

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SOCIAL MOBILIZATION PROCESSES IN COLOMBIA DURING 2021

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The processes of social mobilization have been consolidated over the years as a crucial category of analysis within the social sciences, since they represent the manifestation of the emotions of individuals, which are usually linked to the expression of nonconformity with political, economic or social systems, depending on the catalysts that motivate people's mobility (Massal, 2021).

Not surprisingly, with the advent of the 21st century, mobilizations have become increasingly frequent, using different means to organize people for a common cause -as has been the case of social networks since the strengthening of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)-. Consider, for example, the Arab revolts and the peasant strike in Colombia in 2013 (Massal, 2021).

However, in a country like Colombia, social discontent is of long standing; according to Rodríguez (2020), in the last six years there have been a series of demonstrations by society against the ruling class, whose complaints have revolved around issues such as insecurity, unemployment, international relations -such as the free trade agreements signed with countries like the United States- and, in general, the economic conditions of the territory.

In fact, from the study by González (2019) it can be inferred that social mobilizations in the country in recent years are closely linked to the development model implemented, from which derive claims regarding the coverage, access and quality of social services; likewise, a latent concern about the implications that extractive processes are having on the sustainability of natural resources.

Thus, during the social mobilizations that began in April 2021 in different cities of the country, the complexity of this phenomenon and the elements that explain it can be appreciated, since, as Caicedo and Quintana (2021) refer, there have been diverse causes and actors involved in the strike. This explains why the mobilizations have brought to the streets students, workers, teachers, rural sectors and, in general, a variety of agents whose claims demanded changes in the highly exclusive social system; which leads to question the effectiveness of the instruments with which development has been managed as a State.

Therefore, considering the structural factors that triggered this last mobilization, it is possible to understand the complexity that the different protests acquired in different cities of the country, such as those that took place in Cali, Tulúa, Bogotá and Medellín -just to mention a few-; since the emotions expressed were not only the sum of long-lasting nonconformities, but also the outburst of a country immersed in the devastating socioeconomic effects derived from the shock policies adopted by the government to face a health emergency due to the COVID - 19 virus.

In this sense, the mobilization process leaves important lessons that should be addressed from society in general, and where the Social Sciences are called to contribute from the generation of interdisciplinary positions. The magnitude of the recent process of social mobility shows that beyond a crisis of citizen perception of governments, there is an institutional crisis: the country has lost confidence in the institutions that serve the State, and therefore, their demands transcend domestic economic issues to escalate to structural changes in the way the political system is conceived.

Likewise, the changes that will need to be made in the political system and in the face of institutional strengthening, lessons also emerge with respect to the prevailing development model; in which it will be necessary to think about the effectiveness of the State in its redistributive function, since although progress has been made with respect to economic growth -without considering the ravages caused by the pandemic-, the living conditions of the population are not consistent with the generation of such wealth, which is due to the high concentration that has occurred, which continues to feed the existing inequality.

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