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An epistemological reformulation of SWOT analysis in Social Work

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Abstract. This article describes the use of the SWOT situational analysis tool in the social field, to criticize its lack of epistemological adaptation to Social Work. Having been designed for the analysis of corporations in the market context, its' use has been extended to the analysis of all kinds of social organizations, communities, collectives, groups and individuals. In this regard, it is here proposed, on the one hand, the adoption and combination of appreciative and structural approaches in the analysis methodology and, on the other hand, the incorporation of relevant analysis categories for Social Work, such as: capacities, social systems and resources, unsatisfied needs related to social vulnerability, and social risks. Social concepts would help to identify more specifically and delve into what the SWOT matrix includes as strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats. In addition, the so named offensive, reorientation, defensive and survival type of strategies have been renamed relating them to some of the principal functions of Social Work: information and promotion; prevention, social awareness and mediation; comprehensive care; and political incidence, planning and evaluation. The rethinking of the tool increases its analytical potential and its strategic application from the perspective of social intervention and action.
Keywords: Social Work; epistemology; diagnosis; techniques.

Summary: Introduction. 1. Origin and soial use of the SWOT situational analysis. 2. Epistemological rethinking of the SWOT situational analysis. 3. Conclusions. 4. References.

Introduction

The SWOT situational analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), is an organizational diagnostic tool from the business sciences. Originally, it was aimed at analyzing companies in the market context. Its methodological application has been extended in various social disciplines, including Social Work. It is used for the situational analysis of individuals, groups, collectives, organizations, communities and social realities, constituting a socially and scientifically recognized diagnostic tool.

The tool and its application are taught, generally, in the degree of Social Work in an uncritical way and without questioning its epistemological foundation. This conditions its methodological potential, limited to a matrix that has not been adapted to social intervention. Based on the analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, the original tool proposes to cross these variables to develop four types of strategies (offensive, defensive, survival and reorientation), whose approach starts from a competitive vision, far from the principles of Social Work. Furthermore, this perspective is not adequate to the main social functions performed by professionals in the social field. In this article, a critical review of SWOT is

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made and its epistemological adaptation to our discipline is proposed.

The objectives of the article are: to contribute to a critical epistemology regarding the methodologies used in the Social Sciences; to criticize the import of SWOT from the Business Sciences, without the appropriate adaptation to the Social Sciences; and to develop a suitable approach for its use, particularly in social intervention.

In order to fulfill the objectives, in the first section of the article the SWOT's origin and the two matrices that conform it are described. Next, several examples of its use in Social Work are showed. For that end, articles including the words DAFO or FODA and Social Work, have been consulted in the Dialnet database. Subsequently, its use has been analyzed in six social studies carried out by public institutions and diverse social entities.

In the second section, a critical analysis of the terminology in the original tool and its limitations when it comes to being used in the analysis of social realities has been carried out, as well as consequent proposals for strategies of social intervention. In this regard, an epistemological approach is developed to adapt this tool to the field of social intervention and action. To bring the article to the end, the conclusions referring to the importance of this epistemological turn are presented. In addition, the two adapted matrices to social field are enclosed.

1. Origin and social use of the SWOT situational analysis

The origin of the SWOT tool dates back to the 1960s. The Standford Research Institute promoted a study to improve long-term corporate business planning. It was carried out by Robert Stewart, Marion Dosher, Otis Benepe, Birger Lie and Albert Humphrey (Humphrey, 2005, in Pulgarín and Rivera, 2012). Initially, they raised four questions to consider in the situational analysis: what is satisfactory in the present, understood as strengths; future opportunities; failures in the present; and future threats.

The four aspects: gave rise to the SOFT designation (Strengths, Opportunities, Fails and Threats). Ulrick and Orr later presented a version of the matrix, calling it SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), focusing on endogenous and exogenous factors, rather than present and future reality. This final proposal was adopted and widely disseminated by the Harvard Business School.

Later, Weihrich (1982) would reorganize its elements and would call the matrix TOWS (Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Strengths), initiating the analysis by external factors, since these structurally affect the internal ones. Weihrich also proposed a second matrix to collect four lines of possible strategies based on the combination of external and internal factors: a) maxi-maxi: taking advantage and maximizing both strengths and opportunities; b) maxi-mini: identifying the strengths that could cope with threats; c) mini-maxi: minimizing weaknesses and maximizing opportunities; and d) mini-mini: minimizing both weaknesses and threats (in ibid.). The four types of strategies are referred to as follows: offensive, defensive, rearranging and survival (Annex: Matrix 2). Those concepts are unusual in the Social Work language, since they denote a competitive and militaristic approach that does not concord with our discipline's values and ethical principles. Furthermore, this language makes it difficult to propose social strategies, where collaboration and solidarity are essential.

The tool has been translated into Spanish as DAFO (Debilidades, Amenazas, Fortalezas y Oportunidades) or FODA (Fortalezas, Oportunidades, Debilidades y Amenazas), according to an appreciative perspective, to countries languages, and also to more technical or community contexts. When we introduced the terms DAFO and Social Work on Dialnet, we found twenty-seven articles, twenty-six theses and two book articles. When introducing the terms FODA and Social Work, the search showed twelve magazine articles, four theses and a book chapter[3]. To illustrate how situational analysis is used within different social

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[3]   With the combination of the terms Social Work and DAFO, found researches found referred to several topics: management and strategic direction; information society and Social Work; intervention with people in social exclusion situation; social education; environmental education; economic crisis affecting family and childhood needs; sexual assaults and post-traumatic stress; training in prison; attention to people in dependency situations; sign language; educational inclusion; leisure and disability services, social economy; corporate social responsibility; environmental projects; diversification of local economy; local development tourism projects; university education; evaluation of the quality of research and higher education; professional supervision; and gen-

studies, we have taken six varied studies, carried out in Spain, that use SWOT as a situational analysis tool[4]. Two cases are social investigations on transgender and transsexual people, and on attention to dependency and carers respectively. The other four verse on: diagnosis on social participation promoted by social organizations; design of a local strategic plan at municipal level; direct social intervention within a Community Social Service; and teaching within Social Work training.

In all of them the tool is called DAFO. It is used for the purpose of diagnosing objects and subjects, such as: teaching, participation in entities, community, groups, families and individuals. The way in which the tool is used is limited to the application of one of the matrices. Within it, firstly, the internal factors which help with identifying strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, the external ones, related to opportunities and risks. The studies carried out by Ararteko, De la Fuente et al., and Ramos-Feijó et alter, after the analysis, directly offer some conclusions about the situations analyzed. In the case of Ararteko it also expounds some recommendations. The Portugalete Strategic Plan, after analyzing weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities, critically analyzes the social policy strategies followed by the City Council and its results and impacts on the situation in the Historic District. The study carried out by the European Anti-Poverty Network in the Basque Country (EAPN) analyzes four experiences of member organizations of the Sartu Federation. Derived from the analysis, in order to promote social participation, objectives and actions, or measures, are presented[5].

In the Community Social Service of a Rural area in the province of Zaragoza the SWOT analysis is applied in the individual and familiar levels. The person or families are requested to do it themselves. According to Sisamón,

this allows them to have a real and accurate diagnosis[6], which, based on the joint analysis by families and professionals, allows them to establish accurate hypotheses, with hardly any errors, thanks to the understanding of the situation and the establishment of objectives with social services users. The validity of the tool is explained as follows:

> [SWOT] It is feasible for all situations because all people have weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats. However socially isolated they are, there is always some point of support, although in many cases this could be only their reference professional and the therapeutic relationship with her/him [ ] even if they are small achievements, the change has been accomplished, so that the family or person have learned to be functional in one, two or several areas (Sisamón, 2012, p. 481).

In summary, SWOT analysis is used in different ways. It pursues results not only of diagnosis, but also of participation and empowerment of the population. The name of the tool adopted in Spain corresponds to the initials DAFO. Following the order of the acronyms, in five of the six studies, the analysis was started for the internal and external adverse aspects, then addressing the internal and external favorable ones. After identifying the different aspects, conclusions are drawn that are translated into objectives, strategies or actions to be implemented to overcome weaknesses and risks. In none of the cases reviewed has the second analysis matrix been used, where the different identified factors would be crossed, in order to propose the most appropriate intervention strategies. This trend reflects how the tool is taught. In the same way, the SWOT explanation in the *Manual Metodologías Participativas*, edited by the Observatorio Internacional

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der and feminism perspective. The terms Social Work and SWOT showed researches related to: universities, associations, teaching, basic education, social economy, productive projects, family farming, and environmental sustainability.

[4]   In a first interview with the family and, in some cases, with a member of the social or professional network when the family agrees, the tool is explained and what is meant by strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. They promote a pleasant and trustworthy environment for each person to prepare their analysis individually. Then they put it in common and together they set the objectives to be achieved to achieve the desired change and get out of the process of social exclusion. Subsequently, the team develops the intervention plan adjusted to the objectives that have emerged from the SWOT analysis. This is agreed with the family or person in a second interview.

[5]   The conclusions and recommendations derived from said diagnoses are not included here, as they are not the object of this article.

[6]   In a first interview with the family and, in some cases, with a member of the social or professional network when the family agrees, the tool is explained and what is meant by strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. They promote a pleasant and trustworthy environment for each person to prepare their analysis individually. Then they put it in common and together they set the objectives to be achieved to achieve the desired change and get out of the process of social exclusion. Subsequently, the team develops the intervention plan adjusted to the objectives that have emerged from the SWOT analysis. This is agreed with the family or person in a second interview.

de Ciudadanía y Medio Ambiente Sostenible (CIMAS, 2009), refers only to the first matrix. The reasons why the second matrix has little use in social intervention might be related to the naming of the strategies, foreign to our deontology, and its lack of epistemological adaptation to the social field. In fact, this is the question that motivates our article.

Given that the first situational analysis matrix is indeed useful and its application is widespread in Social Work, we consider it essential to rethink the tool to endow it with a precise meaning within the context of the social sphere. There are two main issues that we would like to rethink, epistemologically, in the way of using the SWOT tool. Firstly, the factors order in the analysis. The second question, fundamental in the view of these authors, suggests news categories of analysis referring to both internal and external factors, as well as to possible strategies. Those would be formulated from a social language to better understand the social reality, thus also generating strategies from the social intervention/action perspective.

2. Epistemological rethinking of the SWOT situational analysis

In Spain and also in the Portuguese-speaking countries, such as Brazil and Portugal, the translation of the SWOT tool as DAFO has become widespread; while in the rest of Latin American countries the name FODA has become the accepted term. In the translation as DAFO the order of the factors has been reversed. In the original tool, the analysis was started by strengths, followed by weaknesses, both concerning internal factors. Next, the externals, both favorable and unfavorable, were analyzed. DAFO tends to start the analysis from problems or negatively influencing issues, as has been seen in the reviewed studies. Actually, this is what the translation as FODA has tried to correct. This perspective highlights the factors that may have a positive impact, internal and external, and then considers the factors that can cause negative influences and, consequently, need to be transformed.

We will propose to follow the proposal of Ulrick and Orr: first, the analysis of internal factors first and, second, external factors; likewise, beginning with the favorable factors and continuing with the unfavorable ones. According to those researchers, starting the analysis by the micro or particular reality is more apprehensible for the subjects. Subsequently, the macro social context will be addressed, which should shed light both on existing social resources and supporting networks, as well as on the structural conditions that may be obstacles.

In Social Work we have used to focus our gaze on the social problems and deficiencies that people experience, more than in their capacities. The appreciative approach is an increasingly present model of intervention. This perspective steams from a deep trust in the essence of human beings, recognizing their potential to change themselves and transform their situations. To strengthen social change, work starts from the strengthening of people's capacities for transformation (Pérez, 2017). According to Hammond (1995, in ibíd.), the assumptions on which the appreciative approach is based are the following: In every system, organization, group or individual there is something that does work and that upon discovering it unfolds the potential for endogenous transformation; That which we focus on builds our reality; The language we use builds and creates our reality and not only represents it; Dreams, utopias and projects give direction to life; Recovering successful experiences and learning about them brings greater confidence on the road to the future; Emotions and attitudes are contagious, so a firm and different emotional disposition that generates optimism, confidence and hope is essential; Questions are mobilizing and make it possible to visualize other options and routes for the desired change, releasing certainties; Human networks are built from collaboration and not from competition or opposition. In sum, an analysis that emphasizes the positive towards oneself and towards other people and the environment, will more easily mobilize their own capacities towards taking advantage of the existing possibilities to overcome situations of social vulnerability.

The appreciative approach would also have an effect on the view and position of professional staff, shifting attention focused on deficiencies to a perspective of capabilities. In this way, addressing weaknesses (situation of dependency, negative self-image, risk behaviors for oneself or for others ...) and situations of social vulnerability (risk or situation of exclusion derived from social inequality structural and cultural) could be considered as a

challenging exercise of personal and citizen empowerment, pursuing both the commitment to the transformation of one's life, and the participation and collective mobilization in the claim of social rights.

Consequently, making a diagnosis exclusively of the internal factors of people, groups and communities is not enough in Social Work, since it would replicate a functionalist perspective of holding people responsible for the problems suffered (Hill, 1982, in Zamanillo, 1999). Thus, SWOT situational analysis has diagnostic interest for our discipline, because it allows interrelating internal and external factors. Actually, what we identify as internal weaknesses, often has an origin or aggravation due to external structural factors. If policies and actions are not adopted to correct the structural conditions that generate exclusion, the potential of individuals and communities will continually be reduced, affecting their capacity of resilience. The capacities of the subjects and the external resources, on the one hand, and the situations of vulnerability suffered and the structural social risks that affect the subjects, on the other, must be put in interrelational perspective. The SWOT situational analysis allows, from a dialectical approach, a deeper understanding of the structural conditions that contribute to generate and reproduce the social problems.

Turning to the resignification of the categories of analysis of the SWOT matrices, the importance of language and the concepts used as categories of analysis should be emphasized. As different authors have explained, language is performative. Beyond that language describes reality, above all it builds it (Sapir & Whorf; Austin; Wittgenstein, in Casillas, 2017). Language is not only a means for communication and representation but, fundamentally, an instrument for constructing reality, since it determines the formation of ideas. For this reason, the disciplines, in both expressions academic and professional, have the responsibility of questioning the language with which we represent and explain reality, re-signifying the terms to endow them with meaning and with analytical and transforming potential from our own ethics. The words reflect certain values and a particular way of apprehending the world. Hence, also in the discipline of Social Work it is essential to reflect on its power, both to reproduce and to transform reality. Being diverse the disciplines to which the Social Work has contributed and also from which it has been nourished, any theory, methodology or models that we adopt must be resignified, adapting them to our deontology and to the social field, both from the investigation and intervention levels.

To do so, first, strengths as the capacities of individuals, families, groups and communities, including professional teams and entities, depending on who is the subject in the analysis will be re-signified. People are the main resource for transforming reality. All of us have fundamental capacities that can be enhanced. Following Amartya Sen[7] (1984), capacities are what people are capable of realizing and relationally being. Their functioning reflects their capacities and possibilities in the achievement of well-being. According to Sen, the capacities would reflect the freedom that people have to lead one type of life or another and, therefore, would be conditioned by the social structure and culture. The term capabilities, rather than strengths, facilitates a more holistic analysis of this type of variables, agreeing to the systemic view and principles of Social Work. Martin J. Urquijo (2014), in his reflection on Sen's theory of capabilities, specifically refers to this point:

> Capacity provides a point of view from which to assess the social, political and economic conditions that people experiment within society. These conditions are important because they can lead to the development or deterioration of people's functioning and abilities. The absence or deterioration of an individual capacity is a reliable sample of inequality, absence of

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[7]   Amartya Sen (1984) introduced the concept of capabilities in the debate on development policies, understanding these as the possibility or real capacity of people to exercise and realize their human rights. He confronted the human rights approach, because what is crucial is the possibilities of realizing them. Sen distinguished performances and capabilities. Operations are what people achieve, their achievements. For this reason, in evaluating the situation of a person or group, it is necessary to evaluate not what they have materially, but what they manage to do with what they have. Hence, capabilities should not be measured by the material goods they have, but by the skills to meet their needs. Thus, material goods would be secondary to capabilities and would be at their service. To transform the focus of development, Sen proposed the introduction of the terms: social justice and freedom, or capacity to realize.

well-being, and a precarious quality of life that can be lived in society (Urquijo, 2014, p.72)[8].

Regarding capacities the classification proposed by Martha Nussbaum (2011) is interesting, as follows: life, physical health, physical integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, relationship with other species, play and control over their environment. As it can be seen, they refer to the fact of living fully, that is, enjoying health, and being able to create and participate socially and environmentally. This last question is fundamental to the challenges that climate change poses to us. Nussbaum argues that states should promote this set of human capacities, underlining Sen's idea that capacities are the real possibilities or real freedom of people to do or be what they consider valuable (Escrich et al., 2015), i.e., the materialization of their human rights.

Continuing with the resignification of the categories, we will move on to the weaknesses. Those will be resignified as procedural needs and vulnerabilities that arise from the position and power relations with the social environment. On the one hand, human needs will be understood as social, material or relational needs of individuals, groups and communities. Max-Neef proposed the following universal needs of people: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation and identity. This set of needs must be assumed as interdependent, where the realization of some depends on the possibility of relationship of the others. Manfred Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde and Marín Hopenhayn (1986), affirm that "the person is a being of multiple and interdependent needs that works as a system", that is, the needs are interrelated; therefore, their satisfaction must be conceived as a process.

The non-satisfaction of human needs is the effect of a social organization that generates and reproduces inequalities, generating conditions of social vulnerability. Social vulnerability is the reduction of the possibilities of satisfying human needs. Robert Castel (1995) pointed out that the vulnerability is also procedural. When people face precariousness regarding employment and the fragility of their relational supports, this process can lead to social exclusion, that is, disaffiliation and margin-

ality. Becoming aware of this helps to awaken relational affiliation and social mobilization.

Sometimes vulnerabilities could be surmountable challenges, by implementing a series of strategies that enhance their own capabilities and take advantage of the opportunities of existing systems. In other cases, vulnerabilities could constitute limitations of the physical body itself, such as a chronic disease or disability, with which it is important to learn to live and that places us in the understanding of the vulnerability and interdependence of human beings. However, as Judith Butler expresses, although all people are subject to diseases, accidents and attacks that can affect our bodies and end our lives, vulnerability should not be affirmed as an existential condition, but it is a social condition. "The precariousness of life imposes an obligation on us, to ask ourselves under what conditions it is possible to apprehend a life, or a set of lives, as precarious, and in which others are less possible, or even impossible" (Butler, 2010, p.14). Butler argues that "life requires support and enabling conditions in order to be 'living/livable'" (ibíd., p.40). It also explains that vulnerability involves a relationship with the environment where the influence of the latter on the subjects and their response capacity cannot be separated.

> Vulnerability is not a subjective disposition but a relationship with a field of objects, forces and passions that influence or affect us in some way, [...] vulnerability is a type of relationship that belongs to that ambiguous region in which the receptivity and responsiveness are not clearly separable from each other and are not distinguished as separate moments in a sequence (Butler, 2014, p. 24).

Within the situational analysis, vulnerabilities will be approached from an interrelational and procedural perspective, as people have to satisfy their multiple and interdependent needs, not only material, but also relational and social participation. If capabilities address satisfied needs, vulnerabilities reveal unsatisfied needs.

Turning to the resignification of the categories related to external factors, we will begin explaining the opportunities offered by the environment. In Social Work these will be resignified as the reference systems for people,

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8   Own translation.

as well as the resources available in those systems. Systems analysis is essential in our discipline. In this regard, ecological theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1987) will be cited, as well as the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner and Stephen J. Ceci (1994). The development of human behavior is the product of interaction with the set of systems of which individuals are part.

The social systems provide options and possibilities for the development of people from childhood. At this stage of life, the closest systems to people are: the family system, the peer-to-peer system, the educational system, the health system and the religious system. All of them are part of the so-called microsystem. Those systems are not separate, but interact with each other. This network of connections is called the mesosystem, representing it in a second circle that surrounds the previous one. A third circle of influence is the exosystem, integrated by the neighborhood system, production, media, security and justice, and social services. The fourth circle is the macrosystem, which includes all the previous ones, referring to the attitudes and ideology imprinted in the social culture, which conditions the functioning of all the previous systems. The fifth circle is the chronosystem, introducing the time dimension and its influence on the physiological changes that occur with growth and aging, conditioning reactions to environmental changes. Subsequently, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci will argue that the development of people is a discontinuous phenomenon, not by stages, which obeys the subjective bio-psychological experience that is maintained with the social environment. Thus, systems would be here understood as the reference social structures in all areas of people's lives: family, peers, neighborhood, religion, cultural community, education, health, work, social protection, security, legislation and justice, media, social networks and culture. All those systems are interrelated, and affect each other.

Following the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994), in the different systems roles, norms and rules underlie configuring the psychological development of people. Besides, participation in the systems enables greater social knowledge and capacity for problem solving. In the situational analysis, the different systems that can have a positive effect on people's conditions should be analyzed: the existing social resources both at the legislative level, services and benefit, as well as citizens' networks and relationships. Making the systems and resources visible allows people not only to recognize their subjective rights and existing services, but also to identify likely alliances and collaborations with different social agents and subjects.

Finally, regarding the resignification of threats, they will be named as social risks. Social risks refer to the possibilities that people could suffer harm in their living conditions, whether material, relational and social participation, due to social causes such as: lack of employment and incomes, situations of abandonment, neglect, harassment, violence, abuse, discrimination, drugs consumption, addictions, risky attitudes, etc.; diminishing the development of their capacities and limiting their access to different systems and social resources.

When people's development possibilities are limited by social constraints, we speak of structural and cultural violence. Both concepts were coined by Johan Galtung (1990). He helped to understand that, on the basis of the direct violence perpetrated in the armed conflicts, it was possible to identify social structures of violation of rights, not only political and civil, but also economic, social and cultural. Actually, the omission of the states in their responsibility for social protection and the system of beliefs and values, could contribute to the legitimation of discourses of exclusion and, thus, reproduce social inequalities. In this way, through the triangle of violence he made visible the interrelationships between direct violence (visible, at the top corner), and structural and cultural violence (invisibles, at the bottom corners). Galtung coined the concept of positive peace, that is, not only the absence of direct violence (negative peace), but also the absence of structural and cultural violence (positive peace). When carrying out the situational analysis of a certain group, it is convenient to bring to the analysis matrix such structural and cultural conditions, which represent risks and social vulnerabilities that limit the possibilities of participation, quality of life and development for people. A positive peace would take place in a context where human rights are respected and promoted.

Next, the resignification of the strategies, corresponding to the second matrix of the tool (Annex: Matrix 2) will be addressed. The original names of strategies, were derived from

the analysis of the competitiveness of large corporations in the globalized market. Transnational corporations have expanded their domain over life all over the planet, increasingly controlling issues that have to do with the rights of citizens, their needs and participation. Corporations control sectors such as: energy, finance, telecommunications, infrastructures, weapons, water, health, agriculture, food, etc. (Zubizarreta, González & Ramiro, 2012). In the original second matrix, the denomination of economic strategies as offensive, defensive, reorientation and survival denotes a vision of struggle to set an advantageous position in the globalized market and, consequently, access to natural, human, technical, financial and even political resources, all of them necessary to guarantee a type of production and marketing of goods and services.

The Business Sciences are influenced by a development model based on growth and accumulation, which generates inequality and social exclusion. As the United Nations Development Program observes, wealth generation tends to be concentrated in the hands of the richest people. "Private wealth increased from 250% to 400% of national income in 1970 to a percentage of between 450% and 750% in 2016" (UNDP, 2019). Given the negative role played by large corporations in the redistribution of wealth and social inclusion, it would be paradoxical to adopt the language of competitiveness and warmongering that underlies the second matrix proposed by Weihrich in social intervention. Social Work promotes respect for human rights, social justice, gender equality and the promotion of a culture of peace. Therefore, we cannot uncritically assume tools and theories that use a language that fosters competitiveness and strategies that involve structural and cultural violence. Our academic and professional responsibility is to adapt them to the ethical principles and objectives of our discipline.

With a view to teaching and applying the SWOT situational analysis, the reformulation of the type of strategies will be here proposed. This led us to move away from the language and the logic of competitiveness and violence implicit in the Weihrich approach, who combined internal and external factors establishing

four types of strategies: Strengths -Opportunities, called offensive strategies; Weaknesses-Opportunities, designated reorientation; Strengths-Threats, defensive calls; and Weaknesses-Threats, named as survival.

Instead, strategies related to specific and general functions of the Social Work profession will be outlined: 1) Peoples' promotion and access to information: linking capacities to social resources and systems; 2) Comprehensive care and assistance: articulating needs with social resources and systems; 3) Prevention and mediation: taking advantage of peoples capacities in order to better face social risks; and 4) Advocacy, coordination, evaluation and planning: to promote the satisfaction of the human needs of all subjects and, in particular, those in situations of vulnerability and in social risk (Annex: Matrix 4).

In summary, the purpose of conducting a situational analysis in Social Work is to holistically understand the complex reality in order to adopt the best strategies that could achieve desired and possible objectives in the short, medium and long term. The type of strategies that should be considered in Social Work would have to do with four fundamental functions that professionals carry out: 1) the promotion of human rights, as well as the participation and development of people's capacities; 2) social mediation in situations of conflict and the prevention of social exclusion (marginalization, discrimination, impoverishment, precariousness, violence, risky social practices, etc.) and violation of human rights; 3) attention to the social needs of the population in general and specifically of different groups because their situation of dependence both physical or social; and 4) the rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of social policies, their updating to emerging realities[9], and the coordination and planning of social programs and services that guarantee compliance with the human rights promulgated by the international declarations, conventions and pacts of human rights.

3. Conclusions

The methodologies, techniques and tools for analyzing reality are the product of our ap-

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[9]   Following Max-Neef, human needs are the same for different cultures and over time. What changes are the satisfiers or ways of satisfying those needs according to habitat, culture and the value system. Therefore, why we speak of emerging realities and not of emerging needs.

proaches and values. They influence the way of analyzing, representing reality and building proposals for social intervention and action. Therefore, it is necessary to build methodologies, techniques and tools that in their conception are consistent with the principles of Social Work, so that their design and application contribute to social empowerment, reinforcing the capacities of individuals, groups and communities, and to the respect and guarantees of human rights. It has been seen that SWOT is a tool widely used in Social Work by diverse entities, applied to the diagnosis of the situations of individuals, groups, collectives, communities and organizations. For this reason, it is essential to critically re-appropriate this tool that was created for the situational analysis of companies.

In this communication it has been proposed: 1) Regardless of the option for the denomination in Spanish and Portuguese (FODA/DAFO), according to the suitable appropriation to the context, to recommend the analysis order of the original matrix, emphasizing the importance of analyzing internal factors first and then the external ones, and

highlighting the capabilities approach versus the deficiencies approach. 2) To re-signify the categories of analysis included in the matrix, relating them to fundamental concepts within the discipline of Social Work. That is, understand strengths as capacities and satisfied needs; weaknesses such as vulnerabilities and unsatisfied needs; opportunities such as social systems and resources; and threats as social risks. 3) To reconstruct the type of strategies, so that they are consistent with the main social functions that Social Work fulfills: information and promotion; prevention and mediation; comprehensive care and assistance; and advocacy, coordination, planning and evaluation.

Summarizing, a critical rethinking and epistemological reconceptualization of this situational analysis tool is proposed, adapting it to the principles and foundations of Social Work. With this, a greater technical and human improvement of the tool is pursued, contributing, on the one hand, to collect more complete and complex social information. Likewise, to establish with all the actors involved more effective strategies from the perspective of social intervention and action.

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Annexes

Matrix 1: SWOT situational analysis from Business Sciences

Internal factors	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
External factors	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Matrix 2: SWOT strategies from Business Sciences

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
STRENGTHS	Offensive strategies	Defensive strategies
WEAKNESSES	Strategies towards reorientation	Survival strategies

Matrix 3: SWOT situational analysis from Social Sciences (Social Work)

Internal factors	**CAPACITIES AND SATIS-FIED NEEDS**	**VULNERABILITIES AND UNSATISFIED NEEDS**
External factors	**SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES**	**SOCIAL RISKS**

Matrix 4: SWOT strategies from Social Sciences (Social Work)

	SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES	**SOCIAL RISKS**
CAPACITIES AND SAT-ISFIED NEEDS	Information, orientation and promotion	Prevention, awareness and mediation
VULNERABILITIES AND UNSATISFIED NEEDS	Comprehensive care, protection and assistance	Agency, coordination, planning and evaluation