



State, public policies and social assistance: some notes

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Summary

Based on Marx's critical social theory, with this work we seek to demarcate the main theses regarding the State, public policies and social assistance policy, seeking to investigate the relationship between these three spheres and conservatism. The methodology consists of systematic bibliographic research.

Key words: public policy; Social assistance; State.

Abstract

From Marx's critical social theory, we seek with this work to demarcate the main theses about the State, public policies, and social assistance policy, seeking to question the relationship between these three spheres and conservatism. The methodology consists of systematic bibliographic research.

Keywords: public policies; social assistance; State.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thinking about public policies in contemporary Brazil, in our view, demands another exercise, which is to think about the formation of the State and more especially the Brazilian State. Furthermore, about the ideological and political conflicts that dispute the legitimacy of imprinting a worldview on public policies.

Based on this problem, we seek to analyze the concept of State, public policies and social security policy. social assistance from critical social theory, through Marxist and Marxist works. The methodology used was systematic bibliographical research in works that support thewe think aboutconcepts listed in the objectives. To better teach the text, we initially deal with the concept of State based on the work of Engels (2017) and other authors such as Lessa (2012), Mazzeo (2015) and Leacock (2019). We then discuss public policies and social policies, with an emphasis on social assistance policy. Finally, we deal with the relationship between these concepts and the class struggle and disputes that in our view appear to be a dispute over the worldview that permeates public policies.

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STATE, GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT: BRAZILIAN PARTICULARITIES

The discussion regarding the State has been carried out by numerous authors, but what interests us here is a discussion that recovers economic aspects, politicians and historical and that contains the main theses from the primitive, Greco-Roman, feudal and modern mode of production. This explanation can be found in the work of Engels (2017), as he aimed to analyze the State based on history and in line with the production and reproduction of social life.

The central thesis of Engels' (2017) book regarding the State leads us to think that throughout history, the dominant classes of each society and mode of production used the State as a means of legitimizing their class domination.

However, more contemporary analyzes lead us to think about how the class struggle operates in relation to the State. Furthermore, there are analyzes that understand that the State is a means of achieving the common good and not permeated by class struggle, such disputes in discourse justify the notes made here.

Aware of the impossibility of quickly dealing with the State and its genesis, we register some characteristics, in our view, crucial. One of them is that the genesis of the State is connected with the advent of private property and productive development, which made accumulation possible, that is, the private appropriation of wealth is identified in societies with a State, including the Greco-Roman one as analyzed by Engels (2017), indicating that the State in these societies already plays a role in guaranteeing land ownership, for example. A second is the *genesis*, which is also close to this genealogy, which will subsequently contribute, for example, to the establishment of the monogamous family, also analyzed in the work of Engels (2017).

What matters is that such *genesis* through conflicts with other *genesis* they will later constitute nations. And the Greco-Roman State was created as a regulator of relations and put an end to the fraternal model found in *genesis* such as the Iroquois and in tribes that cultivate fraternity and responsibility towards their members.

We know that for the advent of modern society, private property and the State have central role and more particular characteristics, but the explanations mentioned above already provide some notions of how the State, private property, monogamy and class division of society were articulated. In Greco-Roman societies, merchandise and commercial relations also appear strongly and contribute to the extinction of fraternal relationships cultivated in ancient times. *genesis*. There, the possibility of having positions, herds and land was a privilege for a few. If in the *gens*, those who defended the groups were themselves, here in these societies it is the State that will appropriate the use of this force (ENGELS, 2017).

After presenting the social and historical processes, considering the material dimension, modes of production and social relations that are responsible for the formation of the Athenian, Roman and Germanic State, Engels (2017) in the last chapter of his text outlines some theses regarding the genealogy of the State, including the exploitation of classes, in his words:

The war provided them: prisoners of war were converted into slaves. The first great social division of labor, which occurred with the increase in labor productivity and, therefore, wealth and with the expansion of the field of production, necessarily led to slavery, in the given global historical conditions. The first great social division of labor gave rise to the first great division of society into two classes: masters and slaves, despoilers and the dispossessed (ENGELS, 2017, p. 201).

Therefore, we can list that private property, expansion of commercialization, invention of money, the enslavement of people and even the collection of taxes are linked to the process of genesis of the state, wars will also be identified as components of the old mode of production (MAGNOLI et al, 2006; PONCE, 2010; ENGELS, 2017).

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Based on the analyzes by Engels (2017), we can understand that Greco-Roman and Germanic sociability ends the essential characteristics of primitive socialization.

Thus, with the expansion of commerce, money and usury, land ownership and mortgages, the concentration and centralization of wealth in the hands of a small class advanced rapidly, and in parallel the growing impoverishment of the masses and the growing mass of poor. At

4They were groups with blood connections, with lineage or descendants, who had common customs and union due to certain characteristics. It is a term that Engels (2017) uses based on Morgan's studies.

To the extent that it did not coincide from the beginning with the old tribal nobility, the new aristocracy of wealth relegated it to a secondary level (in Athens, in Rome, among the Germans). This separation of the free into classes according to their wealth was accompanied, especially in Greece, by an immense multiplication in the number of slaves, whose forced labor laid the foundation on which the superstructure of the entire society was built (ENGELS, 2014, p. 208).

With all this historical and social movement that can be seen in the studies by Engels (2017), Ponce (2010), Lessa (2012) and Leacock (2019), we can infer that unprecedented characteristics in countless tribal groups from different continents will be deeply interfered with the advent of the old model of organization, and violence and social class antagonisms, class division begin to be controlled by the State, which will prove itself as the administrator of these conflicts.

In summary, the work of Engels (2017) leads us to think and have ways to counter-argument about the naturalization of the State, as well as the monogamous family and private property as eternal entities, asexistedother forms of socialization (primitive societies), which lived without the State. And that the State carries ontonegativity, that is, the construction of another form of sociability will demand the extinction of the State, as this, in Engels' (2017) understanding, is permeated by the logic of reproduction of class domination. In his words, "The synthesis of civilized society is the State, which, in all periods taken as an example, is without exception the State of the ruling class and, in all cases, is essentially a mechanism of repression of the oppressed and dispossessed class" (ENGELS, 2017, P. 2018, emphasis added).

This first approach to the State is pertinent, however, other important contributions were made by Marx (2008) in chapter XXIV of the work Capital, whenspokeabout the so-called primitive accumulation, which provides contextual bases for understanding the transition from feudal sociability to modern-capitalist sociability and the role of the State as a promoter and articulator in the institution of capitalist society.

In order to cover the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the formation of the modern State, Trindade's (2011) study on the social history of human rights is pertinent, which recovers how the bourgeoisieconstitutesas a revolutionary class and how the bourgeois revolutions ended the feudal world and human rights and the modern State articulates itself after that, bringing together the thought and contributions of natural law, especially Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) are the main representatives, while they understood that the State is important to protect the rights of men who would be natural. Contributions regarding the modern State also came from Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who brought a conception of man and society in line with the idea of the importance of the State.

After the establishment of the bourgeoisie as a dominant class, the elaboration of human rights and official institutions began to be permeated by a reactionary worldview, that is, after the bourgeois revolutions had advanced and legitimized themselves, it was up to the bourgeoisie to incline the State towards reproduction of sociability as it is (MARX, ENGELS, 2008; TRINDADE, 2011).

The popular classes, upon realizing that bourgeois revolutions would not guarantee the promises made, will carry out countlessclaims,some treated by Marx (2011), such as the spring of the people in 1848. Another aspect that will appear is social democracy, which in short will seek, through the State, to meet the demands of the popular classes, but without the revolutionary project.

The disputes between the understandings of whether or not the State should be disputed to improve the living conditions of the working class or whether the idea should be its complete destruction will be presented over the centuries

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XIX and XX expressed through liberal conceptions, the Social State or a Welfare State, the socialism, aspects of neoliberalism and to this day we identify this debate and its manifestations in reality, in policies, in every social sphere.

In this sense, it is pertinent to highlight that many notes about the State are made in relation to Europe and United States, and in peripheral countries like Brazil, the formation of the State has particularities, for example, here we were the last to extinguish slavery and we did not have a regime like feudalism, in this sense it is used to say that our State was constituted through a colonial route and not through a classical route as was the case in Europe, this explanation and formulation was made by (CHASIN, 1999).

Carvalho (2021), Tejasdas (2020) also make contributions to thinking about the constitution of the State and policies public policies in Brazil, stating that inequality was striking in the country, which did not have the first advances of the bourgeois revolutions, nor the so-called welfare state that Europe and the USA had. Furthermore, racism and numerous inequalities will also be added, ranging from access to food to access to education, income and work. In this sense, authors such as Netto (2015) and Mazzeo (2015) will argue that in Brazil we experience a bourgeois autocracy, through which the power of the bourgeoisie is concentrated in the economy, politics, culture, education and showing how the power of this class will be legitimized, whether in democracy or through dictatorships.

In this first section, we seek to briefly recover the historicity of the State and its development. We also present some of the characteristics of the Brazilian State, which did not count on the advances in the formation of classical states, nor even with aspects of the welfare state. In the next section we discuss public policies, with an emphasis on the Brazilian case.

3 STATE AND PUBLIC POLICIES: GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT

It is during the 20th century that Brazil will formulate some public policies designed to contain claims of the working class, especially from the 1930s/40s onwards with the advent of industrialization and urbanization (IAMAMOTO; CARVALHO, 2014). However, commonly, thinking about public policies leads us to consider the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, as instruments were established from it that predict popular participation in accordance with the Citizen Charter, which was constituted under the action of the Brazilian redemocratization process specifically concerning citizens inserted in political life. In order to conceptually think about public policies, we bring the conception of Macedo (2018), when he notes that:

Public policies are sets of programs, actions and activities that the public authorities develop directly or indirectly. Public policy needs to ensure the right to citizenship for all citizens or specifically for a community, a cultural, ethnic and economic social segment (MACEDO, 2018, p.49).

In this sense, public policies within democracy are always a decision-making process that will involve conflicts of interest. In this understanding, society is made up of different groups of political segments that debate how the State and government should act. However, the first notion of public policy is defined as a conflict of political interest that directly reflects and interferes in the life of the citizen.

According to Granemann (2007):

Public policies and social policies must be differentiated, even though both can only exist under a common entity: the State. Public policies are those initiatives aimed, for example, at satisfying the needs most immediately related to the reproduction of capital, and social policies seem reasonable to me to assume those aimed at meeting the demands of the workforce, even if this, contradictorily, is immediate. , also allows capital gains. Thus, a social policy (social security) will always be a public policy, but a public policy (the establishment of the interest rate by the State) will not always be a social policy (GRANEMANN, 2007, p. 59).

The public is understood by Oliveira (2006) as a synonym of public interest that permeates the government, society and the various civil society organizations. Public policies encompass the first sector which is the State and the government, the second sector is the private sector and finally the third sector that incorporates the various societies, i.e. non-profit civil society organizations with non-governmental organizations. Regarding the third sector, they are civil society organizations of public interest (OSCIPS), philanthropic entities, neighborhood associations, social movements, among other organizations.

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The Brazilian State has been recognized since the military dictatorship, as an authoritarian tradition and a centralizing model of management public. Civil society understands that public policies are the exclusive obligation of the government and do not require citizen participation as they believe they are represented by rulers.

This statement makes it clear that government officials are responsible for carrying out their functions

policies and make decisions aimed at the collective through the construction of public policies. To achieve the objective, it requires participation, co-production between the State and civil society.

The challenges for public policies are inequalities and for greater equity in the social area to achieve a tradition of the universalization of these social rights and the participation of people in the process of social control. Social policy is placed in the context of the process of building public policies.

The Brazilian Constitution guarantees rights to all citizens, which are often not respected and their rights are not recognized by public authorities and society. From this perspective, for rights to be ensured and respected, it is necessary to implement public policies.

According to Boschetti (2012, p. 53), when the recommended rights are not implemented in practice, it is necessary for society to organize and mobilize to demand that programs be established that fully meet the interests of individuals and the means for their implementation. These are the public policies that were instituted. So that the systems/national are implemented and for these policies to be fully developed, civil society needs to work together to monitor and request the implementation of the programs inserted so that it can be carried out in all instances - municipal, state and federal.

It is worth highlighting that few established programs are actually recognized and validated by public managers in their instances. It is the role of the public manager in his sphere to know and promote public policies. The application of public policy legislation, as they are formulated at the initiative of the executive and legislative branches. Therefore, together or separately, they cannot act out of their own necessity, as they need to be provoked by demands and proposals from society. In this sense, population participation is necessary to promote public policies through municipal councils and other mechanisms that are validated by social control.

The. Social Assistance Policy and its historicity

The first forms of Social Assistance provided to the population occurred in an assistentialist way and occurred through analyzes and merit criteria for its implementation. Preliminarily, assistance and charitable actions took place through selections of the poorest, or “deserving” poor, to receive help from the State, the Church or the bourgeoisie.

In 1942, in Brazil, with the creation of the Brazilian Assistance Legion (LBA), the first institutionalized form of “doing” social assistance was established by the State, a demand that responded to the large number of women, children and families orphaned by men who went to the second world war.

In this interim, the first damism was reinforced, in which politicians' wives were responsible for taking care of the welfare side, charitable works, charitable actions for the poor and most needy.

Only in 1988, with the promulgation of the Federal Constitution and the recognition of the right to social assistance in the social security triad, did this policy become recognized as a public policy and as a citizen's right. Since then, it is available financing for the execution of its actions by the State. In 1993, the law regulating Social Assistance policy in Brazil was published. Brazil, the Law n. 8,742/93.

3.1 Notes about conservatism x social assistance

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The unanimity of authors who discuss conservatism agrees with the location of its emergence, which began with the French Revolution in 1789. (EUPHRASIO, 2014). Conservatism presents itself in multifaceted and diverse forms. According to Mannheim (1959, p. 101-102) there are two types of conservatism, “there is the type that is more or less universal and, on the other, there is the definitively modern type, which is the product of particular historical and social circumstances and which has its own peculiar traditions, form and structures”. The same author adds that traditionalism and conservatism are not univocal and do not mean the same thing.

Conservatism, in a sense, arose from traditionalism: in fact, it is primarily traditionalism made conscious. Despite this, the two are synonymous, to the extent that traditionalism only takes on its features

specifically conservative when it becomes an expression of a way of life and thought that is extremely defined and consciously maintained relatively autonomously in the social process (MANNHEIM, 1959, p.111).

According to Netto (2011), conservatism is very well defined in the time and history of Western culture and its functionality is limited to the interests of the bourgeoisie. In the same direction, Eufrazio (2014) highlights that conservative thought has been reconfiguring itself, in different historical periods, but its essential content of preserving the dominant social order and fighting against any form of social transformation in favor of the working class remains alive in our society.

When revisiting the history of Social Work in Brazil, it is clear that this is a profession that was born linked to conservative thinking (NETTO, 2011). MarildaVilelaIamamoto was one of the first authors in the field of Brazilian Social Service to write about the foundations of conservatism in the profession, through critical theory. The author states that the origins of the profession are located in the “belief of conservative reformism” in Brazil, they renew and preserve “their sociopolitical commitments to conservatism, throughout the evolution of Social Service” (IAMAMOTO, 2008, p. 17).

Despite the direction that the intention to break with conservatism, the last phase of the Social Service reconceptualization movement, brought to the mold of the profession and professionals, there are still many challenges experienced in daily work. Social assistance policy today represents one of the socio-occupational groups that have employed social workers the most, who are “terminal executors of public policies” (NETTO, 2009).

This policy has historically represented, since its achievement as a social right in 1988, the responsibility direct and clear commitment of the State to continuously offer basic social protection to those who need it and when necessary, special social protection of medium and high complexity. This list includes the guarantee of services aimed at strengthening family ties, preventing and overcoming social risks and various types of violence, as well as income transfer programs, territorial surveillance, among others.

Regarding the representation of this policy today, we corroborate the idea that “[...] social assistance contemporary, legally recognized as social policy, bears traces of the first philanthropic measures, which explains the persistent confusion between welfare, social assistance and charity” (BOSCHETTI, 2016, p. 83).

It is established between the lines of this confusion that Social Service professionals are inserted, transformed and appointed by the typifications of Social Assistance and services (CRAS, CREAS, SCFV, PAIF, PAEF) as higher-level reference technicians. This technical characterization is not by chance, it is an imposition that the work be developed in an exclusively technical way, devoid of the political, ethical and dialectical analyzes present in the constitutive dimensions of the Social Worker's professional work.

Bringing Social Assistance Policy to the field of work, in many Brazilian municipalities there is the First Lady's secretary of Social Assistance. Even with the changes and new contours given to social assistance policy, it is estimated that the legislation itself cannot free itself from old habits and historical practices linked to first damism.

On this issue, we can state that conservative thinking focuses on the past to the extent that the past survives through CRAS: Social Assistance Reference Center; CREAS: Specialized Reference Center for Social Assistance; PAIF: Comprehensive service program the family; PAEF: Specialized family assistance program. Bourgeois thought, essentially devoted to the present, feeds on what is new now [...] (MANNHEIM, 1959, p. 125). Regarding this reflection, a strong trend observed is manifested in religious fundamentalism. In the work spaces of social assistance, which should legally and constitutionally be a secular space, the biased, old and well-known religious foundation is widespread, used to designate some phenomena of expressions of social issues and to justify social ills.

Moral appeals and the imposition of religion on individuals present themselves as a violation of the expressions religious sions, in a space that does not fit like that practice, with religious appeals being launched, in an attempt to convince such “improvement of the individual and family” or on the most fragile, such as people in

street situation. In this regard, we know that religion plays a very important role in conserving the social order and perpetuating conservatism alongside the State. Conservatism does not exist regardless of the individuals who carry it out in practice and who incorporate it in their actions” (MANNHEIM, 1959, p.103) which means that we need to have incorporated it to reproduce it. Still on social assistance policy, interference in the social worker's work is routine, attempts to determine what the social worker should do in each case, or going over their professional positions and defenses.

One of the best known and not abandoned practices also required of social workers is the selection of users for inclusion in focused policies. In 2020, with the covid-19 pandemic⁵ The demand for occasional benefits and foodstuffs to guarantee food security intensified. In this context, the social worker is required by the logic of the emergence of a minimum technicalization, since the “providers” of the assistance action assume duties such as evaluating the situations in which they must intervene, selecting those “deserving” of assistance, defining categories, knowing the population, either to assist them or to exclude them from assistance benefits (BOSCHETTI, 2016, p. 83).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the analyzes and reflections carried out here, we seek to reconstruct the path that the State has taken and how public policies emerged throughout our history. It was possible to understand that the State is not natural, but a product of human relations and that in the transition from feudalism to modern society, it began to have a classist character and aligned with the interests of the bourgeoisie. Next, we discuss some particularities of the formation of the Brazilian State and how it ratified the inequalities that permeate Brazilian society.

Furthermore, we deal with the conceptualization of public policies and discuss social policy and social assistance policy, considering conservatism. Finally, we consider that there is a dispute over State spaces and how these can influence the world views of social classes.

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⁵Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.



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