

EDITORIAL

Presentation of Volume 13 N° 1 January-June 2015

“CHILDHOOD, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN”

The production of knowledge from Latin America in the Human and Social Sciences has earned new relevance. Following a tradition of very particular and original critical knowledge, Latin America excels in contemporary times as one of the most expressive marginal areas in the world and is constituted as a territory in which enlightened knowledge is redefined and reappropriated to be used in the construction of “another possible world”.

This movement, which is certainly utopian and political, and defines what constitutes the “Latin American and Caribbean” character of our production, doesn’t represent (despite the appeal of this) the only possible sense of the knowledge that we are presenting in this edition. The issue of the languages in which we communicate our work is a significant piece of data in considering why, in a field as rich as childhood, Latin American and Caribbean production has a limited resonance outside of the region. In an inverted sense, it requires the insertion of the question regarding what constitutes the “Latin American and Caribbean” character in these debates. This includes what theoretical categories are required to establish research questions that are capable of “capturing” the specific processes that configure “childhood” in Latin America and the Caribbean. In turn, it is also important to consider how to avoid attributing the “Latin America and the Caribbean” character to cultural processes that are sufficiently general.

An example of this process is represented by the group of texts in this edition of the Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth Volume 13 No. 1 January-June 2015, titled “Childhood, Social Institutions and Political Contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean”. This edition brings together a group of studies that reveal an understanding of the different childhoods that exist in our continent based on questioning, problematizing and optimistic approaches. This research focuses on the structural transformations that are necessary to achieve that the Latin America and the Caribbean region is welcoming, peaceful, fair and sustainable. Reflecting this aim, the articles included in this volume offer a range of timely reflections for those who are involved in reflexive social and cultural actions with our children.

What these articles have in common is their commitment to the mediation that we as adults carry out with the goal of mobilizing children’s voices. The recognition of the role of children as social actors, capable of actively intervening in the construction of social, cultural and political processes in which they participate has included developing an awareness that inter-age relationships are defined by power relationships.

The articles included in this volume offer new views on the issue of childhood in Latin America and the Caribbean, points of view that are based on new perspectives for a new science, in our case a social science. These perspectives demonstrate how we, on the margins of the so-called “developed world”, have contributed to the construction of a new critical, free, creative and questioning thought, in dialogue with the reflections that circulate in the contemporary global world.

The expressiveness that we mentioned before takes shape in the academic productions that problematize, using meta-theoretical, political and rights-based questions, and range from structural dimensions to practical and research problems with children. These two areas form the structure of

Volume 13 No. 1 January-June 2015. The First Section includes nine articles that critically address the institutional dimensions that articulate children's lives. This now traditional criticism, which is based on the history of childhood, arose during the decade of the 1990s as a response to investigators in this field who saw childhood just as a remnant of the history of other social institutions, paradigmatically the school. The articles from this section problematize this dichotomy, analyzing the modes of building childhood, rights and gender that are interwoven in social practices, government organizations and political disputes.

The article by Rony Eulalio López-Contreras from Guatemala reviews the literature on the principle of the "superior interest of the child" and highlights three central elements from the author's perspective: the child's wishes, their environment and the predictability of their circumstances. Constanza Herrera-Seda and Andrea Aravena-Reyes analyze the construction of the category of childhood in social policies in Chile between 2002 and 2012 based on Presidential speeches, reviewing the social construction of "the child" as an object of protection.

In the article "Gender equality with Brazilian early childhood educational institutions", Daniela Finco debates the practical application of gender equality principles and citizenship in the educational environment. The history of childhood in Chile and Latin America based on the pre-hispanic age is investigated by Patricia Castillo-Gallardo as a form of understanding the construction of processes that produce social inequality.

Using an ethnological point of view, David Lagunas covers the biological materialness of human beings to understand, based on the notion of domestication, forms of deploying power and ways that childhood is socially constructed.

Rebeca Cena and Florencia Chahbenderian analyze Conditional Cash Transfers in Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay to identify how childhood is conceived in popular sectors at the level of program design. Also in Chile, the article "The work-family conflict in relation to children's right to care" highlights the complexity of early childhood policies from a gender-equality perspective.

In her article "Childhood participation...History of an invisible relationship", Adriana María Gallego-Henao examines conceptual aspects about the role of children in history from a rights-based perspective, emphasizing childhood participation from the point of view of action.

Finally, in the article "Redefining protection. Systems for the protection of the rights of children in Argentina", Villalta and Llobet analyze interpretative frameworks depending on which agents implement protection measures.

The Second Section includes 13 articles that offer multiple methodological paths for interventions and investigations in the field and case studies with children as subjects. There are many challenges that we face when we try to investigate in the field or work with a school organization, family support or a non-governmental organization and our interlocutors are children. From this problematization, which involves the recognition of hierarchical positions between adults and children that occupy different structural positions as well as the analytical criteria for the data produced, the empirical research carried out with subjects-children seeks to increase the visibility of what they think, wish for and aspire. This is a field that is currently under construction and indeed faces multiple challenges.

Certainly, Volume 13 No. 1 January-June 2015 will not exhaust this questioning, but there are many leads contained in the articles included in this edition. Not only do the authors employ critical and creative methodologies, but also the diversity of scenarios in which these investigations were carried out means that Volume 13 No. 1 January-June 2015 traces an optimal portrait, a map of how we are leading this work in the areas of intervention and investigation. This is evident in the following examples.

Carlos Brenes-Peralta and Ronaldo Pérez-Sánchez in "Empathy and aggression in the use of video-games among children" highlight results from a study that looks at the role of aggression and empathy as predictors of tendencies in children when playing video games alone or accompanied in the context of Costa Rica. The authors offer a reflection on the role of video games in imaginaries of childhood.

In “Children and games in the school: between landscapes and practices”, Monica Fantin examines the theoretical and conceptual landscapes of traditional, electronic and digital games with reference to studies relating to childhood, games and children’s games-based culture.

Gabriela Zamora offers an account of her research in the article titled “Humanitarian support for repatriated children: YMCA Houses for Migrant Minors”, which focuses on the repatriation of Mexican children from the United States of America and evidences a constant trend in the area of migrations. This article also focuses on assistance provided to migrants with a focus on the assistance provided and how these situations are lived by children and adolescents.

Eduardo Aguirre-Dávila in “Parenting practices, temperaments and prosocial behavior of students in primary education” presents the results of an investigation that enquires about the relationship between parenting practices, temperaments of children and their prosocial behavior. The results show that the variables within the parenting practices and the temperaments of children are predictors of their prosocial behavior.

The authors Laura Beatriz Oros, Annie Schulz-Begle and Jael Vargas-Rubilar in “The gratitude of children: Implications of contextual and demographic variables in the Argentine population” explore the motives for gratitude that children express, taking into account demographic and contextual variables. The sample for the study consisted of 249 Argentine participants from 8 to 10 years of age (127 children from a medium socio-economic level -Group 1- and 122 from a low socio-economic level -Group 2).

The authors Nisme Yurany Pineda-Báez, Juan Carlos Garzón-Rodríguez, Diana Carolina Bejarano-Novoa and Nidya Esperanza Buitrago-Rodríguez present the article “Contributions for early education: knowledge constructed by the Pedagogical Educational Community Project” that details the results of a study that evidenced the pedagogical knowledge and practices constructed in the twenty years of the implementation of the Pedagogical Educational Community Project (Ppec) by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) with early childhood. This study involved a systematization of the project through 78 interviews and participation from 181 people. The pedagogical knowledge and practices constructed with early childhood are characterized for being participative, significant, contextualized and humanized, forming a social fabric that is nourished alongside community resources. In another article about the Colombian context, “An analysis of the characterization of early childhood: contexts and methods” presents a literature review in which the authors summarize the contexts and methods of four experiences that characterize childhood and adolescence. This study evidences the complementary use of techniques to collect data with the desire to respond to a multidimensional vision of development. María Dilia Mieles-Barrera in “Quality of life of children from medium level social strata: Case study” is a case study that employs various innovative strategies for the production of data and examines the linking of the perception of quality of life with the material contexts of existence. The author proposes a complex and integrated approach to quality of life in childhood and affirms the need and possibilities of assuming children as subjects of research per se, taking into account the ethical difficulties that this involves.

Juan Carlos Oyanedel, Jaime Alfaro and Camila Mella presents the results of International Survey on Children’s Well-being (ISCWeB), carried out in Chile in 2012. Results show high levels of life satisfaction; however differences exist considering socio-economic and gender variables, as well as different aspects.

The Colombian authors Juan Manuel Estrada-Jiménez, Luz Nelly Novoa-Vargas, Leidy Andrea Guío-Nitola and Angélica Paola Espinel-Mesa in their article “Mechanisms for the generation of discourses and fundamental concepts of child work” present the results of a social experiment that aims to identify some behavioral paradigms, assimilated during family coexistence, among a group of girls that work, recognizing the way in which these paradigms are replicated in educational scenarios as structures that regulate coexistence. In “Construction of imaginaries regarding childhood and the formation of early childhood educators” the authors María Delia Martínez-Núñez and Graciela Muñoz-Zamora discuss that in Chile during the last few decades a technical rationality has been

installed in this country in terms of university teaching. However, this doesn't reflect a consistent and integrated reflection regarding childhood and the meaning that this acquires in the training of early childhood educators. Also from Chile is Nolfia Ibáñez-Salgado's article titled "The diversity in the construction of the world of children of two cultures". The article views the conceptualization of diversity as distinct constructions of the world and aims to identify the different types of logic that guide the interactions in which children from two cultures participate in: the dominant culture and the mapuche culture. Habitual interactions in the homes of middle class in Santiago and mapuche children in rural communities are compared, as well as interactions in their respective classrooms. Maria Isabel Orofino in "Point of view of the child in the debate about communication and consumption" presents a synthesis of a qualitative investigation carried out on the topic of relationships of children with the media and consumption. This article presents the results of an empirical study carried out over a period of 8 months with 25 children in an NGO in the downtown area of the city of São Paulo, Brazil.

The sample of articles brought together in Volume 13 N° 1 of 2015 highlights some of the paths that critical social research has been taking in the construction of knowledge that is committed to the defense of the rights of children and adolescents. We have a responsibility to further investigate ethical, epistemological and political tensions, which form the risks involved in taking a partisan perspective. We hope that this conceptual and methodological map contributes to the development of new research initiatives, knowledge of these problems and ethical and political doubts.

The third section of the Journal contains both the thematic and author indexes, as is tradition. There is also a report on Cinde's participation in the "Breakfast of Champions for Early Childhood Development: Early childhood development and the post-2015 development agenda: a solution to reducing poverty and inequality", in the framework of Session Number 69 of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York City. In the same event Cinde articulated its participation with the actions that area being carried out in this area through the Consultative Group at both global and regional levels. The objective of this event was to bring together and gain commitments from world leaders that are willing to actively respond to the call for the construction of a sustainable society based on building a better present and future for children.

Also presented in this section are news items regarding the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). In the first of these, "Commitment to an education for sustainable development", it is proposed that we live in an authentic planetary emergency, marked by a series of grave problems that are closely related: contamination and degradation of eco-systems, exhaustion of resources, uncontrolled growth of the global population, unsustainable imbalances, destructive conflicts and a loss of biological and cultural diversity, which is why it is necessary to assume a commitment so that all education, both formal (from primary school to university) as well as informal (museums, media...) systematically pay attention to the situation that the world is facing with the goal of providing a correct perception of problems and to encourage favorable attitudes and behaviors for the achievement of a sustainable future.

The second article, "An alarming study of the risk of underestimating the least spectacular effects of climate change", analyses 15 climatic models developed by the Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) and highlights the complexity of the effects of climate change on biodiversity and the challenges that all natural eco-systems on the planet are facing. The results of this study have been published in the journal Science.

At the end of this section, Erica Valencia Osorio made a presentation on the "Buen Comienzo" program which is the Public Policy on Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Medellín, attached to the Secretary of Education, promoting the comprehensive development of children from birth until age five.

In the fourth section of the Journal the series of interviews with notable personalities that are engaged in research in social sciences, childhood and youth continues. The first of these is a dialogue

between Lorena Natalia Plesnicar and Ivonne Farah that reviews, based on the Bolivian experience, a wide spectrum of topics related to public policies for young people and women and refers to the laboral insertion of these two population groups, the influence of international organisms in the definition and implementation of policies, the relevance of the gender equality approach in proposals, the implications of compulsory education in the country and challenges faced by educational institutions.

Ana María Arias-Cardona interviewed Mario López-Martínez, from the University of Granada's Institute of Peace and Conflict in Spain. This interview involves an analysis of this subject, which is linked to an examination of the possibilities for the Colombian context. The interview covers the topics of peace, positive peace, making peace, non-violence and imperfect peace. The interview discusses the historic moment that Colombia is currently experiencing, discusses the different levels of reconciliation and the notion of education for peace. Finally, it proposes various challenges in this area.

“Being a young person in Colombia: subjectivities, new technologies and armed conflict” is the title that Mauricio Jiménez-Flórez has given to his interview with the youth researcher Germán Muñoz. The interview begins with a general question: what does it currently mean to be a young person in Colombia? This interview covers related topics such as young people and new technologies and new technologies and political participation of young people, which leads in to young people and the Colombian armed conflict.

It is important to remember that this edition Volume 13 N° 1 January-June 2015, is produced in association with the Clacso Working Group: Youth, childhood: policies, cultures and social institutions in Latin America.

In May 2014 the Journal was re-indexed in Category A2 of Publindex, Colciencias, Colombia that is valid until the 30th of June 2015. We are still expecting the response of Scopus and Thomson Reuters Social Science Citation Index for the journal to be included in these indexes.

During 2014 the Journal was received by the Left Index, Ebsco Host (Bibliographical database with the selection committee) and in the following databases and libraries: Sherpa/Rome, Base-Bielfeld Academic Search, Engine, Unam-National Autonomous University of Mexico, BDCol: Digital Library of Colombia, Google Scholar, OCLC WorldCat, Copac, Recolecta-Recolector de Ciencia Abierta, CC-Creative Commons, California State University-Monterey Bay Library, New Jour, Princeton University Library, State Library of New South Wales, Science Hub and the Open Access Library.

We would like to thank the authors, reviewers, readers and those who are responsible for the Journal's administrative and editorial tasks for their efforts on a daily basis to create, classify and organize our content so that the academic and research community and society in general can benefit from the production of knowledge. This has the objective of impacting on both public and private decisions that benefit our children and young people.

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