

## Seguridade Social, Cidadania e Saúde

*Lenaura de Vasconcelos Costa Lobato,  
Sonia Fleury*

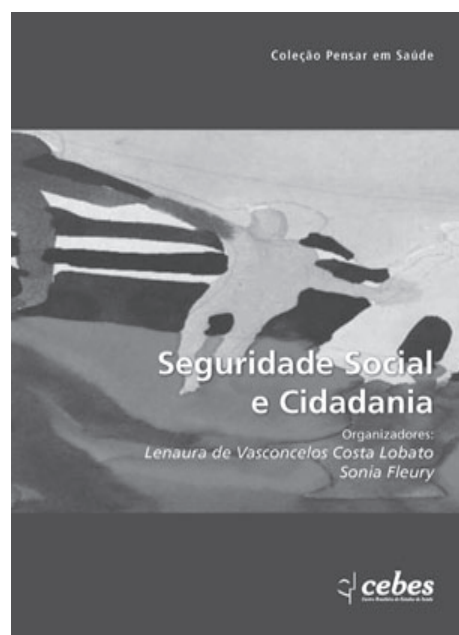
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*Mônica de Castro Maia Senna*

Federal Fluminense University, Niterói, Brazil

Two decades have passed since the concept of social welfare was inscribed in the so called Brazilian Citizen Constitution. Now it is vital that an analysis be made about the advances and limitations for the consolidation of this concept in the core of our social protection system.

Indeed, the social welfare format set forth by the constitution represented an innovation in the Brazilian state intervention standards for social matters, albeit belatedly when compared to the experiences of advanced capitalism countries. The idea of universal citizenship rights, and the recognition of public responsibility for providing and ensuring such rights presented new possibilities for overcoming the meritocratic model, which shaped social policies in the country since the 1930's. Simultaneously (and in consonance with the redemocratization process) Brazilian social welfare encompassed decentralization and social participation as the guiding principles of the reforms of two of the three policies that comprise it – health and social assistance. As a consequence, recent decades show the construction of a new institutionality in the social sector, represented by the democratization and enhanced access to policies, programs and social services, by the adoption of new management and financing mechanisms of public policies, and by the consolidation of social participation and control frameworks. Even the social security area - more resistant to the actions of the current reform - shows some complacency concerning the conducive characteristic that is



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traditional in the sector.

Such innovation, however, faces several obstacles to the implementation of the social welfare model, as provided for by the constitution. The perspective of integration of the policies that comprise the tripod of social welfare gave way to an intense competition for financial and political resources, consolidating specific institutional structures for each area, each with their own *modus operandi*. Moving in the same direction, the social welfare budget proposition, based on solidary principles and on the guarantee of stable funding sources, was replaced by the old model where resources were defined for each area, and more, by the allotment of a considerable amount of such resources to other areas, completely alien to the very concept of social welfare. One could say that the progress achieved with the creation of a new institutionality for the standards of state intervention in the social sector was not accompanied by an effective guarantee of access to social policies, let alone by the efficacy and effectiveness of social welfare policies.

In the face of so many obstacles and challenges to the consolidation of social welfare in Brazil, it becomes necessary to challenge the dynamics of its implementation and the effects on the structure of social inequities and on the very construction of citizenship. Therefore, it is mandatory that the future perspectives of social welfare and the list of factors that interfere with this process be examined, even though the task is highly complex. It is related to overcoming simplistic approaches that narrow down the scope of the analysis of the process to an economic determinism, or to simply meeting the requirements of multilateral agencies. If such factors have significantly affect the shaping of the social welfare model in the country - as they certainly do - it is necessary to consider both the transformations occurring on a worldwide scale and the injunctions of the local scenario – aspects outside our social protection system, and those inherent to the social sector itself.

The book organized by Lenaura Lobato and Sonia Fleury focuses on the base of these concerns, in an attempt to examine the progress and the scope of the social welfare construction process in Brazil, with its inherent complexity. The book is a collection of articles written by great scholars and renowned specialists; it attempts to present several approaches and standpoints, providing a view of the matter from several different angles.

The book is divided in two parts. The first is called *Challenges to citizenship and social cohesion: Social*

*rights, universality and integrity*, sets the conceptual foundations of social welfare, and examines the challenges to the effective consolidation of this concept in the contemporary scenario. What recent changes are occurring in the State – Society relations? What new configurations in the so-called social issue are happening in this scenario, how is it being addressed and what are its influences on the State-citizenship relation? What dilemmas to the construction of citizenship within societies marked by a high degree of social inequality and a still incipient democratic institutionality, as is the case with Latin-American countries? These are some of the issues that provide guidelines to the texts that comprise this first part.

In the opening chapter, *Cohesion and Social Welfare*, Sonia Fleury focuses on the theoretical-conceptual discussion about the concept of social cohesion, analyzing the recent and complex transformations that are being processed in the State-Society-Market relations and the dilemmas to the construction of the democratic and social rights order, especially in Latin American societies. The author states that these transformations have produced a number of tensions that expose the limitations of social protection as it is today, and challenges the very foundations of social order. “*The lack of a solid perspective of a radical change in the conditions of poverty production and inclusion of all in the symbolic and political community of citizens, which would be a fundamental condition for the material and political development of our societies, betrays the underlying existence of something deeper that really comprises an analyzer of the limits of cohesion in our societies.*” (page 25). The need for the construction of a political agenda around the construction of structural changes in the social and political dynamics is a requirement of the recreation of the institutionality of social protection, whose main elements are discriminated in the text.

The chapter *Ciudadania y inclusión social frente a las inseguridades contemporáneas* includes an analysis by Joan Subirats, Eva Alfama and Anna Obradors of the progressive process of dualization of contemporary societies, in the face of recent transformations that occurred in the social and economic levels, with impacts on the pillars of the social integration model built in the second post-war period. The authors recovered the social exclusion concept, emphasizing its structural roots, its multidimensional nature and its social and historical characteristic, to discuss the limits of the current social inclusion policies. Based on the critical examination of such policies vis-a-vis the complexity of the exclusion process, the text

presents some strategic guidelines that should be considered for the construction of innovative inclusive policies.

Chapter 3, by Analia Minteguiaga, makes a critical analysis of the proposition called basic universalism, advocated by some international sectors and organisms as an alternative for the paradigm of focalization that dominated the academic discussion and the directives of these organizations for public interventions in Latin America during the 1980's and 1990's. It is called *De la focalización individual a la focalización de los derechos: crítica a la propuesta del Universalismo Básico*, and analyzes the principles and guidelines that provide the basis for the model in hand, highlighting its insufficiencies and inconsistencies concerning the conquest of the focalizer paradigm and its possibilities for the construction of a new form of relation between the social and economic sectors. Although it acknowledges the importance and relevance of the recommendations of the basic universalism model in terms of changes at the level of social interventions, the author highlights her inability to challenge the very development and accumulation model in force. As a consequence, social policy tends to modernize its tools and modus operandi, but with no significant alterations in the standards of intervention in the social issue adopted by focalizer policies.

The next chapter, suggestively entitled *Is the butler guilty? Constraints to social welfare other than those posed by the economic model*, Maria Lucia Werneck Vianna attempts to examine the fading of the discussion about the principles and premises that guide the constitutional concept of social welfare – a process that evolved hand in hand with the disintegration of the very idea of welfare. The author presents important provocations to the scholars of the area by stating that there has been an abandonment of the concepts of public responsibility and universal rights, with a displacement of the discussion about the unfolding of the social protection system towards three central axes, as follows: a. Reduction of the social issue to poverty; b. resurgence, with a new appearance, of the definition of poverty as an individual process associated to situations where individuals are due to lack of certain aptitudes, and c. advocacy that collective and universal social policies are not the only or most effective ways of approaching the social issue. This set of premises has been providing support to the revision of the social policy concept towards the removal of the responsibility of the State concerning the social issue, and the adoption of policies exclusively addressing segments of the

impoverished population, shaping the theoretical and operational bases of the revisited liberal concept.

At the end of the first part of the book, the article *The right to health, universality, integrality and public policies: Principles and requirements in legal requests for medications*, by Roger Raupp Rios, approaches the growing legal request for medications within the Unified Health System - SUS. The author initially discusses the legal content of the concept of health, as set forth in the Federal constitution of 1988, highlighting the meaning of its being recognized as a fundamental right and its construction guided by the principles of universality and integrality. By reinforcing the dual condition of the right to health as both an individual and collective right, the author advocates the resource of legal protection whenever such rights are violated, whether at the level of individual ownership of these rights, or at the level of collective or diffuse right to health. This being said, the author proceeds with the analysis of the main pleas brought up in the legal requests for medications not made available by the SUS, and points out the procedures, requirements and certain precautions when dealing with these requests.

The second part of the book – *Conflicts and contradictions in the institutionalization of social welfare in Brazil* – makes a close analysis of the development and scope of the Brazilian social welfare in the current scenario. What has been the trajectory of social welfare since its institutionalization in the constitutional text? What progress has been achieved? What difficulties have been overcome for the deployment of the social welfare model as defined by the Constitution? What challenges can be found in the construction of a political agenda for the advocacy of social welfare? Finding answers to these questions is not a simple task. They require the analytical effort of setting up a set of different processes that interfere with the configuration of the current social welfare in Brazil, which makes them highly complex. Aware of the toilsome task, the authors of this segment bring crucial elements into the analysis of the subject, averting reductionism or simplification, and approaching the subject from several different angles.

In chapter six, *Modernizing without excluding*, Marcio Pochmann looks into the recent dynamics of the labor market in Brazil, based on its relation with macroeconomics, especially concerning changes to the production framework, the low dynamism of the population, and the oscillation of economic activity in the country. Utilizing a whole gamut of official data published by IBGE, the author provides us with elements to analyze aspects such as the Brazilian

standards for contracting labor, characterized by a flexible amount of workers, the precariousness and turnover of labor positions, with an impact on efforts to increase education levels and qualification of employees; the persistence or even deepening of salary inequalities, with extremely low income at the base of the occupational pyramid, and with the Brazilian tax system based on a high amount of taxes and concentrated on the lowest salaries. This scenario brings about extremely negative effects on the solidary principles that guide the concept of welfare and the very idea of social cohesion. Its effects on social security are immediate and can be measured by the high amount of individuals not protected by social and labor laws, as well as by a greater oscillation and vulnerability of funding for social security itself.

The three following chapters focus on the fiscal framework and the issue of funding social welfare in Brazil. The text of Jose Roberto Afonso and Gabriel Junqueira (*Reflections about the interface between social welfare and the fiscal aspects in Brazil*) discusses the effects of fiscal policies on the behavior of social expenditures in the country. An imbalance in the relations between federation entities, prioritization of social benefits at the expense of universal policies, the predominance of payroll charges as the main source of funds, and the regressive nature of the Brazilian tax standard (which sets a heavier burden on the impoverished and the middle class) were some of the issues raised in this discussion. If on the one hand the text reveals the fundamental role of social insurance contributions created by the 1988 Constitution in the subsequent promotion of social expenditures, on the other it highlights the utmost need to acknowledge that “they are the root cause of the main distortions of the funding framework of the Brazilian State” (page 135). Thus, at a moment when tax reform is an upcoming subject in the governmental agenda, the author suggests this is “a new opportunity to think about a project, a national strategy for economic development” (page 135).

In chapter 8, *Institutional and financial bases of Social Welfare in Brazil*, Sulamis Dain also approaches the issue of social welfare funding, focusing primarily on the health sector. The permanent conflict between the demand for health services and restrictions to financing is dealt with by the author as a key subject. The deconstruction of the social welfare proposition and the reallocation of resources for each area, along with the application of resources in a way that is different from that which has been set forth in the Constitution, and the ambiguity between the concept of social rights

and the commodification of health services have an enormous contribution toward the underfinancing of health (and of social welfare itself), and the minimization of its underlying universalizing condition. Through simulations and analysis about the financing standards for the area, the author highlights the fact that the tax reform proposition being handled by the federal Legislative (PEC 233/2008) poses the serious threat of forever burying the concept of social welfare and turning social protection and health expenditures into the object of an intense budgetary fight, with irreparable losses for the implementation of universal policies.

In *Financing standards for the workers' health: From social security to health insurance*, Eli Gurgel Andrade and Pedro Paulo Dias Filho examine the obstacles to the consolidation of social welfare in Brazil based on the analysis of changes in the historical standards of financing health for workers within the sphere of social security policies. One of the key concerns is related to the implications of the coexistence of public and private health assistance systems, which operate under different conditions for the provision of access, financing and services. This duality arguably brings about serious political consequences for the progress of the universalization of high quality, public health care, at the same time that it contributes to remove key players from the support base in defense of the effective deployment of social welfare amongst us.

In the following chapter, *Security and inclusion: Institutional and financial bases of social assistance in Brazil*, Aldaiza Sposati discusses security with a highlight on the examination of social assistance policy. The author points out the frail covenant around the contents of social welfare, stating that the process of setting up social policies in Brazil occurred in a fragmented and territorial manner, comprising multiple institutionalities and devices inherent to each sectoral area. As a result of this historical development, intrinsic to each sector, there is no unitary reference for the set of social rights, where each area is ruled by different concepts and logics, whereas criteria and mechanisms for the inclusion of users amongst the three areas that comprise social welfare, its management models and modus operandi are also distinct. The social assistance sector is - among those that make up the tripod of social welfare - that where recognition as public policy and a field of rights is very recent, and is faced with the challenge of becoming as such in the benchmarks of excellence and philanthropy. In this regard, the construction of institutional bases for the management and financing of the social assistance policy is faced with tremendous

challenges, distinct in nature, that need to be better analyzed and discussed.

The final chapter, *Dilemmas concerning the institutionalization of social policies in twenty years of the 1988 Constitution*, by Lenaura Lobato, makes a critical assessment of the direction taken by the construction of social welfare in Brazil since its inclusion in the constitutional text. The concept of hybrids, borrowed from Wanderley G. dos Santos, and connected to the coexistence of conflicting – or even opposing - institutional standards in dealing with the social issue - is adopted by the author to assess the innovations and advances introduced in the political-organizational apparatus of social policies and in the very concept of the social issue, as they coexist with important restrictions to the management of social policies, such as: Focus limited to poverty as defined exclusively by the income; underfinancing for the social area; low quality of care and precariousness of coverage, with negative effects on access to social programs, services and benefits, and frail intersectoral integration. Persistence of these hybrids can seriously impair the goals of a democratic project based on broad

citizenship, and lead social policies away from the model provided for by the Brazilian constitutional framework.

The series of texts presented by the book provides key elements for the assessment of the social welfare issue, whereas the huge complexity it encompasses is not disregarded. On the contrary, it attempts to deal with the issue from several different standpoints, enabling one to update the discussion around the subject in a comprehensive and profound way. Although the challenges to implementing welfare are huge, as the authors acknowledge, the assessments contained in the book are not pessimistic. Rather, the book draws attention to the need to deepen the discussion, so as to foster the construction of technical and political propositions to ensure and broaden social welfare. It is not out of chance, thus, that the book edited by CEBES: this collective subject, essential for the accomplishment of health reform in Brazil as a new civilizational process grounded on citizenship and social justice, principles that rule the very concept of social welfare.

