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Social insertion vs. (political) entryism

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1.1. Terminologically, in English at least, the especificismo concept of “social insertion” may seem to refer to a similar practice as “entryism”, however, within the framing of a particular strategy and clear objectives, there is a theoretical difference.

1.2. Social insertion is distinct in its conception, implementation, and aims, but these differences are difficult to understand superficially, necessitating a didactic exposition of the organizational theory and strategy of especificismo.

2.1. In especificismo, social work refers to the struggle for influence in social movements and mass organizations, and social insertion refers to a certain degree of acceptance of revolutionary values and practices by these movements and organizations.

2.2. When a space is unwelcoming to rank-and-file decision making or organized direct action, the political organization does social work to introduce and familiarize the participants to these methods, and when an effective number of these participants want to defend their own collective interests against reaction, coopta-

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tion, and bureaucratic leadership, the political organization has social insertion.

3.1. While there is obviously an attempt to maintain a flow of radicalizing people to the political organization, the emphasis is always on the degree of unity and coordination of these militants, not their quantity; it is the popular organization that must grow its numbers because the goal of social transformation is not attainable through winning political positions, growing a party, or splitting pluralistic spaces ideologically.

3.2. As the FARJ (Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro) says, “it is ideology that should be within social movements, and not social movements that should be within ideology.”

3.3. Organizational dualism is about having multiple engagements and commitments on the social level AND organizing ideologically on the political level, two distinct autonomous and complementary movements within a single conception of effective action.

4.1. The difference between entryism and social insertion is made more complicated by the mistranslation of “dualismo organizativo” as “dual organizationalism”, a term closely resembling “dual carding”, something which could be seen as a kind of entryism practiced by some anarcho-syndicalists where members of a revolutionary union are also members of trade unions, usually clandestinely.

4.2. When translating into English, it is a mistake to switch the grammatical function of words in a precise term because it can lead to bias; the modifier “dual” implies something that is doubled or split, and when applied to the substantive “organizationalism”, it can be read literally (not theoretically) to mean either two branches of a single organizational practice or one form of organization that is practiced in two places.

4.3. This is made more confusing by the literal meaning of the word “dual” in the phrase “dual power”, leading some anglophones

of influence from the political to the social, making the political level the only real place for self-management and protagonism.

8.4. Therefore, the modifier “political” may be helpful in distinguishing the objectives of entryism from those of social insertion; political entryism has political objectives and political motivations because it is a practice of political protagonism for the purpose of building political power.

9.1. As a revolutionary anarchist current, *especificismo* aims to forge popular power and political-level unity through the means of social work and organization.

9.2. Social insertion is a social process; it is part of a strategy for a social transformation which would signify the liberation of the dominated classes and the creation of a new egalitarian society.

9.3. Unlike the various forms of (political) entryism, the objective of social work and insertion is not (1) a power grab, (2) a covert form of manipulation, (3) a membership drive, or (4) an attempt to force organizational divisions to the surface; it aims instead to win over the dominated classes to their own struggles so that they see themselves as having a social force capable reshaping society in their own interests.

10.1. This has not been an attempt to depict entryism in any particular way; rather it has been an attempt to present the theoretical background and the strategic outlook of *especificismo* so as to better understand the concept of social insertion.

10.2. In this effort, it has been necessary to explain the roles of various modifiers (dual, organizational, social, and political) as well as various substantives (organizationalism, dualism, insertion, and entryism).

10.3. Having demonstrated the structural relevance of terms composed of modified substantives, anglophones should be more well equipped to continue to contrast organizational dualism from dual organizationalism, as well as social insertion from (political) entryism

to have a false sense of consistency of thought which is actually the result of mistranslation.

4.4.1. By contrast, the substantive “dualism” refers to the condition of two things which are distinct but still exist within the same conception, so the modifier “organizational” refers to the kind of conception that can theoretically connect and practically distinguish two persistently present facets.

4.4.2. So, in the theory of *especificismo*, organizational dualism situates all possible manifestations of struggle against the ruling class on a single plane so that they can be understood in relation to each other and as being the result of two fundamental organizational characteristics: (1) popular movement and (2) political movement, which, in practice, take the forms of social insertion and political organization respectively.

4.4.3. By conceiving of a single field of action, organizational dualism allows the political organization to incorporate all kinds of new information and continue to shape itself and direct its actions in relevant ways regarding long-term objectives.

4.4.4. This is not the same as a theory that, from a strictly political perspective, conceives of two “dual” possibilities, constantly raising the question: is this an example of insertion or organization?

4.4.5. It is also different from a theory that conceives of social insertion and political organization as their own distinct fields of action, like a fork-in-the-road splitting the paths of revolutionary work, resulting inevitably in reformist movements on the social level and sectarianism on the political level.

4.4.6. Because organizational dualism does not assume an organizational perspective that is outside of this singular field of action, it considers political analysis itself to be a form of action; there is no neutral, mediating, “removed” perspective from which to produce political understanding, so in developing political analysis, the political organization must recognize its own position as

an already existing condition, meaning the anarchist revolutionary project must be a kind of movement.

5.1. Organizational dualism is a theoretical method of understanding revolutionary action on two distinct axes and should not be reduced to a simple ideological position that opposes “anti-organizationalism” as might be implied by the incorrect use of the substantive “organizationalism”.

5.2. The political organization is distinctly developing a different perspective to that of the popular organization because it is part of an ideological movement (anarchism) as opposed to a social movement (class struggle); these movements are both part of the same shared context and, therefore, should inform each other’s actions.

5.3. Following from this, it is anarchism that should be within the class struggle and not the class struggle that should be within anarchism; this requires social insertion, a political practice that maintains a connection between anarchist ideology on the political level and pluralistic movements on the social level.

6.1. As Juan Carlos Mechoso said when speaking to the OAC (Anarchist Organization of Cordoba), “the political organization is a driving motor of the popular movement, never a glorified vanguard in itself.”

6.2. “The political organization must include diverse opinions that understand the revolution as a process during which we develop new practices and new relationships between various parts.”

6.3. “The political organization should be rigorous in its analysis, knowing in detail where to introduce its fundamental ideas, the dynamics that generate its actions, and the rhythm of change in its relations.”

6.4. “The social insertion supported by the political organization aims to develop a popular power that will emerge as a movement of rupture with the current system.”

7.1. In the article “Anarchism, Power, Class and Social Change” Felipe Corrêa says, “If the ends of anarchist social transfor-

mation are characterized by a change in the power model of society – overcoming a dominating power and establishing a self-managing power –, the means employed must therefore reinforce self-management.”

7.2. “Means that do not coincide with that end must be discarded: those that reinforce capitalism, the State and the institutions that sustain them; those that remove from the masses the necessary protagonism in the process of social transformation; those that stimulate the spirit of survival and obedience.”

7.3. Popular protagonism is not about personal or political opportunism, and social insertion is not a branding exercise for a party or sect.

7.4. Popular protagonism is not a series of individualistic efforts; its emphasis is on the dominated classes collectively because “[articulating] and mobilizing the dominated classes would enable a significant gain of force.”

7.5. To this end, social insertion must be attentive to and respectful of plurality in two ways: (1) the plurality of ideologies and motivations in a particular struggle and (2) the plurality of struggles manifested as disparate events.

8.1. Social insertion is not about clout chasing or political “base building”; this strategy is oriented around the dominated classes themselves as the revolutionary subjects, pitting popular protagonism against ruling class antagonism, insisting on class independence as a defense against cooptation by capitalist interests, vanguard parties, and charismatic leaders.

8.2. Throughout this process, in order to be effective, but also for ethical reasons, the militants of the political organization must always know (1) how they have decided to work, (2) for whom they are working, and (3) what they are doing.

8.3. This mutuality in struggle and respect for the varied demands of different spaces is the “social” aspect modifying the substantive “insertion”, implying the possibility of an alternative “political insertion” that would emphasize a unidirectional movement