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UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S STAYS (EIU): SPACES OF EXPERIENCE, LEARNING AND MEANING FOR CHILDREN¹

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Abstract: The results of the master's thesis "Construction of childhood(s) in university children's stays" are exposed. (Hernández, 2018).² The research was carried out between 2017 and 2018 in two university children's stays (EIU) that belong to public universities in Mexico, located in the states of Chiapas and Querétaro. Its objective is to explain how childhood is built within the EIU, through the analysis of the meaning of the action (García Selgas, 1995) of three sets of bodies where frames of meaning are produced and embodied: children's bodies, the bodies of educators and institutional bodies. These frameworks of meaning constitute basic schemes of orientation, meaning and valuation of the daily interaction of girls and boys, whose foundation originates in two different approaches to the definition of childhood that signify, guide and organize repertoires of concrete practices that reproduce and embody them.

Keywords: early childhood, day care centers, child care, initial education, construction of childhood.

INTRODUCTION

Children's stays are physical and relational spaces, they are spaces for collective upbringing where the maternal and paternal role is performed by adults —other than parents and/or relatives— in charge of caring for and caring, simultaneously and for a long time, to girls and children from 45 days of birth to 4 years. As a social project, childcare centers in Mexico are regulated by the State, which establishes guidelines for their creation and execution; These procedures, in turn, define care models that are oriented both by the definition of who are the subjects attended and cared for (girls and boys), and by the objectives of each institution.

In the case of university children's stays

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(EIU), higher education institutions (IES) are responsible for their creation and maintenance, their purpose is to attend and care for the daughters and sons of their students, since maternity and paternity are considered within the causes of school dropout. Consequently, the EIU must provide the necessary conditions and adequate services so that girls and boys can fully develop during their first four years of life, while their mothers and fathers finish their university studies.

Therefore, the EIU are also spaces for relationship and training, where girls and boys apprehend norms, values, rules, practices and meanings from daily interaction with their peers and with adults who care for and attend to them, but What happens in the daily activities of girls and boys who attend university day care centers? How are their needs met? What lessons do they learn?

GOALS

The general purpose is to explain how childhood is built within the EIU, based on the analysis of the framework of meaning of the actions of the agents (girls/boys and educators) who interact in these spaces and who are embodied in bodily and behavioral schemata. The specific objectives were: 1) to identify the contribution of the EIU as spaces of experience, learning and meaning in the configuration of meaning frameworks and 2) to analyze the educational practices of educators and their interactions with girls and boys from 2 to 4 years of age.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology on which this research is based is the method of analysis of the action meaning framework proposed by García Selgas (1995). This method consists of analyzing the (re)production of frames of

meaning that constitute social actions that, at the same time, the frames are produced through the actions. The characteristics of the frames are: their biosocial origin, regularity and their assimilation in experience. The author starts from Weber's definition of action as "that conduct that the agent's intention places in a social order of meaning" (García Selgas, 1995: 524).

García Selgas specifies that the early relationships of the agents are those that are emotionally linked to the intentionality of their actions. In the case of the agents that live within the EIU (girls, boys and educators), their actions are interconnected and are carried out in relation to other agents, who are not necessarily physically present in the EIU. the intra-infant space of the EIU. These actions, being routine, retain three characteristics: they are regular, systematic, and they produce frames of meaning. For the analysis of the effective (re)production of the meaning of the action, it is necessary to understand that "the structural-repetitive-general converges constitutively with the intentional-ideographic-particular, for which reason the qualitative interpretation is sustained on the explanatory regularity, and vice versa" (García Selgas, 1995: 526).

The frames of meaning manifest and materialize materially in the bodies of the agents, who at the same time are producers of the frames. Its corporality is the result of the intersection of the system of relations, practices, dispositions, values, norms and meanings.

To understand how the frames of meaning operate in the construction of childhoods in two EIUs, located in Chiapas and Querétaro, the bodies of the agents (girls, boys and educators) in both spaces were analyzed, and the same institution was included., which is conceived as an institutional body from the body metaphor. A comparative analysis was

carried out between both EIU considering three dimensions of analysis:

1) Frame of reference. It is the starting point of each set of bodies. The referential framework of the children's bodies (girls and boys) is their family context, that of the bodies of the educators is their formation and training, finally, that of the institutional body is the origin of the project and its purpose.

2) Routines. These are everyday elements that are not explicitly discussed and are taken for granted. In children's bodies, their games and daily activities are analyzed; in the bodies of the educators, their educational practice and dispositions; and in the institutional body, its organization.

3) Principles, values and goals. It is what is expected of each set of bodies. In the case of children's bodies, the ideal of formation is analyzed; in the bodies of the educators, the purposes of their practices and the areas of opportunity; and in the institutional body, the vision and purposes of the institution.

For the analysis of each dimension, three general aspects that intervene in the constitution of meaning frameworks were considered:

- Corporalities, what affects the bodies, what happens to them, how they are modified in-action, the control devices.
- Narratives towards/from the bodies, what is said about them and what the bodies say.
- Interactions, actions between bodies, what happens in their encounters, exchanges and negotiations.

SYSTEMS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN IN UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S STAYS

University children's rooms are spaces of experience, learning and meaning, this means that they are spaces that guide actions, reproductions and exchanges between the agents that interact in it. In the space of meaning, frames of meaning of the actions are configured, these frames are sedimented with experience, it means that they are experienced in the routines of girls and boys.

When girls and boys enter the EIU, they also enter a system that constitutes them and is constituted by them. They represent the stratum ³ more sensitive which, in general, goes unnoticed by the upper generational strata, by making it invisible, controlling and silencing it.

In the intra-childhood space of the EIU, the children's bodies interact with bodies of intermediate strata, the educators who attend and care for them, and play the role of mediators between the institutional body and the children's bodies. They are responsible for communicating information of the system of which they are now a part, and they exchange information from abroad, which comes from their family context. As mediators, they filter external and internal information, establish limits, rules, habits, and express emotions, values, norms, and meanings. Through their actions they support the configuration of frameworks of meaning that serve as points of reference for the formation of the practical conscience of girls and boys.

Each EIU defines and prioritizes which aspects correspond to the proper training of girls and boys, and also guides and signifies them. In the investigation it was found that the two EIU comprised two different systems

³ Castoriadis places childhood as "the first natural stratum on which the organization of the institution of society rests" (Castoriadis, 2015: 317).

⁴ Its certification corresponds to the EC0435 competence standard, which consists of carrying out scheduled, routine and

that define two different senses of supporting the construction of childhoods.

THE MEANING OF SYSTEMS

By contrasting the three sets of bodies: infantile, educational and institutional, it was possible to distinguish two different systems that structure, organize and guide repertoires of habits, values, norms, practices and meanings under which the construction of childhoods is supported. In these two systems, two different conceptual approaches to the definition of childhood are recognized.

On the one hand, the EIU-Chiapas starts from the definition of girls and boys as subjects of attention, not rights. Under this approach, a model aligned to standardization and sequentialization is designed, which is similar to mass education in which discipline is required for the proper fulfillment of tasks. In this system, girls and boys are disciplined, sanitized and obedient subjects of a hierarchical structure that permanently monitors and controls them (Planella, 2006). The boy or girl is trained to be passive subjects, with few possibilities to explore and be creative, their bodies remain in fixed positions for prolonged periods (they are sitting for more than an hour), which leads to their immobility and rigidity. This system corresponds to the structural-functionalist approach, from which girls and boys are seen as subjects who depend on adults to be able to carry out their actions, since their initiatives are inhibited and their points of view are not taken into account (Qvortrup, 1987; Gaitán Muñoz, 2006; Pavez Soto, 2012).

In correspondence with the identity logic of the system, the group of educators, who are in charge of mediating between the intra-infantile space and childhood, are subject to a certification ⁴ that serves as a guarantee

and justification to carry out “only what is indicated” during their training, they are also subject to the provisions of the person who directs and coordinates the EIU. They play a passive role both in the organizational structure of the space and in the very execution of their practices, which is evident in their bodily rigidity. There is also effective control and continuous surveillance on them.

Finally, the architectural and organizational structure of the space is consistent with the system, and ultimately responds to the purposes of the institution: to be a space that provides basic and effective care to the daughters and sons of its students so that they can complete their studies, guaranteeing the consolidation of the institutional image.

In the other system, corresponding to the EIU-Querétaro, girls and boys are considered as holders of cultural repertoires, in whose actions and interactions they are active participants in their own learning. This system is oriented by the constructivist approach, where girls and boys are seen as actors who actively participate in social processes, where their points of view are recognized and their agency capacity is expected (Jenks, 1992; Gaitán Muñoz, 2006; Pavez Soto, 2012).

In this EIU, the autonomy of girls and boys is promoted, providing them with opportunities to explore and move continuously, where their findings enhance their development and learning. Its system is similar to the pedagogical project of the Escuela Nueva, which requires movement for the integral development of the motor, psychological, affective and social dimensions to favor the construction of the personality of girls and boys (Planella, 2006).

Likewise, the group of educators is coherent with the identity logic of the system, since they

have an active participation in the planning and development of educational practices, they are not subject to standardization and innovation is encouraged, in addition their opinion is considered in decision making. They also have greater freedom to express their concerns and concerns, and are continually recognized for their work. Within this system, collaborative work is required between all those involved, so mutual support is more evident. The coherence of the system is transferred to the institutional body, where the architectural and organizational structure favors the active participation and dynamism of all the agents.

In both systems, the three sets of bodies that comprise them serve as an effective and recognized control of practical competence, which guarantees the continuity and reproduction of the system of meanings that functions as a generative scheme of practices. The differences between one system and another are coherent between the definition of childhood, which is the basis for the creation and consolidation of each EIU, based on a lesser or greater participation and involvement of the university community for the appropriation of these spaces, as well as in the dependence on federal resources or in its autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS. THE ROLE OF THE EIU AS SOCIAL PROJECTS FOR THE CARE AND ATTENTION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD

If university children's day care centers are spaces for the care and attention of early childhood, they must be thought of as spaces where childhoods can make room, and their sense of belonging in a shared world is built from affectivity.

predictable activities and depending on instructions from a superior. The evaluation criteria to obtain the certification are: attention to excretory functions, hygiene and personal grooming, food, first aid, attention to the basic needs of the boy or girl; To achieve competence in this standard, 40 hours of training are required with 200 hours of work experience, possession of a professional title is not required (SEP, 2014; SEP-DIF, 2015).

It is necessary to emphasize that the responsibilities of those who intervene and participate directly and indirectly in these spaces -educators, mothers, fathers and authorities-, fall on the possibilities offered to girls and boys to develop fully, to inquire, to feel, explore and question, to foster relations of encounter and recognition between them while maintaining a permanent dialogue with their own environment, to build together with them spaces where they can express their creativity, where they are listened to, where they can externalize their concerns and are considered co-builders of their own reality.

Therefore, universities must assume a role of greater responsibility in the way they plan, develop and maintain the social projects of university children's rooms, and question themselves as higher education institutions how they will respond to the demand for these spaces by part of its student community, in order to satisfy it from the beginning of the best interests of children.

University children's stays as spaces of experience, learning and meaning, are spaces that also mark the beginning of the social life of girls and boys from 45 days after birth to 4 years of age. The purpose of these spaces is to serve and care for them, but it must always be kept in mind that in these practices training processes are carried out, where girls and

boys apprehend habits, values, norms and meanings of life. If childhood is the beginning of the experience, language and historicity of the human being, and constitutes the base that sustains the institution of society, it is a priority to understand where the (re)production of meanings of actions is supported. of childhoods.

If the purpose is to support the initiatives and explorations of girls and boys, as active participants in their own learning, through the recognition of their actions, the creation of spaces where they can dialogue, participate and establish meetings with their peers and with adults. Likewise, it must be evaluated whether through educational practices their autonomy, self-esteem, motivation, reflection and cooperation are promoted so that they learn to establish relationships of equity from diversity; or if, on the contrary, educational practices and processes move away from these senses, and maintain asymmetric relations of power and exchange.

The meaning of childhood is based on the frameworks of meaning constituted during the first years of life, they are neither definitive nor determinant, but they do represent a basis for the process of forming their identity and acting in a shared world. The meaning frames of early childhood are present and future.

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