

LO CARCELARIO

A University project in the prisons of Uruguay post-dictatorship

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This communication focuses primarily on three principal aspects of the theoretical and practical analysis of the last ten years of work in prisons. It needs to incorporate a brief contextualization of Uruguay, in its macropolitical and macroeconomical aspects, as well as a general look at the penal reform which is being implemented since 2005.

Since the end of the dictatorship in 1985, the penitentiary dimension has achieved particular relevance at social and academic level: the 'prolonged prison during the dictaatorship (together with specific components such as the participation of our country in the Condor Plan) offers continuities and discontinuities in relation to the penitentiary practices in the so-called neoliberal moments (during the 90's), of the 'progressive' governments

In the year referred to above (2005) the so-called Law of Humanization and Modernization of the penal system in which the strategical focuses of the reform are established. Four years later, in 2009, after the negative report of the Special Relator on Torture and Degrading Treatments (which is realized by invitation of the proper government) the Chamber of National Representatives and the Senate approve the Law of Penitentiary Emergency, in which a very important financial ammount is allocated voted by all government representatives for the Creation of the National Institute of Rehabilitation (with special focus on structural, organizational and cultural changes) for the in our country.

With these considerations as a starting point, the political and academic (University) core ideas are exposed which guide the work. First of all, we refer to basic specifications on the work of University extension which have influenced the politics and culture of the public University of our country. In this frame the notion of Universitarian comprehensiveness, defined in the following manner:

1. The integration of the functions of research, teaching and extension in processes of critical formtion and the approach to relevant problematics of the social medium with an aim of tranformation.
2. The integration of different disciplines in interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge and intervention problems.
3. The dialogue of knowledges with the social interlocutors of the extension processes, conceived as transformation subjects of their own reality and not as passive objects of Universitarian intervention (Adaptado de Cano, 2015).

The integration of the Psychology Faculty will be particularly analyzed, rich in experiences of extension, and the possible alliances with the research and teaching. At the same time, other disciplinary contributions will be taken into account.

The second aspect to be covered can be summarized in the 'conceptualizations' and theoretical frames which are the references used in this work:

1. The picture of the classical psychological-social intervention is analyzed in the sense of involvement, proposed by different researchers, notion which allows to question the place of the researcher and the relation with the field work.
2. The psychological-social aspects of the prison population valued in a holistic way which allows to penetrate in the false proposals of rehabilitation and re-socialization, as well as draft a comparative approach to other Latinamerican countries. For this purpose, the notion of penitentiary continuum proposed by Foucault is introduced.
3. The aspect of 'gender' and the 'intersectionality'. These conceptualizations will be exposed to identify the principal problems of definition of the studied population, as well as the possibilities of critical expansion and pragmatic anchoring.
4. The organization seen from inside. The principal components of the paradigmatic prisons of Uruguay will be analyzed: the Prison of Women, Punta de Rieles and the penitentiary complex Santiago Vázquez.
5. The resistences when becoming a 'prisoner'. From arrested to persons deprived from freedom.
6. The reports of the principal institutions of human rights that currently exist in Uruguay and their implications at the level of public policies and academic production: the National Institution of Human Rights, the Parliamentarian Commissioner and the Peace and Justice Service, branch Uruguay.

Finally, 'social practices' which have been operating in our experience will be introduced. In order to do so, serving as a guidance, the following aspects of social practices will be exposed, understood as naturalized aspects for the understanding of prisons and of the possibilities to question our own approaches:

1. Particularities in the work agreements with the penitentiary organizations and with the persons deprived of freedom.
2. Narratives of the work in the prisons in which we participated showing the variety and organizational invariance.
3. Critical analysis of our own actions in the prisons: from the desire of transformation of the quality of life to the conception of the proper voice of the penitentiary population.
4. Some words about the deaths occurred in the prisons in the last five years (about the murder of 12 persons burnt, suicides and violent deaths happened in these organizations).
5. The denunciations in the work spaces and the public opinion, the necessity of implementation and the constant dialogue with the population.

As a closure, we will present some conclusions and a discussion will be opened about the penitentiary legitimacy and about its functionality.

