possesses its condition of materiality in which liberation demands non-repression and non-subjugation of voices and people. This is the context in which the action of intervention mainly takes place: the practical ethics of the professional activity of social work.

In the professional daily life, it is necessary to understand this macro historical and sociological scenario so that the yearnings of freedom, equality, right and justice can be transformed into concrete acts. After all, a universalization that dilutes particularities, differences, cultures, histories and that privileges only Eurocentric Western thought, cannot serve as a parameter for interventions with individuals, groups, social movements and populations that find themselves in spaces where the enjoyment of the rights of humanity is permanently denied.

Listening and Speaking as Decolonial Strategies in Social Work

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The debates and appropriations of decolonial thinking have been present with different intensity in subjects, undergraduate and graduate careers in different areas, assuming different characteristics from country to country. For Gómez-Hernández and Sánchez,

> *Opting for the decolonial implies situating oneself from the life alternatives of individuals, collectives, peoples and communities that have not only resisted, but during their historical struggle, have recreated their existences and ways of life. It is there where the hope for social liberation is born and sustained, which is impossible to achieve without intercultural critical dialogue. (2018, p.141)*

In the global neoliberal contemporaneity, social struggles simultaneously confront the capitalism and racialization inaugurated by Eurocentric modernity, which together underpin necropolitics. In this perverse historical conjuncture, social classification systems maintain and reproduce intact colonial power structures, which "were maintained when their bearers changed or were forced to change roles and concrete activities and changed forms of work and exploitation" (Quijano, 1995, p.4), generating historical identities, as mentioned.

As an emerging and geopolitically located debate in Latin America and the Caribbean, decoloniality in Brazilian social work is still an incipient approach and there are few problematizations and contributions to the profession. It is worth highlighting, then, the reflection of dos Santos (2018) in his article "Serviço Social e descolonialidade: relações entre questão colonial e questão social no Brasil". On the other hand, efforts by authors seeking to advance decolonial debates can be identified in several countries of the American continent. In 2017, the book "Social Work and Decoloniality. Epistemologías insurgentes para la intervención en lo social" by Hermida and Meschini, brought together foundational texts for an appropriation of this epistemology by social work.

In the field of professional praxis, the reflections that embrace the decolonial perspective reveal that it offers valuable theoretical contributions for a complex analysis of contemporary social issues and the construction of practices committed to a project of humanization, liberation and overcoming of "subalternity" (Beverley, 2004, p.337) geopolitically and epistemologically located from the colonial experience (Gómez-Hernández, 2017; 2018; Gómez-Hernandez and Sánchez, 2018; Gómez-Hernández et al., 2014; Martínez and Agüero, 2017; Pereyra and Paez, 2017). As stated by Curiel ,

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Decolonial proposals, in their various expressions, have offered critical thinking to understand the historical and political specificity of our societies from a non-dominant paradigm that shows the relationship between Western modernity, colonialism and capitalism, questioning the narratives of official and political historiography and showing how social hierarchies were formed. (2019, p.32)

In the praxis of social work, marked by the permanent articulation between the individual and the collective, by political or ideological and historically situated non-neutrality, listening and orality are privileged tools, whether in action, scientific production or activism. As political acts, they are not neutral, and can be configured, for this very reason, as instruments for the maintenance of subalternity, reinforcing the hegemonic project of control, oppression, inequality and exclusion, or as powerful tools for social transformation. In the recipe book imposed by neoliberalism, listening and speaking are often the only tools available in daily work, especially when the intervention is not supported by public policies and social programs, since they do not address the levels of structural dehumanization imposed by the "zone of non-being".

According to Couto and Carrieri (2018) in liberation processes listening is a way to break with the imposed silencing, therefore, it is imperative to consider the perspective of each person whose voice was denied or whose recognition of their humanity was omitted in the historical process of constitution of modern society.

In the Dusselian perspective of the "Philosophy of Liberation" (2011; 2021) the transformation of society is centered on the ethical principle of reciprocity with the Other. The liberating reason is, therefore, the search for emancipatory means , in which it is necessary to situate oneself at the level of the materiality of practices, in order to understand the mechanisms of exclusion, as well as the ways of silencing voices. This is only possible if there is an effective positioning next to the oppressed, and it is this proximity that allows their recognition as subjects and the awareness of responsibility for their physical, mental, emotional and social well-being (Dussel, 2001). For Couto and Carrieri the "philosophy of liberation" denounces that the form of emancipation from the oppressive totality occurs from the "place of the word of the oppressed", in the political resistance to the system; and of the oppressors, in "assuming their share of responsibility in the construction of the totality and in the myth of modernity in order to, by giving voice to the other, allow dialogue and the reconstruction of society" (2018, p.637).

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According to this approach, subalternity as a critical operator should not be the object of a victimizing discourse, which imprisons the subaltern subject in the space of exclusion and deprivation of access to power and protagonism, which requires salvation or others to manage it. In this context, listening and professional orality will be the tools that can intervene as resources to maintain or transform the oppressive system of subordination.

Spivak (2010), in his article "Can the subaltern speak?", warns that it is necessary to become aware of the political ethical character of intellectuals, in order to avoid the traps of speaking for the subaltern subject, which is one of the ways of maintaining it in subalternity. What must be practiced is a professional intervention and effective actions against subalternity, generating spaces of qualified listening that assume the commitment that "responsibility must unite the call of ethics to a response" (Spivak, 1994, p.57).

Thus, professional ethics needs to critically apprehend the foundations of moral conflicts in order to avoid the determinations of its alienated form, identifying the relationship between the uniqueness and universality of moral ethical acts, so that it can respond to social conflicts in the search for freedom. It is necessary to connect "the ethics of Social Work with democratic values (...) and with the commitment to a way of understanding democracy in which the principles of Social Work have meaning and significance" (Mougan Rivero, 2019, p.298).

The strategies of humanization and integrality in public policies find in ethical listening and speaking two powerful tools of social intervention to articulate the private space and the public space. The non-dichotomous but dynamic transit between the subjectivity of the subject and the construction of social policies requires the mediation of professionals capable of overcoming conservative ideological instruments and who are committed to act according to a critical vision and a libertarian ethic capable of confronting the standards of dehumanization. Thinking critically about practice, values and ethical principles should reflect the search for spaces for the reconstruction of the humanities in a dialectical, permanent dialogue between the local and the global, the subjective and the collective.

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To conclude

The transversality of decolonial thought offers social work contributions for the construction of an existential political project that is nourished by the radical critical debate of the ethics of liberation. The humanity recognized in this debate is instrumentalized through the dialogues of silenced voices and has as its principles an integrative thinking that resists the homogenizing logic of modernity. Knowledge based on heterogeneity and the protagonism of the subaltern subject recognizes the intersectional crossings produced by the different forms of coloniality that structure the "zone of non-being".

The praxis of social work is a meeting place between the micro-social and the macro-social. In the professional intervention there is an intense exchange where the social is inscribed in subjectivity. This, with the marks of the colonial aftermath, in turn, is inscribed in the macro-social. The encounter and exchange between the micro and the macro is mediated by the dialogue that takes place in professional practice, where non-discriminatory, anti-colonial and geopolitically situated listening and speaking are tools to repair the violent denial of the Other, imposed by the invisibility and silencing of the voice, derived from the construction of a dominant discourse that is based on contempt,

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insecurity and indignity. As a critical instrument, praxis invites professionals to situate concepts such as race, class, gender, sexuality and culture as axes of reflection on the construction of social problems and phenomena linked to exclusion and social inequality.

The notion of praxis for liberation is the necessary relationship between ethics and humanization. In this sense, it is urgent to restore, reconstruct and regenerate spaces, epistemologies and interventions, not only as an academic and professional disciplinary project, but also as an existential-decolonial ethical-political and epistemic project for the construction of humanities and the fight against the production and reproduction of the "zone of non-being". The "being" finds the possibility of (re)existing (Achinte, 2013) in the ethical listening of critical professionals who use ethical discourse as an instrument to build spaces of daily resistance.

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Indo-African American Critical Thought: trajectories, identity traits and implications for research in Social Work

Pensamiento Crítico Indoafroamericano: trayectorias, rasgos identitarios e implicancias en la investigación en Trabajo Social

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to approach different trajectories of thought, intertwined with each other as a unit of meaning, which have historically configured a matrix that I call Indo-African American Critical Thinking. This way of thinking not only differs from other forms of critical thinking, but also has implications for research in Social Work. The fundamental premise is that this matrix alludes to a complex political-epistemic framework - transdisciplinary construction - of pluriverse trajectories of thought, ideas, categories, concepts, theoretical and philosophical formulations, social practices, historical experiences and artistic and cultural expressions, which mutually feed each other in a critical, interpretative and transformative way, inscribed in processes of liberation and emancipation. This paper is organized in three sections. In the first I briefly address the trajectories of Indianism, 'patria grande' and continental unity, national-popu-

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lar thought, Indo-African American socialism, dependency theories, liberation theology, liberation pedagogy, liberation philosophy, decolonial option and Indo-African American feminisms. In the second, I summarize some identifying features that characterize Indo-African American Critical Thought and differentiate it from other forms of critical thought. In the third, I link this matrix to Social Work research, discussing some implications in relation to the relevant issues and questions that arise from this critical approach, the methodologies whose development could be useful and interesting for the collaborative and participatory co-construction of knowledge, the types of research designs that would contribute to this co-construction and the modes and forms of socialization that would contribute to the debate and dissemination of the co-constructed knowledge.

Resumen

El propósito de este trabajo es el abordaje de distintas trayectorias de pensamiento, imbricadas entre sí como unidad de sentido, y que fueron configurando históricamente una matriz que denomino Pensamiento Crítico Indoafroamericano. Esta forma de pensamiento no solo se diferencia de otras formas de pensamiento crítico, sino que tiene sus implicancias en la investigación en Trabajo Social. La premisa fundamental que sostengo en este artículo es que esta matriz alude a un complejo entramado político-epistémico -construido transdisciplinariamente-, de trayectorias pluriversas de pensamiento, ideas, categorías, conceptos, formulaciones teóricas y filosóficas, prácticas sociales, experiencias históricas y expresiones artísticas y culturales, que se retroalimentan mutuamente de manera crítica, interpretativa y transformadora, inscriptos en procesos de liberación y emancipación. El trabajo está organizado en tres secciones. En la primera, abordo brevemente las trayectorias del indianismo, la patria grande y unidad continental, el pensamiento nacional-popular, el socialismo indoafroamericano, las teorías de la dependencia, la teología de la liberación, la pedagogía de la liberación, la filosofía de la liberación, la Opción Decolonial y los feminismos indoafroamericanos. En la segunda, analizo resumidamente algunos rasgos identitarios que caracterizan al Pensamiento Crítico Indoafroamericano y lo diferencian de otras formas de pensamiento crítico. En la tercera, vinculo esta matriz con la investigación en Trabajo Social, discutiendo algunas implicancias en relación a las cuestiones y preguntas relevantes que surgen de este enfoque crítico, las metodologías cuyo desarrollo podría resultar útil e interesante para la co-construcción colaborativa y participativa de conocimientos, los tipos de diseños de investigación que aportarían a esta co-construcción y los modos y formas de socialización que contribuirían al debate y difusión de los conocimientos co-construidos.

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Introduction

The matrix of thought that I call Indo-African American Critical Thought has a long trajectory in Our America[2] . When I refer to critical thinking, I do so in a broad sense, as an axiological-anthropological conception or philosophical conception of the world and life, based on the search for liberation and emancipation and the rejection of all forms of oppression, domination or exploitation of human beings and nature. In this sense, I agree with Franz Hinkelammert (2007), for whom not all thought that criticizes something is therefore critical thought, but that whose point of view from which the criticism is made is human emancipation.

However, in this paper I am not referring to Eurocentric critical thought, but to another form of thought, constructed from another locus of enunciation and another socio-historical-political reality. In this sense, in relation to this other way of thinking, I write this contribution from my condition as a salaried research professor and intellectual of a public university, a mestizo descendant of the great Tupi-Guarani nation and native of one of the most impoverished and relegated provinces of Northern Argentina. From this place, I identify with the Decolonial Option that has been building the "Modernity/ Coloniality collective" (Palermo, 2019) and I also adhere to the struggles and political-epistemic proposals of Indo-African-American feminisms and, more specifically, of community feminisms.

This work is inscribed in a context of enormous deepening, expansion and intensification of social inequalities generated by the colonial-modern-capitalist-patriarchal order, built from the bloody invasion of 1492 and currently sustained and reproduced by neoliberalism and financial governmentality (Agüero, 2013). In this context, today the need and urgency of critique is more important than ever, but not a critique that is limited to interpreting the world from a European-Western vision that excludes all exteriority, but a critique capable of questioning this colonial-modern-capitalist-patriarchal order from a decolonial, anti-imperialist, non-capitalist, feminist and deeply Indo-African-American point of view.

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[2] Expression taken from Nuestra América, work of the revolutionary Cuban poet José Martí, published on January 10, 1891 in New York (Rojas, 2015, p.27)..

Trajectories that make up Indo-African American Critical Thinking

In this first section I refer to each of the ten trajectories of thought mentioned above. Indigenism, today known as Indianism, emerged in the first half of the 16th century with Bartolomé de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, who defended the Indians against the Spanish colonizers. In Europe, Francisco De Victoria, professor at the University of Salamanca, then the most prestigious in Europe, shares the same position. Both influenced the sanction of the Laws of the Indies in 1542, which recognized the Indians as free human beings and placed them under the direct protection of the Spanish Crown.

In the 1960s, a critical movement began in Bolivia, which Fausto Reinaga Chavarría called indianismo and which criticized indigenism for its colonialist stance, claiming the integration of native peoples and knowledge into European modernity. However, Ladislao Landa Vásquez of Peru argues that, towards the end of the 19th century, several white authors were already proposing Indianism, but it became invisible and resurfaced only in the 1960s, this time proposed by authors of the native peoples themselves. Fabiola Escárzaga highlights the relevance of Fausto Reinaga Chavarría, Guillermo Carnero Hoke and Guillermo Bonfil Batalla in the indianism of Bolivia, Peru and Mexico (Escárzaga, 2015). Other Peruvian indianists are José Carlos Mariátegui and Virgilio Roel Pineda.

One of the great ideas that sustains and animates the struggles for American emancipation is that of patria grande and continental unity, based on freedom, independence, sovereignty, and therefore, opposed to all forms of domination, colonialism and imperialism. The phrase "let us be free and the rest matters nothing" (Galasso, 2000) summarizes the spirit of the liberating deeds of José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar in the second and third decade of the 19th century. Bolivar warns very early about the imperialist interference of the United States when he asserts that "The United States of America seems destined by providence to plague the whole of America with misery and hunger" (Bolivar, 1982, p.260). José Martí also warned in 1895 that "We must prevent in time, with the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading through the Antilles and falling upon our lands of America" (Martí, 1971, p.189). For Simón Rodríguez, Bolívar's teacher, the way forward was public education, with the purpose of forming citizens. For his part, Manuel Ugarte spreads the idea in "La Patria Grande" published in 1924. This author highlights the figure of José Gervasio Artigas, who created the Union of Free Peoples and the Federal League, and opposed all European colonial rule.

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In the same direction, and following the idea of a large homeland and continental unity, national-popular thought developed in the continent. It is being built with contributions from many political figures, intellectuals, artists, leaders and revolutionary leaders. It vindicates the people as protagonists of their own history and as subjects and recipients of emancipation. In Mexico, Emiliano Zapata leads the peasant revolutionary movement of 1911 and, 15 years later, Lázaro Cárdenas, with the slogan "Mexico for the Mexicans" implements a policy of nationalization, agrarian reform, secular, free and compulsory public education and defense of workers and peasants. In Nicaragua, Augusto César Sandino rebelled in 1927 against North American domination. He vindicated the anti-imperialist struggle and the defense of the native peoples. He is assassinated by order of the North American Embassy (Vázquez, 2015, p.132).

In Peru, Víctor Raúl Haya De La Torre develops his ideas influenced by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó, the Mexican José Vasconcelos and the Argentine Manuel Ugarte. He assumes the presidency of the Student Federation of Peru from the National University of San Marcos. Later, he becomes the first rector of the Universidad Popular del Perú, founding the magazine Claridad, of which José Carlos Mariátegui was interim director. Inspired by Vasconcelos, he creates the Indo-American flag. In 1926, he founds the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, as a "Latin American anti-imperialist revolutionary party" and "Latin American autochthonous movement without any foreign intervention or influence" (Gullo, 2015, p.141). It proposed democratization, industrialization, nationalization and integration as its pillars.

Also important is the trajectory that I call Indo-African American socialism, because it is rooted in the collective ways of life and communal modes of social organization of the peoples of Abya Yala[3] . In the 1920's, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui raised

[3] Name originating in the American continent recognized by the II Continental Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities of Abya Yala, held July 21-25, 2004, in Quito, Ecuador (Bonilla, 2004).

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the need to build a thought situated in the Indo-African American reality, which is not a copy but an original creation. He distanced himself from European Marxism and its local reproductions and founded the Peruvian Socialist Party, vindicating the indigenous, Afro-descendant and mestizo peoples as subjects of the revolution and of the profound changes to be carried out.

In the 1960s, in Colombia, sociologists Orlando Fals Borda and Camilo Torres founded one of the first Faculties of Sociology in the Americas. Fals Borda harshly criticizes intellectual colonialism and recovers the action-research method invented by Kurt Lewin in the 1930s, transforming it into participatory action-research. He adopts from the Colombian peasants the word sentipensar, which expresses the need to combine reason with passion, body and heart (Fals Borda, 2009).

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the Argentine philosopher Rodolfo Kusch lives with Aymara communities in Bolivia to learn about the thinking and way of life of what he called América profunda. Another Argentine, Juan José Hernández Arregui, proposes a socialism interpreting Peronism as a popular movement, from Marxism. Also, John William Cooke vindicates the revolutionary character of Peronism and defends the nationalism of the working class and other popular sectors, arguing that the liberation of the homeland and the social revolution are one and the same thing. Likewise, Norberto Galasso vindicates the struggle against imperialism from the national left and in numerous publications reflects on the national question and the idea of an Indo-African American socialism.

On the other hand, there are several very important historical experiences of Indo-African American socialism. The Cuban Revolution is the most emblematic case, due to its long trajectory and validity, which has been in force for more than 60 years. Another extraordinary experience is the democratic government of Salvador Allende, in Chile, between 1970 and 1973, which was violently interrupted by a civil-military coup. Also relevant is the experience of the revolutionary government of Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru, between 1968 and 1975.

Another very important trajectory of Indo-African American Critical Thought is represented by the theories of dependency, which combine theoretical production with political action. They are built from the 1960s onwards as a critique of developmentalism, capitalist modernization, the classic theory of imperialism and colonialism. These theories are built by: Fernando Henrique Cardozo, Celso Furtado and Theotonio Dos

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[3] Nombre originario del continente americano reconocido por la II Cumbre Continental de los Pueblos y Nacionalidades Indígenas de Abya Yala, desarrollado del 21 al 25 de julio de 2004, en Quito, Ecuador (Bonilla, 2004).

Santos from Brazil; Aníbal Quijano from Peru; Edelberto Torres-Rivas from Guatemala; Agustín Cueva from Ecuador; Antonio García from Colombia; Pedro Paz, Alfredo Eric Calcagno and Alejandro Rofman from Argentina; Enzo Faletto from Chile; Héctor Malavé Mata from Venezuela; Gerard-Pierre Charles from Haiti; Pablo González Casanova from Mexico, among many others (Borón, 2008, p.28-29).

At that time structural-functionalism, which defended capitalist modernization, Stalinist and Trotskyist Marxism, which also defended modernization and development to stop being archaic societies as a path to socialism, and the developmentalism of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), which proposed import substitution as a way to overcome underdevelopment and achieve capitalist modernization, were disputing hegemony in the continent. The authors of the dependency theories take very different and even contradictory positions on these paradigms. Celso Furtado and Raúl Presbisch formulate the structuralist economic theory and defend industrialization and import substitution as ways to overcome underdevelopment. Fernando Enrique Cardozo and Enzo Faletto defend development within dependent capitalism. They do not criticize either functionalism or liberalism, but they do criticize ECLAC developmentalism and Marxism.

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Theotonio dos Santos, for his part, criticizes ECLAC developmentalism, Parsons' functionalism and traditional Marxism. He reinscribes in the Indo-African American reality the theses of Marx on the structure and development of capital, of Lenin on unequal development, of Rosa Luxemburg on primitive accumulation and of Trotsky on unequal and combined development. He criticizes North American imperialism and vindicates continental unity and socialism as ways to overcome dependence. He defines dependence as: a) a situation where the economy of a group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which its own economy is tied; or b) a historical configuration of the world economic structure where certain countries are favored to the detriment of others, determining the possibilities of development of the latter (dos Santos, 2020).

Three other very important trajectories of Indo-African American Critical Thought are liberation theology, liberation pedagogy and liberation philosophy. They emerge in the 1960s. Liberation theology developed in a climate of profound changes promoted by the Second Vatican Council. Hugo Assmann from Brazil, Gustavo Gutiérrez from Peru and Leonardo Boff from Brazil stand out, as well as emblematic figures such as Helder Cámara, bishop of Recife, Brazil, and Camilo Torres, a Co-

lombian sociologist priest, who died in combat as a guerrilla fighter. In Argentina, Juan Carlos Scannone, Lucio Gera and Rafael Tello, founders of the theology of the people, the Argentine version of liberation theology, stand out, as well as Gerardo Ferrari and Carlos Mujica (Scannone, 2009)..

Liberation pedagogy was developed in Recife, Brazil, as a movement of popular culture and adult education, led by Paulo Freire, for whom liberation is a painful labor that gives birth to a new man. He conceived education as a process of conscientization. The 1964 civil-military coup, which overthrew João Goulart, truncated Freire's project. For its part, the philosophy of liberation develops towards the end of the 1960s, with the debates between the Peruvian Augusto Salazar Bondy and the Mexican Leopoldo Zea, joined in 1971 by the Argentines Juan Carlos Scannone and Enrique Dussel. Mario Casalla (1973) coined the category universal situated as a philosophical, political, historical and social category. For Alejandro Auat (2011) this does not imply renouncing the abstraction of concepts or the pretension of universality, but thinking-in-situation or from a locus enuntiandi that singularizes the universal. Enrique Dussel proposes an ethics of liberation and also a method that he calls analectics, which he proposes as a method of the philosophy of liberation.

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In the early 1990s, Aníbal Quijano takes up the thought of José Carlos Mariátegui and proposes the Decolonial Option as a critique of the Eurocentric vision of the world based on modernity/coloniality, patriarchy and capitalism. He constructs the categories matrix-modern-colonial of power, modern-world-system, coloniality of power, colonial difference, among others. Towards the end of the same decade, the Modernity/Coloniality collective was formed, composed of Quijano, Dussel, Arturo Escobar, Walter Mignolo, Edgardo Lander, Ramón Grosfoguel, Catherine Walsh, Zulma Palermo, María Lugones, María Eugenia Borsani, Santiago Castro-Gómez and Nelson Maldonado Torres, among others. Lander proposes the coloniality of knowledge, Maldonado Torres the coloniality of being, Lugones the coloniality of gender and Walsh interculturality as a critique of multiculturalism, among many other transdisciplinary contributions of the group.

Also, in the same decade, Indo-African-American feminisms began to develop with pluriverse trajectories (Martínez, 2019a), although they coincide in the rejection of patriarchy, capitalism, coloniality and the universal homogenization of the categories of women and gender (Villarroel Peña, 2019). They also coincide in the rejection of Eurocentrism and the pretension of hegemony of white, academic and middle-class feminism (Medina Martin, 2013). In addition to these rejections, these

feminisms make very important and pluriverse contributions. In this sense, the social struggles, political approaches and theoretical and epistemological contributions of black, Chicano, mestizo, indigenous, autonomous, decolonial, communitarian, popular and dissident feminisms, among others, stand out (Moore Torres, 2018).

Unity of meaning and identity traits of Indo-Afro-American Critical Thinking

In spite of the differences that we can observe between the different trajectories briefly discussed in the previous section, there is a common thread with which these paths were woven beyond their differentiation; to understand this fabric, in this section I analyze the mutual imbrications, the historical, political and epistemic interrelationships that allow us to see not loose trajectories nor detached from each other, but intertwined, forming a construct with unity of meaning.

Indo-African American Critical Thought is being built over a period of more than 500 years from 1492 onwards. It is configured in a continuous and dialectical process, which is enriched - on the one hand - with a lush production of theologians, philosophers, thinkers, intellectuals, historians, economists, sociologists, pedagogues, political scientists, artists, writers, poets, musicians, among others. But it is also built - on the other hand - with a long history of popular, peasant, military, workers, students, native peoples, women, political and social leaders who take up the cause of liberation and emancipation and dedicate their lives and even give their lives heroically to this cause.

Therefore, a first identifying feature of this matrix of thought is its collective construction process. That is to say, it is a matrix of thought whose historical construction is not attributable to an individual subject but to a collective subject, which is also historically constructed. This identifying feature differentiates it from other critical thought matrices such as Marxism or the Frankfurt School, where this collective production of thought is not so evident, nor is its attribution to a collective subject that is historically constructed. The ideas that shape the Indo-African American Critical Thought cross each other, influencing and feeding back mutually, forming a multicolored collective fabric. Ideas such as those of patria grande, continental unity, independence or liberation, for example, traverse national-popular thought, theories of dependency and the theology, pedagogy and philosophy of liberation, but in turn, through these, they underlie the Decolonial Option and feed back into it and Indo-African American feminisms. The trajectories developed above also show other identity traits that are reflected in

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the richness, originality and pluriversity of their approaches. These characteristics also distinguish Indo-African American Critical Thought from other forms of critical thought. The originality lies in the fact that it is a thought constructed from the singularity and specificity of the historical, political, economic and cultural reality of Our America. It is neither a copy nor a replica nor an adaptation of other forms of thought, as proposed by José Carlos Mariátegui in the 1920s when he founded Peruvian socialism based on the native communities, the mestizaje and the black Peruvian population. Later, in the 1960s, Orlando Fals Borda, Camilo Torres and Rodolfo Kusch, among others, also proposed it. Years later, in the 1990s, it was also proposed by Aníbal Quijano, when he constructed the Decolonial Option, which was joined by Walter Mignolo, creator precisely of the category pluriversity (Mignolo, 2011).

Pluriversity has to do, in the first place, with the multiplicity of voices and perspectives that make up Indo-African American Critical Thought. There is not a single view of reality, nor a single interpretation. There is no hegemonic knowledge that marginalizes other knowledge. Nor is there only one form of knowledge, but multiple forms that come from multiple experiences and life histories. There is no canonical knowledge or forms of knowledge. Nor are there scientific communities with pretensions of sacredness, nor epistemic obedience, nor disciplines that discipline. All voices are valid and legitimate from the perspective of a critical interculturality (Walsh, 2009) and transcultural experiences (Palermo, 2019). This identity feature differentiates this matrix from other forms of critical thinking, where borders tend to be closed, dogmatic and endogenous.

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The richness of Indo-African American Critical Thought lies in the enormous baggage of theoretical, epistemic and methodological contributions made from the different trajectories of thought developed in the previous section. Moreover, this wealth of contributions comes not only from intellectual, scientific or artistic production, but also from the social struggles and national, popular and communal political experiences lived in the continent. It is a matrix of thought that is being built collectively in the heat of these experiences and struggles, and that, therefore, is deeply rooted in the memory, the social imaginaries and the Indo-African-American world of life. The richness of this matrix also lies in a non-linear conception of time and history. It is a circular conception, not chronometric and not reduced to productivity and capitalist economic accumulation. Time and history are conceived as spaces of life, spaces of experiences lived collectively in the body-territories and with nature, in an integrated manner as a totality of meaning. The relationships of mutual imbrication and feedback between the different trajecto-

ries addressed in the first section configure a matrix of thought based on transdisciplinarity, holistic gaze, historicity, intersectionality and decoloniality. It is, therefore, a sentipensar-hacer situado that implies a profound political-epistemic rupture with Eurocentric-Western-modern-modern-colonial-patriarchal-capitalist thought. These identity traits allow us to distinguish very clearly this matrix of thought from other forms of critical thought. Moreover, they point to a very singular and specific profile.

Transdisciplinarity does not eliminate disciplinary boundaries, but it does cross and overflow them, constructing knowledge that cannot be reduced to certain disciplinary fields or interpreted exclusively from them. What transdisciplinarity builds is a multifaceted or multidimensional knowledge, which allows a broader view of reality. As the knowledge-producing subjects of each trajectory relate to each other, they produce knowledge that is enriched, as occurs with the ideas of liberation, revolution, socialism, dependence and coloniality, among others. Furthermore, knowledge is enriched with meanings that are constructed on the basis of pluriverse historical experiences. Very concrete cases are the revolutionary experiences of Fidel Castro in Cuba, Salvador Allende in Chile and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in Peru, among others.

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All the trajectories included in the first section have a holistic and historicist view of reality. In this sense, the idea of patria grande is the most emblematic, as a view of totality (holistic) and historical construction (historicism) of reality. The same is true of Indianism, theories of dependency and the Decolonial Option, to name but a few. On the other hand, although intersectionality and decoloniality are rather recent epistemic approaches (Crenshaw, 1989; Vargas Soler, 2009), the ideas that support them have a long historical construction that crosses the trajectories developed in the first section.

In the case of intersectionality, it refers to the intertwining of conditionalities that specify the social situation of the subjects, such as gender, race, class, occupation, among others. It is a view that situates social subjects in a particular place, time and socio-historical-political context and this is one of the fundamental features that runs through all Indo-African American Critical Thought. The same is true of decoloniality, which accounts for the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) constructed by modernity and sustained by patriarchy, racism and capitalism. This epistemic approach is imbricated in the long political and social struggles developed in Our America against colonialism and imperialism, as well as in the baggage of ideas and theoretical, epistemic and methodological constructions that are shaping this matrix of thought.

Implications for Social Work research

The trajectories of thought developed in the first section and the reflections made in the second, now allow us to address some very important implications for research in Social Work. I have no doubt about the enormous potential of Indo-African American Critical Thinking, not only for professional training and the production of knowledge in Social Work, but also for social intervention, taking into account that these three areas of the profession are nothing more than mutually intertwined and implicated dimensions of each other. It is more than evident that professional training is implicit in all social intervention and that we cannot separate one from the other, even if we tried to do so. The same is true of research, although it seems that this needs to be explained a little more because sometimes it is not so obvious.

First of all, I cannot fail to mention that many ideas constructed by Latin American Critical Thought had a great influence on the period known as the reconceptualization of Social Work, whose peak occurred between 1965 and 1975. Of course, this movement was not unrelated to the social struggles, political experiences and scientific, intellectual and cultural productions that were shaping Latin American Critical Thinking, as I pointed out in the previous section. The contributions of reconceptualization were very important for Social Work, because they meant an attempt to break the crystallization of conservative and reactionary ideas and practices that were reproduced under the name of "social work" in Our America.

Some of the implications for Social Work research that I would like to highlight in this section are: a) the type of research proposed by Latin American Critical Thinking; b) the relevant issues and questions that arise from this matrix of thought; c) the purpose of knowledge production; d) the methodologies that may be useful for this type of research; e) the research designs that would be recommended; and f) the forms of socialization that would contribute to the debate and dissemination of knowledge. It is worth noting that these implications also apply to professional training and social intervention, although I will only refer to research for the sake of the length of this article.

In relation to the type of research, Indo-African American Critical Thinking proposes a collective, collaborative and participatory co-construction of knowledge, crossed by a multiplicity of historical, political, ancestral and popular processes, experiences and knowledge, interpreted not by supposedly seasoned experts, but by the protagonists themselves within the framework of the meanings of their lifeworlds and their daily lives. The relevant research questions and issues are not

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raised out of thin air, but arise from this specific context of long memory, loaded with meaning and shared meanings. They do not arise from theoretical or speculative lucubrations, but from accumulated experience, everyday knowledge, popular beliefs and practices, and wisdom derived from shared stories and experiences.

In the research space that is built from this matrix of thought, convictions and political commitment are not left aside, behind a supposed value neutrality of science. On the contrary, the research task is sprinkled by the collective project, by the struggles and the daily construction of horizons of meaning. The purpose of research is not, then, mere knowledge for the sake of knowledge; it is not mere curiosity or personal or institutional interest. The purpose is the search for the deepest meaning and the appropriate ways to collectively transform reality. Research is thus transformed into a deep reflective look, focused on the problems of the popular sectors, the peasantry, native peoples, afro-descendants, mestizos, commoners, immigrants, as well as marginalized, excluded, stigmatized, racialized and invisibilized populations. It emphasizes those who, for Indo-African American Critical Thought, are the protagonists and recipients of emancipation.

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Useful methodologies for this type of research are all those that can construct a broad view from a particular place (Harding, 2004), not only to understand and interpret reality but, fundamentally, to transform it. Methodologies that allow the analysis of power structures, dependence, domination and oppression, with a situated and rooted view of the other, of social subjects and of historical, political and social processes, are useful. In this sense, positivist, neopositivist, falsificationist, systemic-functionalist, quantitative and hypothetico-deductivist methodologies, among others, are not useful. On the other hand, undisciplined methodologies are useful, centered on a situated feeling-doing and that generate processes of depatriarchalization, decolonization and intersectionality, such as participatory action research, collaborative research, feminist research, performative ethnography, collective historiographic research, research with significant images, among others.

The research logics inscribed in Indo-African American Critical Thinking are always constructivist, open, flexible, and this also includes the design of research projects, as well as the socialization processes through which knowledge is legitimized and validated. In this sense, in this type of research, not only the production of knowledge, but also the socialization of its results are always collective and, therefore, political processes. Both the production and the dissemination and discussion of knowledge are political acts that are carried out in the knowledge of the power that all knowledge generates and the possibilities it implies, whether in terms of domination and oppression or liberation and emancipation.

Algunas experiencias de investigación en Trabajo Social, inscriptas en el Pensamiento Crítico Indoafroamericano, que menciono solamente a modo de ejemplos, son la indagación de procesos de dominación cultural y reproducción de la desigualdad social, realizada con pequeños productores tabacaleros de las provincias argentinas de Jujuy y Misiones (Agüero, 2009); la investigación feminista de procesos de dominación/emancipación de mujeres en situación de violencia en contextos familiares, realizado en la ciudad de Posadas, Misiones, Argentina (Martínez, 2013); el estudio de la cultura popular y la participación social en el barrio de Mataderos de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Sirvent, 1999); las experiencias de investigación, compartidas como encuentros sociales en el Trabajo Social (Gil Claros y Sánchez Rodríguez, 2020) y las experiencias con diversidades sociales desde el Trabajo Social Intercultural y Descolonial (Gómez-Hernández, 2018). También menciono a modo de ejemplo, aunque estrictamente no son experiencias de investigación en Trabajo Social, la indagación de la trama oculta del poder y las desigualdades de género en los partidos políticos (Martínez, 2019b) y las ricas experiencias de investigación con comunidades *aymaras* (Kusch, 2007).

Some research experiences in Social Work, inscribed in the Indo-African American Critical Thinking, which I mention only as examples, are the investigation of processes of cultural domination and reproduction of social inequality, carried out with small tobacco producers in the Argentine provinces of Jujuy and Misiones (Agüero, 2009); the feminist investigation of processes of domination/emancipation of women in situations of violence in family contexts, carried out in the city of Posadas, Misiones, Argentina (Martínez, 2013); the study of popular culture and social participation in the Mataderos neighborhood of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Sirvent, 1999); research experiences, shared as social encounters in Social Work (Gil Claros and Sánchez Rodríguez, 2020) and experiences with social diversities from Intercultural and Decolonial Social Work (Gómez-Hernández, 2018). I also mention by way of example, although strictly speaking they are not research experiences in Social Work, the inquiry into the hidden plot of power and gender inequalities in political parties (Martínez, 2019b) and the rich research experiences with Aymara communities (Kusch, 2007).

Final Reflections

In this paper I have argued about the complexity of Indo-African American Critical Thought as a political-epistemic framework. My argumentation began with a brief approach to ten trajectories of thought called Indianism, patria grande and continental unity, national-popular thought, Indo-African American socialism, dependency

theories, liberation theology, liberation pedagogy, liberation philosophy, Decolonial Option, and Indo-African American feminism. Then, I argued about the mutual imbrication and feedback historically constructed between these trajectories and their interrelation as a unity of meaning, addressing in turn some identifying features that allow differentiating this matrix of thought from other forms of critical thought. Finally, I referred to some implications of this matrix of thought in Social Work research, pointing out that these implications also extend to professional training and social intervention, as mutually intertwined and mutually implicated dimensions.

This critical approach is highly topical, due to its rich contributions, its originality and its analytical-interpretative potential. As a matrix of thought, it has developed a broad view from a particular place: the Great Indo-African American Homeland. In this paper I have only presented -in broad strokes- a first approach to this matrix of thought, which requires, of course, to continue working on it, in order to broaden and deepen its content, make new contributions, enrich the look by incorporating other historical experiences, discuss other views on the Indo-African American reality, among other possibilities.

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The theoretical-political horizon of long-term strategic growth of Indo-African American Critical Thought finds its greatest potential in the epistemic contributions of the Decolonial Option and the Feminisms of the South, especially the Community Feminisms of Bolivia and Guatemala. Without prejudice to this strategic horizon of long-term growth, in the short term and in the present, it constitutes a political-epistemic and theoretical-methodological matrix in which very diverse research projects, undergraduate and graduate academic training projects, extension projects and links with the territory, social intervention projects and, obviously, political projects of liberation and emancipation can live and find meaning and foundation.

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ARTICLE

Social work and elites:
An agenda to research and action for the discipline

Trabajo Social y élites. Una agenda de investigación y acción para la disciplina

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How to cite

Abstract

Understood as social groups that are located at the top of the social scale, elites are a central actor in contemporary societies. Although heterogeneous, these groups can be characterized by their social and political influence on local, national and global levels, their deep intertwined relationship with knowledge production and distribution, and by the use of meritocracy as the main rationale for justifying privilege. Although these characteristics position elites as relevant social subjects in contemporary societies, Social Work has scarcely explored intervention and disciplinary research agendas with/on/for these subjects. As a way of addressing this research gap, this paper explores the manner in which it is possible to understand elites as subjects of social intervention. The paper explores four possibilities of disciplinary research and action: creating interventions that

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lead to terminating or limiting the processes of elite reproduction; developing intervention and research mechanisms and devices that allow for the reduction in social gaps while bringing the elites closer to the rest of society; the need to understand elites as a key part of contemporary political communities, highlighting their role in addressing challenges such as the climate crisis, xenophobia and/or the crisis of democracy and; the need to discuss the ways in which the discipline itself generates processes and mechanisms of (re)production of knowledge elites. The paper concludes by reflecting on the extent to which this agenda allows us to question the very locus of Social Work, as well as the historical and political foundations of the discipline.

Resumen

Entendidas como los grupos sociales que se ubican en la cúspide de la escala social, las élites son un actor central en las sociedades contemporáneas. Aunque heterogéneos, estos grupos pueden caracterizarse por influir política y socialmente en los niveles locales, nacionales y globales, por estar altamente imbricados con la producción y distribución del conocimiento, y por utilizar el mantra meritocrático como fundamento principal para justificar sus privilegios. Aunque estas características posicionan a las élites como sujetos sociales relevantes en nuestras sociedades, desde el Trabajo Social no se ha explorado mayormente cómo podría pensarse una agenda de investigación e intervención disciplinar con/sobre/para estos sujetos. Como forma de abordar este vacío, en este artículo exploro cómo es posible entender a las élites como sujetos de intervención social. A partir de un ensayo teórico, se exploran cuatro posibilidades de investigación y acción disciplinar: la generación de intervenciones que permitan romper o limitar los procesos de reproducción de las élites; la construcción de mecanismos y dispositivos de intervención e investigación que permitan disminuir brechas sociales y "acercar" a la élite al resto de la sociedad; la necesidad de entender a las élites como parte de las comunidades políticas contemporáneas, destacando su rol en desafíos como la crisis climática, la xenofobia o la crisis de la democracia; y la necesidad de discutir las formas en cómo la propia disciplina genera procesos y mecanismos de (re)producción de las élites de conocimiento al interior de la disciplina. Finalmente, se reflexiona en qué medida esta agenda permite interrogar el locus mismo de lo que es el Trabajo Social, así como algunos de los fundamentos históricos y políticos de la disciplina.

Palabras Clave:
élites; Trabajo Social; intervención social

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Introduction

As a discipline, Social Work was born and developed as a response to the so-called social question that has accompanied the emergence of capitalism since the mid-19th century. With the deployment of the capitalist project, as well as the development of other forms of modernity throughout the world (Wagner, 2015) -including the so-called "real socialisms" and Latin American developmentalist projects-, Social Work diversifies its object of study, gradually moving away from its monochromatic focus on poverty, increasingly considering "new" subaltern groups (under labels such as vulnerable, excluded or neglected), as well as other disadvantaged groups in cultural, social or political terms (gender, women, masculinities, LGTBQI+, migrations, racialities, children and old age).

Although with geographic and epistemological nuances, this focus on subaltern or disadvantaged groups continues to this day in the theory and practice of Social Work, constituting the very locus of the discipline (Parton, 1996). This particularization can be clearly observed at three levels: (i) at the ethical-valorical level, since the profession is conceived and self-described as a discipline that has an ethical impulse oriented by the improvement of the conditions of the most needy (Dominelli, 2004) and by a focus on social justice that emphasizes human relations (Ioakimidis, 2021); ii) at the thematic level, since Social Work training, research and intervention tends to focus on problems arising from social exclusion and various forms of vulnerability (Healy, 2018); iii) at the professional level, since a significant number of social workers work primarily in social programs that tend to seek to improve the conditions of these groups (Stoeffler, 2019).

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In contrast to this orientation, other disciplines -especially economics and sociology- have experienced a shift from vulnerability-poverty to inequality and inequities as the fundamental axis of their action. Motivated by the development of an extreme phase of capitalism, which Piketty (2020) has called hypercapitalism, by the evidence of national and global economic inequalities never seen before (Milanovic, 2017), by the deepening of what Klein (2015) has designated as disaster capitalism and by the development of an economic-social model based on the depredation of nature and the geological transformation of the planet (Chakrabarty, 2021), various researchers in the Social Sciences have promoted the development of an analytical-conceptual turn that has questioned the centrality of poverty as a univocal object of analysis. In this questioning, a relatively forgotten actor in recent decades has been repositioned at the center of the debate: the elites.

Defined as those subjects who possess disproportionate access to or control of a resource that gives them advantages over the rest of society (Khan, 2012) and who, by the same token, can be understood as historical agents that have the capacity to transform societies (Wright-Mills, 1960), elites have been the focus of analysis in recent decades in disciplines such as economics (Piketty, 2014; Chang, 2018), sociology (Milner, 2015; Kornses et al., 2017), anthropology (Abbink and Salverda, 2017), education (Van Zanten et al., 2015; Khan, 2011) and political science (Binder and Woods, 2014). In contrast, in Social Work the discussion on elites (political, cultural, economic and intellectual) has remained largely absent and unexplored. Problematizing this aspect and outlining an agenda for research and action are, broadly speaking, the main objectives I propose to develop in this article.

How can we reconcile the ethical-moral impulse for justice and the historical tradition focused on vulnerable groups with/in social interventions towards the most favored groups of society? Does it make sense to intervene -with public funds and from the State apparatus- in sectors that have the greatest privileges and run societies? What tools -for research and intervention- can be imagined to intervene with/above/for the elite? In what areas and fields of research and action can Social Work operate in this challenge? Even if in a preliminary way and with more questions than answers, approaching to answer these questions is the main focus of this text.

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To achieve the above, I organize the article into three sections, in addition to this introduction. The second section synthesizes and summarizes some of the concepts, debates and characteristics of research on elites, with a particular focus on developments in recent decades. This characterization allows me, in a third section, to outline a research and action agenda from Social Work delimited by four areas or focuses: i) to break or limit the processes of elite reproduction; ii) to generate mechanisms to reduce social gaps and "bring the elite closer" to the rest of society; iii) to understand the elite as part of contemporary political communities, accounting for their role in current societal challenges; and iv) to discuss the potential role of Social Work as a (re)producer of the elite or elite spaces. Finally, and by way of closure, some challenges are outlined and some tensions that could emerge in the development of this agenda are problematized.

The elites: Concepts, debates and characteristics

Briefly, elites have been defined as the social groups at the top of the social scale. Although overshadowed for decades by the bourgeoisie-proletariat separation developed by Karl Marx, as well as by the conceptualizations of bureaucracy and power proposed by Max Weber, the notion of elite began to be a relevant object of study in the first decades of the 20th century, with the seminal works of Wilfredo Pareto (1980) and Gaetano Mosca (1984) being fundamental. Although with (slight) differences, both conceptions developed a naturalized vision of the elites, who were understood as socially validated and respected social groups, with high turnover rates, in charge of reproducing social life and providing order to the booming capitalist societies.

In contrast to these perspectives, the texts of Torsthen Veblen (2014) and, later, of Charles Wright-Mills (2005) are going to propose more critical visions regarding the elites. On the one hand, and from the connection of Weberian notions and concepts of classical economics, Veblen will postulate in Theory of the Idle Class that the elites -especially the economic ones- have a central role in the processes of (over)production in capitalist economies, since they allow the promotion of conspicuous consumption patterns that allow them to differentiate themselves from other social groups without developing productive value, thus questioning the myth of the American self-man. On the other hand, Wright-Mills (2005), based on an eclectic (and original) combination of Marxism, pragmatism and Weberianism, develops in his work The Power Elite the idea that modern societies -specifically the American one- were dominated by three differentiated elite groups, but with interlinked interests: the economic elites (bankers, big businessmen and managers of large companies), the political elites (congressmen, government leaders and members of the political establishment) and the military elites. For Wright-Mills, these three groups would have the capacity to transform history (1960), being like social super-agents responsible for the destiny of humanity, at that moment, on the brink of World War III.

Although with differences, the works of Veblen and Wright-Mills, added, for example, to the theorizations of the role of the State in the reproduction of the elites by Ralph Miliband in The State in Capitalist Society (1991), or the networks and links between aristocracy, bourgeoisie and elites described by Maurice Zeitlin and Richard Ratcliff in Landlords & Capitalists. The Dominant Class of Chile (1971), made it possible to discuss the immanent character of the elites, showing, in addition, the differences and relations between the different factions of these groups. A complementary contribution

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in this line -although not limited to the discussion of elites- was Bourdieu's theory of fields, habitus and capitals (1984; 1986). For Bourdieu, contemporary societies were characterized by a relative autonomy between economy, politics and society, constituting fields with their own logics, dynamics and hierarchies. Therefore, the dominant subjects would not be naturally dominant in all areas, requiring transmutation processes that would allow the transformation of capitals from one field to another (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2009). For all these arguments, it is possible to affirm that in contemporary societies there would be elites -in plural- rather than a single elite (Milner, 2015).

During the last decades, different works have sought to define and delimit what elites are and how they behave. Synthetically, it is possible to characterize these groups by three central elements. First, elites operate in a dynamic that moves fluidly between the local, the national and the global. They are no longer exclusively national elites, but neither are they a select group of tycoons or politicians who manage the entire world without any counterweight. Rather, elites are "constellations" of very different subjects (Savage and Nichols, 2017) - including entrepreneurs, philanthropists, politicians, technopols, agents of international organizations, academic figures, intellectuals (right and left, it must be said), people from the entertainment world, high-performance athletes, influencers, among others - (Bishop and Green, 2009), who are connected at global levels, but who have a definite impact on the organization of countries and local communities. This form of "glocal" development determines different forms of relationship with nation-states. In some cases, relations are based on what has been termed elite capture of the state, i.e., the increasing degree of control that the various elites (especially economic and political) have over the public apparatus (Hellman et al., 2000). In other cases, the elites have sought to replace the public function, promoting an increasing reduction of the state function and generating a favorable view towards any private initiative (Bishop, 2013). Be that as it may, the first central characteristic is that contemporary elites are, at the same time, global, national and local (Hartmann, 2017), constituting heterogeneous groups in their characteristics, capacity of incidence and relationship dynamics, but with a common characteristic: possessing disproportionate resources and social advantages.

Secondly, it can be said that contemporary elites are increasingly intertwined with knowledge, both in terms of its production and acquisition. Although the works of Foucault (2007) had highlighted that the very constitution of modern science is linked to processes of production and legitimization of power, today it is evident that contemporary elites operate with and from knowledge (theoretical and practical), under the recognition of the premise that power is knowledge, and that, conversely, knowledge is also power. This has led Khan (2012) to speak of the existence of "knowle-

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dge elites", defined as those groups of academics, researchers, intellectuals and/or policy makers who produce, control and manage knowledge and promote certain forms of access to reality. Likewise, several investigations have focused on analyzing the networks and flows between knowledge elites and members of other fractions of the elites, which develop through strategic positions such as symbolic analysts (Brunner, 1993), technopols (Joignant, 2011) or governmental social researchers (Davies et al., 2000) who have the capacity to translate knowledge into the political and economic practice of the elites (including, not infrequently, social workers).

Finally, unlike in other historical moments, most elites do not have a blood consecration (like kings or queens) or a transcendental-spiritual consecration (like monks or priests), so they need more sophisticated validation processes. In general, in modern societies this process has developed through the meritocratic mantra and the principle of meritocracy as a distributor of justice and social equality (Young, 1958). In this process, education -more than the family or the community- plays a central role, as it not only allows the acquisition of knowledge, but also promotes socialization processes and networks of contacts that are fundamental for being and feeling part of the elites (Bourdieu, 2013). Likewise, the acquisition of educational diplomas would be the "litmus test" that would allow elite groups to enshrine their privileges (Sherman, 2017), promoting, in turn, a vision where the most privileged positions in society are developed by the existence of high levels of effort, talent, or both factors.

Thus, although heterogeneous and increasingly differentiated, contemporary elites can be characterized as groups that operate - at the same time - at local, national and global levels, are highly imbricated with the production and distribution of knowledge, and operate using the meritocratic mantra as the main basis for their justification of privilege. With these three characteristics in mind, in the following section I seek to delimit a research and action agenda from Social Work on and in elites.

Towards a research and action agenda: A preliminary effort

Defining a research agenda is, almost inevitably, a risky undertaking. The possibility of omitting important issues, of questioning the canonical foundations of the discipline or, simply, of not projecting certain ideas with sufficient force are always latent problems. For the same reason, the agenda I outline here should be understood as an always adaptable and open script or, following Bassi's (2014) idea, as a score, which seeks to ima-

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gine and project a research and action agenda for the discipline, but without delimiting it. Moreover, and like any conceptual enterprise, this agenda will have to be contrasted with the daily realities of implementation of the discipline, being, by the same token, an agenda of a generic nature (an especially important issue to keep in mind for someone far from the practice of the profession, as I am). Considering the characteristics of contemporary elites outlined above and the different contemporary perspectives of Social Work, I propose below four preliminary research and action topics for the discipline on elites.

Breaking, diminishing or limiting the reproduction processes of elites

In their operation, elites generate different mechanisms that seek to reproduce their position in the social structure, thus seeking to perpetuate their privileges (Bourdieu, 2011). This reproduction process is diverse, including family reproduction strategies (marital unions or birth and sexual reproduction policies), social reproduction strategies (generation of friendship networks or specific work networks), belonging to certain social circles or having certain memberships (being part of a school or living in a certain neighborhood or sector), the possession of distinctive credentials (being part of scientific, academic or cultural associations or belonging to social clubs) and the generation of patterns, or behaviors associated with elites (playing certain sports, wearing specific clothes and having/adopting particular ways of speaking and acting). In this way, the processes of elite reproduction include material, social and symbolic elements that seek to separate elites from the rest of society (Lamont and Molnár, 2002) and generate a distinction between "them" and "us". Generating social interventions and research from Social Work that allow breaking, limiting or making these processes more porous constitutes a first field of action of this agenda, and we can imagine three main components.

On the one hand, Social Work could contribute to the generation of discussions, actions and research in elite institutions (schools, universities, artistic institutions, social or sports clubs), oriented to the development of democratization processes in these spaces, promoting discussions that allow, among other things, to introject the sense of privilege, discuss social inequities and inequalities or thematize the role of these groups in societies. Mediation tools and other collective discussion strategies developed from Social Work (Martin, 2008) could be fruitful to achieve this objective.

Secondly, and from perspectives such as organizational social work (Gould and Baldwin, 2004), and especially from the idea of critical management (Adler et al... 2007),

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social workers could use the tools of mediation and other collective discussion strategies developed from social work (Martin, 2008), 2007); social workers could, from within the organizations, discuss the criteria and mechanisms of entry and selection in elite spaces (for example, by accounting for the naturalization of certain criteria, or by investigating the origins of the barriers of elite spaces), making it possible to imagine new forms of social management of these places, through studies or intervention experiences that would expand the boundaries of these spaces and reduce social closure. Exercising a position of internal critique of organizations appears, then, as an axis of work for the discipline, seeking to "challenge the predominant instrumentalist view that suggests that organizations should be organized primarily to ensure a profitable and efficient development of services" (Lawler, 2020, p. 152).

Finally, Social Work could have a relevant role in promoting social interventions with people who are in elite spaces but who have experienced processes of mobility or "unexpected" possibility to access these spaces. These people, who tend to feel like "fish out of water" or "strangers in paradise" (Reay et al., 2009; Villalobos et al., 2022) often have feelings of distress, resignation or non-belonging, which Aries and Seider (2005) define as class marginality. Designing and implementing accompaniment processes, monitoring the insertion processes of these people, promoting organizational changes in favor of these subjects and investigating the factors that could allow the insertion of these subjects are, in short, aspects that social workers could also contribute to reduce or limit the processes of elite reproduction.

Generating mechanisms to "bring the elite closer" to the rest of society

As I have mentioned, economic, political and social elites are understood as social actors distanced from the majority of the population. This distancing is promoted by processes of social closure (Parkin, 1979), as well as by polarization dynamics (Duclos et al., 2004) that not only construct distinct groups ("us" versus "them"), but also distance these groups, limiting or preventing contact or social interaction. Considering this, a second axis of research and action from Social Work has to do with the generation of mechanisms and interventions to reduce the social distance of the elites from the rest of society, which could be translated into several axes or lines of work.. On the one hand, Social Work could actively contribute to the design and implemen-

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tation of social programs and mechanisms that allow the elites to be integrated into the social security, education, health, employment or social protection systems in conditions similar to those of the rest of the population. Historically, elites have tended to build parallel systems in these areas, perpetuating a difference regarding how social services are generated for this fraction of the population in contrast to the rest of society, which has occurred both in Europe, the United States and Latin America (see, for example, Van Zanten et al., 2015, for the case of education, or Cook and Moskowitz, 2013, for the case of social security). For the same reason, contributing to the discussion on the universalization of social systems, systematizing the negative effects of targeting systems and implementing intervention strategies to integrate elites into these systems (e.g., adapting instructions, expanding coverage, redesigning instruments, specifying interventions for these groups) are ways to contribute to the construction of universally guaranteed (but not necessarily uniform) social systems. Obviously, this implies rediscovering the role of the State itself (and of states, in plural) not only as a distributor, but also -primarily- as a collector, which implies generating new consensuses for contemporary societies (Piketty, 2020) on national and global taxes.

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Secondly, Social Work could play an important role in the coordination and generation of intervention spaces for the development of projects that intentionally seek the incorporation of non-elite groups in spaces of power. In this way, Social Work could contribute to the incorporation of non-elite actors in spaces of political government (for example, through training, development or support for reserved seats) or in company boards (encouraging and supporting the integration of workers in spaces of strategic management); elements that Social Work has already developed in some historical moments.

Finally, it is also possible to apply this agenda in processes of territorial integration of elites. Elites tend to concentrate in segregated neighborhoods, a trend that occurs in countries as different as Chile (Gayo and Méndez, 2019), Mexico (Camus, 2019) or Norway (Kornses et al., 2017). This physical and territorial isolation affects, and in some cases determines, that economic and political elites do not meet or coexist with others. Therefore, promoting territorial integration processes, generating gentrification processes (in middle-class neighborhoods) or de-gentrification (in upper-class neighborhoods), as well as enhancing social interventions to promote coexistence are, among others, actions from which the discipline could contribute.

Understanding the elite as part of contemporary political communities

Elites are part of societies and, in fact, an inherent part of their evolution (Wright-Mills, 1960). Although obvious, this statement allows us to reposition the discussion on elites and Social Work on a new plane, which, rather than denying their existence, promotes the development of these actors in pursuit of the construction of a more just society. Although it may sound contradictory, this implies rethinking the elites as social actors and, therefore, as subjects of social intervention, at least from two components or forms that constitute this third imaginary axis of research and action.

On the one hand, it seems to me that it is possible and relevant to develop interventions that discuss the processes of subjectivation and social perceptions of the elites, including the problematization of inequality, wealth, poverty, talent and/or merit. Through gamification processes, using modeling strategies or generating social discussion activities -among other possibilities-, it seems possible to think of strategies that aim at having elite actors (sons and daughters of elites, current members of elites, former members of elites) problematize their life experiences, thus mobilizing judgments and prejudices and developing interventions that integrate the gaze of the "others", thus activating policies of recognition (Fraser and Honneth, 2006), but which, rather than empowerment, self-management and development of group confidence (Houston, 2020), promote especially a critical discussion about their privileges, their actions and possibilities for change.

On the other hand, it seems to me that it is interesting to start imagining intervention processes that allow engaging elites in common contemporary global problems. Our current societies are transversally crossed by phenomena such as the problems of social cohesion, xenophobia or the (re)growth of racism (Hobsbawm, 2009), the collapse of traditional and limited forms of the exercise of democracy and the delimitation of citizenship (Dalton, 2008), and especially, global change and the crisis of humanity caused by the geological transformation of the biological patterns that have allowed life on the planet until today (Chakrabarty, 2021). In these problems, the role of the elites is fundamental and, therefore, managing their participation and inclusion in global solutions - rather than in individual or limited searches only for them[2] - is one of the challenges of Social Work. This challenge could be addressed through interventions, through social action projects limited to the elites, or to part of these groups, as well as in the development of social or environmental intervention projects that incorporate the elites, but also other social groups.

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[2] Individual or small-group elite solutions have taken different forms. Faced with climate change, fractions of the capitalist techno-elites are designing solutions to global change for a reduced minority of people, even contemplating off-planet travel. Something similar is happening with the highly xenophobic solutions tested in some European countries in the face of the migratory crises of recent decades or the increasingly strong authoritarian proposals that are being put forward to placate the democratic crisis in most Western countries.

To discuss the potential role of Social Work as a (re)producer of elite or elite spaces

Historically, an important part of Social Work currents have been (self-)visualized from subaltern positions or, paraphrasing Camus (2021), as a profession that refused to dominate. Is this, however, possible? From a perspective that understands power as a relation, Foucault (2003) has shown how power relations are not limited to the dominators/dominated dichotomy, since power is constituted through relations of force, domination being spread in multiple spaces and dimensions. This relational perspective of power allows us to rethink the question of Social Work in the production and reproduction of elites, moving away from Manichean views that unequivocally (and almost inevitably) position the discipline in a dominated position, allowing us to advance in a more nuanced discussion on how it also contributes to the processes of maintenance and creation of existing unequal structures, allowing, in this same operation, to reconfigure certain forms of disciplinary operation.

In this sense, it is possible to think of research and action agendas for the discipline from different perspectives. In the first place, it seems important to address the historical and increasingly established division between doing and researching -or between theory and practice-, which crosses the discipline as a whole (Dominelli, 2004). Rather than seeking a synthesis or designing mechanisms to flank this division, the central point is to recognize that the division between doing and researching is constituting a structure of domination within the discipline, generating a knowledge elite within Social Work that also perpetuates the distinction between individualistic visions (of those who "practice" the profession) versus critical visions (of those who theorize it), as Teater and Hannah (2021) have shown for the United States. Recognizing, studying and analyzing this fact will make it possible to imagine mechanisms that allow us to dimension the role, meaning and effectiveness of this "intellectual elite", typical of any professional field, thus making it possible to account for the forms of construction of "organic intellectuals" of the discipline (Vivero-Arriagada, 2021) and to promote the generation of alternative or counter-hegemonic spaces of disciplinary production.

On the other hand, the consideration of the discipline as a space of production and reproduction of a fraction of the elites makes it possible to update the discussion on the mechanisms of ascent proper to the discipline. As Bourdieu (2013) has shown for the French case, the consolidation of a select group is not purely by intellectual or

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academic merit, but also through the use of social networks, contacts, personal favors, and other strategies of social reproduction. Questioning these criteria, as well as the formation of "castes" or "lineages" within the discipline, will make it possible to re-imagine the criteria, methods and techniques of selection proper to the spaces of power in Social Work, thus promoting greater coherence between what is said and what is done in terms of the critique of power and the generation of unfair practices, promoting greater levels of (self-)reflexivity in the collective work of the discipline.

Final reflections

Based on an analysis of the relevance of elites and their main characteristics in contemporary societies, in this essay I tried to outline a preliminary research and action agenda for Social Work, starting from the idea - little explored in the discipline - that it is possible to understand the people who have the most privileges and capital as subjects of social intervention. The analysis delimited four main focuses of research and action: the generation of interventions that make it possible to break or limit the processes of elite reproduction; the construction of mechanisms and devices of intervention and research that make it possible to reduce social gaps and "bring the elite closer" to the rest of society; the need to understand the elites as part of contemporary political communities, highlighting their role in challenges such as the climate crisis, xenophobia or the crisis of democracy; and the need to discuss the ways in which the discipline itself generates processes and mechanisms of (re)production of the elites of knowledge within the discipline.

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As an exercise, this delimitation raises new questions -and perhaps also- poses new challenges, beyond those already described. On the one hand, it makes it possible to question the very status of the discipline, that is, what Social Work is (or is becoming). This questioning can be linked to the discussions on multi- or transdisciplinarities, or to the discussion on theory and practice in the discipline, since it is clear that the discussion on interventions for/with/about the elites must be accompanied by discussions on the tax structures of the countries, transformations of democracy, the role of the State, or the mechanisms of reproduction of the elites in the educational systems, to give some examples. In this way, it seems to me, the disciplinary construction itself is put in tension, remembering that Social Work does not work with "individuals as such", but with analytical categories that can be stigmatizing (Campana, 2021).

On the other hand, the inclusion of elites in the map of Social Work allows us to broaden the idea of possible "intervened" subjects, putting in tension the historical efforts for subordinate or subaltern subjects. In this way, some of the traditional schemes (epistemo-

logical, political, ethical) of functioning of the discipline and the profession are broken. From a radical perspective, Vasilos Ioakimidis (2021, p.37) indicates that "if we ignore inequality and poverty as a structural factor, our professional intervention is reduced to a useless and superficial function, as if it were a social aspirin". Although it may seem small, the absence of the elites (or dominant groups in general) in this radical discourse is symptomatic, to my taste, of a forgetting of the elites as central factors in the production of inequalities, an aspect that should be deepened in the configuration of "critical social work".

Finally, the (still imaginary) Social Work with/about/for the elites enhances discussions on the ethical-political impulse of the profession. Starting from the idea that critical social work understands that "justice is not possible without the abolition of capitalism" (Gray and Webb, 2020, p.21), the incorporation of the elites does no more than recognize (instead of ignoring) in these actors key pieces of contemporary capitalist functioning, creating a space - little explored - to generate practices, struggles, resistances, creations and actions that allow "examining the common as an effective political principle of our transformations" (Campana, 2021, p.19). Although this is not the space to discuss these points, and perhaps it is not possible to do so only through this format, opening up these questions will, it seems to me, expand and re-imagine the historical discipline for the dawn of the twenty-first century. The challenge is, then, already posed.

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ARTICLE

Putting (us) in common: Production of knowledge and narratives in/from social work

Poner(nos) en común: Producción de conocimientos y narrativas en/desde el trabajo social

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Abstract:

In this article we develop a reflective exercise regarding knowledge production in social work, its entanglements with power, and the way in which it is geo- and corpo-politically situated, highlighting a methodological proposal for knowledge production: Narrative Productions. For this, we propose the need to expand the hegemonic margins, leaving behind the presumption of objectivity that some models of knowledge generation sustained by a neoliberal, colonial and patriarchal ethos. From there, we review power relations, their articulations with the logic of knowledge production in the Social Sciences in general and in so-

cial work in particular, questioning the academic production and the habitual knowledge practices used by the discipline. We propose to intertwine social work with feminist practices and theories, materialized in the integration of Narrative Productions as a feminist methodological strategy, whose main value is that it allows for generating co-work processes, deconstructing naturalized spaces and integrating affective, collaborative and embodied elements.

Resumen

En este artículo desarrollamos un ejercicio reflexivo respecto de la producción de conocimientos en trabajo social, sus entramados con el poder, y la forma en que está geo y corpo-políticamente situado, destacando en ello una propuesta metodológica para la producción de conocimiento: las Producciones Narrativas. Para ello, planteamos la necesidad de ampliar los márgenes hegemónicos, saliendo de la presunción de objetividad que algunos modelos de generación de conocimiento, sostenidos por un ethos neoliberal, colonial y patriarcal, reafirman. Desde ahí,revisamos las relaciones de poder, sus articulaciones con las lógicas de producción de conocimiento en las Ciencias Sociales en general y en trabajo social en particular, cuestionando la producción académica y las prácticas habituales de conocimiento a las que acude la disciplina. Proponemos entrelazar al trabajo social con las prácticas y teorías feministas, materializadas en la integración de las Producciones Narrativas como una estrategia metodológica feminista, cuyo principal valor es que nos permite tejernos en común, generando procesos de co-labor, deconstruyendo los espacios naturalizados e integrando elementos afectivos, colaborativos y corporeizados.

Introduction: Our starting point

In this collaborative and affective exercise in which we trace the reflections that we share here, we assume a commitment with a feminist critical social work, which weaves and knots our acting/feeling/thinking. The critical refers to the possibilities of deconstructing and reconstructing the various theoretical, epistemological, political aspects that converge in the processes of social transformation, welcoming the tensions and constant articulations between research and intervention movements, generating feedback and situated knowledge (Hernández, 2018; Muñoz et al., 2017; Hermida, 2020). In this sense, and to exercise situated thinking (Haraway, 1995), both academically and politically, this article reflects part of our current movements, without totalizing pretensions or uniformity around disciplinary visions.

Rather, we put in common the trajectories we have developed, which intersect affectivity (Enciso-Domínguez and Lara, 2014), upbringing, teaching and multiple relationships we inhabit; from there, we can question ourselves disciplinarily in the methodological exercise for the production of knowledge; based on the idea that the plot is woven by semiotic-material imbrications (Butler, 2005), so that we cannot separate affectivity from knowledge, nor ideas from the body. In summary, we identify our place of enunciation with proposals that transit between feminisms and anti-patriarchal gazes (Cabnal, 2017; Gil, 2011; Haraway, 1995), de and anti-colonial positions (Espinosa, 2016; Hermida and Meschini, 2018; Rivera, 2015), as well as anti-neoliberal (Ioakimidis, 2020; Muñoz-Arce, 2019; Pérez-Orozco, 2017).

These looks that manage, from the articulation of different fronts, to provide possibilities of intersectional reading (Crenshaw, 2002; 2012) in our research and vital exercises, also require methodological anchors that translate these theorizations with procedures that seek some coherence, to be supported by real possibilities of interpellation on how we do what we do (García-Fernández and Montenegro-Martínez, 2014; Haraway, 1995; Harding, 1986). It is precisely this exercise that we attempt in this article, by putting in tension the forms of traditional knowledge production, integrating the power of narrative productions.

In this way, our pretension, which we know to be ambitious, is to put ourselves in common and through these letters to be able to agree (Cabnal, 2018) to think among us, to exchange possibilities of action, to try movements together that can challenge the hegemonic visions, where to put in common does not mean to homologate nor to think only in agreements, but to make dissent exist, that we fit with our contradictions and also with our agreements, to produce knowledge that integrates this marriage.

Weaving to widen the margins

In this sharing exercise we reinforce the idea of widening the margins, because we understand that in the conceptions of traditional science the desire to achieve objective and totalizing visions (Haraway, 1995) leads us to build a positivist view of the world, since, in order to find the desired objectivity, those who investigate must distance themselves "from the object" and try to observe it impartially so as not to stain it with personal subjectivities, a premise that is reaffirmed by classical social work. Thus, "Eurocentric Western modernity (...) generated a coloniality of knowledge (Lander and Castro-Gómez, 2000), a type of technical-scientific, epistemological rationality, which is assumed as the valid model of knowledge production" (Curiel, 2015, p.51).

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It is from this colonial, patriarchal, Eurocentric and neoliberal space that we believe it is necessary, both academically and politically, to move the borders and get out of the assumption that

> *The model of knowledge is a subject capable of objectivity, that is to say, capable of separating his own interests and acquiring, then, this vision of the aspects of the world without putting himself at stake in the vision of these aspects. A separation between the subject and the world, where the subject acts as a kind of mirror, where the laws of the world and the objects are reflected as they are, and not as each perspective appreciates them. (Maffía, 2005, p.628)*

In contrast, we believe that, as we have initially stated, in line with feminisms, there is not (or at least it is not the central intention) a quest for

> *a doctrine of objectivity that promises transcendence, a history that loses track of its mediations where someone can be held responsible for something, nor an unlimited instrumental power (…) We need the power of modern critical theories about how meanings and bodies are created, not to deny meanings and bodies, but to live in meanings and bodies that have a chance in the future. (Haraway, 1995, p.322)*

Therefore, and from Haraway's (2005) proposal, which seeks to distance itself from the discussions around the search for a single truth, it is possible to affirm that "the moral is simple: only the partial perspective promises an objective vision" (Haraway, 1995, p.326). Feminist objectivity deals, then, with limited localization and situated knowledge, not with transcendence and the unfolding of the subject and objectifies her. However, she also speaks of a trap for the establishment of the ability to see from the periphery and from the depths. We see this directly linked to the analysis of the privileges we exercise, since there is a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while having the illusion of looking from their positions. Looking from below is not easily learned; it is even more difficult if we are unaware of the shifting continuum of above and below, and it is also not without its problems, even if "we naturally inhabit the great subterranean terrain of subjugated knowledge" (Haraway, 1995, p.328). Thus, "feminism is not reduced to an epistemological break with modern thought from which it emerges and feeds back. It implies cultural, normative, symbolic and logical-political changes" (Lagarde, 2000, p.5), which necessarily impacts on how we think about methodologies.

In turn, incorporating the idea of continuum between political, ethical, theoretical and epistemological projects of life, always thought from interdependence, requires us to keep updating/creating methodologies that contribute to account for that line of coherence, understanding; it is never a pristine exercise, but rather stained (Rivera, 2018), in which we can account for dissents, contradictions and inconsistencies, which will again promote other inexhaustible recursive exercises.

Rehearsing this possibility is not easy; it requires us to be attentive, in a recursive attitude, present in the relationship and in ourselves. It is an entangled ethical practice (Duboy-Luengo

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and Muñoz-Arce, 2022), not in the sense of confusing, but in the sense of being woven with others, putting care at the center of the relationship (Martínez-Flores et al., 2021) and allowing, in that construction, to give life to the ideas that will nurture this research process.

From there, we communicate ideas with the intention of generating more openings and less methodological overdeterminations (Duboy-Luengo and Iturrieta, 2021) that allow the plurality of our voices, existing and making possible the realization of exercises that decenter the usual logics of power so present in the production of knowledge

Power relations in the production of knowledge

One of the needs we visualize in order to develop knowledge production exercises that transgress and subvert traditional hegemonic practices is to think about how power is played in this framework. Although there are many conceptualizations that deepen the notion of power, we want to stay with those developed by Foucault (1981). Thus, we will understand power as an exercise, not as the property of a class that has conquered it. It is, concretely, a strategy. Its effects are attributable to dispositions, tactics or techniques, but not to appropriations. We link this concept to the usual practices of knowledge production in social work, where, both for qualitative research and systematization, the techniques that give life to the methodological processes are guided interviews (structured and semi-structured).

Although they can have nuances and achieve results of great depth and density, it is possible to observe that they perpetuate the existing tensions in the subject/object dichotomy, because, although it is true they allow the interviewee some flexibility in the story he/she constructs, there is always an intentionality on the part of the person conducting the research. In this way "interviews become narratives of research authors, who "extract" from the interviewees the necessary information to produce a text where "their" positions are clear, and where power relations continue to be reproduced" (Duboy-Luengo, 2020, p.5), generating what Grosfoguel (2016) has called epistemic extractivism.

To decenter these logics, we propose to make room for other ways of conceiving knowledge that can develop distinctions with the dynamics contained in the neoliberal ethos (Harvey, 2007) in which we have been immersed, and that, in turn, discusses the hegemonic model that has endorsed a male supremacy in the

ordering of the world, strengthening a binary construction of gender, reinforcing the development of stereotypes of what is expected for each category (sex-gender system) with a heterosexual patriarchal regime (Pateman, 1995) and also colonial (Rivera, 2018).

In this sense, universities, places that we inhabit both in privilege and precariousness, and that "constitute a central aspect in the configuration and production of knowledge" (Villalobos, 2017, p.162), have not been at the margin of these impacts, serving as reproducers of these logics and, in turn, disputing within them the clientelist relations linked to the idea of privatizations and those of public and community service (Torres, 2011).

Thus, neoliberal management devices have proliferated, ordering academic work, hierarchizing it, promoting a quantitative photograph of scientific productivity and affecting their work (Fardella-Cisternas et al., 2017). With this, and adding that "neoliberal academia integrates diversity and critical thinking as performance indicators and at the same time reproduces a climate of racism and sexism and supports a culture of silence in the face of harassment and abuse of power" (Loick, 2018, p.242), we visualize the risk, in which as the same author indicates, the "critical theories become accomplices of hegemonic institutions" (Loick, 2018, p.242). Therefore, it is important to assume the urgency of "questioning the material conditions of university production, its history and its relationship with communities" (Federici, 2020, p.157), which entails the obligation to modify "our conception of what knowledge is and who can be considered a producer of knowledge" (Federici, 2020, p.157).

Social work and discussions at the edge: the production of knowledge

These discussions have also strained the production of knowledge in social work and have been developed previously on multiple occasions (Heler, 2011; Malacalza, 2019; Sosa, 2018), affecting how academic productions are understood and their impact on how social work training has been transiting, which is evidently contained in the same framework of neoliberal relations and maintains challenges around the disputes of hegemonic thoughts in the discipline (Cifuentes, 2013; Duarte, 2022; Grassi, 1995; Rain and Muñoz-Arce, 2019; Rozas, 2006).

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Thus, we are traversing a history of social work's relationship with knowledge that has not been univocal and that has manifested transformations according to the territories inhabited, the histories traversed, the social, economic, political and cultural oppressions of which it has been a part, among other factors. Of course, we do not want to abandon the structural dimension in the analysis

In this sense, there have coexisted statements about social work that define it as an applied science; others, in the search for scientificity, have sought to adhere to an empirical-deductive model in the processes of intervention and research; and others, which have been marked by reflective movements that place the knowledge of action at the center, as has been the case with the reconceptualization movement in Latin America (Mosquera, 2006).

There are bets from authors who adhere to critical lines, both from the Social Sciences and social work, which have developed a long trajectory and which are linked to the emergences of the reconceptualization movement, proposing current readings around the social question and which invite us to "recreate the professional field from the knowledge and understanding of the complexity (...) of the social question, which is expressed in the trajectories of individual and collective subjects with respect to their needs" (Rozas, 2018, p.54).

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Now, from feminisms this is also a long-standing line of reflection and action, which has found as many possibilities as there are currents, being able to highlight emergencies such as affidamento (Espinosa, 2008) and sorority (Lagarde, 2000), raised from some perspectives as counterpoints, but which build other ways of looking at the links to think about life and the production of knowledge. Thus, many feminists, from philosophers and epistemologists (Harding, 1986; Haraway, 1995; Gil, 2011; 2017) to community feminists (Tzul, 2015; Koroly Castro, 2016), to black feminists (Crenshaw, 2002; 2012; Davis, 2019), Marxists (Federici, 2004; 2020), ecofeminists (Pérez-Orozco y Mason-Deese, 2022), post/des/de/anti-colonial ones (Spivak, 2003; Rivera, 2015; 2018; Espinosa, 2014), among many other identifications, and understanding that on many occasions these categories also function imbricated, have discussed and generated a myriad of proposals to emerge multiple ways of producing knowledge.

With the ample existing development around these themes, which we find when we look separately at social work and feminisms, and which are constituted as extensive trajectories, both analytically and prospectively, we could think that both are already widely permeated by each other. However, although there is less experience in this crossing, there are critical analyses that grant glances to the production of knowledge,

intertwining feminisms and social work (Guzzetti et al., 2019; Hermida, 2017; 2020; Linardelli and Pessolano, 2019; Lorente-Molina and Luxardo, 2018), questioning the heteropatriarchal, colonial and neoliberal constructions (Roldán, 2020; Acuña Pinilla et al., 2019; Campana, 2021; Casá, 2014; Duarte, 2013; 2022; Patiño, 2020), and that not only tension, but invite us to travel other possible paths, and that have been triggers, along with others, in the reflections that propitiated this text.

Weaving situated in a geo- and corpo-politics

Historically, even in the first and second wave feminisms, the knowledge to which we have access is thought from European and North American theories (Cejas, 2011). However, and from non-hegemonic social work, there have been views that discuss this idea and question the exercise of knowledge construction as a continuous flow between theory and practice, in which social and political practices are the roots from which this possibility emerges (Cazzaniga, 2009; Deepak, 2012; Grassi, 1995; Malacalza, 2019; Parola, 2009; Rozas, 1996).

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This is, then, another starting point, since "a process of decolonization means recognizing the theories that come out of political practices (...) as a center that questions the knowledge-power relation" (Cejas, 2011, p.181). And that place does not always ascribe to the same physical territory, but to a way of constructing ideas that have experienced similar oppressions and that constitute a logic of thought that could come from a certain effect, such as the south:

> *The south is not a place, but the effect of relations between power, knowledge and space (...) The south is the result of a racial and sexual system of social classification, a binary epistemology that opposes above and below, mind and body, head and feet, rationality and emotion, theory and practice. The South is a sexualized and racialized myth. In Western epistemology, the South is animal, feminine, infantile, queer, black (...) The South is always represented as lacking sovereignty, lacking knowledge, lacking wealth and, therefore, as intrinsically indebted to the North. At the same time, the south is the place where capitalist extraction takes place: the place where the north captures energy, meaning, jouissance and added value. The south is the skin and the womb. It is oil and coffee. It is meat and gold. (Preciado, 2019, p.276-277)*

Producing knowledge from the South has implied a continuous exercise of resisting, both to epistemic hegemony (Rivera, 2015 in Rasgado, 2015) and to the patriarchal norms with which spaces move, also in the face of the colonial logics of knowledge (Lander and Castro-Gómez, 2000) and the neoliberal formulas that have permeated the practices of society and social work (Muñoz-Arce, 2015).

At the same time, a gaze is required that recognizes the elements associated with the corpo-politics of knowledge (Anzaldúa, 1987), which in its enunciation accounts for the bodies and relationships that are established in the process of knowing, evidencing the heteronormative forms in which narratives are established, silencing memories, practices, senses, knowledge and flavors. Thus, a "politicization" is woven that "is encrypted in the body" (Castillo, 2022, p.40), in which its enunciation is made explicit, so that "feminist corpo-politics need to integrate in their practices narratives belonging to other archives -other presents of struggles forgotten by the histories of emancipation- that activate the present itself, altering it, transforming it, liberating it" (p.42). Therefore, recognizing ourselves as bodily-politically situated implies becoming aware of the frontiers, evidencing the hegemonic practices inscribed in our corporealities, the ways in which colonial logic is installed androcentrically, imposing, invisibilizing and plundering other ways of knowing. To enunciate ourselves from a feminist body-politics is also to bet on different ways of positioning ourselves in the relationships that are woven between the production, reproduction and creation of knowledge in social work. It is also a form of resistance that interpellates, "knotting bodies, names and acts" (Castillo, 2022, p.42), embracing the meanings and ways in which knowledge is narrated and linked. From a feminist corpo-politics we allow ourselves to create bridges, to circulate words, to articulate the fabric, the looks and the affections.

Thus, from a geo- and corpo-politics located in the south, in mestizo and variegated, sentient bodies, we try to produce and trace feminist theoretical reflections, in which we can harbor the "hope of our liberation", since "in its production resides the possibility of naming all our pain" (hooks, 2021, p.118), as long as we allow ourselves to knot a deep connection between theory, practice and feminist movement, in a fabric that is "able to speak directly to the pain people feel and offer healing words, healing strategies, healing theory" (p.118).

From this place of enunciation we recognize feminisms as part of an irruption in social work that "problematizes coloniality and patriarchy from a racialized and situated imprint" (Hermida, 2020, p.96), reaffirming the importance of generating modes of production of disciplinary knowledge that facilitate, geo- and corpo-politically situated, the transgression of the margins that have been delimited, ena-

bling the recognition of a social work that is situated as a practice of daily feminist resistance, framed in a politics of bodies that weaves and destabilizes spaces (Duarte, 2022). In this sense, we propose the need for the relationship between different dimensions of the text, both logocentric and corpo-political, in order to think narratives as a counter-hegemonic exercise for the production of knowledge.

Narrative Productions: Subverting hegemonic logics in knowledge production

Considering our positionality, the territory and the role of power in the production of knowledge, we start from the idea that generating knowledge is a performative activity (Butler, 1998), "reiterative and referential through which discourse produces the effects it names" (Butler, 2005, p.18), so that the generation of knowledge is associated with the power of discourse to make something recognizable or not (Butler, 2009). Thus, identities, knowledge and relationships are produced and reproduced.

In this framework, the notion of Narrative Productions emerges. This concept has important qualities that we want to highlight. On the one hand, it tensions the power relations inherent to research processes and, on the other, the possibility of integrating through them the dimensions of affectivity (Troncoso et al., 2017). Thus, the Narrative Productions are presented as a feminist methodological strategy that points towards "a partial objectivity and a politically responsible positioning", in which "a new, complex construction is generated, which develops in the game of interpellation-reflection between participating subject and researcher" (Troncoso et al., 2017, p.24).

In the words of Balash and Montenegro (2003), to develop Narrative Productions, it is necessary to manage meetings in which researchers and participants comment on various aspects of what is being studied, considering that those who are a part develop a reconstruction of their experience and a production of meanings together with the researcher. In these sessions, "the text of what was discussed is changed and reformed until a discursive consensus is reached for the construction of a final narrative on the topics discussed" (Rubilar and Galaz, 2019, p.2). After each session the researchers recount the various ideas using their own words, subsequently creating "in-formation" texts. The account is then presented to the participants so that they can intervene in the vision of the phenomenon and, at the same time, questions and clarifications from the researchers can be inserted. Not all of the participant's words are necessarily included, but rather the way in which she wants her point of view to be integrated.

From the development of this process, a group of diverse narratives of the phenomenon studied emerge. These texts are not presented as transcriptions of these processes, but rather the ideas that emerged in the course of the sessions are organized to achieve the creation of a narrative that has an argumentative logic and is presented as a finished text that accounts for the phenomenon (Balash and Montenegro, 2003).

> *One of the potentialities of the study of the narrativization of certain social phenomena lies in the possibility of observing the tension between dominant narratives - which can serve to silence or make invisible stories that do not fit or go outside the norm - and counter-hegemonic narratives in which the visibilization and creation of liberating imaginaries and practices are at stake. (Gandarias and García, 2014, p.100)*

Another important characteristic is that textualization allows us to rethink the notion of product, typical of Narrative Productions, avoiding its presentation as data or discursive records. Therefore, the analytical level is back and forth with those who co-construct it; it does not become an act separated from the data. This time, the data acquire meaning only from the hand of those who have the strength of their production.

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Narrative Productions, as Balash and Montenegro (2003) point out, approach language in a different way than discourse analysis; however, they also conceive knowledge as a social construction, affirming that if language is conceived as an activity, it must be in continuous dialogue with what happens in everyday life, generating an "independent product that transcends the context of elaboration" (Ramirez and Montenegro, 2021, p.6).

Narrative Productions allow "the generation of emancipatory or anti-oppressive practices and generators of critiques to social normativization" (Galaz, 2016, p.1), facilitating a research that acts on the porosity of the academy (Butler, 2020) and that questions the way knowledge is known and produced, oriented towards the construction of skeins of affects (Federici, 2020). Narrative productions enable co-labor processes in which "both parties are legitimized from mutual recognition as particular subjects who share interests and intentionalities of change of the hegemonic political order" (Castañeda, 2019, p.21), enabling the emergence of research "from acting, commitment and affects" (Duarte et al., 2022, p.137).

Adding the reflections of geo- and corpo-politics, we propose to integrate the bodily experience, materialized both in the production of the ideas developed in the Narrative Productions, as well as in the possibility of expansion in the presentation of results. This integration can be done by incorporating registers that exceed the logocentric manifestations and graphing, as they have done from research that integrates art or the sociology of the image (Rivera, 2015), the bodily trajectories as a visible part in the production of ideas.

Final reflections

Up to this point, we have carried out a reflective exercise regarding the production of knowledge in social work, its interweaving with power, and the way in which it is geo- and corpo-politically situated, highlighting a methodological proposal for the production of knowledge: the Narrative Productions. In this, it is vital to recognize that situated research is positioned as a possibility to deconstruct those naturalized spaces, which are intertwined with social opacity, preventing the understanding of the complexities that are unveiled from the contexts in which our discipline develops. The research can be understood as an exercise of deconstruction and against the grain, because from the ruins it is possible to observe the various paths that open up in order to build projects that dialogue with those complexities that the contexts of disciplinary development present; therefore, we place ourselves from a look that opens the possibility of incorporating complexity to the elaborations that emerge.

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We recognize here a contribution and a challenge from the discipline of social work. From the construction of situated knowledge, it is possible to approach emerging and contingent social processes, such as institutional and political forms oriented to the provision of care, the production of subjectivities and the public sphere.

Enhancing the intrinsic link between intervention and research, from a critical and feminist point of view, allows for reviewing the historical constructions on the professional and research work of social work and its fields of action, questioning the traditionally assigned role and allowing for drawing new professional and academic perspectives (Muñoz-Arce, 2019; Duarte, 2022). Such perspectives are strengthened by thinking the discipline from the South, from Latin America, by giving centrality and meaning to a resistance that is inscribed in a decolonial key (Hermida and Meschini, 2018). At the same time, we see it as imperative to think ourselves from the corpo-political, picking up feminist provocations, questioning the ways in which knowledge is produced, making reference to the ways in which the multiple oppressions lived, felt, thought and embodied intersect:

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Doing this exercise has at least three levels of implications for social work:

First, how we conceive research: reflecting on what is raised here requires developing an epistemic movement in the classical conception in which social work has been related to research, incorporating conceptions that feminist traditions have extensively deepened, such as the notions of partial and situated knowledge, and the integration of geo- and corpo-politics to find the places of enunciation.

Second, how we design the research: this epistemic dislocation and re-centering with feminist assumptions also requires materializations in the design of strategies that transcend textualization, both in the interviews and in the final products, incorporating other ways of immersing ourselves in the experiences of those who participate, exploring poetry, music, art, performance, among others, with the intention of enriching the opportunities for research exchange and expanding the traditional logics for the reconstruction of experiences.

Third, how we teach research: the two previous implications have as a point of arrival (and possibly departure) the repercussions in the formative processes of social work. Epistemic and methodological decentering requires moving these discussions to the classroom and to the Schools of social work, to stop thinking about approaches to the field with the traditional qualitative/quantitative divisions, and rather think about how we can respond to the contingent and contextual needs that are graphed in "the social". This requires not only developing critical epistemologies and methodologies in training, but also thinking about the continuity between the two. In short, to leave behind the atomized conceptions of what research implies.

Finally, we would like to point out that this does not mean that, by writing these lines, we are proposing that all social work should develop research based on these conceptions. This premise would again have a hegemonic pretension and what we seek to dislocate would be strengthened. On the contrary, with this article we seek to expand the margins to think about the production of knowledge from social work, developing recursive and self-reflective practices on our work as women who move in an academic circuit and who adhere to the positions that we developed before.

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ARTICLE

Borders and overflows of the criticism of objectivity in the training of Social Work professionals

Bordes y desbordes de la crítica a la objetividad en la formación de profesionales del Trabajo Social

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How to cite

Abstract

In this article we will try to put back on the table the epistemological and empirical need of objectivity for any discourse with pretensions of producing knowledge, in social sciences in general and in Social Work in particular. To do so, we will try to identify the edges and overflows of some critical theories that are frequently raised in the faculties of social sciences and, on the other hand, based on the work of Saul Karsz, we will point out the false equivalence between objectivity and neutrality and between objective and indisputable. In reality, what is claimed to be indisputable is any dogma or affirmation -ideological, political, scientific or militant- that is pronounced as the "word of God". Objectivity, on the contrary, is a process of argumentative production, by definition debatable, basically rectifiable and generally collective (or, at least, involving more than one professional). We will try to make explicit how "neutrality is impossible but objectivity is indispensable" (Karsz, 2017).

Resumen

En este artículo trataremos de volver a poner sobre la mesa la necesidad episte-mológica y empírica de la objetividad para cualquier discurso con pretensiones de producir conocimiento, en ciencias sociales en general y en Trabajo Social en particular. Para ello, trataremos de identificar los bordes y desbordes de algu-nas teorías críticas que se enarbolan con frecuencia en las facultades de ciencias sociales y, por otro lado, basándonos en la obra de Saúl Karsz, señalaremos la falsa equivalencia entre *objetividad y neutralidad* y entre *objetivo e indiscutible*. En realidad, lo que se pretende indiscutible es cualquier dogma o afirmación -ideo-lógica, política, científica o militante- que se pronuncie como "palabra de Dios". La objetividad –por el contrario- es un proceso de producción argumentativo, por definición debatible, básicamente rectificable y generalmente colectivo (o, al menos, que implica a más de un profesional). Trataremos de explicitar cómo *"la neutralidad es imposible pero la objetividad es indispensable"* (Karsz, 2017).

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"Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere"
Spinoza

Critical theories

Until the 1960s, in the training of social workers, the identification of the student body with the typical discourses of bourgeois humanism was promoted. The great majori-ty of students came from the upper and middle bourgeoisie, which implied that they arrived at the faculty with an important religious formation that was reconverted, du-ring the course, into philanthropy, i.e., into "love of Man and of the social worker", in "love of Man and Humanity", and that could derive as much in the ladies-of-the-bene-ficence-mano-right-wing-philanthropists-and-doctors-hygienists model as in the mili-tant-in-favor-of-social-causes-feminist-pacifist-suffragist model. Thus it was that the Social Work career historically swung between producing sensibilities (subjectivities) that tended to monitor and control the lives of the poor and sensibilities that took sides with them, confronting, in some way, the established powers. Even these two options were not always mutually exclusive.

ARTICLE

During the 1960s, the discourse of "social workers as agents of change" spread under the supervision of the technicians of the United Nations and the Alliance for Progress. During the seventies, the reconceptualization and its manifest commitment to the working classes was raised. Today, we challenge students, to a large extent, with so-called critical theories.

Although most of them arrive in the first year with a strong empathy with the most vulnerable sectors of society and a marked tendency to criticize the hegemonic powers, the work to be done every day in the classrooms in relation to forming the social sensitivity of future professionals is no less important. We refer to the effort aimed at breaking with the mandates that saturate common sense in the West and that drag wills towards exacerbated consumerism, the veneration of luxury, the obscenity of wastefulness and the whole series of typically neoliberal values and affections that translate into individualism, meritocracy, aporophobia and a certain political apathy, to which must be added the ever-present patriarchal, racist, heteronormative, transphobic, fat-phobic, segregationist practices, etc.

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Objectifying, conceptualizing and denouncing these practices is as necessary in the faculties of social sciences as getting future professionals to take sides with the exploited, oppressed or subalternized sectors and communities.

In this way, we encourage in the student body "disobedient" and "insubmissive" positions in the face of patriarchal and neocolonial mandates, while promoting commitment to social and identity struggles.

From this advanced position, it is common to try to go one step further: to apply these critical developments to concrete social intervention. However, the ground here begins to become slippery under our feet. The problem that immediately arises is that this task is often approached without precise definitions and with an omni-explanatory spirit, which facilitates frequent overflows that make it difficult, if not impossible, to produce objectivity.

Precising the place that critical theories should have - both in the training of professionals and in concrete intervention practice, oriented towards the production of knowledge and objectivity - requires three prior moves.

- First, to define Social Work and social intervention, which will imply delimiting the place that the problematic of the subject occupies in both definitions, either as an intervening subject (and its concern for professional identity), or as a subject of assistance.
- Second, to mark the borders -and to point out the frequent overflows- of any theory in general and of critical theories in particular.
- Third, to differentiate objectivity from neutrality, given that the confusion of these two terms is largely responsible for the abandonment of the pretensions of objectivity in the social sciences.

Definition of Social Work

It is very common to read that Social Work deals with "social problems". Herman C. Kruse, for example, places Social Work as:

> *a branch of the Social Sciences that seeks to know the causes and process of social problems and their incidence on individuals, groups and communities, in order to promote them to an action of correction of those effects, eradication of their causes and rehabilitation of the affected beings, having as a final goal the widest social welfare in a framework of authentic and sustained national development (Kruse, 1975, p. 9).*

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Vives de Heredia states:

> *Social Service is the set of appropriate scientific techniques, tending to prevent, attenuate and suppress social problems, promoting the harmonious physical, spiritual and socioeconomic development, for the achievement of welfare and the best relations that may occur in a society at a certain time, through interdisciplinary professional activity and the free, active and responsible participation of those concerned, on the basis of Social Justice (Vives Heredia, 1967, p. 167).*

Natalio Kisnerman (1990) defines it as a discipline that is in charge of "knowing the causes-effects of social problems and of achieving that men assume an organized action, both preventive and transforming, that overcomes them" (Kisnerman, 1990, p. 1).

Carballeda, in a recent text -where he argues about the convenience of crossing Social Work and decolonial studies- expresses himself in the following way: "It is possible to enter the study of social problems from different aspects and categories of analysis (...)" (2017, p. 72); a few lines later he refers to decolonial theories:

"This perspective, perhaps, allows to expand the possibilities of conceptualization and the construction of new ways of understanding and explaining social problems" (2017, p. 72); further on, he points out "the importance of an American thinking, in this case of social problems (...)", then -and this time already with capital letters- he suggests: "To study and analyze Social Problems from a situated perspective that tries to move away from pedagogical colonization (...)" because "(...) in America social problems are inscribed in a different way (...)" (2017, p. 73)[2]. Examples abound in the specific bibliography of the field; what does not abound, however, are definitions, particularly of "social problems". Instead, one rushes forward to debate whether we should approach them from classical sociologies, from critical sociologies, from new decolonial theories, or from southern epistemologies. In this way we tend to embark on long theoretical journeys, without realizing that, not having defined the terms from the outset, we end up in the midst of exotic and foggy territories, generally suggestive, but far removed from concrete social intervention.

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Let us attempt a summary deconstruction of the notion of "social problems". In principle, it implies that there are, on the one hand, society and, on the other hand, phenomena that disturb it. These phenomena would be poverty, addictions, sexual abuse, homelessness, unemployment, immigration, prostitution, teenage pregnancy, delinquency, violence against people with non-binary sexuality, etc. However, the same phenomena do not qualify as "social problems" if the social class where they occur changes, rather they are usually taken as "private problems", they may not even qualify as "problems". For example, teenage pregnancy does not fall under the jurisdiction of social workers if it occurs in middle or upper class homes, nor does uncontrolled substance abuse if it takes place on fashionable beaches or at electronic parties, much less sexual abuse or gender violence if it takes place in private neighborhoods. The immigrant who has a professional degree, the prostitute who charges in dollars and much less the criminal who evades taxes, leaks foreign currency or bankrupts banks or companies, never crosses paths with social workers. The same practices cease to be "social" depending on the person,

[2] Social problems also occupy the center of the definitions of Social Work in the Gran Enciclopedia Larousse (1970); in the Documento de Tandil - Informe final del Segundo Encuentro de Escuelas de Servicio Social de las Universidades Nacionales - realizado en Tandil (Provincia de Buenos Aires) - Argentina del 27 al 30 de Julio de 1978; also in the document of the Escuela de Servicio Social - Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos - Paraná, Argentina - (1985), and several other texts and authors as stated in Alayón (1987).

group or social class that practices them, and may even cease to be problematic, to become gracefully transformed into class characteristics. On the other hand, it would be naïve to forget that many of the phenomena called "social problems" - which would apply to the popular classes - are often also solutions for the users, just as symptoms are shelters for patients, that is, they do not always or automatically represent failures, vices or abysses, but also serve as attempts at solutions. In reality, the signifiers "society" and "social problems" are empty signifiers of which no definition is given - nor could be given. They are metaphors and synecdoches that are not at all appropriate for professional and disciplinary work. When an author analyzes the relationship between "society" and "social problems", he or she speaks from a "we" that perceives itself as "society", an ideal entity without drugs or crime or violence or neurosis or psychosis or abuse or prostitution or sexuality or conflicts or deficiencies or "dysfunctions" or "perversions" or problems in each and every one of the families that really exist. From these heights he or she points out and studies the anomalies that "we must face as a society", even with the best of intentions, as Simmel does when he thinks of "the relationship of the collectivity with its poor" (2014, p. 77)[3].

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When these phenomena are verified in the popular classes, they awaken strong alarm in the right-wing sectors, which usually react by demonizing, monitoring or controlling -even locking up- while appealing in their discourse to "lack of values", "idiosyncrasy", "genetics", even invoking the famous diagnosis "they are poor because they want to be". Reformisms and leftists, for their part, strive for the inclusion of that "Other" within "society", if not, plainly and simply, they perceive and present it as covered by a mantle of glory.

The discourses on "society" are exclusively enunciated by the bourgeois classes and are articulated around the fiction that these classes have elaborated of themselves. These fictions are imposed as models of life so luminous and evident as to be impossible to find realized anywhere... not even in the social class that raises them. However, everything that distances itself from these models, that is, from how one "should" live, raise children, have sex, have fun, get sick, suffer, endure or not endure anymore, be born or die, immediately falls into "otherness", an entity that - whether perceived as infected or as nimbed - either way is produced by a classist disposition, even if we immediately join the two terms in the same sentence with a possessive article, in the style of "French society and its poor", as Serge Paugman (2014) does.

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[3] We have made a more detailed analysis of Simmel's position in the text "Social Theoretical Analysis and the Real of Intervention Practices" (Lobos, 2022).

We cannot fail to mention that discourses that include formulations in the style "society has to take care of its poor" have their effectiveness - by no means negligible - in spheres such as parliamentary debates in bourgeois democracies, or the hegemonic media (entirely bourgeois), or common sense (hegemonized by bourgeois ideologies). They even have their place in the foundations of decisions taken by national and international bodies, which must be expressed in terms digestible by (bourgeois) common sense. What we are pointing out is that beyond its legitimate use in other spheres, this rhetoric is neither pertinent nor effective for social intervention.

In the case of Social Work, these empty signifiers serve - like squid ink - to escape from the necessary task of defining and to be able to move on quickly to less arduous and more bubbly topics.

The same synecdoche is carried out when we move from the verifiable fact that social workers intervene in some situations where certain users of social policies are in situations of poverty, to sustaining that "Social Work deals with poverty" in a universal and complete manner. In this way, one can read pages and pages based on the assumption that Social Work has the expertise to reduce poverty, the responsibility to disarticulate it and even the mission to fight its cause, in our times, neoliberalism.

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Defining Social Work is an arduous and complex process that requires gray and meticulous work. To achieve it, it is necessary to renounce the use of protean signifiers, in exchange for identifying what Social Work can really do. Defining helps to increase the potency of what is defined, while at the same time sparing it from the painful experience of being required to do what it could not possibly do and of bearing the guilt of not having been able to achieve what was never in its hands.

On the other hand, we will not be able to define Social Work if we do not include in the definition the State, social policies, certain institutions and the system of public-state protections. Nor can we do without pointing out in the definition the close link that Social Work has with capitalism, highlighting, at the same time, its structural incapacity to combat, transform - or even damage - this mode of production.

A possible definition

The French-Argentine philosopher and sociologist Saúl Karsz has devoted the first chapter of the book Problematizar el Trabajo Social: Definition, Figures, Clinic (2007) to define Social Work. We will not try to summarize those 72 pages here, rather we refer the reader to that text. However, we will offer arguments and formulations that go in the same direction.

The object of research and intervention of Social Work is the material and ideological conditions of certain relations of social reproduction that are plausible to connect with the social policies in force in each country. Social Work does not deal with "social problems", but with situations that include some people in poverty, some people in a situation of uncontrolled consumption of substances, some unemployed people, immigrants, those who suffer harassment or violence, in street situations, some neighborhoods, communities and settlements, as long as they apply to the conditioning factors of social policies.

Social Work tries to influence some conditions of social reproduction of certain users (individual or collective) of social policies that suffer certain effects of capitalism, neoliberalism, racism and patriarchal and neocolonial practices, involving the mobilization of agents and material and ideological resources offered by social policies and the tools provided by the theories, discourses and concepts of Social Work. Professional intervention, always both theoretical and situational, seeks to produce - from an ideological standpoint - argued, tendentiously objective knowledge about concrete situations which, together with some material resources (always insufficient), seeks to produce some distance from the real, thus promoting a certain distension, opening or oxygenation of the real of some intervention situations, especially in the register of the ideological conditions of social reproduction, contributing to alleviate some effects of capitalism without attacking its structure or questioning its existence. The possibility that Social Work has of producing a distance within the reality of certain situations of social reproduction can eventually lead to the transformation of the reality of the situation. Social intervention is, then, a mobilization of resources -especially ideological ones- carried out by a main intervener (professional, service, institution, NGO) and where the users (individual or collective) facilitate such intervention or resist or oppose it, to the point of deviating it, at least in part, from its initial objectives, which -on the other hand- is constitutive of the structure of such practices.

Concern for "the self", identity and the subject versus the need for objectivity

One of the concerns that hovers over the professional collective and that often displaces the question of knowledge production in the field of social intervention is: are social workers obedient to patriarchal, neoliberal and neocolonial mandates or, on the contrary, disobedient and revolutionary?

Faced with this question we have to say that what is at stake is not the "being" of social workers or their identity, but social intervention. As professionals, what is im-

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portant are the competencies in the production of records, diagnoses and reports. It is not we, social workers or social scientists, who must be objective, innovative or revolutionary, but our analyses, diagnoses, interviews and interventions that can be so. Let us remember that we speak of objectivity, never of neutrality! And it is precisely in the objectivity/non-neutrality dialectic that the transformative possibility of intervention lies. This thesis is developed in chapter 8 of Objectivité indispensable, netralité impossible, of the book Affairs sociales, questions intimes (Karsz, 2017).

The shift from focusing on professionals as subjects to focusing on the reports and diagnoses they produce arises from a view that focuses on practices and not on practitioners. That is to say, we pay attention above all to the doing and its effects, and not to the persons and their purposes. This gaze characterizes the Transdisciplinary Clinic, but also the perspectives of Bourdieu, Castel, Passeron, Canguilhem, Foucault, Lacanian psychoanalysis and all the currents of thought that have been defined as "philosophies of the concept" by Foucault confronted with the "philosophies of the subject" represented by humanisms, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, etc (2012, p. 252). For the "philosophies of the concept" the subjects are a sine qua non condition of the practices, but they are neither unique nor sufficient: what is determinant are the logics that structure the practices. These logics are not subjective. Although subjectivity is a variable to be considered, it does not play a central role. To put it another way: there is no intervention without an intervener, but the latter is not the protagonist of the intervention. What is decisive is not what each individual projects on the situation: what is important is to objectify the logics of the practices, to read them and to dimension them, making an effort to limit as much as possible the phantasmatic of the intervening professional. In other words, it is a matter of locating the practice as a real phenomenon. With Marx and Lacan we understand by real that which exists and functions here and beyond our desires, fears and theories: real is that which resists and never goes too well with the subject. As subjectivities we see what the books we have read and those we have not, the concepts we have and those we lack, the training we have had and those we have avoided, allow us to see. The real does not appear immediately to subjectivity. As Lacan says "The real (...) in the analytic experience, for the subject, is always the clash with something, for example: the silence of the analyst" (2009, p. 37). The real is that with which we always collide. "The real is the impossible" says Lacan; "I do not hesitate to speak of the real (...) Later, over the years, a little formulation emerges, that the impossible is the real" (Lacan, 2008, p. 178)[4] . This implies that the real acts as a limit for any pretension of

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[4] Lacan sometimes writes Real (with a capital letter), not always, as in this case. Although the text was established by J-A Miller, it was published during Lacan's lifetime, and probably revised by him. We have preferred to keep the lower case to avoid the metaphysical connotations implied by the use of the capital letter.

complete understanding of the world. But at the same time it must be remarked that it is possible to delineate the real. Althusser says explaining Marx: "the real is independent of its knowledge, but it can only be defined by its knowledge" (Althusser, 2011, p. 205). "The real does not speak, it must be made to speak" (Bourdieu, 1998). However, we can approach it, delineate it, try to have an impact on it if we are able to hold on to the concepts and leave aside prejudices, fears and longings, if we could - as Spinoza recommends - "Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere" (2018).

Borders and overflows of critique

Critical theories can illuminate one or another aspect of the real. However, when we pretend that this or that theory explains everything, hyperboles are produced that lead us to think "everything is political", "everything is psychic", "everything is colonial oppression" or "everything is patriarchal oppression". This type of formulation implies at least two things: first, that we would have the key to explain any possible situation, and second, that we would be able to solve, completely and fully, the problems that the situation entails.

If "everything is political" we do not need to listen too much to quickly offer a diagnosis. If "everything is patriarchal oppression", some feminisms claim to account for all conflict and discomfort and even point the way to liberation. These overflows make the production of objectivity and, therefore, of scientificity improbable. In this way, and in spite of ourselves, we contribute to discredit our professions (Karsz, 2021).

The same criticism that was once directed against "Science" must now be directed against the totalizing use of critical theories. It must be said again, Science (singular and superpowerful), mirror of nature, which would have the monopoly of knowledge and which was dreamed of as the savior of humanity, does not exist and never existed. The sciences, the really existing ones, will neither save the world nor destroy it, neither will Modernity nor technology. The same argument is valid for patriarchal and colonial practices, conceived - from some theories - as the source of all evil. In fact, no theory can explain everything or be the sole cause of a domination or, on the contrary, of a revolution. Such are the edges that must not be lost sight of. Such is also, and consequently, the path that opens up: to resign oneself to incompleteness, to renounce the metaphysical pretension, highly narcissistic, of a subjective point of view that claims to account for the real without shadows or unknowns in order, on the contrary, to persist in an endless research, with progressive improvements, trying to avoid the plague of dogmatism from which no one is definitively exempt.

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The dialectic between objectivity and non-neutrality

The tendential but effective objectivity is the space that opens up when we stop thinking in terms of "all or nothing" and start working in the arid terrain -but not at all infertile- of partial, debatable, conjunctural and rectifiable knowledge. Knowledge that can have effects of certain transformation and, why not, of certain emancipation.

For that we will dwell on the dialectic objectivity - non-neutrality that has been analyzed by Saul Karsz in the book "Affaires sociales, questions intimes" (Karsz, 2017). Objectivity is a process of argumentative construction, by definition debatable, generally collective and basically rectifiable. This construction is realized thanks to, in spite of and against the inevitable taking of sides. In our case, we generally take sides with the vulnerable, segregated or discriminated sectors of society. This position is usually grounded in the critical theories we frequent and in the social sensibility that constitutes us, that is, what we love and hate, both personally and ideologically. In relation to this partiality we produce knowledge about concrete situations, that is, we try to make explicit -with, thanks to and against theories in general and critical theories in particular- the logics that make a situation work (Karsz, 2007).

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In intervention practices we do not intervene as subjects and neither on subjects. We intervene as agents and we do so in situations, within situations constituted by the materiality of practices whose main characteristic is that they are transindividual. As we have already said, the fundamental aspects of the intervention are the reports, interviews and diagnoses, the effects they may induce and the commitments they may promote. We must emphasize that it is not a question of unveiling the keys to the "subject of the assistance" or what the subjectivities of the interveners hide - or treasure - but the situation as real.

Otherness, the "subject of assistance" and situations of intervention

Let us dwell for a moment on the categories "Other" and "Otherness" that are often used to think about the "subject of assistance". These concepts, frequently used by humanisms - where social intervention is usually considered as an "encounter with the other" - have nowadays slightly changed and point out - in order to denounce it - the question of the absolute difference that certain persons, groups or peoples would have with respect to the hegemonic models. If the place of "the Same" is occupied by white, heterosexual, bourgeois males, or white, bourgeois, thin women from the northern hemisphere, then the place of "the Other" is reserved for native peoples, people with mental suffering, in

poverty, undocumented immigrants, people with non-Caucasian skin color, with non-hegemonic bodies or with non-binary sexual choices, understood as the disvaluable or pure negativity. The logic of "the Same and the Other" is the logic of all segregation practices.

If we have sufficiently studied gender studies, critical studies of heteronormativity, cisnormativity, transphobia, validism, ageism, fatphobia or decolonial studies, we can be aware of all these forms of violence and we will be able to identify them in the practices. Once we have reached this point - and if we take for granted that our audiences are "the Other" - three paths open up: the first is to invert the negative valuation of "otherness" and turn it into a positive difference in the style of the "Pride of Otherness March". The second is to constitute it in a specific field of study such as "Anthropology of street children", or "Sociology of poverty: subjectivity, habits and forms of enjoyment of the poor". The third is to focus on the affront to Human Rights implied by the category of Otherness as pure negativity.

The inversion of the value of otherness into a positivity that produces pride is a fundamental weapon for identity struggles, but it does not seem to us to be so for the career of Social Work. Although it is often politically relevant to hold a march for trans pride, Mapuche pride, "colifato" pride or "villero" pride, and it is certainly valuable to support these demonstrations as militants or to incorporate them as part of an intervention strategy, it must be emphasized that they do not challenge the specificity of the profession. In fact, it is a problem for the Social Work perspective to take for granted that there is any sector, group or social fact that may be unassimilable or constitute an absolute difference. Insanity, poverty, addictions, street situations, violence, involve suffering, heavy and difficult situations, sometimes impossible to deal with, but they are not the Other of normality (among other reasons because normality does not exist).

Studies on poverty, or on street children, or on street violence may be suggestive research topics for urban anthropologists and possibly interesting for social intervention, but they do not point to the core of Social Work. The specificity of Social Work is not a certain anthropology or psychology of the oppressed. What we can do is to influence in some way the material conditions, but above all the ideological conditions of social reproduction of the users of social policies. Finally, the subject of rights is one of the ways of access to Social Work, but we cannot forget that rights in Western societies are predominantly bourgeois. The struggle for rights is the struggle for the bourgeois inscription of certain individuals and non-bourgeois groups, a struggle that is undoubtedly long term, very necessary to carry on and impossible to win.

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A case

Let us suppose the case of a "violent child" in a school. We do not intervene with this child but in a situation that includes him/her together with a teacher who may or may not be a good teacher, a correct, dismissive or persecutory principal, more or less cruel or frightening classmates, a structured, partial or completely unstructured family, a positive, passable or terrible referent (father, uncle, neighbor, kiosk owner), a probable group of friends from the neighborhood, a social worker, institutions (school, health center, municipality, etc.) and specific social policies. We try to produce knowledge about this complex situation and thus intervene to induce -or give rise to- effects of change or transformation.

The professional will present him/herself in such a situation with his/her certainties under his/her arm: first of all and surely on the value of social inclusion ("we must prevent this student from being kicked out of school"), then on the need to respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child and social policies for children, without forgetting, of course, the certainties provided by his/her readings on adult-centeredness and critical pedagogy. What is being said in the parents' chat room about the rights of the other children in the school may also be very present in the situation, as well as the pressure from the authorities who want a quick solution, without forgetting the pressure from the teachers' union that tries to protect the teacher from situations that exceed her duties. In addition, there will surely be present what is heard in the corridors about preserving the good name of the school and that "this kind of child" should be in a specialized institution where they are given "the medical attention they need."

Most probably, from the progressive bias of the professional, the supposedly violent child will take sides, thinking of them as a previously violent child to protect them from the punitivist onslaught. However, one cannot fail to hear the bias that supports the obligation to preserve other children from such situations and even the bias that warns of the need to protect female students from the practices of patriarchal domination embodied by these "children without limits who do not respect authority..." despite *the Ritalin*. Each of the above hypotheses could be deployed by appealing to critical theories. It is indeed possible to develop the reasons that serve the so-called best interests of the child, and/or the interests of the victims, and/or of the girls, and/or of the teachers, and/or of the dissidents, and/or of the school as an institution. But this debate risks remaining exclusively in the realm of meaning. That is to say, in the discussion about which right should prevail, who is more vulnerable than whom, and whose best interest is whose.

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Social intervention requires, first of all, a work of deconstruction. What meaning do the notions "violent child", "situations of violence", "bullying", "ADHD", "child without limits", "setting limits", "lawlessness", "vulnerability", etc. have, in this concrete situation, for these concrete interveners? Each of these terms encompasses a wide range of possible interpretations and it is necessary to identify which of them is playing its game in each case. At the same time, it is necessary to review what is being projected by authorities, teachers and professionals. It will be necessary to listen to the child, the family, the classmates, the referents. All this will help to read which logics are fighting their armed battle here. Without forgetting that logics are the logics of practices, not of people (Althusser, 2015). We will have to see which ideologies knotted to unconscious logics structure the situation and rigidify it (Karsz, 2007).

The bourgeois ideologies are undoubtedly the most frequent; we refer to the universalist discourses on Childhood, Women, Adolescence, the Human Being, the Evolutionary Maturation Process (all with capital letters, of course). Faced with these discourses, we must ask ourselves some inevitable questions: Are these so-called universals equally valid for the popular classes? at what price? In addition, ideologies will probably never be far away, playing their game, neoliberal, hygienist, macho, pachamamamist, ecologist, racist, socialist, fascist, communitarian, feminist, psychologist, victimizing, medical hegemonic, etc.

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The challenge is to try to identify the logics at work in the situation with, thanks to and against our feminist, decolonial, anti-psychiatric or psychoanalytic theories; with, thanks to and against our most deeply rooted ideological convictions; with, thanks to and against our institutional or political inscriptions. In this way we will try to reformulate the situation: it is not always the character who appeared at the beginning as a victim who retains, at the end of the analysis, that place; often the problems - after looking at them for a while - reveal themselves to be solutions or shelters and always the private issues reveal themselves to be "social issues" and the social issues, inevitably private issues. Finally, it will be necessary to see what alliances can be woven between the institution, the referents of the neighborhood, the family, the teacher, the classmates and the social policies. Movements and readings that make possible some form of unblocking the situation, without ever forgetting that social intervention does not resolve situations: it seeks viable negotiations. Theories -classical or critical- help us to approach the real, illuminate one or another aspect of the (ideological) struggle that develops there, show us threads that we can take or leave according to the concrete of the situation. In this way we can approach a certain objectivity.

Conclusions

The necessary commitment, as Social Work professors, to progressive ideologies, together with the consequent taking sides with the oppressed, usually has the collateral effect, generally unnoticed, of overshadowing -or completely displacing-, both in the academy and in professional practice, the concern for objectivity, thus losing an important ally.

Far from favoring scientistic positivism or the old slogans of "keeping the right distance" or "not getting affectively involved in the intervention", the pretensions of objectivity in Social Work (understood in dialectics with non-neutrality) offer us the possibility of producing knowledge that tends to be scientific, distancing us from slogans and bringing us closer to the complexity of reality.

We have insisted that in order to achieve a certain objectivity we cannot understand the subjects who come to social intervention as radically "other" (neither negatively nor positively). They are not a different species from the rest of the citizens, they are not only victims nor do they exist exclusively as subjects of rights. They are people with strategies, interests, alliances, tricks, resentments, cowardice and courage just like any businessman, university professor or social intervention professional... Nor can they be defined at all as "subjects of lack" or assume that they have a monopoly on suffering. In this sense, it seems to us necessary to remember that, at least in Social Work, it is more interesting to define the user subjects by what they can do and not by their deficiencies or needs. It is fundamental in social intervention to keep in mind potencies rather than impotencies.

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We have also pointed out that posing the question in terms of "being" - or of the professional identity of social workers - diverts the gaze, leads us to boast, to be ashamed or indignant; ridere, lugere et detestari, as Spinoza would say. To boast for being revolutionaries, to be ashamed for being obedient, to be indignant for being "accomplices of the system". However, what is at stake is not our identity or "what we are". What is at stake are the interventions, analyses, reports and diagnoses that professionals may produce, as well as the effects they may cause. What is important is that the report to the judge, the hospital director or the school principal be rigorous and objective and, as objective, forceful, convincing and - why not, but thanks to that - transformative. Symmetrically, as we have already said, it is not "the subject of care" that is central to the profession, even less so as "Otherness", but the logics and linkages that constitute the situation of intervention in which this person, group or community is involved. It is neither fruitful nor pertinent to think of professionals, users, social sectors or situations of intervention as entities; instead, it is more interesting for Social Work to think of them in terms of processes, or as elements or agents that are part of processes of social reproduction.

We thus relocate objectivity to the center of intervention practices on the condition that it is not confused with neutrality, disinterest or impartiality. Objectivity is not equivalent to disinterested knowledge; on the contrary, it is a practice interested in knowledge, in identifying how the real works in fact and what makes it work. The work that summons us is to progressively unveil the real thanks to and in spite of the different partialities of which we are the bearers. In this way we will be able to produce an objectivity that will illuminate the situation in order to promote, at the same time, certain political or ideological directions for which we are betting.

In conclusion, teaching in our classrooms to produce, to work, to think within the dialectic objectivity/non-neutrality is as necessary as is the study of critical theories. If we avoid focusing on the binary oppositions "the Same" versus "the Other", "modern Science" versus critical positions, "the study of subjectivities" versus political clientelism/not neutrality and, instead, focus on the dialectic objectivity/non-neutrality we will be able to clearly appreciate how practices are articulated by ideological and unconscious logics. Identifying these logics is the task that can lead us to produce a possible objectivity and, within the framework of existing social policies - and even in spite of them - to intervene in such a way that we can weave alliances, combine forces that enhance the user and the situation in its best profile and give rise to "favorable compositions" as Spinoza (1983) would say; in short, perceive the existing alliances in order to enhance them and thus be able to aspire to a certain effectiveness of the intervention and - why not - to a certain social transformation.

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Public Policies: An analysis from the evidence-based approach in Social Work

Políticas públicas: una mirada desde el enfoque basado en evidencia en trabajo social

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How to cite

Abstract

One of the answers to the ethic reference in Social Work is the Evidence Based Approach. However, its use is not limited to Social Work, in fact this approach supports a large proportion of decisions made at the policy level today. Through the public policies the State seeks the wellbeing of the population. Thus, it is important to show evidence about the implementation of such policies and how those meet their aims. At this point the proposed Evidence-Based Public Policy gains importance as a contemporary theoretical approach for Social Work, through its theoretical-critical analysis. The discourses and voices presented in this study are based on analysis of semi-structured interviews with social work professionals who have worked or are working with the approach.

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Resumen

Una de las respuestas al referente normativo en Trabajo Social es el Enfoque Basado en Evidencia. Sin embargo, su utilización no se limita a esta disciplina, de hecho, respalda gran parte de las decisiones que se toman en políticas públicas hoy en día. A través de las políticas públicas, el Estado busca constantemente el bienestar social, por lo que es importante dar cuenta de la manera y la medida en que las intervenciones estatales aseguran –o no- el cumplimiento de sus objetivos, relevando brechas a trabajar. En este punto cobra importancia la propuesta de Políticas Públicas Basadas en la Evidencia. En este artículo, se analiza críticamente esta perspectiva, relevando los límites y posibilidades para su transferencia en el contexto chileno, y relevando sus contribuciones como enfoque para el Trabajo Social contemporáneo. Las discusiones que aquí se plantean se basan en los análisis de entrevistas semi-estructuradas realizadas a profesionales del Trabajo Social con amplia experiencia de trabajo desde este enfoque conceptual.

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Evidence-based public policies

The essential purpose of policy is to promote and realize the welfare of all social groups. Its execution and its operational forms organize and administer public life through the regulation of the various relationships between humans and between humans and their environment (Henao, n.d., p. 2; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021).

In this way, public policies are constituted as a form of State intervention, with the aim of seeking the welfare of the population in general. De esta forma las políticas públicas se constituyen como la forma de intervención del Estado, con la finalidad de buscar el bienestar para la población en general.

The main engine that guides political decisions are the ideologies and currents that constitute them, historically constructed, in addition to the availability of economic resources, congruent with respect to the cultural traditions from which they emerge, impacting values, interests, personalities, times, circumstances and events that happen at the time (Oliver et al., 2014; Banks, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Parkhurts, 2017; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Mueller, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020; Strydom et al., 2010; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021).

The ongoing evaluation of the policy is a fundamental task (Henao, n.d.; Head, 2009; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Banks, 2009; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Parkhurts, 2017) and is the key indicator of the fulfillment of its purpose; however, it is complex to quantify social welfare without falling into a reductionist view (Henao, n.d.; Oliver et al., 2014). Thus, the knowledge and use of available and generated information can contribute as decisive tools to reduce uncertainty about the results and impacts that could be generated (Henao, n.d., p. 3; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Banks, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Haskins and Baron, 2011; Cairney, 2016; Mueller, 2019; Strydom et al., 2010; Parkhurts, 2017).

Policies that have not been informed by good evidence and analysis are more likely to fall foul of uncertainties and unintended consequences, which can lead to costly mistakes (Banks, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012; French, 2019; Mueller, 2019; Oliver et al., 2014; Strydom et al., 2010; Parkhurts, 2017). However, this is not to say that policies without sufficient rigorous evidence cannot proceed, especially when they must be generated quickly (Haskins and Baron, 2011). Banks (2009) says that policies are experimentations and one can never be truly certain, but neither should one operate blindly, one needs a good rationale or theory that can be subjected to debate and scrutiny. At this point, evidence-based policy becomes important, which is constituted as an aspiration rather than an already consummated result (Head, 2009; Cairney, 2016; Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017), since it is a proposal that still lacks a clear definition of its methodological scopes.

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Head (2009) states that there are three key factors in the modern understanding of evidence-based policies. First, it must be based on high quality information on relevant topics. Second, that professionals have skills in data analysis and policy evaluation. And finally, policy incentives that encourage the use of evidence-based analysis and advice in decision-making processes.

It is key in this aspect to place scientific knowledge at the center of decisions, i.e., to place evidence obtained from systematic research at the center, based on the idea of rigor (Parkhurts, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). However, the authors emphasize that evidence is not the only influential factor in policy formulation, but that both individual factors specific to politicians, such as their judgment and experience, and others at the institutional level, such as incentives, should also be considered (Cairney, 2016; Mueller, 2019; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Strydomet al., 2010; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Oliver et al., 2014; Henao, n.d.; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Parkhurts, 2017).

Evidence-based policy refers to policies and programs informed by the best possible evidence, by making use of the available scientific evidence when formulating,

implementing and evaluating them (Cairney, 2016; Oliver et al., 2014; Strydom et al., 2010; Parkhurts, 2017; French, 2019). In this way it does not leave out the complexity inherent in policy. Evidence and analysis can play a useful and decisive role in informing policy makers, as well as conditioning the environment in which these decisions need to occur (Banks, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012; OECD, 2020; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Parkhurts, 2017; Cairney and Oliver, 2017).

To date, there is no clear definition of evidence as it applies to public policy (Oliver et al., 2014; French, 2019; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Strydom et al., 2010). Evidence is obtained from research defined as "any systematic effort to increase available knowledge" (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, p. 2). Thus, it is intended to include all types of systematically obtained evidence, including action research, qualitative evidence, among others (Oliver et al., 2014; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Parkhurts, 2017; Saltelli and Gianpietro, 2017).

Governments often understand evidence as hard data or hierarchize types of evidence (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Head, 2009; Oliver et al., 2014; Saltelli and Gianpietro, 2017; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Parkhurts, 2017; French, 2019), following a technocratic logic of evidence. Head (2009) asserts that a bridge has been built between quantitative and qualitative evidence, yet program evaluation practitioners tend to use mixed methods. Governments and their central agencies, which apply the evidence-based approach as the basis for their interventions, recognize that qualitative studies are important as long as they are conducted rigorously and systematically (Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017).

For a correct application of the evidence-based policy approach it is necessary to consider a wide range of research sources, and to move away from the more technocratic idea of evidence, in order to capture the complexity of public policy processes (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Saltelli and Gianpietro, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; French, 2019), since as mentioned above, that would be falling into a narrow vision. Likewise, policies have different stages, cyclical, in which different types of evidence are required (Head, 2009; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Cairney, 2016), which could be mobilized according to mechanisms influenced by time, thus defining that for the agenda-setting stage, the evidence needed refers to elements of identification of the problem and its magnitude, accounting for the context, causes and scope, among other things (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021).

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Second, for formulation, evidence is required to account for the different options and their implications, this from the various authors, relieving the different intervention alternatives with their possible consequences and economic and social costs (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Cohen and Martinez, n.d.; Grinell and Unrau, 2010; Parkhurts, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). During implementation it is relevant to obtain operational evidence to improve the effectiveness of the actions, since by surveying information on the process in its implementation it is possible to find errors that are causing poor or low performance, and thus be able to fix them, thus improving the intervention at a previous stage in which the damage can be stopped or solved more effectively, causing less negative impact or avoiding it (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Cohen and Martinez, n.d).

Finally, in the evaluation stage, evidence of impact and monitoring is required, which accounts for how the intervention was carried out, whether it met the expected objectives in terms of solving the problem and not making it worse (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Cohen and Martinez, n.d.; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Haskins and Baron, 2011; Oliver et al., 2014). Banks (2009) states that in order to implement evidence-based policy it is necessary to have certain essential ingredients; first of all, it requires the right time and the right people, as for example, the case of the United Kingdom that began to use this approach finding the opportunity in the change of government from Thatcher to Blair, with which a rule that had been working in the same way for more than a decade was changed.

Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that the methodology matters; many of the problems of policies have to do with the inability to identify the problem or that this identification has more to do with a desire of the government than with the problem itself (Banks, 2009; Head, 2009; Cairney and Oliver, 2017); in this way, general lines of a desired cost-benefit framework must be defined, in order to estimate the social benefit, considering the possible impacts. The key is to estimate whether the benefits would be greater than the costs within a coherent analytical framework, even taking into account that there are elements that cannot be quantified (Banks, 2009), this under a broad and not merely economic analysis logic, although it is considered as an element to be taken into account. In addition, good data are required as evidence (Banks, 2009; Haskins and Baron, 2011; Grinell and Unrau, 2010; Oliver et al., 2014).

Thirdly, transparency is needed, i.e., that studies and evaluations do not occur behind closed doors, as this is necessary to educate people and because to call it evidence it must be able to be challenged and tested (Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021; Strydom et al., 2010). In this aspect it becomes important that not only should experts be consulted, but also those impacted by the policy, which shows the government how

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communities react to certain ideas and anticipates different courses of action to politicians (Banks, 2009; Head, 2009; Cairney and Oliver, 2017). Organizational support and sustained interaction between researchers and research users are needed, which can be achieved by encouraging the involvement of researchers early on, within or outside the formulation process (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006). In recent years, the idea of collaborative and shared research has been coined to overcome this limitation (Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021).

Expertise and capacity are required, as you don't have good evidence without good researchers (Banks, 2009; Head, 2009; Grinell and Unrau, 2010; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). Sutcliffe and Court (2006) and Cairney and Oliver (2017) argue that communication and interaction between the research and policy worlds is needed to strengthen research and evidence use, which could be achieved by establishing incentives that facilitate evidence use by policymakers and/or by co-locating policymakers and researchers, and/or by enhancing staff exchanges between government departments and universities. Evidence shows that even when there is rigorously generated evidence, it is the values, ideologies and political agendas of governments that take precedence (Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Mueller, 2019; Saltelli and Gianpietro, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). Finally, good evidence may be of low or no value if it is not available when needed (Strydom et al., 2010; Banks, 2009; Oliver et al., 2014). This approach requires a policy-making process that is responsive to evidence (Banks, 2009; Oliver et al., 2014), which could be facilitated through bridging the research and policy worlds (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Head, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Haskins and Baron, 2011; Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017).

Methodology

The present study is non-experimental, descriptive, because the topic of study is not widely developed in the world and little developed in the national context of social work, so it is necessary that a methodology is able to capture and reconstruct meanings with flexible methods (Canales, 2006) and holistically (De la Torre et al., 2008; Taylor and Bogdan, 1987; Flores, 2009).

Interviews were developed, understood as "repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and the informants, encounters aimed at understanding the perspectives or situations as expressed in their own words" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1987, p.127). The interviews were conducted with experts in the Evidence-Based Approach (EBE) who have worked or are working from this perspective, for

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which we resorted, due to accessibility criteria, to professionals from the University of Michigan, located in the U.S.A. A broad instrument was designed, capable of capturing the complexity of the object of study, since it responds to its own questions and codes, and therefore applies its own rules and speech (Canales, 2006).

The type of interview used was the semi-structured interview, which presents open questions and free answers for the interviewee, that is, without alternatives or stipulated response options. This technique is constituted as an orientation in the conversation (Canales, 2006), so that it allows in the course of this to go on revealing and asking questions that have not been considered, which due to the type of study and how little the phenomenon has been studied, becomes very relevant.

For the analysis, the process of codification and constant comparison of grounded theory was followed. Also ensuring theoretical saturation - defined as the non-emergence of new themes in the interviews, which was achieved after 8 interviews.

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Possibilities and limits of evidence-based public policies

The applicability of the approach to the social sciences, and to social work in general, has been subject to various problems that the applicators have been able to reveal. First, it is observed that the epistemological assumptions of the approach are still unclear (e.g. Henao and Jaimes, 2009 in Henao, n.d.; Oliver et al., 2014; Strydom et al., 2010), which is confirmed by what was revealed by the professionals, experts in EBE, interviewed for the purposes of this research, who state that there are differences in the understanding of the approach and how it is taught, which hinders its implementation (Interview 5). As an example, one interviewee states that there are social workers who say that the approach is distant from the professional context and that it is given only at the university (Interview 4). "I think there are different ways of understanding it because people have diverse training" (Interview 4).

Second, there are those who defend that evidence presents a hierarchy of quality based on the types of methodological rigor used to design and interpret studies. In particular the so-called Randomized controlled trial (RCT) approach (Head, 2009; Petticrew and Roberts, 2003), however, the application of this presents difficulties in politically or socially sensitive areas (e.g. Head, 2009; Petticrew and Roberts, 2003; Salteli and Ginpietro, 2017; Oliver et al., 2014; Cariney and Oliver, 2017) because of the difficulty of translating experimental and quasi-experimental results to large-scale programs and because of the tendency to minimize knowledge

of expertise in the field (Head, 2009). Politicians, scientists and policy makers may have different views about the type of evidence that is most reliable (Head, 2009).

It is worth mentioning that the approach originates from medicine, and that the idea of hierarchy of evidence is defended, socially, mainly from the area of public health (Petticrew and Roberts, 2003); however, the approach should not and cannot be transferred without prior contextualization.

Since the evidence used by physicians differs from that used by social workers and other disciplines, because the focus and the way of approaching the object from each discipline is different, in certain circumstances the proposed hierarchy of RCT at the apex and observations at the base can be inverted, as the hierarchical order also depends on the questions asked (Petticrew and Roberts, 2003). In this way, the levels of hierarchy are understood to be linked to the design of the study and not linked to the concept of evidence itself (Petticrew and Roberts, 2003). It is difficult to implement a hierarchy of evidence in other sectors of social intervention, unrelated or indirectly linked to health. This is affirmed by the interviewees, saying that it is suitable for clinical rather than community environments.

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> *There are few programs that work from an evidence-based approach, and they are mostly in clinical settings..... Medical contexts, focused on health behavior, and psychiatric institutions. In community contexts it is different, because they may say they do it, but there is no real application of the model. They don't really (...) adopt it (Interview 2).*

Thus, it is possible to observe that the characteristics of the evidence constitute a barrier to the implementation and use of EBE (Oliver et al., 2014). In addition, the approach must and is adapted to the different contexts in which it is used.

Science is only one input to evidence-based policy, as knowledge of the approach is varied. "The larger world of policy and program debate compromises several other types of knowledge and expertise that have legitimate voices in democratic society" (Head, 2009; Bryman and Becker, 2012), such as political strategy, through which the tactics and agendas of politicians and their organizations deliver a scenario of priorities and approaches, in addition to professional knowledge as crucial knowledge of roles in implementation and monitoring, and finally, both institutional sources and the experiential knowledge of those who receive the service. It thus follows that the evidence-based approach is not

only about evidence, but about integration of the best possible information, skills and values, considering the ecological context of the users-clients (e.g. Shlonsky and Stern, 2007; Bryman and Becker, 2012; Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). EBE ensures good work and impact, fed by available information and previous research, thus eliminating personal implications in decision making.

> *It leads to the delivery of better services, eliminating decisions made by intentions."*
> *(Interview 4)*

> *I think it is important because most of the theories have been tested and serve as*
> *guides for implementers and interveners (...). Otherwise social workers act based on*
> *their own opinions, which has the potential to do more harm than good. (Interview 1)*

Petticrew and Roberts (2003) state that the importance of the evidence and the method used will depend on the research question being pursued, which can be answered by different types of studies. Thus, the mixture of methods could be more relevant than just discarding qualitative methods, since the approach requires systematicity and rigor in the studies and research, which does not leave out the different methods by definition.

This conflict between methodologies is also highlighted by the professionals interviewed, stating that there are those who defend only qualitative methods and those who defend only quantitative methods, without reaching an agreement. "There are people who say that everything should be qualitative, others say that it is very quantitative and limited, and that quantitative should be" (Interview 4).

This is how researchers themselves can constitute a barrier to the implementation of EBE (Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney, 2016), making dialogue between methodologies impossible. Notwithstanding the above, and affirming the idea of not discarding qualitative methods, it is noted that the professionals interviewed point out that the mixture of methods can be more relevant than just one, in terms of the possibility of generating more and better evidence, and that qualitative and quantitative methods used rigorously can be at the same level and contribute to each other.

> *I think they go hand in hand, I don't think it should be one or the other or that one is*
> *good and the other is not. I think that the qualitative adds elements to the quantitative,*
> *which it is not able to capture in any other way. So if you do qualitative and quantita-*
> *tive research rigorously, it's a good mix. (Interview 4)*

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As Petticrew and Roberts (2003) state, the promotion of typologies is better than hierarchies in conceptualizing the strengths and weaknesses of different methods, considering the contribution of different types of research and that the method selected will depend on the research question rather than on a hierarchy.

> *The scientific exercise seeks to address (...) the complex relationships that mediate public life (...) and must take advantage of the multiple scientific methods to obtain relevant knowledge. Thus, the available scientific evidence would be enriched with the precision of statistical estimates and the representation of the ethnographic method (Henao, n.d., pp. 5).*

It should also be noted that social activity and science are linked, so that the latter is permeated by the prevailing ideology of each historical moment. In this line, Head (2009) states that while the prevailing ideology is neoliberal, individualism and economic growth, science will only benefit those who can pay for it. It will only benefit the dominant culture of the moment without responding to minorities (Interview 2).

Thus, there is a limit to the access of a few to evidence. However, in this scenario, a possibility opens up, since evidence can account for the gap between economic growth and the welfare of groups, becoming a tool that promotes a scientific state, in which decisions are based on evidence to promote welfare (Head, 2009).

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It is noteworthy at this point that the evidence-based approach achieved its expansion due to the idea of efficiency and effectiveness that it brings with it, related to the neoliberal ideology. However, it is also its cure, since the use of evidence allows the overcoming of economic domination, while continuing with the principles of effectiveness and efficiency, ensuring welfare.

As a possibility, it is worth mentioning that in the USA it is also used for the prioritization of programs to be financed, this based on the crises in which social programs and policies were the first to be cut, due to the neoliberal logic of the country. Evidence-Based Policies made it possible to show the social benefits and costs of programs and thereby ensure that social programs and policies that caused good impacts were not terminated (Haskins and Baron, 2011; Oliver et al., 2014; Strydom et al., 2010).

In this way, it allows for ending practices and interventions that do not provide good impacts, while consolidating old effective practices and generating new practices (Cairney, 2016), which is confirmed by the professionals interviewed.

> *Access to approaches that have helped to solve social problems effectively (...) will allow social workers to stop making interventions or actions that are not effective or that have not proven to be effective. (Interview 7)*

At the same time, the use of evidence and demonstration of good impacts and interventions secure funding, which is noted in interviews with knowledgeable U.S. practitioners and implementers of EBE.

According to a study conducted by Oliver et al. (2014), the incidence, as a facilitator in the implementation of EBE, of having legal support and definition of clear lines for the use of evidence is low. Thus, Evidence-Based Policy can strengthen the possibilities of promoting and realizing well-being (Head, 2009; Cairney, 2016; Oliver et al., 2014; Saltelli and Giampietro, 2017; Parkhurts, 2017). Likewise, Henao (n.d) states that it is necessary to go to the background and overcome the current ideology in order to consolidate a fair and dignifying policy for all.

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In addition to this, the U.S. professionals interviewed state that it is an ethical imperative (Interview 6) and a professional obligation (Interview 4) to make known what has been done and to generate more knowledge, as well as to use it. This corresponds to what Shlonsky and Stern (2007) state, that at the very least, the aim is to be honest and respectful when trying to provide information to help people make informed decisions.

In addition to the above, political activity brings with it inherent limits, such as government priorities, ideological preferences, values and principles of politicians, government promises, personal interests (e.g. Head, 2009; Mueller, 2019; Oliver et al., 2014; Cairney and Oliver, 2017; Federowicz and Aron, 2017) among others, so the difference between formulators constitutes a barrier in the implementation of EBE (Oliver et al., 2014).

Despite the fact that the policy cycle has varied stages in which different evidence becomes important, not all policy areas are really open to rethinking, in addition to which one of the characteristics of complex social problems is that they are underlain by clashes of values that are sometimes not adequately recognized and addressed. Problems have different scales of complexity and these can generate differences in how problems are framed, debated and investigated (Head, 2009).

In this sense, it is possible that the Evidence-Based Approach is more likely to gain strength in areas that are further away from the political heat, since the political process is a web of arguments and persuasion, however, political adjustments and opportu-

nities for rethinking may arise in unexpected ways, as a response to incidents, conflicts or crises (Head, 2009; Federowicz and Aron, 2021). Moreover, policy analysis has a dual tendency, on the one hand to seek simple technical solutions, and on the other to identify value conflicts in order to generate dialogue, mediation and conflict reduction (Head, 2009; Saltelli and Giampietro, 2017; Federowicz and Aron, 2021). "Without ignoring the vast complexity of politics, scientific knowledge can provide it with crucial tools by decreasing uncertainty about its possible outcomes" (Henao, n.d., p. 2-3), and thus make more informed decisions to lessen the probability of, by intervening, generating more damage than the one intended to be repaired. It is claimed that good evidence can lessen and even neutralize political obstacles, and thereby make reforms more feasible (Banks, 2009; Saltellia and Giampietro, 2017; Federowicz and Aron, 2021).

The professionals interviewed repeatedly affirm that the use of EBE allows generating better interventions and impacts, which, they say, is affirmed by studies where they conclude that those who use EBE present better results than those who do not use it (Henao, n.d; Oliver et al, 2014; Federowicz and Aron, 2021).

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In addition to the above, there is a strong tension in governments regarding the use of evidence, because building the capacity to generate evidence can be expensive, since they do not always have the data and access to the necessary information (Banks, 2009; Oliver et al., 2014; Mueller, 2019), which may require a special study or the use of pilots from the same program (Banks, 2009), which requires an investment of time that for the government can slow down the process of generating policies. This is why constant evaluation constitutes a difficulty for governments (Banks, 2009); however, the policy must be constantly evaluated and supervised in order to correct the points and aspects that could lead to failure.

This difficulty of the governments is revealed, by the interviewees, as a difficulty of the agencies to implement the EBE. Since they do not always have access to the evidence, they also affirm that it prioritizes the intervention over the investigation and that with this they can have good interventions, but without knowing their effectiveness (Interview 5). It is also affirmed that through constant evaluation the information flows are improving, since what is delivered to the government from the different programs is made available by it to all the auditors or those who want to see it and study it. Los profesionales entrevistados afirman reiteradas veces que el uso del EBE permite generar mejores intervenciones e impactos, lo cual, dicen, está afirmado por estudios donde concluyen que quienes usan el EBE presentan mejores resultados que quienes no lo utilizan (Henao, s.f; Oliver et al, 2014; Federowicz y Aron, 2021).

We have to report the results to the government and the government is aggregating all this information, from all the programs across the country and they can see all over the country what is happening with young people and we can see if it is happening in the southwest or if it is happening in the northwest something is happening differently. (Interview 5)

The lack of human resources is also observed, since there are no trained professionals (Oliver et al, 2014; Federowicz and Aron, 2021), which is confirmed by the interviewees (Interview 5). Added to this is the fact that those involved in policy processes do not always have the time available to complement daily tasks with research, due to the workload, and therefore the lack of time (Oliver et al., 2014; Shlonsky and Stern, 2007).

On the other hand, the transparency of programs can be politically risky, in the sense that governments do not want to be exposed to strong public criticism for programs or pilots with negative or weak impacts (Head, 2009). In this way, little or no transparency constitutes a barrier to the implementation of the EBE (Oliver et al, 2014; Federowicz and Aron, 2021). However, as Head (2009) states, the evaluation culture must be understood as a culture of constant learning, which is why it needs to be incorporated as a good practice. In this way the problem of lack of evidence and information could be eradicated. The concept of risk of the word evaluation would change, giving way to a concept of learning and continuous improvement, thus transparency becomes a facilitator of EBE implementation (Oliver et al., 2014)

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Haskins and Baron (2011) state that policymaking inevitably implies political, evidence and time constraints, however, this does not mean that evidence and information is not available or that authorities should not pay attention to existing evidence, or devote resources to get new. It is necessary to install a culture of evaluation as learning.

Politicians, through policies, intend to materialize social welfare, which is constituted as a complex task that requires high levels of ethical and intellectual commitment, so the availability of scientific knowledge that allows the fulfillment of this task must prevail. (Henao, s.f), rather than carrying out interventions of which there may be little or no knowledge of the impacts.

The Evidence Based Policy can help build a culture of evaluation through the use of two methods; the first, as a descriptive method to evaluate current policies, and the second, as the formulation of principles that allow the construction of an experimental approach for the production of new knowledge that serves as an input for

the construction of political decisions (Henao, s.f). It is possible to work in this line, making the knowledge developed up to now more transparent, and promoting the generation of new knowledge, which will advance the culture of evaluation as learning.

The foregoing is confirmed by the way in which the EBE is understood by the interviewees, who affirm that through evaluation, constant learning is achieved in the implication of research and the use of evidence in practice. As a possibility, the EBE is recognized as a facilitator of interdisciplinary dialogue, while through research common languages are achieved in the different disciplines, which, in turn, allows for raising the level of the social work profession.

With interdisciplinarity, it is possible to make better interventions, in the sense that social phenomena are holistic and are not the domain of a certain discipline, but that different disciplines converge in each phenomenon that, in their dialogue, allow broader and better informed interventions, in order to consider social phenomena and problems in their entirety and globality, and not from different aspects that do not dialogue with each other.

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Finally, knowing that the integration of the EBE between the curriculum and individual learning in the classroom is still in progress (Shlonsky and Stern, 2007), it is possible, from the academy, to strengthen the link between research and field work, since students continue to face places of practice and work that do not use the EBE, and that brings the possibility of working, discussing controversies and generating strategies to implement the EBE in their day to day life.

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to theoretically-critically analyze the applicability of Evidence-Based Public Policies, for which semi-structured interviews were carried out with 8 EBE experts. Based on the above, it is revealed that there are various limits and possibilities for the application of the EBE in public policies in Chile.

In the interviews carried out, it is clear that the access and existence of information is a point of conflict and a limitation of the approach; however, in Chile information has been generated that can serve as a basis for making better decisions and for implementing public policies based on evidence.

Limitations referring to the characteristics of policies and politicians, such as their interest and campaign promises, are also observed, as well as limitations refe-

rring to the lack of resources, whether economic or human, due to the investment of time, economics and training. Finally, limitations related to definitions are observed, such as the epistemological framing of the approach and the way of understanding the evidence. However, depending on how the category of evidence is understood, there will be multiple figures that the EBE can acquire, which until now has been focused on an empiricist approach in its way of understanding (evidence).

This approach is considered as a tool that, understood in its breadth, could contribute to the accountability of the State's work and its evaluation, allowing the central body to establish a culture of evaluation that would be useful in other areas further removed from the policy. The EBE would contribute to the strengthening and appreciation of the profession, because better performance would be achieved, and from social work it would be possible to explore and access areas that until now have been left to other professions, due to lack of knowledge and necessary skills.

This study is not without limitations. The experts interviewed are experts residing in the State of Michigan in the USA. The convenience sample could introduce biases associated with the place of selection of the participants.

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Acknowledgments

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ARTICLE

Perspectives on gender and the division of labor: readings on the experience of migrant families in Santiago, Chile

Perspectivas sobre el género y la división del trabajo: lecturas sobre la experiencia de familias migrantes en Santiago de Chile

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How to cite

Abstract:

This article investigates how migrant mothers who reside in Santiago de Chile and who have children under 5 years of age have lived their gender roles in the exercise of parenting and care from their migratory experience. To this end, interviews were conducted with 17 migrant mothers of Latin American origin who participate in the Chile Crece Contigo System from Family Health Centers in Santiago communes. Results show that they associate parenting and care tasks with a naturalized role, in which they identify at the family level as responsible for these tasks. In this way, their migratory experience is deeply related to the need to guarantee the care and well-being of their children as the main axis, which transforms or maintains gender roles throughout their migratory experience, and is related to studies on maternity and the mental health of migrant women where

the sexual division of labor and the overload of child-rearing and care work on women emerge. This raises challenges that can be addressed by the State, the ChCC and academia.

Resumen

Este artículo busca conocer cómo han vivido las madres migrantes que residen en Santiago de Chile y que tienen hijos menores de 5 años, sus roles de género en el ejercicio de la crianza y el cuidado desde su experiencia migratoria. Para ello se realizaron entrevistas a 17 madres migrantes latinoamericanas que participan en el Sistema Chile Crece Contigo (ChCC) desde Centros de Salud Familiar de comunas de Santiago. Se evidencia que asocian la crianza y las tareas de cuidado a un rol naturalizado en el que se identifican a sí mismas y a nivel familiar como las responsables principales de dichas tareas. De tal modo, su experiencia migratoria está profundamente relacionada para ellas con la necesidad de garantizar el cuidado y el bienestar de sus hijos/as como eje principal, lo que va transformando o manteniendo los roles de género a lo largo de su experiencia migratoria, y guarda relación con estudios sobre maternidad y salud mental de mujeres migrantes donde emerge la división del trabajo y la sobrecarga de labores de crianza y cuidado sobre las mujeres. Se plantean desafíos que pueden ser abordados desde el Estado, el ChCC y la academia

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Introduction

In recent years in Latin America, migration flows have increased at the intraregional level, with Chile being one of the most attractive countries for migrants (León, 2014; Martínez and Orrego, 2016). The increase in the migrant population has become evident in recent years, as reflected in the figures (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, INE and Departamento de Extranjería y Migración, DEM, 2020; 2021). Since 2017, an unprecedented increase was seen and by December 2021, 1,482,390 migrants were registered in the country (INE and DEM, 2022), which corresponds to 7.6% of Chile's population, according to 2021 figures (World Bank, 2023). This migration is predominantly intraregional in nature, concentrated in the Santiago Metropolitan Region and is mainly of Venezuelan (30%), Peruvian (16.6%), Haitian (12.2%) and Colombian (11.7%) origin (INE and DEM, 2022).

Within the migratory movements that involve the arrival in Chile as a destination country, migrant families, migrant parents who have children at the destination and unaccompanied children take part. In this context, there is evidence of different realities, practices and meanings regarding parenting (Grau et al., 2022) and the role played by migrant parents in this regard, where roles can be determined and transformed in the migration process, considering origin, transit and destination and the different conditions and characteristics that are present there and that impact parenting, care and the role of parents in them. In addition, the experiences are not homogeneous; they are marked by inequalities that arise according to class, migratory condition and citizenship status, which condition access to resources to support daily care (Colen, 2006 in Linardelli, 2020). These inequalities became even more acute during the pandemic, where an increase in the poverty rate was evidenced, as well as in the informality of migrants, to a greater extent than Chileans (Servicio Jesuita Migrantes, SJM, 2021).

In this context, family vulnerability, manifested in the labor, housing, health, etc., conditions of migrants in Santiago de Chile, strains care and affects the way it is exercised (Grau et al., 2023). However, in the Chilean case, the State has implemented some policies that help to mitigate this vulnerability[2] , for example, the public policy called Chile Crece Contigo, a subsystem of comprehensive child protection that offers accompaniment, protection and comprehensive support to children and their families, created for all children living in the country, to which the migrant population can access and, through it, access expeditiously services and benefits of care and support in development. The ChCC provides support to families for the welfare of children (Ministry of Social Development and Family, n.d.), and it is precisely in this subsystem that the migrant families who participated in this research are inserted.

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In this way, and as part of the new dynamics brought about by intra-regional migration and the feminization that accompanies it, we seek to know how migrant mothers who reside in Santiago de Chile and who have children under 5 years of age have lived their gender roles in the exercise of parenting and care from their migratory experience, seeking to contribute to migration studies, specifically migrant parenting, from a gender perspective, where the challenges that arise for them and the role of the State and the ChCC in it are made clear.

[2] These policies are often designed for the Chilean population and can be accessed by the migrant population.

Upbringing and care

Parenting refers to the processes, activities and perceptions related to the care of children (Peralta, 1996), to the training and formation that an adult/responsible person, who is generally the parent, provides them based on their beliefs, attitudes and knowledge (Izzedin and Pachajoa, 2009 in Infante and Martínez, 2016). It is a cultural construct, considering practices and models that show patterns of socialization, based on beliefs and knowledge that societies consider appropriate for the welfare of children and the maintenance of culture (Naudon, 2016).

Care, on the other hand, is tangential in relation to parenting (Pérez and Olhaberry, 2014) and refers to the action of supporting the daily development and well-being of a dependent person, such as a child, including three aspects, material, economic and psychological care, thus involving work, a cost and an affective and emotional bond (Batthyány, 2004). Although families, in general, go through similar experiences in the upbringing and care of children, when speaking of migrant families, additional difficulties are revealed to those that local families would present, due to an increase in the conditions of vulnerability arising from the lack of networks and aspects related to migratory regularization; in this sense, when there is no guarantee of social conditions that facilitate upbringing, this can become a stressor for parents (Grau et al., 2022).

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Gender, division of labor and construction of differentiated roles

It is necessary to approach gender from a sociohistorical viewpoint (Waisblat and Sáenz, 2014), which transcends the differences of a biological nature between men and women. Following Bourdieu (2000), this differentiation between the sexes has been the basis for the generation of a social meaning around it, associating each sex to certain characteristics in the way of being, of approaching language, the body, of relating, etc., from which a hierarchization is socially established in which women are placed in a role of subordination and are associated with attributes that obtain less social value; on the other hand, men are placed in a role of power and domination in relation to women (Logiovine, 2017). Bourdieu (2000) put forward the social construction of bodies, from which sexual differences that are immersed in a set of oppositions that organize social life are addressed. An interpretation is generated that understands some characteristics as natural differences, thus the socially constructed difference of the sexes is understood as natural and is filled with legitimacy (Bourdieu, 2000). Biological differences, then, appear as a "natural" justification of a difference that is established especially

in the sexual division of labor, where the role of men in productive work (recognized and remunerated) and that of women in reproductive work (little recognized and not remunerated) has been naturalized, accompanied by an unequal distribution of burdens (Logiovine, 2017) and in the differentiation of the sexes within the labor market in terms of labor and salary hierarchies (Hirata and Kergoat, 2007) and the recognition of women's capabilities (Cárdenas and Caro, 2021). The division of labor is framed within the structure of male domination (Bourdieu, 2000) in which women are assigned the responsibility of fertility, motherhood and the tasks that have to do with it by extension, excluding them from the public sphere (Heritier, 2007), as the social structure is based on the rupture of the public and private spheres and their differentiation based on sex (Monreal et al., 2019), helping to reproduce the capitalist patriarchy in which women are primarily responsible for the reproduction and care of the workforce (Logiovine, 2017).

However, the scenario has changed in recent years in Western societies with the massive incorporation of women into productive and, therefore, educational work, generating changes in social structures and beliefs (Monreal et al., 2019). However, gaps and inequalities between the sexes and, above all, gender biases in different work environments are still maintained (Díaz, 2014).

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According to Judith Butler (1990), gender is performative, constituting the required identity; and it is not constituted consistently and coherently in all historical contexts, since this category intersects with others, such as class, sex, race, etc., so Butler proposes that gender cannot be separated from intersections of a political and cultural nature. Latin American authors, such as Ochy Curiel (2017), have argued that, although gender is an important analytical and political category for the social sciences, which highlights hierarchies between the sexes, it is based on the male-female dichotomy, and assumes each of these two groups as homogeneous within themselves, ignoring other characteristics. Likewise, María Lugones (2005) shows that the subordination of women to the power of white men is universalized as the subordination of all women, ignoring the fact that they are not all presented in the same way and hiding the intersection of different forms of domination. Thus, beyond an approach based on gender, it is necessary to relate it to other characteristics, such as nationality, generating an intersectional understanding.

Gender and migration

The feminization of migration, as well as migration studies that do not take women as companions in migration, but as protagonists of it, are recent (Stefoni, 2014). In Latin

America there is evidence of a growing intraregional and feminized migration (León, 2014), which means that women are beginning to attract attention in migration studies and various studies are produced that inquire about their work experience (Álvarez and Castro, 2020; Cardenas and Caro, 2021), especially in relation to domestic work (Courtis and Pacecca, 2010; Mallimaci and Magliano, 2018), on their role in the family and raising their children (Naudon, 2016; Pedone, 2006; Quecha, 2015), among others.

Although there are works that have addressed "gender" and "migration" (Palacios, 2016; Stefoni and Stang, 2017; Thayer, 2012), most works do not allude to the concept "gender" nor are they approached from a gender perspective, but refer to migrant women (Stefoni and Stang, 2017). This is due to the idea that women are empowered due to the economic independence generated by being precursors of the migratory movement, becoming a transforming factor of gender relations (Thayer, 2012).

Gender, care and migration

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Following the review made by Monreal et al. (2019), it should be said that gender models are constructed that imply for migrant women the construction of identities different from those of men, which is manifested in the way they position themselves in the face of the risks and opportunities of the migratory process. Their role tends to be associated with care and with their role as mothers, therefore, their migratory process goes hand in hand with the importance of the family, which implies ensuring the welfare and opportunities for their children (Courtis and Pacecca, 2010). However, the established roles may imply stigmatization, in that migration is associated with the abandonment of children (Pedone, 2008) or the failure to fulfill the maternal feminine role of those who work outside the home (Monreal et al., 2019), placing greater emphasis on the stigmatization for the failure to fulfill the traditional role of mothers, over the situations of exploitation and domination to which they are subjected (Pedone, 2008). On the other hand, migration tends to reinforce men's role as providers.

In addition, women's migratory movements have particularities related to the economic and social role in the public and private sphere that differs from the role of men and that is present both at origin and destination (Monreal et al., 2019), which has entailed changes in family dynamics (Quecha, 2015). Although it has been highlighted that these transformations do not necessarily imply a change in the patriarchal organization of the family (Vargas, 2019 in Lara et al., 2021) or the emergence of new types of families, such as transnational families (defined as those where members live much of the time, or part of the time, separated, but despite the physical distance, create links that make

them feel as part of a unit, perceiving well-being from a collective dimension (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002 in Gonzálvez, 2016)). On the other hand, migration studies related to gender have tended to focus from women, and those that focus on men have done so from a look at labor (Torre and Rodríguez, 2018). However, in a study conducted with Venezuelan migrant men (fathers) in Ecuador, it is realized that fatherhood and work are common elements, but these, as well as the transformations, adaptations or reaffirmations of masculinity, are expressed and experienced in differentiated ways. Nevertheless, there is a reaffirmation of traditional masculinity based on being the family provider (Márquez, 2020).

The incorporation of migrant women into labor markets and the existence of transnational families have given rise to global care chains, which refer to linkages of people across borders who seek to sustain life in everyday life, paid or unpaid (Hochschild, 2001 in Hernández, 2016), in this case, women who migrate to engage in care work, leaving their children in the origin under the care of relatives (Lara et al., 2021; Leiva-Gómez, 2017), generating new forms of kinship and family life (Mummert, 2010 in Hernández, 2016).

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Methodology

The methodology was built on the basis of the qualitative interpretative paradigm (Ruiz, 2003; Tarrés, 2008), seeking to collect the practices, meanings and evaluations that migrant mothers give to the exercise of daily parenting, as well as the parenting received by their parents or significant adult migrants. In order to achieve this purpose, qualitative tools were used, mainly semi-structured in-depth interviews with the subjects in question (Latin American migrant families) in the selected health centers belonging to the public health network of the Metropolitan Region. The ethnographic character is embodied in the characteristics acquired by the interview, which implies greater immersion in the context of the people and, therefore, flexibility in the conversation generated (Flick, 2012).

Participants

The participants of the study were, on the one hand, Latin American migrant parents attending Family Health Centers (CESFAM) in 2 communes of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago with a high percentage of migrants (INE and DEM, 2019). The inclusion criteria were to be migrant families with parents who were born in another country, who had children under 5 years of age, who were exercising the child-rearing process in Chile and who participated in the stimulation rooms of the Comprehensive Child

Protection System (Sistema de Protección Integral a la Infancia, ChCC). The number of people in the family and the type of family (two-parent, single-parent, other) were not considered. As exclusion criteria, families attending family health centers other than the selected communes or having only children over 5 years of age were not considered for this study.

Semi-structured interviews (Vela, 2004; Tarrés, 2008) were conducted with 17 migrant families (14 mothers, two families where father and mother were interviewed and one family where grandmother and father were interviewed). The fieldwork took place between August and October 2019 and the participating families were of Venezuelan, Peruvian, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican and Haitian nationality. Most of the children of the participating families were born in Chile, except for 3 children who were born in their country of origin, Venezuela. The children ranged in age from 6 months to 4 years, and all of them attended the stimulation room of the CHCC of each CESFAM, because health professionals had identified some lag in them. The professionals of the stimulation rooms identified the families that could participate taking into account the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined, contacted them and after giving their authorization, the research team contacted them to conduct the interviews. It is important to mention that despite the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, the choice of participating families could be biased by the professionals' criteria. Some of the characteristics of the participating families are listed below (Table 1).

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Gender, caregiving and migration

Following the review made by Monreal et al. (2019), it should be said that gender models are constructed that imply for migrant women the construction of identities different from those of men, which is manifested in the way they position themselves in the face of the risks and opportunities of the migration process. Their role tends to be associated with care and with their role as mothers; therefore, their migratory process goes hand in hand with the importance of the family, which implies ensuring the welfare and opportunities for their children (Courtis and Pacecca, 2010). However, the established roles may imply stigmatization, in that migration is associated with the abandonment of children (Pedone, 2008) or the failure to fulfill the maternal feminine role of those who work outside the home (Monreal et al., 2019), placing greater emphasis on the stigmatization for the failure to fulfill the traditional role of mothers, over the situations of exploitation and domination to which they are subjected (Pedone, 2008). On the other hand, migration tends to reinforce men's role as providers.

Table 1: characteristics of the participants

Participant code	Family composition	Nationality	Time in Chile
E1 (mother)	Parents and one child	Haitian	4 years old
E2 (mother)	The mother and daughter. La madre tiene dos hijos The mother also has 2 more daughters in the Dominican Republic, and the father, who is not the mother's partner, has older children in Chile.	Dominican	4 years old
E3 (mother)	Parents and three sons.	Peruvian	13 years old
E4 (grandmother and father)	Parents, grandmother and one daughter	Venezuelan	2 years old
E5 (mother)	Parents and one daughter	Venezuelan	1 years old
E6 (mother)	Parents and two sons. The father has a child from a previous union.		
E7 (mother)	Parents and two sons	Peruvian	2 years old
E8 (mother and father)	Parents and one child. The father has a child in Colombia from a previous union.	Colombian	2 years old
E9 (mother)	Parents and two sons	Venezuelan	3 years old
E10 (mother)	Parents and a child	Peruvian	11 years old
E11 (mother and father)	Parents and a son. The mother has an older son in Haiti.	Haitian	3 years old
E12 (mother)	Parents and two sons	Colombian	7 years old
E13 (mother)	Mother and two twin daughters	Colombian	6 years old
E14 (mother)	Parents and three sons	Cuban	10 years old
E15 (mother)	Parents and two sons	Colombian	7 years old
E16 (mother)	Parents and a child	Peruvian	4 years old
E17 (mother)	Parents and two sons	Venezuelan	2 years old

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Source: Own construction with information provided by the families interviewed.

Interviews and data analysis

This article is part of a broader project that sought to understand and analyze how, from their cultural universe, tensions and contradictions about practices, meanings and valuations of and in the care relationships in the upbringing during gestation and early childhood of Latin American migrant families linked to ChCC in Health Centers of the public health network of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago are configured. In this regard, interviews were conducted to address different topics on the basis of this study and in response to the specific objective proposed in this article. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. A content analysis was carried out on the topics of the migratory trajectory, the experience in the exercise of daily parenting, as well as on the upbringing received by their parents or responsible adults. From there, a codification was made that allowed a later description of the traditional gender roles in the exercise of parenting and care of migrant mothers in Chile.

Ethical aspects

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to guarantee their scientific rigor and informed consents were signed in accordance with the ethical commitment of the research, which was approved by the Scientific Ethical Committee of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, as well as by the Ethics Committee of the Servicio de Salud Metropolitano Norte.

Results

The results are presented below, organized according to the following dimensions that intersect with the migratory trajectory of the families: experience in the exercise of daily parenting; parenting received by their parents or responsible adults. In turn, the results were structured based on the 3 profiles of migrant women mothers, according to the gender roles that stress the spheres of production and reproduction in the context of female migration (Gissi and Martinez, 2018). The profiles identified would be the following: (1) Centrality in reproductive roles: those women mothers who, due to the migratory situation, having small children and the lack of support networks, dedicate themselves exclusively to care and upbringing; (2) Conciliation of productive and reproductive roles, corresponds to those migrant women mothers who, despite having small children, carry out productive work; and (3) Those who make productive and reproductive roles compatible in the context of transnational upbringing. In the case of men, all of them play the role of father provider, although there is evidence of different discourses on their position in relation to parenting and paternity; however, in the imaginary of none of the families interviewed does the primary role of caregiver attributed to the father appear.

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The exercise of daily parenting

In the first place, we inquired about the upbringing that migrant families currently exercise with their children in Chile, seeking to know how gender roles are exercised there. The results show that not all families have the same dynamics or develop the same parenting roles (fathers and mothers).

(1) The centrality of reproductive roles: Families with women mothers dedicated to domestic and care work.

In this first case, women who do not work for pay are divided between those who decided to stop working as a family decision (which in several cases they say was their husband's idea), to devote themselves to caring for their children after the change of country, and those who stopped working because they had no one else to care for their children. These women report that they went from working and being economically productive to dedicating themselves exclusively to reproductive work. The lack of family networks plays a role in this; the families say that if they were in the country of origin, someone else in the family could take care of them so that the mother could work; however, always exemplifying that the caregiver would be a woman (grandmother, aunt, neighbor), but never a man.

> *"It's not that I don't want to work, my husband doesn't want to. Because who is going to take care of her, she is afraid to be in the garden, as they say, but little by little. Yes, I have the possibility of being able to take good care of him, then thank God he works and I take care of the baby." (E10)*

> *"[...] if we were in Colombia we would have more support, starting from the fact that a stranger would not take care of him, my mom, I don't know, a sister. But in that sense we would have more support, and the child would be more in the family, not with a stranger." (E8)*

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The most complex transformations in the way they exercised their gender roles are reported in the cases of Venezuelan families. Women were dedicated to productive work and for migratory reasons had to transform their role to a more traditional one, leaving productive work aside to take on care and domestic work, which also implied a loss of economic autonomy. These situations include accounts in which contradictory emotions and a feeling of loneliness and sadness are expressed.

> *"Right now I am 100% dedicated to my children, to the home, to the house and well to be honest suddenly I am super overwhelmed, I want to run away because I love them, I love them, I adore them, but you know, I got lost." (E6)*

Most of the women who dedicate themselves exclusively to reproductive work report an overload of domestic and caregiving tasks simultaneously, taking advantage of the children's breaks to finish the household chores. It is noted that husbands work tirelessly outside the home in order to bring in financial support, which affects the amount of time they can spend with their children. However, it was noted that several fathers seek ways to balance the quantity of time with the quality of time, finding the possibility of sharing with their children in the little time they have available.

> *"I am with him all day long. I wake up, I make him breakfast, sometimes he takes his nap. Sometimes when he sleeps I try to make lunch or clean or wash when he is asleep (...) In the case of my husband, he works 12 hours, so when he shares with the child. That's how I feel. Right now he is getting up early because he wakes him up and shares 2 hours before he leaves."* (E5)

> *"He works from 9 a.m. until 6 a.m., he arrives at 7 a.m. at home. The time he arrives he is with my children, he asks him how he has been at school, he asks him if he has any pending homework, because my son and I don't always do it, but we let the dad also participate."* (E7)

(2) Families with mothers engaged in paid work: Reconciling productive and reproductive roles

In the case of mothers who work for pay outside the home, they say that they feel that work absorbs their whole day, not being able to dedicate enough time to their children, feeling guilty for this and for having to leave them in the care of third parties. When someone other than the mother takes care of the child, that person is a woman or (very few) they leave them in kindergartens. Despite working all day, just like their husbands, they are the ones who are in charge of taking the children to medical checkups, having to ask permission from their jobs or having to take them to work to then go to the doctor's office.

> *"I have almost no time with my daughter. She goes to kindergarten and I go to work and when I take her out there is a lady who takes care of her and I go to study. My husband takes her out and I arrive and sometimes she is sleeping or I have to prepare her for the other day, then I have almost no time, the only day we have are Sundays and when she accompanies me at work."* (E1)

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Some, in order to get a job after having had their children, point out that they have lied about their condition as mothers, because they assume that the bosses think that the role of worker is not compatible with the role of mother, which would put them at a disadvantage compared to their male colleagues or women without children.

> *"I got a job, just the same to enter that job I had to say that I have no child, because I went to many jobs, I said that I had a child with whom I lived, I said what it was, but from there they told me no, because if you say that you have a child of such age they will not accept you, because it is like <<ay, my son got sick and they have to give me permission>>. To enter that job I just said <<now, well, I am not going to say that I have a child>> and on the sheet they give you to fill out I said that I did not have a child and that same day they gave me the contract." (E16)*

There are other families where it is stated that even though the mother works because of an economic necessity, the ideal for them as a family would be for the father to exercise the role of provider and the mother to stay at home with her children. Thus, although they would ideally hope to comply with traditional gender mandates, the reality of migration and economic necessity do not allow it.

> *"Unfortunately we have to work. What I would give to have a super good salary and tell [the wife] <<ya, you stay at home and you are with the child always>>. Unfortunately it plays like that." (E8)*

(3) Those families that make productive and reproductive roles compatible in the context of transnational parenting.

There are families where one of the partners (mother or father) has children in the country of origin. However, the situation is approached differently when it is the father or the mother who has separated from the children.

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In the case of the mother, when she is separated from her children, she looks for a way to be with them again, devising a plan for reunification at the destination, a plan that is slow and complex due to economic conditions and/or the migratory situation. In addition to this, mothers, who were the main caregivers, seek to leave their children in the care of third parties, other than the father (if he is in origin), always women.

> *"I have two more girls who are in the Dominican Republic, I had a problem with him [the girls' father] and that is why I decided to come here. A sister-in-law, his sister, is taking care of them. I pay her 10,000 pesos, 10,000 from there, which is about 140,000 from here. One is 10 years old and the other is 5 and in December he will be 6. (...) later I will bring one of them, but I can't bring them all together, because I live in a small house and I can't fit anything. And rents are very expensive here." (E2)*

In the case of the father, when he is separated from the children, it is stated that the children are fine because they are with the mother in the country of origin and that they maintain telephone communication, through which, on occasions, the children are corrected from a distance and the need to maintain a male figure who establishes limits and guarantees good behavior is evoked. The need to send money for their support is also highlighted.

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> *"He is a child who has everything, because I send him money from here and his mother is also a professional and earns well there. He has everything. Just tell him <<what is wrong with him? what is missing? what doesn't he like?>>. And talk to him a little bit man to man and explain to him how things are, so that he really knows that it's a tantrum just because, because he doesn't have to behave like that." (E8)*

There is another case, in which the daughters were conceived in Chile, but the father decided to return to the country of origin. In this case, the father has little relationship with his daughters, asks about them, but does not contribute financially or visit them. Thus, the task of care and upbringing falls solely on the mother, who must also act as the sole provider for the household.

"No, he is in Colombia, he came to see the girls. Here they asked me if I was sure that he was the father of the girls, that they would give me the name, I didn't know what to do. I talked to him, he came, he saw the girls and sometimes we talked, but no money was given. Sometimes he asks me how the girls are and I answer him normally. I don't know if he is going to come back here." (E13)

On the other hand, there are families that do not leave their children in the country of origin, but they do leave other relatives, such as the children's grandparents. In these cases the families continue to maintain emotional and economic ties. When the person who stayed in the country of origin is required to be cared for permanently because of age or health, it is also a woman (family member or not) who does the care work.

"She is sick, but always, now she is bedridden in Lima. She is cared for by my sister who is single. But we have always gotten along well." (E10)

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Upbringing received and the weight of traditional gender roles

On the other hand, we inquired about the aspects of the upbringing of the interviewees' families to find out how their parents exercised gender roles and how they have distanced themselves or not from that. The aspects identified as positive in the upbringing they had in their countries of origin are linked to experiences of affection and respect, where dedication and attention as part of care are highlighted as aspects that they would like to replicate with their children. In the upbringing received, a woman is generally recognized as the main caregiver, whether it is the mother or a relative, such as a sister, aunt or grandmother. In other cases, the women describe that they themselves were in charge of their siblings.

"I did not grow up with my mom, I grew up with an older sister because my mom married my dad, my dad had other daughters from another marriage and my dad passed away when I was 2 years old." (E1)

In a few cases the parents of the interviewees were also caregivers. In this case the women were cared for by the father who exercised reproductive tasks from affection, but simultaneously incorporated them into productive work generating dynamics around child labor.

> *"Because when my mother went out, I stayed with my father. My dad would do my hair, he loved me very much because I looked so much like him. We used to work in agriculture with him, beans… and the relationship with him was quite good. Yes, because he taught us how to plant things, because that was what you did the most, planting, agriculture… we planted a lot there. (E2)*

On the other hand, there is an account of how they were taught to maintain traditional gender roles since childhood, instilling in them that women and men should perform differentiated tasks "proper" to each sex, where women were more restricted and were taught aspects such as staying at home with other women doing domestic work.

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> *"In those times, the little girl had to be in the house helping mom, doing things and the male children did not, they were taken care of by dad, <<do whatever you want>>. But the little girl, women, no." (E3)*

> *"In Colombia there is always a difference, for example, my mother and my father showed love, affection, everything to men, but to men, yes, my father spoke louder and tried to instill in them more." (E13)*

In some accounts, it can be observed how the discourse on traditional gender roles still persists, where the maternal figure acquires a central role in relation to the care and upbringing of children.

> *"In Peru, most women do not work when they have children, they usually stay at home, their husbands work, because we are used to raising our children. Because the mother can work, that's fine, everything develops, but the absence that you are going to give to your child when you work is not the same when you come". (E10)*

Despite having been raised based on traditional gender roles, some families take a critical position in this regard, recognizing that although the traditional gender roles were emphasized in the upbringing they received in their country of origin, this has been changing in part, but has also persisted to a greater extent in their contexts of origin.

> *"Previously, there was like a lot of machismo. Like men are from the street and girls from the house." (E9)*

> *"Yes, boys were allowed to go out more than girls. You don't go out because you are a girl, it was like that. There is still a lot of taboo there about telling the mother that she has a boyfriend because the mothers tend to react more, they lock them up, they don't let them go out, suddenly they change schools. It is still strong. A girl in shorts, cleavage is not well seen, very badly seen". (E7)*

According to the results, we can point out that most of the interviewed women refer that in their childhood, women were much more restricted than men. Women had to stay at home, they were not allowed to go out until late at night, and it was even frowned upon to have boyfriends during adolescence.

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Discussion and conclusions

The above shows that the migrant mothers who participated in this research, who reside in Santiago de Chile and who have children under 5 years of age, have lived their gender roles in the exercise of child rearing and care from their migratory experience in different ways. This shows that migrant mothers are not a homogeneous group of people who live their experiences in the same way and with the same characteristics. There are some mothers who used to work for pay and have remained in the private sphere after migration, dedicating themselves not only to care and child-rearing tasks, but also to domestic chores. Others are engaged in productive work and sometimes pay for informal and private care services provided by other women. In the face of this, there is an overload, as they continue to assume reproductive tasks during the hours they are with their children and still belong to the productive sphere. Sometimes, productive work is an undesirable option for women, who would prefer to maintain their traditional gender role in which they themselves naturalize that it is mothers who should be with their children.

In this case, although they would like to maintain traditional gender roles, the reality of migration and economic needs make it difficult, since the mother cannot stop working to stay at home. These findings are consistent with recent studies on motherhood and the mental health of migrant women (Carreño et al., 2022), where the sexual division of labor and the consequent relapse of child-rearing and care work on women emerge.

On the other hand, although men were not the main focus of this article and their own vision of masculinity in a migratory context was not addressed, it reaffirms what other research has said (Márquez, 2020) regarding the fact that fathers -men-, in the migratory context, reaffirm their traditional masculinity based on their role as the main provider at the family level. However, differences are reflected in the exercise of their masculinity, from the mothers' accounts, where some fathers are to some extent involved in the tasks of care and upbringing. It is shown that there are several fathers who seek to make space before or after their working day to spend time with their children, showing that, although their main role is not that of caregiver, but that of provider, they distance themselves somewhat from the traditional mandates when they seek to be present in the upbringing of their children and share with them daily moments in their time off, which they would like more of, but for economic reasons cannot do so. In this sense, it is observed that although men can be present in childrearing, playing a complementary role in this space, the responsibilities of care fall on and are focused on women (Carreño et. al, 2022). This is due to the interweaving of gender, division of labor and naturalized and differentiated roles and attributes. There is only one case in which the father is not a provider and does not have any type of contact with his daughters; in this case, beyond the reproduction of the provider role from the family model, a question of individualism is evident, displacing the idea of providing for a family to providing for oneself.

In this sense, it should be noted that the results show that in the imaginary of the families it is implicit that the role of caregiver belongs to women predominantly; in no case was it considered when migrating that the father could devote himself to care while the mother devoted herself exclusively to productive work, which shows, as expressed by Vargas (2019, in Lara et al., 2021), that the transformations in family dynamics do not necessarily imply a change in the patriarchal organization of the family. This is also reflected in the case of women who leave children behind, since the father does not remain as the main caregiver; it is other women who are left in charge of their care. However, in an account of transnational paternity, it is pointed out that the father has a position of power that surpasses that of the mother with res-

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pect to the obedience of his son and that, in addition, he seeks to transmit it from his own idea of masculinity, from what he calls "talking to him as a man to a man".

In terms of daily childrearing, it can also be observed how childrearing models are transformed and often conflict with the experiences of migrant mothers (Carreño et al., 2022; Grau et al., 2022).

From an intersectional perspective, it is evident how gender and nationality mark the experience of gender roles in care and upbringing, as it was shown, for example, that Venezuelan mothers had to stop working due to the migratory situation and economic conditions. On the other hand, it is observed how Central American mothers leave their children at home and become mainly responsible for economic support, delegating care and generating, as stated by Mummert (2010, in Hernández, 2016), a transformation in the roles expected from the culture of origin and generating new forms of kinship and family life. In such a way, in the case of these Central American mothers who build transnational families, it is manifested, as proposed by Bourdieu (2000), that women are assigned the responsibility of fertility, motherhood and the tasks related to it by extension; but in addition, they assume the role that has been defined as traditionally male, as Trujillo and Almeda (2017) showed, of being the main economic providers. In this sense, mothers experience an overload of work, whatever their daily task. Those who dedicate themselves exclusively to reproductive work, have an overload with respect to domestic and care tasks, not only with respect to their children but also to their partners; mothers who work in a paid manner in the public sphere have an overload of productive and reproductive work, evidencing a double workday and what has been called a "global workload" (Sáinz, 1999). In the case of fathers, there is an overload of productive work.

It can also be seen that mothers have different characteristics that place them in a position of subordination and inequality. Not only because they are women do they have an overall work overload, but also the possibilities and conditions of integration will depend on the nationality of the people, since the rules and regulations vary according to the country of origin. This conditions the lack of support networks and opportunities in the country of destination, depending largely on the country of origin and the migratory situation, which is given, for most of them, by the length of stay in the country. But in addition to the above, it is shown how the fact of being migrant women and also mothers puts up a wall for them when they need access to work, to the point that they must lie about their condition as mothers.

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We conclude, in line with other research (Logiovine, 2017), that parenting and care tasks are associated by women, and by the migrant families interviewed, with a naturalized role in which they are primarily responsible for such tasks. In this sense, their migratory experience is deeply related for them to the need to guarantee the care and well-being of their children as the main axis, which transforms or maintains gender roles throughout their migratory experience. This means that gender roles are accommodated, maintained or transformed depending on family conditions and the way in which they organize themselves as a group to meet their needs at the economic level and for the maintenance and reproduction of life.

This article reaffirms the challenge of including from the State, and particularly from ChCC, a gender and division of labor perspective, which also includes an intercultural respectful point of view, where customs and traditions are understood and respected, as well as conceptions regarding upbringing, care and gender mandates, understanding that not for all families and mothers the definition and construction of being a woman and the feminine corresponds to the same- and that not for all families and fathers the definition of their masculinity is the same. Let us remember that there are mothers who have been forced by migratory circumstances to do exclusively reproductive work, when in their lives they had always participated in productive work. This also goes hand in hand with the difficulty of finding places in kindergartens or day care centers that are economically accessible and trustworthy, a matter in which the State has an important role to play. Although an approach to co-responsibility could be proposed from instances such as the ChCC stimulation room, the reality that this study shows is that this does not depend exclusively on the will, but that there are other factors such as economic possibilities and cultural meanings, which make this a complex challenge.

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Another relevant aspect is the need to provide care and support to mothers, understanding that they face an overload of work exacerbated by migration, sometimes accompanied by the difficulty of finding employment as mothers of young children and/or an excess of daily tasks. It is important to address from academia and from the State, in this sense, the welfare and mental health of Latin American migrant mothers with young children in Chile.

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ARTICLE

Feminist lenses for the renewal of Marxism: exchange of views[1]

Lentes feministas para la renovación del marxismo: intercambio de puntos de vista

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How to cite

Abstract

This article seeks to offer some theoretical-political bases for a necessary discussion: that Marxian categories have a history and a dynamism, and, because they are more complex in the present, they require being saturated with new historical and social determinations. In this effort, the Marxian ontology of social being is the analytical ground for this paper, which walks through feminist contributions that renew the reading of the relations of oppression-exploitation of class, race, and gender in the present time. This reflection intends, besides pointing out the renewal of Marxism by feminisms, to widen the lenses that allow for translating the structural elements of the historical and current social precariousness of Brazilian women, in the face of the de-democratization process imposed by the neoliberal and neoconservative project.

Resumen

EEste artículo pretende ofrecer algunas bases teóricas y políticas para una discusión necesaria: las categorías marxianas tienen una historia y un dinamismo, y, por ser más complejas en el presente, requieren ser saturadas de nuevas determinaciones históricas y sociales. Para este esfuerzo, el escrito, teniendo como suelo de análisis la ontología marxiana del ser social, transita por aportes feministas que renuevan la lectura de las relaciones de opresión-explotación de clase, raza y género en la actualidad. El objetivo de esta reflexión, además de señalar la renovación del marxismo por los feminismos, es ampliar las lentes que permitan traducir los elementos estructurantes de la precariedad social histórica y actual de las mujeres brasileñas, frente al proceso de desdemocratización impuesto por el proyecto neoliberal y neoconservador.

Palabras Clave:
Feminismos; Marxismo; opresión-explotación; clase-raza-género; precariedad social femenina.

Introduction

Both the historical and dialectical materialist method and the Marxian categories have scientific validation, whose verification is produced through the historical process. Both are highly topical, since they continue to explain the immanent movement of bourgeois sociability. Marxian categories are ontological, they refer to dimensions of being, and, for this very reason, they have a historical and dynamic character, which, at present, in the face of other historical needs that must be studied, even from a class structure, deserves a theoretical and political analytical treatment that saturates them with new determinations, an exercise made possible by the Marxist method itself.

In this sense, it is worth recalling what the important Marxist feminist, Brazilian sociologist Heleieth Saffioti, said in "Quién teme a los esquemas patriarcales de pensamiento" about the knot between class, gender and race/ethnicity: "[...] it was, then, Marx himself who taught me to think the knot, although in his time it was not possible for him to do so. In fact, the most important thing about a scheme of thought consists in the power of being able to teach how to think" (SAFFIOTI, 2000, p. 73-74).

The functioning and legality of bourgeois sociability were duly unveiled by critical social theory. With Saffioti's Marxist feminist perspective, it was possible to understand that patriarchy and racism also operate as social determination in reality together with capitalism, consubstantiating the system of domination-exploitation. In the sociological analysis of the knot, gender-race-ethnicity-class are constituted as three contradictions that structure the unequal social relations of Brazilian society.

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Domination and exploitation for Saffioti (2004, p. 105) are faces of the same way of producing and reproducing social life, since "there is not, on the one hand, patriarchal domination and, on the other, capitalist exploitation". To the extent that patriarchy is conceived as a political system and capitalism as an economic system, the system of domination-exploitation is fragmented, denounces the sociologist, splitting the political, social and economic dimensions.

Saffioti (1988), understanding that the capitalist mode of production presupposes social reproduction, as well as being the historical result of the capitalism-patriarchy-racism symbiosis, expressed his formulations in terms of the capitalist mode of production and not in terms of the logic of capital.

This theoretical and methodological prism is fundamental to refute the theses of the Marxist tradition that, in their argumentative constructions, separate the logical structure of capital from its historical dimensions, incurring a classic confusion between the two, as Cínzia Arruzza (2015), American Marxist feminist, points out. Such a separation ultimately leads to reductionism and economism, autonomizing patriarchy from capitalism and underestimating the centrality of gender oppression (ARRUZZA, 2015).

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Within the feminist-Marxist tradition we find studies that propose a unitary theory, in which patriarchy is not an autonomous system of capitalism.

> *The defenders of the "unitary theory" disagree with the idea that patriarchy today is a system of norms and mechanisms that reproduce themselves autonomously. At the same time, they insist on the need to consider capitalism not as a set of purely economic laws, but as a complex and articulated social order, an order that has its core constituted by relations of exploitation, domination and alienation. (ARRUZZA, 2015, p. 38, emphasis added).*

Regarding the inextricability between production and reproduction, and between the determinations of gender and class for an analysis of the social totality, another relevant feminist, who produces intellectually from critical social theory, is the Italian historian Silvia Federici, for whom gender is a specification of class relations and the history of women is the history of classes (FEDERICI, 2017).

The Italian intellectual in The Caliban and the Witch: Woman, Body and Capitalist Accumulation (2017), by analyzing the processes of primitive accumulation from a femi-

nist and class approach, brought us a series of historical determinants hitherto unstudied that shaped the crisis of feudalism, allowing its transition to capitalism. In the study of the historical determinants of capitalist development, in addition to the expropriation of the peasantry, ending the communal societies, and the conquest of America with the slave system, Federici (2017) examined the witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, giving it historical and determining importance for primitive accumulation.

From this historical finding, Federici (2017) presents us with the thesis that the witch hunts of the Modern Age interacted in a structural way with slavery and enclosures for the constitution of capitalist accumulation, in which violence and expropriation, practiced by the ruling classes that were being formed at the time, occurred even more severely on women, configuring a historical, systematic and structural degradation of these in the course of the development of capitalism, whose scope still exists today.

Thus, the relevance and timeliness of her thesis for feminist and Marxist thought is precisely to elaborate the connections between past and present, for example the techniques of social control and extermination used in the present, which can still be seen as a witch hunt (MARINHO, 2020). However, it is not limited to this point. In the book The Zero Point of the Revolution: Domestic Labor, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle (2019) and in the article notes on gender in Marx's Capital (2018), Federici illuminates other important aspects of the transition from feudalism to capitalism by considering the primitive accumulation of capital as a permanent process, and by giving centrality to reproductive labor, historicizing domestic labor as labor for capital.

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The Marxist feminist perspective has thus revealed itself as a significant analytical terrain for reading the current configuration of oppression-exploitation relations in the face of the dismantling of rights and public policies in times of de-democratization (BIROLI, 2020). When articulated with other feminist epistemologies, such as decolonial epistemologies - which situate the sociohistorical formations of modernity/coloniality and the violence of the intrusive colonial project (capitalist, racist and heteropatriarchal) - they enhance the lenses that allow us to translate the structural elements of the historical and current social precariousness of Brazilian women. It is worth noting that, in disagreement with what has been pointed out in some writings and studies in the field of decolonial production, it is not possible to consider that there is an antinomy between Marxism and the decolonial perspective in the development of intellectual and scientific production. This is because, in Marxist-inspired studies in dialogue with decolonial epistemologies, what must be taken as rigor to reach the structural and structuring foundations of social phenomena is the orthodoxy of the Marxist method, as learned from

Lukács, and its ontological (and not epistemological) nature, which, ultimately, means to unveil the essence of social being (LUKÁCS, 1979). In this sense, decolonial epistemologies contribute to the understanding that social relations are marked by gender, race, sexuality, nation and class.

With respect to the apprehension of oppression-exploitation relations as a unity, it is worth mentioning that in theoretical production, both within feminisms and the Marxist tradition, and in political debates, it does not yet occupy a central place, or is not yet theoretically and conceptually well developed. Although several feminist studies have established a theoretical-political understanding in terms of the articulation between gender, race, sexuality and the inequalities of neoliberal capitalism, the category of exploitation does not obtain a theoretical-conceptual framework, occupying a privileged place in the debate on oppression. On the other hand, most Marxist writings do not consider, or discuss laterally, the colonial dimension of the historical process of the inequalities of capitalism and the cleavages of gender, race and sexuality, maintaining the centrality of the analysis of bourgeois sociability in social class.

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In view of the above, from Marx's rich categorical framework, we must emphasize social class, whose complexity and interconnectedness among its determinants needs to be better captured, which demands a new look at the political subjects of the transforming action of the existing order. After all, the factory proletariat, recognized as the universal subject of the emancipatory struggle (read as white, cis, heterosexual, male workers of the European and English-speaking world), had its historical time, and today this idea of the universal male subject no longer reaches the concrete reality; on the contrary, it reifies it.

This is how feminisms and the feminist struggle are situated in the framework of new protagonisms of emancipatory proposals. The different feminist formulations, as a unity of the diverse, encourage the articulation between anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-racist, ecofeminist and anti(cis)heteropatriarchal struggles.

Feminist lenses and Marxist method: analytical legacies in perspective for the reading of oppression-exploitation relations today

Given its theoretical nature (ideal reproduction of the real movement constitutive of social being in the bourgeois order), critical social theory allows us to understand the structure and dynamics of bourgeois society from a material and concrete

basis: the social relations of production and reproduction of social life, that is, class relations, based on labor, a founding category of social being - as vital activity, generic life of humanity, which gives light to the subject as historical being.

It is, therefore, a fundamental sociological concept, a fruitful analytical category for understanding history. In today's world, under globalization and the financialization of capital, contrary to the thesis that advocates the end of work, the category of work occupies a central place in human existence.

From Marx's ontology of social being, it is understood that work is configured as a source of satisfaction of the material needs of survival, as a development of human sociability and as a historical possibility. It is ontocreative. What differentiates human beings from other animals is precisely the teleological capacity to produce their own means of life. Marx (2004, p. 84) pointed out that "[...] man makes his vital activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has conscious vital activity".

In the wake of the historical materialist conception, men and women are sociohistorical subjects. History is the product and process of human action and, after all, has a material basis:

> *[...] the first presupposition of all human existence and also, therefore, of all history, namely, the presupposition that men must be able to live in order to be able to "make history". [...] The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself, [...] the fundamental condition of all history [...] (MARX; ENGELS, 2007, p. 32-33).*

Pursuing ontology in Marxian thought and the methodological elements of his social theory leads to concrete thought. Marx starts from the concrete (unity of diversity, synthesis of multiple determinations), from his historical-social and materialist foundations, and captures the determinations of reality, turning them into abstract categories, which are not concepts that define themselves, they are determinations of being elaborated by knowledge as an abstract movement that abstractly reconstructs the determinations of reality.

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The concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of multiple determinations, therefore, unity of diversity. For this reason, the concrete appears in thought as a process of synthesis, as a result, not as a starting point, although it is the effective starting point and, consequently, also the starting point of intuition and representation. In the first way, full representation has volatilized into an abstract determination; in the second, abstract determinations lead to the reproduction of the concrete through thought (MARX, 2011, pp. 76-78).

When Marx elaborated his analysis to investigate the essence of the capitalist mode of production, he criticized the economists of the eighteenth century. In his Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx (2004) criticizes Political Economy, which treated economic mechanisms as given, natural facts, because it did not explain the historicity of these mechanisms, such as the origin of private property, the capital-labor and capital-land division.

According to José Paulo Netto (2011, p. 18, emphasis added), "[...] Marx did not make a tabula rasa of existing knowledge, but critically started from it". Therefore, Marx advanced from accumulated knowledge. The meaning of criticism in Marx consists in: "bringing to rational examination, making them conscious, their foundations, their conditioning and their limits - at the same time that the contents of this knowledge are verified from real historical processes" (PAULO NETTO, 2011, p. 18, emphasis added).

Just as Marx elaborated his critique of political economy based on classical economists, feminist historian Silvia Federici elaborates her analysis of the historical determinants that contributed to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, based on Marxist theory and the critique of Marx's limits and scope, particularly with regard to the theme of gender and the sphere of social reproduction in Capital.

In the analytical description of primitive accumulation, Federici (2017) includes a series of phenomena absent in Marx that are nevertheless extremely important for capitalist accumulation. Among these phenomena the author identifies the development of a new sexual division of labor; the construction of a new patriarchal order based on the exclusion of women from wage labor and their subordination to men; the mechanization of the proletarian body and its transformation, in the case of women, into a machine for the production of new workers; and, finally, the element that the author placed at the center of her analysis of primitive accumulation: the witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that occurred in Europe and in the so-called New World, arguing

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that the persecution of witches was as important for the development of capitalism as the colonization and expropriation of the European peasantry from their lands.

Federici (2017, 2018) recognizes that critical social theory allows us to understand bourgeois society from wage labor, sustained by the so-called primitive accumulation, which, in the words of Marx (1980, p. 830) is "the historical process that dissociates the worker from the means of production. It is considered primitive because it constitutes the prehistory of capital and of the capitalist mode of production".

However, as for the aspects of the transition to capitalism, in Federici's (2017, p. 161) interpretation, they are not things of the past or as Marx stated, "historical preconditions of capitalist development that would be overcome by more mature forms of capitalism." For Federici (2017, p. 161), we are still witnessing today with the new phase of globalization, impoverishment, rebellions and the scale of criminality, which are structural elements of capitalist accumulation to the same extent that capitalism must dispossess the labor force of its means of reproduction to impose its domination.

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In the historical analysis of the development of capitalism elaborated by Marx, and also by later Marxists and socialists, as Federici (2017, 2018, 2019) points out, the primacy of attention was given to the formation of the proletariat, identifying factory labor as the normative form of labor, leaving in the background the conditions of everyday social reproduction and disregarding reproductive labor as labor.

The historian denounces that Marx does not historicize domestic labor by naturalizing it as something that has always existed. In dealing with the social division of labor, according to Federici (2018, p. 95), Marx identifies a division of labor in the family on a physiological basis: "within the family [...] a division of labor naturally arises, based on differences of age and sex, that is, on purely physiological causes" (Marx, 1990, p. 471, Federici, 2018, p. 95, emphasis added). Thus, and although Marx dealt with the outrageous conditions of female factory labor in the stage of industrial development, he did not deal with the subordination of women within the bourgeois family, which leads Federici (2018) to conclude that Marx dealt with gender issues descriptively and not analytically, which provokes us to go beyond Marx.

In this sense, filling Marx's gap on reproductive work, the Italian feminist, in examining the determinations of domestic work in the formation of capitalist society, identifies that it is a historically determined work, a product of the separation between production and reproduction engendered by capitalism. This is one of his central the-

ses. And, contrary to the peripheral status of reproductive labor within the analyses of the Marxist tradition, Federici (2019) gives it centrality in capitalist society. According to her, reproductive labor is the pillar of the capitalist organization of labor.

The Italian historian has pulled back the curtains on the social processes that have constituted the hierarchization of labor and, consequently, the inferiorization of reproductive work, ultimately expressed by its unpaid condition. As Federici (2017) analyzes, gender differences were less marked in communal societies. Women performed activities related to their subsistence and that of their families, as well as domestic activities. However, with the hierarchization of these activities by capitalism, supported by biologicist conceptions of sex, women were confined to domestic work, producing the sign of a feminine vocation for this type of work.

> *With the disappearance of the subsistence economy that had predominated in pre-capitalist Europe, the unity between production and reproduction, typical of all societies based on production for consumption, came to an end, as these activities became bearers of other social relations and became sexually differentiated. In the new monetary regime, only production-for-the-market was defined as a value-creating activity, while the reproduction of the worker began to be considered as economically valueless and even ceased to be considered work (FEDERICI, 2017, p. 145).*

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In view of what has been explored so far, it is possible to infer that Federici brings historicity to the apprehension of primitive accumulation and of the dialectical articulation between production and reproduction, recomposing the history of capitalist development. She goes to the essence of the phenomena and brings to light the determinations of domestic labor in capitalist society. This is undoubtedly the great analytical legacy of Marx's method. His ability to help us read the movement of reality and arrive at concrete thought is already patented.

Another important aspect of Federici's (2017) thesis, which is that primitive capitalist accumulation is, in fact, structural and permanent, also reveals the permanence of the degradation of women. Historically, it was only possible by resorting to the violence of the dissociation of human beings from their means of survival, colonialism, racism and patriarchy, the latter having as its maximum expression the witch hunt. The

violence of the expropriation of primitive accumulation on women is exemplified, as Federici (2017; 2019) historicizes, given that women - stripped of their possibilities of sustenance and mobility by being expelled from their villages as a consequence of the practice of enclosures - were left with the impoverishment and violence of men.

This structural mark is still present. It is urgent to affirm that there is a permanent process of erasure, persecution and degradation of women in the present, which is combined to a contemporary process of dehumanization, a strategy of domination imported from colonial modernity (MARINHO, 2020).

In fact, the witch hunt of the present, as demonstrated by Marinho (2020), encompasses a complexity of violations of a structural nature with the neoliberal agenda, especially in the countries of the South, such as Brazil. There are several effects and impacts on women's lives with the commodification of social policies, the privatization of education and health, the global capitalist control over production and social reproduction and the dismantling of citizenship rights and the already fragile Brazilian democracy.

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The structural elements that explain the social precariousness of women and violence against women are closely related to the processes of dehumanization that sustain the project of cisheteropatriarchal, racist, capitalist and colonial domination-exploitation, which ideologically has today, in neoconservative thought, in Christian religious morality and familism, its main mortar for anti-gender, anti-feminism and anti-LGBTI+ reactions, under the invented discourse of gender ideology, which in reality is a gender panic. This project gains materiality in social practices, either with direct violence, or with the violation of rights in the face of the ongoing Brazilian de-democratization (BIROLI, 2020), as an ultraneoliberal project of the imperialist global elites on countries of peripheral and dependent capitalism such as Brazil.

With the advance of the new right, an extreme right expressed in the Bolsonarista project, of an authoritarian and proto-fascist nature, we are faced today with many paradoxes regarding the issue of women, rights and Brazilian citizenship. If we take as a point of observation the violence against women, this is of a direct nature, as shown by the data in an upward curve in the cases of femicides, and of an institutional programmatic nature with the retraction of rights and the systematic defunding of public policies.

Brazil ranks 5th among the countries with the highest number of femicides, according to the Dossier on Feminicide of the Patrícia Galvão Agency ([2015]). Regarding the sys-

tematic defunding of public policies for women, after so many historical conquests, the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MMFDH) - occupied by an evangelical pastor, whose personality brings together a series of positions, speeches and addresses frankly criticized by national and international human rights organizations - spent, in 2020, only 53% of its budget, which corresponds to a significant impact on the realization of actions for women's rights. Experts agree that, in the long term, this situation will empty the portfolio's budget, as pointed out by Lola Ferreira (2021), from Gênero e Número.

Therefore, there is no way to disagree with Federici's (2019) thesis that the globalization scenario, in all its capitalist forms (structural adjustment, trade liberalization, low-intensity wars) is, in essence, a war against women, particularly devastating for Third World women, although it also harms the lives of planetary women. To confront this war, the Italian historian argues that the feminist struggle must attack the underlying problems of women, moving away from the empty discourse of empowerment, which requires an anti-capitalist struggle, a struggle against capitalist globalization and its international bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.

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It is a war already designed from the privatization of land and the commodification of social relations that, according to Federici (2017), must be taken as the sociohistorical contextuality in which to situate the history of women, since the arrival of capitalism introduced changes in the social position of women.

Thus, it is important to address colonial modernity and its dimensions: gender, race, metropolis/colony - north/south. According to Marinho (2021), the historicity of the capitalist mode of production is built on the patriarchal and racial structure of the colonizing project in the world-village, which transformed the references of life, culture and work of non-capitalist societies. It is no longer rare to find historical studies showing that imperialist and colonialist systems engendered hierarchies of race/ethnicity and gender in societies where gender and racial systems had no or insignificant hierarchical divisions. Argentine feminist Rita Segato (2014), addressing the existing interrelationship between coloniality and patriarchy, has historicized the existence of gender systems in the pre-imperial world and in colonial modernity, inferring that in the world-village there was a low-intensity patriarchal organization, which, historically transformed by Western gender with colonialism, was shaped into what she calls modern colonial patriarchy, a high-intensity patriarchal organization. Segato's thesis is relevant, in particular, for inserting the category of gender as a central category in the unveiling of the dimensions of social life totalized by the modern colonial order.

It is important to note that the decolonial proposal is different from "decolonization". While the latter term, by putting an end to colonialism, refers to the historical processes that followed the end of the official colonial relationship, the former, on the contrary, is presented with a political use that aims to highlight what still remains in force in societies today considered postcolonial, although denied by the colonial structure (VERGÈS, 2020).

Thus, a decolonial view recognizes the permanence of the effects of colonization on current social relations and the intertwining of gender, race, sexuality, class and nation for the study of social phenomena related to women's social precariousness. In other words, it implies situating such phenomena in the historical and concrete dynamics of global coloniality (CURIEL, 2015), whose central key of analysis is that of the inseparable trilogy between Eurocentric Western modernity, colonialism and the globalization of capitalism. A trilogy that structures racial, sexual, geopolitical, class and gender hierarchies - concretely expressed in the international division of labor that dynamizes between the center versus the periphery of capital -, thus hierarchizing who is human and who is not.

Such hierarchization is a debate that also gains importance in the studies of the important Italian Marxist Domenico Losurdo. Critically and historically, Losurdo (2006), by historicizing liberalism and racial slavery as a singular twin birth, reveals that liberal doctrine and slavery, which in theory are a paradox, a radical disjunction, were shaped as a necessary conjunction for the development of the English and American liberal capitalist bourgeoisie. A historical cycle broken only after the end of the Civil War due to the historical needs of consolidation of capitalism with the generalization of wage labor and the formation of a consumer market.

With the liberal revolution of the seventeenth century, racial slavery expanded and marked a period of dehumanization based on racial (black and white) and spatial (colony and metropolis) demarcation and discrimination, delimiting the community of the free and the enslaved, the boundaries of the human and the non-human. These frontiers, rationalized by natural/biological explanations, inferiorized blacks and indigenous natives of warm climate regions (the soil of the modern barbarian world), taking away their human condition and giving them the character of merchandise and property to be exploited (LOSURDO, 2006).

Against the historical backdrop of the American Civil War (the industrial North with wage and free labor and the agricultural and slaveholding South), Losurdo (2006) concludes that the liberal world was deeply divided on the issue of slavery. Ultimately,

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these were intra-bourgeois dissensions: a liberal bourgeoisie on the one hand and a landed aristocracy on the other. This revealed antagonisms in the very condition of being liberal, as different political uses of the term liberal and its relation to the institute of slavery were forged, according to the imperative needs of economic domination, whether in liberal politics or in the liberal mode of feeling of the eighteenth century, the century of modernity, which was still nourished by conservative structures such as slavery.

The historical dynamics presented here express the consolidation of modern colonial capitalism. Today it can be situated with globalization: *on the one hand, the constitution of the capitalist periphery with a dependent economy,* the countries of the South, and, on the other, the central countries with a dominant economy, the countries of the North. A pattern of world capitalist power of a patriarchal and racist character, with control over labor and over the production and reproduction of life.

Thus, in the history of capitalist formation, the division between civilized and backward, between human and non-human, between the property-owning and the dispossessed, and between those who have rights and those who do not, is clear. The historical legacy of the modern conception of abstract formal law, by not considering the status inequalities of citizens such as women, the enslaved, the blacks, the indigenous, the illiterate, the non-property owners and the non-Catholics in asymmetry with the white, rich, property-owning, literate and Catholic man, reappears today reproducing the structural inequalities of modern colonial society. With regard to Brazilian society, whose social formation is marked by slavery and patriarchy and whose historical-political formation has the status of a former colony, the current neoconservative scenario sharpens the oppressive ideologies of gender, race/ethnicity, class and sexuality.

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Final considerations

The argumentative journey of this article, anchored in the Marxian ontology of social being and in feminist perspectives, was intended to contribute elements of analysis to a material basis of the present. The relations of oppression-exploitation of colonial modernity, read from the unity between theory, method and history, require a perspective of historicity, totality and dialectics, tripod of the Marxist method, to unveil the functioning of social relations through their historical-concrete and structural foundations.

This is how the historical and dialectical materialist method presents itself as an important analytical legacy to interpret the new realities in movement. This means that the Marxian categories have a history and dynamism and, being more complex in the present, demand to be saturated with new determinations.

This has been a theoretical-political exercise carried out by many feminist theorists, fruitful and encouraging of new syntheses and mediations, necessary, therefore, for us to read the historical root of daily violence against women and systematic violations of rights. They are structurally and conjuncturally linked to the current process of Brazilian de-democratization (BIROLI, 2020), imposed by the global imperialist elites in response to the structural crisis of capital.

The erosion of the already fragile Brazilian democratic conquests and the successive attacks on the social state are umbilically accompanied by anti-gender, anti-feminism and anti-LGBTI+ policies, which, despite having a transnational characteristic, gain in our country, of the societal project of the Bolsonarist extreme right, a symbiotic governance between the desecularization of politics, authoritarianism, necropolitics and corpocracy, the result of the fusion between neoconservatism and neoliberalism (PEREIRA, 2020; BIROLI, MACHADO, VAGGIONE, 2020), undermining our political sovereignty and the ballast of female citizenship. It is with this scenario in mind that the ability to broaden the lens of analysis on the relations of oppression-exploitation, as well as the design of strategies of struggle for their supplanting, merits an exercise of successive approximations to the real, as taught by the Marxist method, and especially in articulation with the contribution of different feminist formulations and theorizations, since no feminist theory will be able, on its own, to fulfill the task of translating the complexity of social phenomena and objectify the structural responses in the horizon of the feminist struggle.

Inspired by what Nancy Fraser (2018) already pointed out in the feminist debates of the 1990s, undertaking a theoretical, ethical and political exercise that accesses new emancipatory meanings requires confronting the complementarity of the substantive theoretical tools and methodological perspectives of feminisms.

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ARTICLE

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Acknowledgments

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REVIEW

Paradigm Recovery: The Social Workers of Freedom.

Fernando Vidal, Madrid, Comillas Pontifical University of Madrid, First Edition, 2021, 226 pp. ISBN 978-84-8468-901-0, CPL $ 18.572 / USD $ 21.59

Gabriela Rubilar Donoso[1]

Fernando Vidal is a prolific author of university texts and books on Social Work, some of his works can be downloaded in free format from https://sites.google.com/site/fernandovidalsociologo/blog-el-cuaderno-del-ciclope.

A sociologist by profession, he has trained several generations of social workers in Madrid, where he lives. He has been president of Hogar Si https://hogarsi.org/, the Spanish initiative to fight against the social exclusion of homeless people and promoter of several works that critically reflect on the professional work of those who work in the field of social intervention.

The work Paradigma Recovey comes to my hands at a key moment to reflect on the recovery that not only concerns people in a micro dimension, but also institutions and countries after two and a half years of pandemic with its effects on the worsening of social inequalities. The works on this paradigm are usually limited to Anglo-Saxon models, so we rarely have access to a book that presents in depth the constitutive elements of this paradigm, while critically discussing its scope and possibilities in Spanish.

The subtitle of this book, "The Social Workers of Freedom", may be somewhat contradictory for those of us who work in contexts of subsidiary or neoliberal states, since freedom in our cases is promoted as an "exit from the state" or competition, entrepreneurship and weakening of welfare schemes. However, the notion of libertarianism that Vidal seeks to recover in this work alludes to the principles of autonomy and determination that are part of the values of international social work and hence its relevance as a critical liberationist perspective. At the same time, it is very much in tune with other paradigms that promote Latin American approaches such as liberation pedagogy and the movement of reconceptualization of social work itself.

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But what is this paradigm about? Recovery is part of liberationist approaches to intervention and as such liberates the stereotypes and constructions that have been made about people and their contexts. This is especially relevant in the case of the worst forms of exclusion, where subjects are forced into a non-person condition with no rights or autonomy over their lives. The Recovery paradigm does not act on the subjects who have been pushed aside, but on the interveners and the care systems, freeing people from the conditioning factors of the interventions and assumptions that impose ways of doing and being intervened with their respective labels, so typical of the conditional transfer schemes in force in Latin American countries.

I call them approaches of the three Rs, because it restores lost or denied rights. It repairs the damage caused, hence the concept of victim of those who suffer situations of poverty and exclusion, in the sense proposed by Bauman (2022). And it reconciles what we as a society have violated as a result of a system that structurally reproduces and generates exclusions. What this paradigm seeks is to recover the right to live, in direct harmony with Victor Jara's song (1971), which in Chile, almost fifty years later, became the anthem of a movement for the dignity of people.

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This paradigm dialogues and reinstates the debates on otherness approach that the author himself has previously worked on including some approaches for the Chilean case such as those developed in the works of Rubilar (2013), Castro-Serrano (2018) and Castro-Serrano and Gutiérrez-Olivares (2017). The Philosophy of Liberation, emerges as a critique of the traditional philosophical discourse and is born strongly rooted in the history and culture of Hispanic America. As formulated by Enrique Dussel, recognized as one of the most representative exponents of this current, "The original institution of the philosophy of liberation was born rooted in the Heideggerian critique of modern reason and the Cartesian subject (...) it was also inspired by the first Frankfurt school (...) which helped to understand the political sense of this anthology" (2013, p. 34).

The Recovy paradigm has its roots in the emancipatory mental health movements (anti-psychiatry movement) and its effects on deinstitutionalization in the 60s and 70s of the last century. Therefore, it has a historical substrate that is worth recognizing and analyzing in the light of contemporary transformations. This paradigm emerges as a recovery from the political and institutional oppressions that impact the models of social intervention and hence the relevance of this book that shows the origin and deployment of this paradigm (Chap. 1), which can also be considered a perspective or approach to social intervention.

Given its conceptual foundations and its internal plurality, this paradigm unfolds in a matrix (Chap. 2) that has expressions as visible and heterogeneous as the Housign Firts intervention model https://hogarsi.org/housing-first/ that has been applied in several countries since the late twentieth century with orientations adjusted to the contexts, but under principles that are common to them, "since it not only seeks to recover the status that was subtracted or that potentially belonged to a person, but also tries to recover the type of society that should be" (Vidal, 2022, p. 71).

It is from this viewpoint that one of the first possible criticisms of this approach and the perspectives that underlie it arises, which implies thinking that recovery necessarily implies the transformation of systems and structures with their consequent resistance. What is recovered in some cases are rather symbolic realities, especially in contexts where rights are not guaranteed or where their realization is impossible. This is especially visible in contexts of historical violation of rights, such as the link that has been maintained with indigenous peoples or with people deprived of liberty and criminalized because of their gender, race or social class.

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In this sense, the contribution and contribution that this book offers readers is to move the boundaries of what is possible and the pre-designed institutional frameworks, which adapt and adjust interventions to what social services can provide. What this paradigm recovers is the human condition of the assisted persons, recognizes their rights and acts accordingly. A measure that is certainly demanding and painful when one observes the quality standards of the offer of our social protection system and the professional modulations to adjust and adapt programs that are not accessible or focused on pre-determined profiles.

A text full of provocations, given that the Recovery movement that arises as a result of the reaction to oppressive segregation systems remains an urgent need, which demands and promotes confrontation on interests, on ways of life and visions of change. The main contributions of this work lead precisely to that path of questioning where not only to act by eliminating abuses and discriminations, but also to positively reinforce capacities and strengths in a collective empowerment, which differs from the individual managerisms of management of oneself and for oneself.

And yet in our neoliberal societies we always face the risk of meritocracy and free choice as a market issue, taken to the extreme in the catalog of social programs and outsourced services that compete for the same users and resources, applying for funds

whose amounts do not cover the costs of producing quality services. This is especially evident in the phenomenon of homelessness in Chile, without a public policy that addresses this phenomenon in an integrated manner, existing programs are precisely the source of those insecurities that the Recovery paradigm seeks to address: i) their temporality maximizes risks by understanding that the phenomenon is only visible in the winter, ii) the segmentation of users between migrants and non-migrants generates new discriminations and exclusions, and iii) outsourcing reproduces logics of indignity among its workers, who face precarious working conditions and low wages.

The professional skills needed to carry out actions under this approach are lost whenever a bidding process awards the implementation of the standard program to another actor, and there is no transfer of legacy, nor accompaniment after the referral. Professional skills are reduced to a singular experience that is captured in the best case individually in a more or less successful work trajectory, but is not transferred to agencies and institutions that have few elements to cooperate or work together.

The book concludes with six case studies that present collaborative models of Recovery under the slogan "recovery in the care society" (Vidal, 2022, p. 195). Some of them have already been anticipated by the author in the previous chapters, while others present their main contributions at the end of the text, in line with the perspectives discussed above and reinforcing the idea of plurality of expressions within them. We can also recognize elements of this paradigm in the interventions and processes developed by social workers in the different countries of the region, assuming, as in the book, a broad conception of social work that groups together the set of disciplines and professions aimed at liberating people suffering from social exclusion (2022, p. 15).

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In summary, the Recovey paradigm in contexts of neoliberal and highly unequal societies becomes a provocative challenge that is one of the effects that this book seeks to generate in its readers. Promoting thought, debates and forms of action that recover the social life of our societies and the transforming sense of the processes that are promoted from liberationist approaches such as the one proposed here.

It has undoubtedly been a hopeful reading of green shoots in this complex springtime for Chile, a country that advances in transformation processes, at the same time that unveils the deep tensions and contradictions of the neoliberal inheritance of these almost fifty years.

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The book that we comment on and suggest reading brings together a set of works derived from a seminar organized by the Magister in Social Work of the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, carried out in 2019, whose central axis was to reflect on the social movements and struggles that have marked the recent history of our country. The text, coordinated by Paula Vidal Molina, is organized in seven chapters, in which different authors, from diverse perspectives and theoretical frameworks, analyze the emergence, development and projections of social movements in Chile, as well as the role that Social Work can play in these processes.

In the first chapter, titled "Notes for a discussion on social movements and their relationship with Social Work", Paula Vidal Molina offers a conceptual and theoretical framework that allows us to understand the complexity of social movements, their characteristics and their relationship with the profession of Social Work.

The second chapter, written by Gianinna Muñoz Arce, addresses the relationship between Social Work and social movements from a decolonial perspective, questioning the Eurocentric and colonial matrices that have marked the profession.

In the third chapter, Rubén Moraga Rodríguez analyzes the student movement and its role in the political and social transformations of the country.

The fourth chapter, by Mauricio Rosenblüth and Francisca Gómez, addresses the housing movement and the struggles for the right to the city.

In the fifth chapter, the authors analyze the feminist movement and its impact on society and on the profession of Social Work.

The sixth chapter addresses the environmental movement and the socio-environmental conflicts that have marked the recent history of the country.

Finally, the seventh chapter addresses the union movement and the struggles of the world of work.

The book Movimientos sociales y luchas en Chile: Interpellations from Social Work, coordinated by Paula Vidal Molina, views the constituent process with the possible horizon of constitutional change. As its different authors seem to insist, in order to understand the processes in course it is necessary to have a historical look; the explanations of the conjuncture must be sought in and beyond itself. Starting from the premise of historical links between social work and social movements in Latin America, which gained special strength during the Reconceptualization, the task-invitation proposed by the book is to establish "a bridge in the history of the profession, an issue that is very weak in the production of this type in Chile and, therefore, we want to settle, in part, certain theoretical-political weaknesses that exist in the relationship between social work and social movements under Chilean neoliberalism" (Vidal, p. 13), at a time of structural crisis of capitalism, where the basic conflicts of a profoundly unequal society challenge the reflection-action of Social Work.

The book, as a collection of articles, has a kaleidoscopic richness. Both for the diversity of styles and places from where it is spoken (written), including the geographical diversity that, as Vidal states in the introduction, rescues "the voice of the disciplinary-professional collective throughout Chile, materialized by the contributions of colleagues who are inserted in various public universities in the regions of the country" (p. 13); as well as for the different registers of the articles, including the geographical diversity of the articles); as well as for the different registers and levels addressed in it, ranging from the presentation of theoretical perspectives for the study of social movements, as in the article by Paula Vidal and José Cea, Teorías de los movimientos sociales: distinciones para su estudio desde el Trabajo Social, to the review of a concrete experience of a formative nature that we appreciate in the article La educación en derechos humanos como matriz heurística para afrontar dilemas ético-políticos desde el Sur global en tiempos de convulsión social, by Ximena Soto and Damián Ojeda. Between one and the other of these articles (opening and closing), varied readings are traced that together with the critique of capitalism, address other systems of domination and oppression, also establishing interdisciplinary dialogues.

Their reading provides interesting keys to understanding some elements at the basis of the social revolt of 2019, as Soraya Espinoza and Ramón Vivanco approach in Analizando potenciales razones para el estallido social, especially through the articulation, in chronological key, of the previous mobilizations.

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On the other hand, it allows us to notice the persistence of actions of resistance and contestation, as we can see in the article by Cory Duarte, Feminismos en territorios sacrificables: el caso de Atacama y sus implicancias para la propuesta formativa en Trabajo Social, and in the article by Leticia Arancibia and Pamela Soto, Movimientos sociales, conflicto y construcción democrática: Resistances and imaginaries from the secondary student movements in the Chilean post-dictatorship; where, from the feminist action against dispossession and violence, in the case of the former, and in the struggle of the student movement for public education, in the case of the latter, other forms of organization, participation and relations that subvert the political-economic logic of neoliberalism are proposed. Here, the power of social movements is recovered as living social agencies (Guattari, 1989, in Arancibia and Soto, 2022, p.123), recognizing their political potential and the place of conflict as a topos of the political and as an essential element in Social Work for the reading of social reality (Arancibia and Soto, 2022). In this same line, from the decolonial feminist reading developed by Duarte, we notice the thanatopolitical form (Esposito, 2006) of the Chilean post-dictatorship; where the violence of the patriarchal-colonial-capitalist patriarchy is exercised on women's bodies and on the sacrificial zones, converted into sacrificial bodies-territories.

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From a decolonial perspective, Pablo Suárez questions the concept of dignity, proposing in his article Dignidades humanas: el "Willi mapu" de los "trabajos sociales otros" en tiempos de "revuelta", a plural with an open and polyphonic aspiration, as a relevant aspect to decolonize Social Work.

Héctor Vargas and Carmen Gloria Jarpa, appealing to the politicization of Social Work in their article Social work and public policies: between the reproduction and the rupture of capitalist logic. Reflections from Dusselian readings, propose, from Enrique Dussel's theorizations, categories to read the production of public policies in the relationship citizenship-State-Social Work; they raise the importance of potestas, the people as instituting power, recognizing the relevance of the effective participation of citizenship, through social movements, in the formulation of public policies.

From another place of political action, Luis Vivero and Dina Guarda explore the political action of social workers who are part of collective spaces in Perspectives and places of social work: struggles and social movements in Chile; they distinguish the tensions and challenges faced by professionals who develop their practice within the framework of neoliberal policies, and at the same time engage in collective actions together with other actors for their transformation.

REVIEW

This kaleidoscopic form has its crossing point in the inscription of its authors in critical Social Work. In this sense, the historical-critical reading in a Marxian key is also relevant and serves as the foundation of this book. This constitutes, together with its more explicit content, one of its substantive contributions for Social Work in Chile, if we consider that after the 1973 coup, Marxist theory was not only relegated, but also excluded from training; an issue that more than thirty years after the end of the civil-military dictatorship remains, with nuances, as one of its burdens, and that the fall of the "real socialisms" came to cement, in Western societies, as a "stale" and "defeated" theoretical perspective. However, the contributions of Marx himself and, in the case of the text we are commenting on, of Gramscian categories, seem to be pertinent theoretical-political keys to understand our present time, especially if the idea is to transform it.

I understand this book as a praxis, in the sense that Gutiérrez (2022), following Marx, proposes for historiographic practice:

> *as a constant search between concrete experience and theoretical reflection. Marx referenced it well when he thought of praxis, that is, where theory and practice are one and the same moment in the process of research/creation, and not two separate moments, where one determines the other. (p.96)*

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A praxis that we can situate as counter-hegemonic.

If we understand Social Work "as a historical product and, as such, that acquires meaning and intelligibility in the history of the society of which it is part and expression" (Iamamoto, 2003 p.221), the book coordinated by Paula Vidal, as a whole and as diverse articles, proposes suggestive readings to read ourselves in this time and an approach to understand the present that we are living, questioning us, as Young (2000) would say, from the demands of justice that social movements, their actions and struggles carry. Chile is a country marked by different inequalities and oppressions, where more and more, what is at stake, what is at risk, is life itself; but, social movements carry the denial and the possibility of an emancipatory societal project that puts the life of all and everyone at the center; since, as Vidal and Cea state, they have promoted a "prefigurative or anticipatory politics" that "refers to the creation of forms of social relations and production outside capitalism, in the here and now, making the future society effective in the present, without stopping to wait for a better future" (p. 36). 36). I invite you to read it, discuss it and put it into circulation in training spaces and in professional and research collectives.

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Exercise of state power with LGBTIQ+ persons deprived of liberty in Ecuador: Human rights challenges

Interview with Juana Narváez
By Carlos Andrade Guzmán[1]

In this interview we spoke with Juana Narváez, a social worker from Ecuador and academic at the University of Cuenca, who shares her reflections on the power exercised by the State with persons deprived of liberty, particularly LGBTIQ+ persons. In this interview she shares the results of her research and intervention trajectory and outlines ways forward to improve the living conditions of this population from a human rights perspective

Carlos: Juana, first of all, I want to thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this interview with Propuestas Críticas en Trabajo Social and to be able to talk about the living conditions of the LGBTIQ+ population and the prison system in Ecuador. In this context, Juana, I would like to start by asking you, what is your perception of the prison system in Ecuador?

Juana: I must start by saying that the answer is alarming. The Social Rehabilitation Centers in Ecuador, called prisons, have been showing some shortcomings in the prison system, even more so in times of pandemic and post pandemic. You know that we are world news because of the massacres that have occurred in the Social Rehabilitation Centers in the last three years. Specifically, in 2020 there were 103 murders in the maximum security wards. Meanwhile, in 2021 there were 255 massacres in maximum, medium and minimum security wards and so far this year there have been 53 massacres in minimum and maximum security wards. In this scenario, it is quite common for the Ecuadorian State to normalize the bodies, naturalize violence, justify the death of people deprived of liberty and criminalize poverty.

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In these prisons, in addition to controlling bodies, they also seek to control thoughts, feelings and environments. This, on the one hand, through technological devices of the National Service of Integral Attention to Persons Deprived of Liberty - SNAI - and, on the other hand, through forensic medicine from the control of diseases, the distribution of medicines, the determination of those who have access and those who do not have access due to their economic situation and power, among others.

Carlos: Juana, thank you for sharing these elements that allow us to establish a scenario to situate the conversation. From what you say, it is inevitable not to think of Foucault. In this regard, how do you observe, from your research and intervention experience, that the idea of power has been understood?

Juana: Well, first, from a historical review, the concept of power has not undergone major changes. If we remember, in classical Greece the power of the people or Democracy arose, but in that democracy neither the serfs, nor the women, nor the children, nor the peasants, nor the workers participated. Only certain citizens who had certain privileges, especially in the economic aspect, were allowed to participate. Now, from what we observe in the penitentiary system, it is useful to remember what Duverger (1970) states, in terms of power referring to the power to change the behavior of other people in order to obtain compliance with one's own will, despite the resistance of others. This power can be exercised because whoever obeys does so under threat of violence or because he or she has been manipulated. So, what we need is to break with inequalities, with oppression, with alienation, and to be able to transform this reality of injustice.

Carlos: Juana, how do you observe the exercise of this power in your country's prisons?

Juana: The prison system in Ecuador and specifically in the Turi Social Rehabilitation Center, where I carried out my last research work, according to the data found, there have been situations that violate the rights of those who are deprived of their freedom. This is alarming because it coincides with what was established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights - IACHR - in its 2022 report, in which it warns that social rehabilitation centers in Ecuador are characterized by intra-prison and institutional violence, the causes being overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, inefficient food and medical care; irregular drinking water service; shortage of prison staff; the absence of gender perspective and lack of access to programs focused on social reintegration.

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In this regard, I would like to mention that only half of the people have access to rein-sertion programs and, linked to your question, rehabilitation in prison consists in the disciplining that occurs through the administration of behavior, a more criminal and repressive policy that affirms the power of the superior as presented in the work Watch and Punish by Michael Foucault. We observe a "disciplining" that controls and impo-ses what one should be, think, feel and act, in this case, on the part of the LGBTIQ+ population deprived of liberty. From this perspective, discipline is to "straighten" indi-viduals, to keep us functional to the dominant system, destined to a punishment-reward system. Discipline controls activities, imposes exercises, exposes tactics to carry out hierarchical surveillance. From there, we are always watched, the panopticon is the model of the confinement centers. Citing Giraldo (2008), the discipline of the body is nothing more than the act of domination of a power through methods of control.

Thus, in prisons, the main function of disciplinary power is to straighten behaviors. It acts as a control device that is a suspicious power, which owes its success to the use of simple instruments: hierarchical inspection, normalizing sanction and their combina-tion in a procedure that is specific to it.

Carlos: Juana, and from everything you have observed, what specific ways have you developed to intervene in the disciplining of the LGBTIQ+ population in prison sys-tems?

Juana: The experience of the "Victoria" Pavilion is an example of this. The Victoria Pavilion is in the Centro de Rehabilitación Social Regional Centro Sur - CRS Turi de la zona 6 located in the province of Azuay, Cantón Cuenca, which began operating as of November 19, 2014 with 690 people deprived of liberty.

This penitentiary center has nine pavilions, and has a capacity for 2,740 persons de-prived of liberty, 488 cells, ten for people with disabilities and one for the LGBTIQ+ community, divided between minimum, medium and maximum security.

In the 2019-2020 period, students from the Gender and Social Work career worked with the Victoria pavilion and the LGBTIQ+ community. They conducted a participatory diagnosis yielding worrying data on food health. It is from this framework that the need arises to train them in food sovereignty and productive entrepreneurship, but specifica-lly aimed at the LGBTIQ+ community, prison staff and the authorities on duty. All this, also with the purpose of providing tools for social and labor reinsertion and promoting a culture of good treatment within the framework of human rights.

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Within this framework, the pavilion has 70 people from the LGBTIQ+ community. We focus on this population, as it is one of the groups with multiple vulnerabilities. The training process on productive entrepreneurship and food sovereignty was planned jointly with the LGBTIQ+ community. We worked on different topics such as human rights, leadership and workshops related to productive entrepreneurship and food sovereignty.

This experience for the formation of our students has been crucial because in the regulation of pre-professional practices of the University of Cuenca in art. 87 of the "Organic Law of Higher Education" it is determined as a prerequisite for obtaining the professional degree that students accredit community services duly monitored in the fields of their specialty. Article 4 of the Law's regulations allows us to carry out diagnoses of social problems from a gender perspective, to plan and teach workshops for promotion, dissemination and awareness, to elaborate and execute development projects, and to support political advocacy processes and the elaboration of public policies.

En este marco, luego de un trabajo mancomunado con la población LGBTIQ+, y de conversaciones en instancias de cierre del proyecto, pudimos ver, siempre desde una aproximación inicial, que este contribuyó al aumento de la calidad de vida de las personas. Algunas/os de ellas/ellos, al cierre, se veían como sujetos productivos y generadores de cambio en la sociedad, y veían cómo podían tomar parte del control de sus vidas y los espacios posibles para ejercer sus derechos humanos.

Carlos: Juana, finally, and always from your perspective observing the relationship between the experiences of the LGBTIQ+ population and the prison system, what challenges does Ecuador face today in terms of rights and the exercise of power?

Juana: I think it is necessary to question the absence of a public policy with a human rights and gender approach applied to a real social rehabilitation system in our country. We urgently need to abandon, as a matter of urgency, the punitive vision in prisons. I also share with you that a greater presence of the International Commission on Human Rights - IACHR - is required in relation to the fulfillment of its obligations towards persons deprived of liberty, especially in times of pandemic and post-pandemic. Likewise, it is necessary to make progress in improving the quality of life at different levels of well-being, for example, in health and even food. In this regard, there have been initiatives by specific groups to contribute to improving the quality of life of the population. However, there is a need for greater empathy with the LGBTIQ+ community.

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Carlos: Juana, and thinking about the challenges we face from Social Work, what would be, in your opinion, the main ones?

Juana: As Social Work and Gender professionals, it is important to act in cooperation and articulation with the actors of the Justice and Human Rights Sector to fight to ensure effective access to health services, food, psychological care, quality education and productive enterprises in Social Rehabilitation Centers. As a great horizon, promoting the development of a coherent and relevant legal policy in the administration of justice, from a human rights perspective, is fundamental.

Carlos: Juana, I want to thank you for this conversation and particularly for sharing your critical reflections on the reality experienced by the LGBTIQ+ population in your country's prison system. It certainly gives us challenges on where we need to move forward in terms of disciplinary action. Again, thank you very much

Juana: Thank you for this conversation and for the possibility of sharing my critical reflections on these issues.

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Learn more about the topics covered in this interview:

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