Five ideas on social welfare from the political right in Argentina (1955-2024)

Cinco ideas sobre la asistencia social de las derechas políticas en Argentina (1955-2024)

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How to cite

Summary

The article identifies five ideas about social welfare that have characterised the political right-wingers in government. It analyses the period from 1955 to the present day in Argentina, constituting a first attempt to take a comprehensive and historical look at the link between these social forces and the state's social welfare practice.

The comprehensive analysis comprises academic literature on the subject, a database of its own, and observation of the first measures of the current government. In expository terms, elements with significant continuities are grouped. Five typical ideal meanings are identified: 1) "dispute with its political adversary": social assistance has been thought of as an element that would make it possible to win over a part of the social base that is alien to its affinities and political project; 2) "re-education of the poor": it moralises the living conditions of the poor and sees poverty as a problem of "mentality", which is why they

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propose the practice of assistance in educational terms; 3) "governability": 4) "technocracy": it understands that welfare demands should be depoliticised and that they should be defined by experts, redefining social needs "from above" in a process that deconstructs the social and the political; 5) "social econometric": it incorporates cost-benefit logic to think about state agencies and presupposes the subsidiarity of the social to the economic. In instrumental terms, it was based on the proposals of fiscal adjustment plans as state policy and citizen effort, considering the consequences that this could have on a specific population segment.

Abstract:

EThe work identifies five ideas about social assistance that have characterised the political right in government. The period from 1955 to the present in Argentina is analysed, constituting a first attempt to locate a view that comprehensively and historically addresses what the specialised bibliography has studied singularly. The comprehensive analysis is made up of academic literature that addresses the topic, its database, and observations of the first measures taken by the current government. In expository terms, elements with significant continuities are grouped, and five ideal-typical meanings are identified: 1) "dispute against one's political adversary": social assistance has been thought of as an element that would make it possible to win a part of the social base outside of one's affinities. 2) "reeducation of the poor": moralises the living conditions of poor subjects and observes poverty as a problem of "mentality", which is why it proposes care practice in educational terms; 3) "governance": within the framework of healthcare, the aim is to ensure minimum social reproduction to eradicate social conflict; 4) "technocracy": understands that assistance demands must be depoliticised and that they must be defined by experts, redefining social needs "from above" in a process that destructures the social and political; 5) "social econometrics": it incorporates the cost-benefit logic to think about state agencies and presupposes the subsidiarity of the social to the economic. In instrumental terms, it was based on the proposals of fiscal adjustment plans as state policy and citizen effort, considering the drifts that this could have on a particular segment of the population.

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Resumen

El trabajo identifica cinco ideas sobre la asistencia social que han caracterizado a las derechas políticas en el gobierno. Se analiza el periodo temporal que transcurre desde 1955 hasta la actualidad en Argentina, constituyendo un primer intento por situar una mirada que aborde de forma integral e histórica el vínculo entre estas fuerzas sociales y la práctica estatal de la asistencia social.

El análisis comprensivo está compuesto por la literatura académica que abordó el tema, una base de datos propia y la observación de las primeras medidas del actual gobierno. En términos expositivos, se agrupan elementos con continuidades significativas y se identifican cinco sentidos típicos ideales: 1) "disputa a su adversario político": la asistencia social ha sido pensada como un elemento que posibilitaría ganar una parte de la base social ajena a sus afinidades y proyecto político; 2)"reeducación de los pobres": moraliza las condiciones de vida de los sujetos pobres y observa a la pobreza como un problema de "mentalidad", por lo que proponen la práctica asistencial en términos educativos; 3) "gobernabilidad": en el marco de la atención asistencial se pretende asegurar mínimos de reproducción social con el objetivo de erradicar el conflicto social; 4) "tecnocracia": entiende que se deben despolitizar las demandas asistenciales y que ellas deben estar definidas por los expertos, redefine "desde arriba" las necesidades sociales en un proceso que desestructura lo social y lo político; 5) "econometrismo social": incorpora la lógica costo-beneficio para pensar las agencias estatales y presupone la subsidiaridad de lo social a lo económico. En términos instrumentales, se fundamentó en los planteos de los planes de ajuste fiscal como política estatal y esfuerzo ciudadano, atendiendo las derivas que ello podría tener en cierto segmento de la población.

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Introduction

This article attempts to systematise and organise some persistent elements and ideas about state assistance in the actors, alliances and political parties on the right of the political field. Taking as a reference those experiences that were at the helm of the state, it is nourished by a reflection carried out in the framework of an ongoing investigation that observed and identified how the justifications and meanings assigned to the state's social intervention correlate in the design and implementation of specific programmes.

To understand social phenomena historically, the article deals comprehensively with what has, until now, been studied singularly. While it is true that assistance as a socio-state practice is a recurrent theme in the social sciences and that the study of the political right in Argentina was revitalised in the second half of the last decade, its link was studied in the specificity of political cycles. In this sense, this article is an initial historical reflection on the relationship between the ideas and meanings that these political identities have given to social welfare in the context of the instrumentalisation of the state, highlighting what they have in common through an understanding of a tradition of thought. From the analysis of the specialised literature, the main findings of my doctoral research (which uses as empirical material a database from the period 2015-2019 consisting of public pronouncements by government officials) and the observation of the first measures and speeches of the current government in Argentina, persistent elements in the welfare ideology of the political right in government are exposed.

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Firstly, the identification, reconstruction and analysis of the main findings of academic work on the subject has the advantage of knowing the historical reality within the framework of the operationalisation of the research object. Although this strategy of observing the past may have the limitation of using an artificial element of reality – that is, scientifically constructed – it is possible to take advantage of its conclusions to give it another treatment, according to a different objective (Scribano and De Sena, 2009), trying to offer an additional interpretation to those presented by the authors (Sierra Bravo, 2003). Secondly, the use of public pronouncements and measures carried out by contemporary right-wing political officials allows for the analysis of formal position-taking and the direction of welfare practice from what the state "does" (Oszlak, 2003), both in the singularity of its agencies (Soprano Manzo, 2007) and its "faces" (O'Donnell, 2008). This secondary data is analysed under the observation criteria of "enunciative continuity" and "apparent discontinuity", which form part of an epistemic base that aims to understand the recurrent categories with which the actors signify the social world.

Para la reconstrucción histórica del ideario de las derechas sobre la asistencia estatal se realiza un recorte temporal: aquellas que han gobernado el país a partir de 1955. Este recorte es, fundamentalmente, porque la política social del peronismo transformó el campo de la acción asistencial del Estado, incorporando la lógica y el lenguaje del derecho social, la noción de "dignidad" de las personas asistidas y el horizonte de justicia social.

For the historical reconstruction of the right-wing ideology on state assistance, a time frame is used: those who have governed the country since 1955. This is mainly because the social policy of Peronism transformed the field of state welfare action, incorporating the logic and language of social law, the notion of the "dignity" of the people assisted and the horizon of social justice.

There are two types of right-wing government: dictatorial and electoral. Within these, six experiences can be identified: "Revolución Libertadora" (1955-1958); the coup d'état of José María Guido (1962-1963); "Revolución Argentina" (1966-1973); "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" (1976-1983); the political coalition "Cambiemos" (2015-2019), led by PRO; and, recently, "La Libertad Avanza" (2023-2027).[2]

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While it is true that each of these experiences has its ideological particularities, its specific format for exercising power and differentiated societal projects, it is possible to consider that persistent social, economic, political and cultural ideas can be identified within a tradition of thought. Taking this assertion as a reference point, this article deals with those ideas that have lasted the longest and from which assistance was thought of. In other words, it aims to answer the questions: How does the right wing think about state assistance; under what criteria and challenges do they define assistance mechanisms; what are the arguments and categories they use to justify them, and What are the reasons and categories they use to justify them? Familiar notions of these collective subjects can be grouped into at least these three questions.

[2] The periods selected for analysis should be analysed with caution on a number of issues. Firstly, the difference between constitutional and dictatorial governments in the framework of the management of public affairs and, particularly, in terms of the forms of exercising power, from where they have acted to process social conflict around demands for needs and the ways in which they have promoted strategies of control, disciplining and political domination, as well as the implications this has had for the relationship between the state and civil society.
On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that assistance had – and still has – a preponderant place in the strategies of social reproduction of capitalist societies and, especially in Argentina, acquired greater visibility and boom after neoliberal policies (Servio, 2021). However, as one of the state areas with the greatest institutional weakness and instability (Perelmiter, 2012), changes in the political cycle often mean transformations in the normative orientation of the state's social intervention.
Finally, with respect to the last period selected on the welfare ideas of the political right, at the time of writing there are no published works that address the implications of the new redefinition of the state for the welfare policy of the first "anarcho-capitalist" government in Argentina. However, a first approach to the symbolic foundations, in which bridges are built between the intellectual references of this strand of the Austrian school of economics and the government's first measures, can be seen in Zuccaro (in press).

On the other hand, assistance is understood as a process that is constantly redefined within the framework of specific political cycles (Alayon, 1989) that build state devices legalised through legal and normative foundations (Krmpotic, 2016) within the framework of orientations, guidelines and ideas that are possible to maintain and sustain regularly by government actors in the exercise of power (Ottone, 2014; Alcántara Sáenz, 2016). Under this point, it is understood that "ideas have consequences" (Camou, 2001), observing that state policies are symbolically constituted by a set of senses and meanings by political officials in terms of social order. Senses and meanings are based on the basis on which the state acts governmentally to enforce and achieve the ideal horizon to which these actors adhere (Aguilar Villanueva, 1984; Weber, 1991; Schluchter, 2008).

In this scenario, the article presents the ideas underpinning the welfare task during the periods right-wing actors took charge of the state. These values, beliefs and interpretative frameworks of social significance are grouped into five "ideal types" which have been used over time to argue for the practice of social welfare: the struggle against the political adversary, the re-education of people experiencing poverty, technocracy, governability; and social econometric. In the sections that make up this article, a definition of each of these is given, with examples from each period.

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Disputing the political adversary: Winning social support and eradicating the ideas of the antagonist

The first idea that articulated the right, when it came to thinking about state assistance, was to dispute social and political support for their adversary. Because of its instrumentality and capacity to contact the working and popular sectors, this social action by the state was considered an element that would make it possible to win over a part of the social base alien to their political project.

They have tried to do so in two consistent ways: to eradicate from the social imaginary that the only ones interested in attending were left, centre-left, progressive or national-popular political actors, and to create conditions to broaden their electoral and representative base in the popular sectors. Such moves are possible to see in the intention of "westernisation" of the dictatorships of 1955 and 1966, "decommunisation" in 1976, "deskirchnerisation" in 2015 or "depopulation" in 2023. Under the adversarial radicalisation and construction of the political antagonist as a cultural enemy, the right wing assumed that aid would be a good state instrument to achieve this.

These two meanings have two hypotheses: that the social support for their political adversary came from the state's welfare tasks as a form of political domination and that it was through welfare that they could establish their ideas in the popular sectors. For example, during the 1976 dictatorship, in the division of political work carried out by the armed forces, Emilio Massera was in charge of the area of assistance, and he set out a strategy of power-building based on institutionalising support from popular sectors. The aim was to generate social support and, from there, to achieve greater political power within the alliance (Canelo, 2008). On the other hand, he understood that state assistance could be an element in the "fight against communism", as it could reunify the family and, through this pillar, "re-establish a social order without subversive ideas" (Salerno, 2022; Sala and Agüero, 2023). The commissioning of the welfare area of the state served in two possible directions: 1) to build power in the framework of a strategy to implement social assistance in order to conquer a social base to achieve better internal positions and try to 'eradicate' the sympathies that workers and popular sectors had with the ideas of 'communism'; 2) based on the different vectors of practical, affective, cognitive and moral socialisation implied by state actions, to generate a process of social reorganisation based on the family – in a conservative and patriarchal sense – customs and traditions

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A similar mention can be made of Francisco Manrique, Minister of Social Welfare between 1970 and 1972. During that period, he built up political capital that he used to run for president in 1973, where he won 12% of the vote. Also, in 2018, the Minister of Social Development, as a result of playing an essential role in the dialogue with social movements and in containing social conflict in a context of economic crisis, came to be considered as a possible member of the presidential ticket in the 2019 elections (Stanley, 2018, in Animales Sueltos, 2018).

On the other hand, for the right-wing, assistance became an element to dispute and eradicate the problems their political adversary's ideas brought with them in a sector of society. Hence, it is sometimes one of the cornerstones of the 'cultural change' proposed by "Cambiemos" and "La Libertad Avanza". A 'cultural change' that aims to return to a pre-Kichnerist or pre-populist Argentina. What both cases ascribe to their opponents would be the manipulation of the masses, the destruction of liberal free market principles, the subjugation of republican institutions and the exercise of authoritarian power. In this polarisation, the limits of confrontation outside the realm of political institutions are widened to other registers that radicalise and polarise public debate.

La lógica descripta puede recuperarse y observarse, por ejemplo, en el desmantelamiento
The logic described above can be recovered and observed, for example, in dismantling
the Fundación Eva Perón, which the dictatorship carried out in 1955 as one of its first
acts of government. From the looting of its furniture to its dissolution, the dictatorship
tried to eliminate all traces of the institution (Alayón, 2019), which would become
one of the most important milestones of Peronism both for its closeness to the sectors
assisted and for the way and capacity to respond to the demands that came to it. It was
part of what Portantiero (1977) called the 'cleaning operation' to take the country back
to a pre-Peronist period.

For their part, the recent forces that gained access to state leadership by electoral means
configured their adversary in terms of assistance. Each chose their antagonist differently:
"Cambiemos" for Kirchnerism and "La Libertad Avanza" for social movements. The
former labelled them as "punters" (Stanley, 2019, in Terapia de Noticias, 2019) and
the latter as "poverty managers" (Adorni, 2024, in A24, 2024). In both cases, such
adversaries would use the management of public resources to subjugate or manipulate
popular sectors in exchange for favours, support and mutual reciprocity. Under this
idea, in both periods, channels were opened to denounce political leaders who had
committed these practices, accompanied by public defamation in various media outlets.
In particular, "La Libertad Avanza", to dispute social support, reactivated philanthropic
networks and institutions to carry out assistance policies, which resulted in the
signing of various agreements to develop joint food assistance projects (Ministry of
Human Capital, 2024) in the context of the public conflict over the delivery of food to
neighbourhood canteens.

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The cultural co-extension of the political adversary widens the degrees of adversarial
intensity by placing it on the cultural plane, denies the political character of the
confrontation and places it on the moral terrain. For example, the 'foundational' project
headed by Juan Carlos Onganía in 1966 postulated social welfare as a strategic area of
social intervention and institutionalised it with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Through
this agency, he set out to reorder society to confront Peronism, which was radicalising
"towards the left" (Portantiero, 1977; Giorgi and Mallimaci, 2012) and was gaining
social support. One of the strategies to achieve this would be promoting family, human
resources and community action (National Law N°16.956, 1966).

According to the above, it is possible to consider that one of the ideas and objectives that
lead the political right to build the welfare area as one of the pillars of their government

is the dispute for social support to eradicate the ideas of their political adversaries, trying to establish specific values, objectives and projects in the popular sectors in order to shape a way of being, thinking and acting. In this sense, assistance would include a second idea and function: the re-education of the poor.

Re-education of the poor: "elitist suspicion" and restricted sociability

Related to the previous idea, it is interesting to note that the right-wing understands that in order to dispute the social support of its political adversary, it must work to re-educate the popular sectors. This is what can be seen in the spiritual and moral work that Onganía's dictatorship understood it had to do with the reunification of the family to eliminate the 'communist traces' of the dictatorship initiated by Videla, the 'capacities' that "Cambiemos" sought to generate, or the idea of human capital that "La Libertad Avanza" proclaims. Suppose assistance is a way of approaching and linking with the popular sectors. In that case, it is also an instrument to re-educate them according to the needs of their project of society.

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The idea of re-educating the poor has at the heart of its justification the "elitist suspicion" that poverty is an individual problem rooted in the customs and traditions of the excluded sectors and their cognitive, moral, practical and affective capacities. Hence, one of the tasks, for example, that is required of the target population of the welfare policy is training (Stanley, 2014; Jefatura de Gabinete, 2017), as it was in the government of "Cambiemos". For them, "people living in poverty" – as defined by officials – were there because they did not possess the skills that transnational companies demanded, based on the understanding that the market assigns value to skills, services, and goods.

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The "elitist suspicion" naturalises poverty and the accumulation of wealth. To put it another way, what is naturalised is inequality through a justification that refers to the capacities of the individual and the social characteristics that determine his or her social situation from the perspective of restricted sociability. A restricted sociability that places people within the framework of their primary social ties – the family or the social environment – classifies them according to their abilities and moralities and caters to them according to their desire to stop being poor. These issues can be identified in the "moralisation of the social question" process during the Onganía dictatorship. In that period, the Catholic vision was incorporated (Osuna 2012; 2017) with the aim of re-Christianising the popular sectors (Giorgi and Mallimaci, 2012) and introduced a notion of the 'social question' in cultural and spiritual terms (Laguado Duca, 2010). In its founding act, the military officers Pascual Pistarini, Benigno Varela and Teodoro Álvarez[3] characterised the 'spiritual rupture' of the nation as one of the elements that had allowed 'Marxist penetration', which required the armed forces to act (Secretaría de Estado de Gobierno, 1969).

In terms of restricted sociability, on the other hand, it is interesting to note that both Videla's dictatorship and the "Cambiemos" government proposed the family as a space for intervention. In the former, it was identified as the fundamental pillar of society and people with low incomes were "good savages" (Osuna, 2017) who had to be re-educated to move away from subversive ideologies. Care for low-income families was based on the assumption of considering them as a moral reserve of national and Catholic values that should structure the social order. The second is a space where intersections and fissures could be generated to "break" intergenerational poverty. Under this idea, the state should ensure minimum conditions of social reproduction and generate the conditions to provide everyone with the same opportunities for social competition. In Mauricio Macri's presidency, it was argued that parents who made efforts could inspire their children to excel (Stanley, 2018, in Spillman, 2018).

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Currently, it is possible to note these elements in the "Back to Work" programme, which aims to help people develop "socio-labour skills" in order to "achieve employability" (Secretary of Labour, Employment and Social Security, n.d.). According to government officials, this visualises "a cultural change in the programme's beneficiaries" (Cordero, in Ámbito, 2024, n.d.).

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[3] These three military men formed the "Junta de Comandantes en Jefe" (Board of Commanders-in-Chief) which ordered the overthrow of Arturo Illia and Juan Carlos Onganía as the President of the military government.

Technocracy: depoliticisation of the social and de-socialisation of politics

Technocracy is a vision that understands that public affairs, particularly the state's tasks, are a matter of technical, expert and rational treatment. It is a way of depoliticising the social and the subject-necessity relationship.

In Argentina, international financial institutions created in the post-war period have played a decisive role since their inclusion in national issues in 1956, with the first loan contracted with the International Monetary Fund. In the heat of "developmentalism" ideas (Campana, 2011), they promoted a "model of promotion and social assistance" (Arias, 2012) that emphasised the articulation between the delivery of material resources and the activation of state devices that allowed for aptitudinal changes in the assisted population. This trend would continue in other periods, as seen in the sanctioning of Decree Nº 392 (1976), which requested the Ministry of Social Welfare to promote the participation of communities in solving their problems.

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In general terms, the technocratic utopia reversed the welfare equation: if in Peronism, the need was defined by the subjects, in the 1955 dictatorship, the need was defined by the experts. Paraphrasing the well-known saying, "People do not need fish; they need to be taught to fish", in a recent television programme, the country's current president, Javier Milei, argued and justified the creation of the Ministry of Human Capital by arguing that: "in such a way as to change the way assistance is given: instead of giving you fish, you will be taught to fish" (Milei, 2023, in Viale, 2023).

In the welfare sphere, technocracy proposes redefining social needs "from above". It assumes that a technical criterion for processing social demands, preferences and conflicts resides in authority (Camou, 2001), highlighting the dichotomies between administration vs politics or punters vs technocracy (Rey, 2001). Hence, the discussion becomes an issue of form in the context of challenging the ways social actors make demands visible and place them on the public agenda to demand attention to inequality. For example, in the context of a recent demonstration, Sandra Pettovello, minister of the Ministry of Human Capital, mentioned that she would directly attend to those who are hungry but that she would not talk to social leaders who use them to generate conflict (Pettovello, 2024, in LPO, 2024). By seeing social conflict as an anomaly and the collective strategies of the popular sectors as a grotesque form of manipulation of poverty, the dispute over the meaning of the social is shaped by other values, criteria

and meanings. Therefore, the depoliticisation of the social sector refers to a form of re-politicisation linked to the destructuring and dissociation of the political and social fields.

This idea becomes more visible if we observe the distinction established in the welfare area during Onganía's dictatorship between "populist welfare" and "community development" (Osuna, 2012; 2017; Giorgi, 2015). For the de facto government, the first version of the state's social intervention consisted of a paternalistic manoeuvre that generated a dependency between the popular sectors and the state institution, mediated by political-personal interests identified in the governmental sphere. Meanwhile, the second proposed increasing the autonomy of these sectors concerning the state, given that it was based on their participation and promotion inscribed in the technification of assistance where the community emerged as the "place" – or the zone of civilian "intermediate bodies" (Gomes, 2016; Osuna, 2012; Giorgi, 2015) – of training, modernisation and inclusion. Technification enacted new foundations for national development based on scientific ideas (Osuna, 2017). During this period, the Ministry of Social Welfare had as its domain the training of "social welfare technicians" (Law Nº16.956, 1966) that would allow the renewal of welfare practices.

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In this way, the definition of need is based on a technical criterion that redefines it according to what the expert understands about the demands of the popular sectors to manage and discretionally allocate public resources efficiently, objectively, and technically. It is a way of trying to solve public problems based on specific forms of knowledge. For example, during the "Cambiemos" government, this criterion was used to justify the 'myth' of the creation of equal opportunities, in which assistance was seen as a transitory stage and infrastructure works as decisive elements for the 'exit' from poverty (Macri, 2021; Vidal, 2021). In this sense, although welfare demands increased, the government maintained that the popular sectors needed sewers and asphalt (Stanley, 2018 in Mujeres Lideres, 2018). Welfare is not considered a right here but rather an institutional, political and governmental strategy to ensure social reproduction morally.

Technocracy incorporates other coordinates for the welfare policy design, where notions that attempt to process social conflict are woven together. In other words, the state's actions do not follow socially reached consensuses about how public resources should be redistributed but rather technical criteria that define what people need based on expert knowledge. The idea of "disintermediation" of assistance put forward, for example, by the government of "La Libertad Avanza" is suggestive of this, given that it assumes the technical certification of poverty and need (Ministerio de Capital Humano,

in Perfil, 2024). The depoliticisation of state action, as a split between state social intervention and politics, is an operation that implies the de-institutionalisation of social organisations within the framework of assistance.

The examples that have been reconstructed show that technocracy, as an idea, redefines the subject-need relationship from the coordinates of the depoliticisation of the social and the dissociation of the political. As a hierarchical foundation that can establish social preferences "from above", it situates a structural destructuring of the social and the political as autonomous and separate spheres. At this point, a fourth idea becomes visible: assistance as a necessary element for governability.

Governance: containment and social cohesion

Governance is inscribed in the relationship of political domination between the representatives of society and the represented. It refers to how government is governed (Comou, 1993; De Riz, 2017), how the exercise of public power is carried out, and the degrees of governmental stability that a political establishment has to carry out its programmatic plans through the legalised use of the state act.

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Taking such a definition, it is possible to recall the idea of "social time", of which the dictatorship of 1966 spoke, whose guideline established the strengthening of state intervention mechanisms on the processes of wealth distribution within the framework of control and containment of workers' demands (Gomes, 2016) – the 'social time' projected by Onganía aimed to meet the demands of the popular sectors to contain social mobilisation and guarantee the minimum levels required for the continuity of the dictatorship. At the same time, the senior political-strategic cadres understood that the state's social intervention aimed at the community could maintain the degrees of social cohesion necessary to ensure the functioning of their government's plan. It is interesting to recall Osuna (2012), who argues that intervention in the community eradicates conflict, where individuals have to accept their place in the social structure, guaranteeing the spiritual cohesion of the popular sectors.

In general terms, governance is the capacity of a government to process social conflict and amalgamate the interests of the different collectives that make up society. For example, welfare was one of the most critical demands and conflicts during 2015-2019 (Natalucci and Moujan, 2022). Since the "Cambiemos" government, each mobilisation was seen and felt from the latent fear of a new "2001", which operated in the partisan

memory as a "trauma". Every time December approached during the four years of government, journalists asked officials how they saw the social situation and how they would calm the social conflict. The government staff specified that they had been working every day to ensure that Mauricio Macri did not leave office early and that the difference lay in the fact that they were accompanying the deterioration of living conditions with different assistance plans and social containment strategies (López Medrano, 2016, in Lado P, 2016).

The idea of governability for these actors situates the social as synonymous with 'citizens' moods' regarding the acceptability or otherwise of their government plan. It appears to be linked to 'waiting' or 'sacrifice' as a governmental imperative in realising the promising future state measures would bring. As the president-elect Javier Milei argued in December 2023, explaining that the future fall of the economic system had to be contained (Milei, 2023, in Último Momento, 2023).

In the context of the economic reform projects that have historically inspired Argentina's right-wingers and which have brought, in general terms, an increase in poverty and a deterioration in the living conditions of the population in general, waiting and patience have become a political necessity and a proposal for a patriotic attitude. In any society, the horizon of the future is an indispensable vector of social cohesion. As a governmental imperative, waiting and patience are constituted as petitions to make this common future effective and, in the meantime, to attend to social suffering and anguish. Hence, assistance begins to be configured as an element of social governance. Thus, assistance as a criterion of governability appears as a substratum of economic projects. The fifth idea is based on this subsidiarity.

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Social Econometrics: Managing Uncertainty

The econometric vision of the social incorporates the cost-benefit logic to think about state agencies and presupposes the subsidiarity of the social to the economic. In historical terms, it begins to be visualised in Onganía's dictatorship[4] (Gomes, 2016) to consolidate in Videla's dictatorship when Martínez de Hoz won the political internecine (Salerno, 2022), a period in which economists began to achieve greater public visibility and inflation acquired the status of a social problem (Heredia, 2017). For example, inflation was considered the worst ' tax ' on the poor during the current government and in the evolution of the "Cambiemos" government

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[4] It is appropriate to quote the following excerpt from the "Junta Militar en Jefe" where it was stated in its founding act that one of the reasons that led them to dismiss the elected President was: "the monetary inflation that the Nation was enduring was aggravated by an insatiable statism and incorporated as a system and, with it, the most terrible scourge that can punish a society, especially in the lower income sectors, making wages a swindle and savings an illusion" (Secretaria de Estado de Gobierno, 1969, p.14).

(Macri, 2016, in Casa Rosada, 2016). The fiscal adjustment measures and the creation of a welfare system that can guarantee a minimum acceptable level of coverage for social reproduction are based on the objective of combating inflation.

The econometric view of social issues has always been based on fiscal adjustment as a state policy and citizen effort. In this sense, the econometric conditional meaning presupposes, first and foremost, the establishment of an economic principle to be followed: reduction of the fiscal deficit. A subsidiary one is attention to how this could affect a particular population segment. As was argued by various members of the party that governs Argentina, the fiscal management of the economy would leave many people in poverty (Milei, 2023, in Último Momento, 2023), but they were not going to let them "starve to death" (Villarruel, 2023, in Todo Noticias, 2023).

These narratives observe and explain the social characteristics in terms of an econometric criterion and a financial premise. Adjustment, therefore, is the main driving force behind political decisions to balance the economic situation, an argument that demands the sacrifice of citizens as a contract of political domination. This 'sacrifice' incorporated, during Onganía's government, the importance of individual responsibility for the development of the project of personal self-realisation (Gomes, 2016). While this future where everything would be 'welfare' was being achieved, the state should ensure the minimum thresholds for the reproduction of the material conditions of existence of the population outside the formal employment market.

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Social assistance would be a strategy to contain the adverse effects of market liberalisation, such as economic recession and rising unemployment. For example, from the political and economic crisis of Mauricio Macri's government in 2018, as a result of the run on the dollar, the deterioration of social indicators and food inflation, added to measures to eliminate subsidies for public services, assistance attempted to consolidate itself as an instrument to manage the uncertainty generated by market dynamics in excluded sectors, as substantiated by the political authorities (Stanley, 2018, in Legrand, 2018).

Thus, attention to the urgent and immediate becomes vital for 'right-wing' governments. It recovers a 'transitional state' notion that assists those most in need, arguing that they are taking economic measures to bring in foreign investment and produce quality employment (Stanley, 2019, Ten to Ten, 2019). Today, the econometric view of the social emphasises the neoliberal aporia of the commodification of human life. It exalts the economic sphere as the core of human beings and configures a set of practices, worldviews and affectivities that attach the rational calculation between cost and benefit.

This idea of the transitory nature of assistance to the poor sectors does so to re-educate them to follow the needs of its social project, ensure its governability, dispute their adversary's social support, and redefine social needs. Moreover, it must do so based on a rational cost-benefit calculation, assuming the efficiency of public spending and the fiscal deficit reduction. This is how the minimum possible (and acceptable) levels of welfare management that these governments must establish are configured. In uncertainty management, the randomness of the deregulated economic market and its impact is incorporated and naturalised as a constitutive element of social life. Uncertainty emerges as the domain of social management and intervention localisation.

Conclusions

This work constituted a first approach to observing the ideas that political rightists have in common concerning social assistance. While it is true that the ideal groupings that were identified contain singularities and historical expressions, the significant continuities and symbolic statutes were invariant elements that were maintained to give meaning to this state action.

At the same time, no attempt was made here to question or verify whether each of the ideas or objectives that the actors set for themselves could be achieved. Instead, it was a search to understand the symbolic structures from which reality is interpreted, acted upon and given meaning.

In this first outline, we recognise a line of research that is propitious and of current relevance for the social sciences in general but for the discipline of Social Work in particular, given that the ideas of governmental institutions shape forms of intervention on the manifestations of the 'social question', the design of public policies, the criteria for the distribution of resources, and the living conditions of the population, among other elements (Zuccaro, 2024). Thus, observing, interpreting and analysing these dynamics of institutionalised politics can be a fruitful field for exercising mastery of its intellectual status and observing the argumentative structure of the discipline from other coordinates.

Moreover, a comprehensive look at the trans-historical characteristics of the thinking of the political actors analysed is an exciting space for better knowing and understanding the present and, in a certain way, facing the challenges, dilemmas and aporias that constitute the professional field in the current context. In the specialised literature, we

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find research of great relevance and knowledge about the singularity of each historical period, which can serve as a starting point for developing this research agenda.

In this essay, we found five elements in each instance where the right was in government. It is a first approach that needs to be debated, deepened and updated. To do so, it needs to be circulated.

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