

- The centrality of economic and social rights
  - o German Jaraiz Arroyo, Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla

## **1.- Presentation.**

Good morning, everyone. First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting me and especially for inviting my colleague Francine Mestrum. It is a pleasure to share this moment with you and to do it in a country and a city like this.

First of all I would like to make it clear that my level of spoken English is low, although I can understand your dialogues and read your texts, I rarely speak English. The organization informed me that during this day we would not have simultaneous translation services, to avoid other more tedious modes of translation, I decided to translate and read my text. I apologize in advance for my limitations.

The organization of this seminar asked me to speak on social rights and their link to the debate on common goods. I will try to go deeper into this issue now, but first I have to make it clear that my vision and experience, both in terms of intervention and research, is restricted to the state and local level. A large part of my contribution is the result of the Research Project on the impact of inclusion policies in Spain, carried out by a team of researchers from the universities of Barcelona, Navarra, Valladolid, La Rioja, Murcia and the Pablo de Olavide University of Seville, to which I belong.

I am going to organise my speech around three main ideas or blocks. The first of these has to do with the scenario of change we are witnessing. Secondly, I will try to define some trends in public policy aimed at reformulating social rights, especially those relating to income security. Finally, I will try to outline some criteria that, in my personal opinion, would mark what I will call from now on a new social agenda.

### Concerning labour markets

#### **1<sup>a</sup>. Idea Old answers to new questions. Old methods to new challenges.**

It is obvious, I do not discover anything new, that the main challenge facing our institutions in terms of guaranteeing economic rights has to do with the changes in the economic model and, most especially, with the scenario of increasing job destruction on a global scale.

If, at first, the phenomenon of productive relocation has meant a shift of employment, at least of employment linked to the industrial sector, from Western countries to Asia, with the consequent effect of the emergence of new emerging middle classes in these places (as suggested by works such as Branko Milanovic). Also the displacement of a large part of the productive capacities of the primary sector to Latin America and North Africa.

The current incident factor is the impact of robotization on the labour markets, which will be transversal and which, sooner or later, will affect all regions. The less pessimistic forecasts announce an impact of 40% of the activity is laborised.

However, this decrease in employment does not mean a reduction in productivity; on the contrary, after the crisis stage, the post-crisis scenario is one of economies that are recovering their productivity levels but which, paradoxically, persist in the block of wealth transfer mechanisms, causing a greater effect of inequality. Spain is a clear example of this trend.

But lower employment does not mean lower productivity, on the contrary, productivity is increasing. The result of this spiral is manifested in greater inequality in the distribution of wealth in the form of income.

How do hegemonic actors position themselves before this? I am referring to the three great agents who have organised economic and political life so far: the states, the market and the trade unions.

I think this is one of the great problems, the hegemonic actors are still anchored in Fordist solutions to a phenomenon that is not the same. The responses are Guided on the way to employment recovery. The idea prevails that, although different employment (more dualised, more precarious, more mobile...), policy action should concentrate on 'producing employment'.

This is even the position of a large part of the trade union movement, which is often involved in maintaining certain niches of work activity that sooner or later cannot be sustained. I do not doubt the importance of this struggle in tactical terms, but I think that this urgency to slow down the fall makes the strategic difficult.

## **2nd Idea. Public policy trends.**

Public policies are largely marked by this hegemonic position. Without being able to overcome the classical dialectic. It is true, however, that not all rights guarantee policies follow the same path.

The European Union is opening the debate on the European Social Rights Pillar in 2015, a debate which involved a large number of social partners and which ended with the adoption of the Pillar at the Gothenburg Summit in November last year.

However, the end result is a bill of rights, which follows the path of linking labour market and welfare states. It is enough to recall the content of the three blocks of the programme: equal opportunities and access to the labour market. A dynamic labour market and fair working conditions. Public assistance, social protection and social inclusion.

On the limits of EPSR:

Beyond this, the text is marked by five aspects that make it difficult to overcome the classic dynamic:

- 1) The guidelines are generic and not very specific,
- 2) It is a non-binding text and is not provided for if it is included in the EU Treaties.

3) Does not include a budget line for the European Commission.

(4) The measures to be implemented are subject to the principle of subsidiarity and fall within the competence of each of the States.

5) Finally, the E.U. itself makes all social measures conditional on the control of public deficit, establishing sanctions in the event of deviations from it.

Perhaps the most notable contribution is the implementation of the so-called "Social Scorecard", which represents an advance on the Open Method of Coordination by presenting a set of social indicators for measuring the impact on social cohesion in the States. This CMS is also included in the EU's six-monthly reports.

However, the paradox persists in the rules of the game imposed by austerity policies, the EU. On the one hand, it denounces the weakness of the social cohesion policies of certain States and at the same time blocks their implementation, making them conditional on the control of the deficit.

In the local European context, the political position of the States and regions has also been marked by their economic position. In the southern regions, which have traditionally had more fragile public protection systems, compensated by dynamics of familiarity and primary solidarity (Ferrera, Moreno), there has been an intense decline in assistance with the crisis, a loss of rights that has not yet been reversed.

However, in other states and regions, if a certain reaction has been possible, at least in terms of regulations, this reaction has concentrated on promoting measures of different magnitudes, supported above all by income guarantee policies. In the case of Spain, it was mainly the northern and Mediterranean regions that undertook far-reaching reforms in income guarantee policies (Basque Country, Navarre, La Rioja, Aragon, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Community of Valencia), although these measures did not abandon the minimum income models for integration, they represented a significant and more ambitious step forward.

Important advances have been made, such as the consideration of subjective rights, or the incorporation of double entitlement criteria (right to income and right to inclusion), as well as the compatibility of income guarantee benefits with certain employment conditions.

Beyond this and apart from the well-known Finnish initiative, different local initiatives have been developed in cities in countries such as Canada, Holland, Scotland, one of these experiences is the B-Mincome Project. These are initiatives that go in line with the aim of provoking a transition from models of minimum insertion incomes to models of universal basic income. Prioritising households as the object of intervention and combining a response of economic guarantee, insertion, housing and community capitalisation.

### **3rd Idea. Four conditions for a new social agenda.**

The central question in the new debates is what should be the premises that shape the social contract of the future. To this end, it is necessary, as a precondition, that the

new civil society be capable of consolidating a scheme of minimums that allows for the sharing of a culture of collective construction. I think that this question of minimums, as far as economic rights are concerned, needs to cover at least four issues.

It is necessary, first of all, to understand that the main common good is the Social State. The theory of the commons has often been used as an alternative to the social state and this can lead to some confusion. In a liquid context, a facilitating actor is necessary, we can call it the State or in any other way, but contexts of common good require, in my opinion, broadening the weight of the role of the public actor.

The second premise is the need for new income guarantee mechanisms and, in particular, the online proposals for universal basic income. This is a central element of the social contract, but on it we have to build everything else, protected environments (economically), proactive (vital), with a capacity for care and anchored in the community.

A third basis of the new contract obliges us to generate new dialogues around employment, especially the linking to employment mechanisms of a large part of unmet needs or of needs met by other spheres, which can be converted into employment. We are talking about a transition from an industrial model to one based on care. In this dialogue, the idea of care (of people, of the environment, of communities) is essential as the focus of new modes of action linked to the expansion of the coverage of needs linked to the quality of life.

Finally, public actors also have an essential role to play in the conversion of classical forms of commercial activity into forms of activity based on the common good. In this sense, initiatives such as that of the Madrid City Council, which has managed to leave aside the large electricity companies for providing insufficient technical solvency for the supply of green energy, mark a suggestive path and show how it is possible to go beyond the classic social clauses in public administration contracts.

Thank you very much for listening.