

City Maps; Contributions to Social Work for a Territorial Analysis from Critical Geography

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Abstract

The construction of an alternative city different from that imposed by the neoliberal model, passes through the recognition that the subjects make of the territory their memories and imaginaries in relation to it in order to be able to analyze social reality and generate transformative actions conditions of social injustice, which for the social work program is fundamental in the development of training processes with its students so that they are Committed to social change, as an essential ethical-political option for the construction of the collective fabric .

The practice of social work from a critical perspective proposes to face the situations of injustice and social and economic inequality within the capitalist mode of production, thus, globalization and neoliberalism are a challenge for the social worker since he or she must investigate on the way of life of social actors, reconstructing the meaning of their practices and unveiling the meanings of the experiences present in their daily lives to contribute to change. (Falla, 2014 p. 84). As well as respect for the communities, their territory, their knowledge and their environment.

This new context requires the professional in the area to carry out an accurate analysis of contemporary urban problems, for this the research process here socialized proposed the implementation of georeferencing strategies of phenomena to strengthen professional training processes through social cartography as A strategy that establishes an emancipatory interest as a horizon in line with the universal declaration of bioethics where the production of knowledge must “evaluate social realities and achieve equity” (UNESCO, 2008).

Keywords: cartography, social work, georeferencing, social, urban phenomenon, neoliberalism.

1. Introduction

The document presented below gives an account of the methodological elements and the field work implemented in the context of the research project Cartographies of the city; An analysis of the configuration of the contemporary city from critical social work, a process developed in the city of Bogotá-Colombia with students from the social work program at the Minuto de Dios University Corporation.

Thinking the classroom as a laboratory for the advancement of participatory social inquiries, is the place of enunciation that is assumed for the development of pedagogical practice, within the framework of formative research, there the teaching-learning processes

point towards the consolidation of critical thought (Giroux, 2006. 203) which makes a situated reading of the space and the phenomena of reality in which the social worker intervenes as a field of action.

The document is divided into four sections as follows: first section presents the proposed methodological bets developed in light of the investigative process, emphasizing the possibilities Other than in contemporary emerging methodological terms. The second chapter addresses the discussions given through the formative research experience called Callejear for transformation proposal that focuses on the transformation of traditional pedagogical practices around the training of social workers. The third section of the document gives an account of the conclusions and final reflections on participatory pedagogical research as a strategy for strengthening the training processes of social workers. Finally, a series of recommendations are presented in the field of social worker training from the relationship of critical geographies and critical social work.

2. The methodological approach

The field of contemporary qualitative research is presented as a scenario of opportunity for the faculties of Latin American Social and Human Sciences, which implies a fundamental challenge for teachers and researchers in our region. Will we be able to question the ways in which we have been known? and classified? Can we distance ourselves from the colonial matrix to analyze our realities and thus transform them? Will we be able to build our own knowledge alternatives without condemning ourselves to scientific and technological ostracism?

The counter-hegemonic struggle around investigative practices is linked to ceasing to see ourselves as passive subjects which are the echo of Paris, London, Amsterdam, among others (Fanon, 1961). Assuming a decolonization posture linked to the transformation of methodological praxis, theoretical corpus and paradigmatic scenarios; This process is disruptive and dynamic since it forces societies to understand their memories by analyzing the structural systems and the relations of domination that the colonial regimes of "truth, science and justice" have generated over their bodies (Denzin and others 2011). This process is linked to the construction of a flexible proposal in the design that includes the participatory community (Denzin 1989, p. 81), the territorial (Lefebvre, 1991) and the idea of transformation as transversal elements to the pedagogical act.

Participatory community research from a transformative territorial perspective is based on the idea that people are arbiters of their own presence in the world and therefore have the possibility and / or need to define and reinvent it according to their wishes in the territory. and needs (Harvey 2012) The function of social research consists, in this context, in expanding the interpretive universe around the conditions of life in contemporary cities from three transversal elements: the multiplicity of voices, the territory and the transformation (See table 1.). "The mission of Social Science research is to help community life prosper, offering people the tools they need to reach common conclusions" (Clifford 2011 p. 309).

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| <p>Multiplicity of voices</p> | <p>Action and knowledge in and about the phenomena of social reality is not impartial, it is linked to the needs, interests, and life positions of the subjects, which brings with it tensions, contradictions and territorial disputes around power and knowledge. Participatory community research is constituted from a collective task in which all the actors involved are located and defined as subjects of doing and knowing, taking up Guiso "subjects capable of knowing, defining and deciding</p> |
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| | on the issues of environmental, social reality, cultural, economic and political, which with relevance requires studying and transforming”(2013, p. 206) |
| The territory | The territory from this formative research commitment is a social construction, the appropriate space is generated from human interaction with the natural space, in it a dialectical relationship is established between the productive forces and with the means of production; in addition, there are processes of connectivity and interconnection (Santos, 1994 p. 15) that are in permanent movement, renewal and transformation, accounting for the dynamics in the constitution of the phenomena of reality. |
| Transformation. | The transformation from this investigative perspective places the subjects involved in a scenario, which they know and configure with their daily actions (Guiso 2013, p. 106). This process of analysis and observation of the phenomena of social reality enables them to acquire tools that allow them to contrast. that allow you to recognize, define and decide on the territorial elements that you want to study and if you want to re-signify, this process of change is not only in relation to objects or subjects of study, it is linked to a process of reflexivity that forces you to de -territorialize so that a subject willing to build new human and nature bonds emerges, with creative abilities that allow them to elaborate new questions and propose novel community responses. |

Table 1. Interpretive elements for a participatory community research with a territorial perspective. (2021). Own elaboration.

There is a traditional theoretical research that brings with it a time lag in relation to the transformations of social reality (Zemelman 2005, p. 93) and perpetuates the violence and inequality of colonial power, underestimating and turning a good part of the researchers of the faculties of Social and Human Sciences in Latin America into mere instruments (Guiso, 2013, p. 102).

Participatory community-based formative research from a transformative territorial perspective is constituted from a collective task in which all the actors involved are located and defined as subjects of doing and knowing, taking up Guiso "subjects capable of knowing, defining and deciding on the issues of environmental, social, cultural, economic and political reality, which with relevance requires studying and transforming" (2013, p. 206).

The decolonial paradigm guides the research by its self-reflective character (Beltrán, 2010 p. 18), the approach is participatory research, characterized by enabling the constitution of collective knowledge, combining research, educational work and action (Hall, 1988, p.150), the research methodology is social mapping, which allows communities to produce localized knowledge in the light of their territorial reality (Peña, 2011). Social mapping is conceived as a dialogic technique (Fals Borda 1987) to address contemporary conflicts around urban territories.

The process is developed within the framework of a formative research project in the city of Bogota, capital of the country, the metropolis currently has approximately 8 and a half million inhabitants, and has been the largest recipient of internally displaced persons as a result of the war that the country has experienced for more than fifty years, It is currently the most unequal city in the country and about 60% of the population is in poverty and extreme poverty as a result of the implementation of neoliberal policies in a vertical and violent manner during the last 40 years, which has generated an excessive growth of hyper-degraded areas throughout the urban area, exacerbated by the effects of the covid 19 pandemic.

3. Street in order to transform

From the ambiguity in the social sciences, spatial configurations have been seen as a process of naturalization, i.e. people do not recognize the processes of structuring the spatial order but are alienated to the context and are not questioned but normalized, therefore in the studies of space (physical) it is constituted as fragmentations of the territory and from what exists in space as (Economy, population, vegetation, among others). According to (SANTOS,1996) spatial relations are social relations that occur through spaces of human interaction, where they must not necessarily be harmonious but contradictory and are constituted through processes that in turn are in constant movement. LEFEBVRE (social) space is a (social) product, where each society, each mode of production produces its own space.

He also proposes an analysis of space where he discovers the social relations that are woven among themselves; - Spatial practices (perceived space): Spatial (social) practice is a practical matter, which employs accumulated knowledge, involving a process of signification and construction of meaning. - Representations of space (conceived space): These are mediated by relative and changing knowledge and play a determining role in social and political (spatial) practices - Representational spaces (lived space): In this space users make symbolic use of natural objects, and non-verbal signs and are constituted in everyday life. This triad is held together by relationships and combines in different ways to produce a space according to its modes of production and its historical period, these relationships are never stable but make it possible to interpret societies from different points of view. (HARVEY, 1973) The (social) space is the social production of space and time which he considers inseparable categories, it is a scenario of political struggle and social confrontation. He takes up aspects of Lefebvre, however he attaches four aspects of spatial practices. -Accessibility and distancing - Appropriation and use of space -Domination and control of space -Production of space For (EDWARD SOJA,1989)

Social space is represented by means of a substantial and recognizable social product and together with spatiality they are the means and the result, this part of a "second nature". Based on the above postulates, it should be noted that every social process has a spatial dimension that is recognizable as a product and as a social medium, it is a social construction both physical and symbolic and mental, it allows spatial relations, the modes of relations are associated and can be given "daily spatio-temporal practices are associated with the social order characterized by hierarchies and inequalities" (Giddens, 1995).

The proposal of investigative training called "street to transform" had three categories: Critical social work as an epistemic bet that places the professional beyond social assistance, positioning him as a restless subject with investigative capacities and aptitudes, which allows him to read the social reality in a critical way. The urban territory understood as a matrix of life, is a space instituted by subjects and social groups that refer to themselves through it and finally the georeferencing of social phenomena given through the recovery of the imaginaries and experiences of the subjects around the territory, its tensions, processes of resistance and possibilities of life beyond the hegemonic dynamics of the neoliberal territories. In the framework of the georeferencing of social phenomena, the recovery of community memories is also linked, the community is understood as a set of processes that are directed towards the common good of humanity on the basis of reciprocal relations and not of possession or domination of the other.

The formative research proposal with a territorial perspective was developed through two didactic strategies of an investigative nature: a) social cartography understood as a qualitative investigative technique, which is built collectively in which the subjects represent their imaginaries around the territory (the cartogram) being the language their unit of analysis; this allows the students to locate the sense and meanings that institute the social reality and the territorial matrix, but also enables a dialogue between actors that enhances the construction of collective knowledge (circles of the word), which become transformation and are potential for agency at the individual and collective level.

The second didactic strategy is linked to the urban tour through a process of urban critical ethnography, through this process it was proposed to contrast the imaginary with reality in order to understand, explain and problematize social phenomena linked to social organization and community development in contemporary urban contexts, The traveler's notebook, ethnographic photography and street art were tools that allowed us to carry out an active participant observation exercise that made it possible to understand phenomena such as globalization and neoliberalism through the analysis of capital grabbing of common goods and its consequences for life in general.

In order to advance in the understanding of social theory and specifically to georeference social phenomena from cartography and the territorial journey, it is necessary to understand elements of what has been called horizontality, i.e. the spatial configuration of these phenomena, at first it must be said that spatial distribution will be the product of multiple forces in which the human and environmental factors intervene. At first, the georeferencing of the phenomena suggests that the phenomena have a spatial concreteness and this is determined by three elements: localization, location and scale in terms of absolute, relative and scalar. In the case of location it is important to have other references that can be determinant in the reading of a context or use of a research technique, some of them raised by the author Lynch as the paths, nodes, milestones, edges, among others. In the case of scale, it is necessary to take into account elements proposed by political geography and specifically Taylor (1994) who pointed out a tri-scalar structure applicable to the analysis of the phenomena of the micro-urban, the meso-state/nation and the global.

Secondly, in the study of horizontalities, it is necessary to talk about aspects of spatial distribution or deployment in order to extract as many elements of interpretation and understanding of social, political and economic relations as possible. These elements are density, type of distribution, pattern, regionalization (differentiation), according to the author these concepts are raised to see their relevance in the formulation of research questions in social phenomena.

4. Conclusion

The debate on the epistemological referents of space, especially from the viewpoint of the verticalities that have been responsible for clarifying the discussion from the social sciences for the 20th century, is key and necessary to take as a point of reference the changes and contexts of human intervention with a view to interpreting or understanding social phenomena in both urban and rural areas.

Participatory community-based formative research from a transformative territorial perspective is based on the idea that people are the arbiters of their own presence in the world

and therefore have in the territory the possibility and/or need to define and reinvent it according to their desires and needs (Harvey 2012). The role of social research is, in this context, to expand the interpretative universe around the conditions of life in contemporary cities towards the good living *sumak kawsay*.

This view forces us as Latin Americans to think the territory beyond the colonization imposed by the violence of the national states (i.e. Eurocentric modernity) and this in the urban context leads us to think of social phenomena from the horizontality and its georeferencing as a possibility to locate other territories in which daily practices are an alternative for life.

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