

## Introduction

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The complex contexts of violence, insecurity and criminality demand profound transformations to face the order of resistance and inertias that exist within police institutions in different parts of the world and within those who govern them. In this respect, no one could deny the importance of thinking about and reflecting on education and training as a core task that both organizes security forces and runs through their history and hierarchies. Not more than one century ago the most common type of police population were the vagrants, wandering and poorly entertained pool of people who were at the same time the main target of social disciplining and the main source of police recruits. Today potential recruits are often young people with a middle educational level, who also make up most of the police forces.

Hence, the diverse processes of training and control of the police forces must also be redefined in the light of the legitimate demand of societies to have a civilian-oriented police with a citizenship vocation, where the discipline of these forces must be determined by professionalization, specialization, and control of statistics. Certainly, the relationships engendered by the present juncture do not make it an easy task, because at the same time it brings into play individuals with a long experience in the police and ideas about what the police should be that are much closer to the traditional, bureaucratic and repressive view that characterizes the current police system in many places, especially in Latin America. This, in a game of oppositions, exacerbates differences or makes them more visible, especially because even in the universe of shortcomings in which police forces live, in the younger generations, exposed not only to new versions of what it means to be a member of the police force in a democracy, there can also be seen a critical attitude towards the training and tasks of the police when they figure out their condition of vulnerability (even in those webs of crime and corruption from which they can benefit), but also their interest in occupying places of spokespersons/reproducers of the police imaginary that they believe to be legitimate. This is the source of the power of such collectivities over the imaginary of the ideal police force, with the perfect training and the privileged position that each one of them could occupy. We argue that they have the right to imagine a different future, and it is our obligation as scholars to contribute our knowledge by promoting dialog, consensus in the difference and democratic criticism to shape, build and turn into a reality the police we want in a democracy.

It is with this belief that we present Issue 17 of *Diálogos sobre educación*, where we have brought together six texts that give meaning to the inquiry we proposed when we first called for contributions: which are the challenges faced by police training in democracy? We would have wished to receive a large number of texts produced in the field of education and the social sciences at large, but that was not the case. The historic legal perspective from which the police

have been approached still persists, holding back the urgency of thinking about it and producing knowledge precisely from a multiple and complex view that makes it possible to understand it in and through the socio-historical, socio-cultural and political circumstances that produce it in different contexts. For this reason, the articles contained in this issue of *Diálogos* are even more valuable: they enunciate and suggest clues from different outlooks to understand the functions of the police and the key role played by police training in modernizing processes. They examine and question police training to suggest possible routes to reformulate and reorganize it with the aim of providing our countries with more efficient and democratic police institutions, with professional and suitable agents who can fulfill the enormous challenge of being both members and key actors of democratic governability.

This issue starts with an article by Luisa Carolina Arévalo Herrera, "Educación policial y derechos humanos" ("Police education and human rights"), where she reflects from Central America on the set of competencies – in terms of performance – that should be the objective of police training. She sees as a serious consideration to make progress in such definitions the analysis of that strong ideological core that, as a hidden curricula, contributes to the perpetuation of images and meanings with a long history in the police realm and where, through the actors in charge of the educational process, stereotypes and prejudice that lead to discriminatory practices and violations of human rights and the dignity of people are also introduced in the classroom. She highlights transformations oriented towards a humanistic training that instills the value of and respect for citizens' rights and enables students to become key actors in a functional cooperation of the police with the collectivity and active promoters of citizen engagement.

Next comes an article by Mariana Sirimarco, "Reformas y formación policial: supuestos, sentidos y configuraciones políticas. El caso de las escuelas de ingreso a la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina" ("Police training and reforms: assumptions, meanings, and political configurations. The case of police recruits training in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina"), which starts with two fundamental questions for Argentina, but clearly relevant to the reform efforts being made in many other parts of Latin America: How has initial police training become the expression *par excellence* of police reforms? How has the issue of initial police training become such a ripe field for restoration and retouch? There can be no doubt that in Argentina, as in many other parts of the world, a police with the characteristics defined as appropriate for a modern security institution is necessary for the geopolitics of security. However, despite the different institutional efforts aimed at achieving informed, critical and updated thinking in members of the police forces who must make security decisions in changing, imprecise environments under strong political pressures, there are still a number of problems such as the dispersion of police forces, lack of doctrine definition, shortcomings in the recruitment and selection process of the members of the police forces and inadequate planning processes.

For the same reason, the contribution “La educación de la policía en Colombia: situación y proyección para materializar el estado social de derecho y la paz justa y duradera” (“Police education in Colombia: situation and prospects to achieve a social State of law and a just and lasting peace”), by María Stella Baracaldo Méndez, becomes key in the framework of the discussion proposed by Sirimarco. Baracaldo points out clearly that it is in the efforts of institutional reform where police education becomes the main focus. The police must be trained in the new procedures and the new policies that govern it, and this involves profound cultural changes. Education does not by itself lead to any change of attitude unless the values and techniques are reasserted by institutional priorities and reflected in the policies for promotions and the disciplinary codes, among others. In this respect, both authors coincide in pointing out that training is an important means to elucidate and communicate the values and techniques of a new police institution.

Along the same lines and with a very precise and relevant approach, Olivia Tena Guerrero offers in her text “Experiencias de formación policial en fuerzas de seguridad argentinas” (“Experiences of police training in the Argentinian security forces”) a substantial review of some experiences of police training on gender and human rights based on texts and narratives of trainers in Argentina. Her contribution to the Latin American experience is very valuable because it allows us to conclude that the prevention and management of gender-based violence, addressing sexual harassment, systematizing the activities conducted, incorporating a gender and sexual diversity approach into police training, the creative production of an internal campaign of sensitization on the rights of LGBTI people or activities of training on new masculinities, must be – among others – priorities of the support for a police force in democracy.

In a similar line of reflection, the paper by María Eugenia Suárez and Alejandro Agudo “El Conversatorio como un ejercicio de pedagogía social. Obstáculos y oportunidades para el establecimiento de una agenda de Seguridad Ciudadana y Policía de Proximidad” (“*El Conversatorio* as an exercise in social pedagogy. Obstacles and opportunities for the establishment of an agenda of citizen security and proximity police”) shows how the traditional behavior of police institutions in Mexico originates in a view of security that concentrates the discretion of its management in the State and sees the citizen as a mere receiver of police services, which blurs – within the police institutions themselves and in their relationship with communities – the social demand that now expects from the police concrete solutions to their problems, and not just those linked to crime but also to the many expressions of violence or incivility. In this respect, the different experiences of reconciliation between the police and the community in which enabling a strategic dialog has been a key element leads the authors to conclude that it is now urgent to undertake profound efforts to reinvent police institutions through a new philosophical framework reflected in a normative and juridical foundation that emerges from a citizen security approach, as well as from the strengthening of policies and processes within the police to channel a new

institutional culture with greater technical, intelligence, proximity and linkage capabilities to generate spaces for greater collective and individual security that favor the exercise of rights and freedoms.

Closing this *dossier* is the paper by Mariana Da Silva Lorenz “Formar e investigar a los policías en democracia” (“Training and researching the police in democracy”), who in an interesting exercise of reflection and double perspective both as a teacher in different police training processes in Argentina and as a full time social science researcher in police studies shows us the weight of the representations that officials of the Federal Police of Argentina build around their profession and the importance of deconstructing many of those imaginaries covered in neglect, poor chances of personal development, brutality, perilousness, dishonesty, amorality, complicity with superiors, criminals, politicians, impunity, and finally physical and social death. This unequivocal evidence of thinking about being and working in the police forces is key to start throwing light on how to pursue another road that makes it possible to reinvent a democratic institution.

These are all contributions that have become vital to provide perspective and meaning to police training in the more complex framework of the radical and profound change of structures and mentalities within the police forces themselves, and the urgency of repositioning the figure of the police agent in societies ever more disenchanted with their functions and results. This is why it is so important for the social sciences and specifically the field of education to contribute to the reflections now emerging on the training of the police, which demands from us a more profound understanding of the number of logical consequences of the fracture between the order of the police mandate and the order of the everyday work of the police, which takes place day to day and constitutes its greatest challenge in order to become a democratic police.

In the section Other articles, Óscar Eligio Villanueva and Leticia Isabel López present the essay “La noción de integración como transición revolucionaria en la profesión docente” (“The notion of integration as a revolutionary transition in the teaching profession”), which delves through the philosophy of science and the punctual analysis of curricular discourse and proposals into integration as a complex and effective notion to think about the educational reform in Mexico. The authors develop thoroughly from a historical perspective the idea of integration in the theory of metaphor, complex reasoning and the immeasurability of science, and after that explanatory section they explain the meaning of the pedagogy by competencies with which recent curricular transformations have been proposed, which are not only being discussed in Mexico but being debated worldwide.

Finally, this issue also includes Ricardo Fletes’s review of the book *Superando el arraigo a la calle. Modelo operativo del Colectivo Pro Derechos de la Niñez, A.C.*, published in 2015 by Danielle Strickland.