

## EDITORIAL

### RESEARCH APPROACH: PARTICIPATORY ACTION AS A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Methodology (from the Greek *meta* “beyond”, *odos* “way”, and *logo* “study”), it refers to the group of procedures based on logic principles, used to reach a range of goals that rule a scientific research. Method and methodology are two different concepts. Method is the procedure used to reach the goals, in this case, the ones defined in a research project, and the methodology is the study of the method, which is directly related to the epistemological posture, which is assumed and guarantees a scientific approach. During the middle of the last century, social research was labeled under a quantitative approach, positivist; in which experimentation, objectivity, validity and reliability prevailed as necessary requirements. Later on, a new approach was assumed towards qualitative perspectives, making use of flexible designs, but rigorous, which have allowed the evolution of knowledge through this new posture, without ruling out its scientific nuance.

According to Habermas, there are three types of paradigms: empiric, analytic, historic-hermeneutic and social-critic; each one of them assumes a methodological approach which leads the researcher on the way how he should address his object of study, and the way to present the discoveries of his research. According to the social-critic paradigm, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a methodology that allows the development of research processes, which emerges as a way to grant power to people, so they can assume affective actions towards the improvement of their life conditions.

PAR is a methodology, which presents some particular features among the ones with the qualitative approach, which leads to many criticisms, and even, to questioning their practice. In this regard, PAR is different from the conventional research because of the specificity of the social change goals that it pursues, the implementation and modification of the research methods, the types of knowledge it produces, and because of the way it connects knowledge with social action. Peter Park (1989, p. 138).

From a methodological ground, it should be stated from this perspective, the construction of a new society, which incorporates the needs for change and expands the perspective of the global causes of the existing problem. Orlando Fals Borda points out that one of the main problems to handle in the methodology of the research action, is the one connected to production of scientific knowledge; in this sense, the meaning of “popular science” or “science of the people” should be reexamined and reevaluated. Fals Borda suggests that by accepting the premise that says that the science of the people (empiric knowledge), which has allowed them to survive, interpret, create and produce, has its own rationale and its own causality structure, it becomes convenient to start to try to understand that rationale on its own specificity. In this way, it will remember how much the popular wisdom has benefited civilization in different fields.

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Because of the aforementioned arguments, it becomes evident that PAR is contrary to the traditional methodological practice, for it has become a problem to establish specific objectives, strategies and designed instruments, and time-line for activities, among others a priori; nevertheless, each one of these aspects are built as long as the researchers become part of the community, and get in contact with the everyday routine, for their primordial goal is not generation of knowledge, but its empowerment in a community so it lives its own social transformation.

In the scientific research it is essential that a methodology leads to valid and reliable results. Therefore, the PAR is suggested as a methodology that expresses a qualitative analysis of action about social reality, and it can be contemplated in a different alternative that includes the citizens as lead actors to cause changes in the social reality.

In this line of thought, the editorial position of Saber, Ciencia y Libertad praises the efforts of that the different researchers have made individually or collectively, with the goal of achieving social transformation in the pursuit of new knowledge, with new methodologies of participatory research or with different approaches, but with one sole goal, which is, to contribute with human development.

In like manner, we are pleased to offer the national or international academic community, this new issue, which is the product of an institutional endeavor and, in special of the researchers who made this new edition possible, which contains a wide variety of articles related to different subjects pertaining the social science, and that we hope it contributes with the development and advancement of science.

**ZILATH ROMERO GONZÁLEZ**  
**Editor**