

Editorial

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Research: approaches to an understanding of the social world

We are pleased to publish this new issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación. Temas actuales en investigación educativa*, born of a genuine interest to encourage reflection on what has been happening in the field of social research in regards to how it is conducted, and what the ways of conducting it mean.

Among the concerns voiced in academic events held online during the pandemic that kept us shut away at home in the last two years, some of the most pressing ones were about how we would do research at that time and what we could expect afterwards. One thing we knew for sure was that things were not going to be as they had been before, nor would our way of conducting research be the same, and also that not every context, issue or social subject was amenable to be approached through the web or online research.

If we take into account the fact that an essential element of the work carried out in social sciences is proximity, approaching individuals, collectives and communities, reflecting on the paths that we have had to follow when we were forced into a lockdown is both timely and relevant because face-to-face communication, being with others, brings with it the possibility of understanding. It is a vital passage in the course of any research that aspires to build knowledge on people and specific processes of social reality, since a part of the social scientists' task is to examine those persistent factors that determine or condition those processes, as well as the aims and motives that lead individuals to undertake certain actions.

Although this is not the place to scrutinize the heterogeneity of methodological approaches, we believe that it is necessary to discuss the hows and the whys, which also implies learning from which horizons of meaning we approach the field again. What did the health contingency and the lockdown reveal about the ways in which we seek to build knowledge?

The proposal made to us by the guest coordinators of this issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación*, "Epistemologies centered in the individual and production of knowledge in Latin America", opens up what we hope will be a profound discussion on the ways and meanings of the scientific work conducted in the social environment.

In accordance with discussions held in the last fifty years, especially in the southern hemisphere, we believe it necessary to make a space to reflect on how far Western modernity has gone in the construction of certain truths and the discredit suffered in this sense by subjects and approaches to knowledge from other latitudes whose center is not Europe. This entails ad-

mitting the existence of epistemological and methodological approaches different from those re-cognized as canonical to make the social world intelligible, which points to the challenge of calling into question our own rationality and the practices that we have consequently deployed in our research and accommodating not only the recognition of other knowledge, social relationships and individuals previously dismissed but also, probably, updating knowledge and methodological skills for social research.

We find it necessary to consider the main debates held in this respect in Latin America as a space of intense, continuous and solid participation. In this regional history there are authors and collectives who have stood up for the intellectual and social value of calling into question hegemonic ways of conducting, presenting, and granting recognition to research work and cumulative knowledge apart from the formal models of shaping knowledge. Thus, we are thankful the rigorous work done by doctors Irene Vasilachis and Mariano R. Gialdino as coordinators of Issue 25 of *Diálogos sobre Educación. Temas actuales en investigación educativa*, because they offer us both a space and an opportunity to reflect on these topics with them and with the different authors whose work makes up this issue, which we hope will be of great interest to our readers.

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Editor