




Plans and plays

Planes y juegos

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ABSTRACT This article is structured around two concepts – planning (as the attempt to predict the future through reason) and play (as freedom in the present) – used to discuss work processes, organizational forms, institutionality and the management of public institutions in the social field, with an emphasis on the fields of health and education. Based on Nietzsche’s reflection regarding the mythological figures of Dionysus and Apollo, a synthesis of the development of planning in Latin America is carried out with the aid of works by Carlos Matus and Mario Testa. From this perspective, play is analyzed over the course of history, in addition to the proposal of Homo ludens and the unrecognized role of play in the day-to-day life of social institutions. However, understanding the game does not guarantee that the forms of playing it will change. Therein lie the complexity and challenges that must be considered in relation to structures that are both structuring and structured by the actions of their agents, in the framework of processes of reproduction and social domination that naturalize current institutional forms.

KEY WORDS Planning; Game Theory; Organizations; Institutions; Work.

RESUMEN Este artículo se estructura sobre dos conceptos: la planificación (como intento de predicción del futuro a través de la razón) y el juego (en tanto libertad en el presente), desde los cuales se discuten los procesos de trabajo, las formas organizativas, la institucionalidad y la gestión de las instituciones públicas del campo social, con énfasis en las del campo de la salud y la educación. A partir del planteo de Nietzsche sobre las figuras mitológicas griegas Dionisio y Apolo, se realiza una síntesis del desarrollo de la planificación en América Latina a través de Carlos Matus y Mario Testa para, desde allí, analizar el juego a lo largo de la historia, la propuesta del Homo ludens y la presencia no reconocida del juego en el cotidiano de las instituciones sociales. Entender el juego no garantiza que se cambien las formas en que se lo juega. Allí reside la complejidad y el desafío que debe ser pensado en la relación de estructuras que son estructurantes pero que, a su vez, son estructuradas por la acción de sus agentes, en el marco de procesos de reproducción y dominación social que naturalizan las formas institucionales vigentes.

PALABRAS CLAVES Planificación; Teoría del Juego; Organizaciones; Instituciones; Trabajo.

INTRODUCTION

"Man's maturity: to have regained the seriousness that he had as a child at play"

Friedrich Nietzsche.⁽¹⁾

The subject matter of this article is made up of work processes, organizational forms, institutionality, and management of public institutions in the social field, with an emphasis on the fields of health and education. Based on that "subject matter," the following questions are posed: why do we plan to do what we do not do, and why do we do what we did not plan to do? Why do we intend to plan for the future if we are always living in the present? Why do we feel the necessity of setting goals if we will not fulfill them? Why is play not regarded as part of the work process, the organizational forms, the institutionality, and management?

In order to address these questions, two concepts are taken up again: planning (as the attempt to predict the future through reason) and play (as freedom in the present), a discussion based on Nietzsche's reflections regarding the relationship between the Greek mythological figures of Dionysus and Apollo. A synthesis of the development of planning in Latin America is carried out through the work of Carlos Matus and Mario Testa. From this perspective, play is analyzed over the course of history, in addition to the proposal of *Homo ludens* and the unrecognized role of playing in the daily life of social institutions. At the end of this article, another question is discussed: why are things the way they are? We discuss social reproduction and domination processes that naturalize the current institutionality, including work, organizational forms, management, and administration of those institutions.

PLANNING AND PLAYING IN DIONYSUS AND APOLLO

In his book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Friederich Nietzsche (1844-1900) describes

the confrontation between Apollo and Dionysus⁽²⁾ as an indefinite and endless battle, which is part of western culture, and attributes the downfall of Greek culture to the abandonment of the Dionysian spirit.

In Greek mythology, Apollo is portrayed as a stylish, symmetrical, and smooth-faced god. He represents predominant western values such as rationality, sculpture, words, individualization, harmony, moderation, and balance. According to Apollo, everything should be definite and specific. He is the moral compass of the powerful, of those who create the language with words that know the task. In this way, grammar represents order, which, to Dionysus, becomes a prison.^(3,4,5) Apollo needs Dionysus to overcome him, and Dionysus needs Apollo to restrain him.⁽²⁾ According to Nietzsche, Apollo represents a restriction to Dionysus' excesses.

Based on the Greek mythological characterization and Nietzsche's interpretations, Dionysus is identified with standing outside oneself, fear, archaic times, orgies, intoxication, music, the vertigo of dancing, excitement, the joy of living, irrational forces, unlimited passion, instinct. Dionysus shows a careless and filthy appearance, with hair covering his body and hiding its shape. Dionysus represents the ludic nature, as opposed to Apollo, who represents rationality. The Dionysian cult is characterized by being chaotic, liberating, and instinctive, as it embodies the forces of desire.^(2,4) The Dionysian culture transforms fear into "I wanted to do so" by changing the rejection of life into accepting the tragic nature of life.

Nietzsche considered himself to be the last Dionysian disciple.⁽³⁾ He regards life as happiness and horror, that is why he vindicates it in the "here and now," "the human body," "passions" and "desire," true to his idea that life is not an *a priori* situation, but a unique and exceptional conjugation, the result of antagonisms that are solved throughout its course, which he symbolizes as an immeasurable maze.^(2,6)

Apollo loved Cassandra, and to seduce her, he granted her the gift of prophecy. Cassandra, after accepting it, refused to love

Apollo back, which infuriated him. For this reason, Apollo withdrew the gift of inspiring trust from her, turning her gift of prophecy into misfortune. From that moment on, nobody believed in her predictions, and she was always seen as a madwoman.⁽⁵⁾ Many years later, Apollo decided to grant the gift of prophecy again, this time to a young Hermes, god of trade and theft.

PLANNING IN MODERNITY

Apollo colonized us and, by way of Cartesian reason, he influenced our concept of planning as the possibility of setting goals to be achieved in the future. Planning, in its technical sense, hides its ideological dimension, obtaining a strong “Cartesian” adhesion. As such, it is still being taught at universities (undergraduate and graduate programs) and it is applied in the form of programs from central levels of government as a product of planning that includes all policies, removing its political features.^(7,8)

Planning intends to remove the anxiety from reality and to limit Dionysus because reality is excessively intense and its immediacy is not simple to tolerate; it becomes difficult to handle and causes fear and anxiety. “Reality exceeds” [own translation] states Darío Sztajnszrajber.⁽⁴⁾ Hence the anxiolytic power of planning, which is based on the process of capturing the Dionysian force. In modern times, planning has been established as a method to predict the future through rational action, which eliminates the ludic nature.

Our belief in planning is such that during election campaigns, for a politician to be considered serious, he or she must have a plan. So much so that the politician is mostly asked about the plan, rather than his or her values or governmental capacity to carry it out. We live in a period of weak democracies, which contributes to the fallacy of believing in a plan, as no account is rendered when plans fail.

Mario Testa and Carlos Matus’ professional background

In the field of planning, there are two authors in Latin America who cannot be ignored: Carlos Matus (1931-1998) and Mario Testa (1925-). Both have been referential figures in our professional training.⁽⁹⁾ These authors will be introduced based on the concept of “professional background” adopted by Bourdieu,⁽¹⁰⁾ who proposes to analyze life in terms of a professional background, beyond bibliographic data, that is to say, the agent’s journey in the social field, in different positions and in transitions, employing limited resources and negotiating and disputing with others the control of economic, cultural, political, and symbolic capital.

We consider that loyalty to a thought does not lie in its repetition, but in rethinking – in other times and historical and social contexts – the problems that gave way to its questions. It is public knowledge and well known that our debt to Mario Testa’s thinking is evident in many of our ways of thinking and acting over the last three decades. This does not mean that we are exegetes of his work, but we do acknowledge ourselves to be in debt to him. Within the framework of that debt, we suggest reconsidering his thinking, not to sacralize it, but to help us, as a product of a historical time, to consider his achievements, his mistakes, his successes, and his passions. *Pensar en salud* [to think about health] again, which is the title of Testa’s book, where he specifies the strong limitations that planning ideas have and which serve as a foundation for his rupture with that idea.⁽¹¹⁾ Our relationship with Matus has been through readings, from situational strategic planning to his last considerations about theories and government methods. We will see in their biographical elements and in their professional backgrounds how the Cartesian rationality and the certainty in science as a central element for progress are deconstructed over the years when facing real

situations against which they show a honesty rarely seen. May these lines help the reader understand the evolution of the ideas from planning to playing.

Mario Testa was born on May 15, 1925, in the district of Boedo in the city of Buenos Aires, in the bosom of a middle-class family. His father, Humberto Antonio, was a civil engineer and worked at the Public Works Department [*Ministerio de Obras Públicas*], where he became the person in charge of the National Direction of Port and Nautical Works [*Dirección Nacional de Obras Portuarias y Navegables*]. His mother, Amelia de Franchi, was a teacher, a career she would interrupt for the sake of maternity. Both of his parents were Argentine, and on his father's side, his grandparents were from southern Italy; on his mother's side, his grandfather was Italian, and his grandmother was Uruguayan. Testa completed his secondary education at the Buenos Aires National School [*Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires*], dependent on the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). Between the years of 1944 and 1951, he studied medicine at Universidad de Buenos Aires, where he met Asia Selvin (1925-), who would later become his life partner, and with whom he would have two children, Pablo and Alejandro. From the time he finished his studies and became a physician, until the year 1958, he performed his medical practice in the fields of internal medicine, clinic pneumonology, endoscopy and thoracic surgery at the "José de San Martín" Clinical Hospital [*Hospital de Clínicas "José de San Martín"*] in the city of Buenos Aires and at the "Dr. Antonio Cetrángolo" Hospital [*Hospital "Dr. Antonio Cetrángolo"*] located in Vicente López, province of Buenos Aires. Then, Mario began to move away from medical practice and, between 1958 and 1960, he worked as the head of the UBA Scholarship Department [*Departamento de Becas de la UBA*] under the rectorship of Risieri Frondizi. Between 1958 and 1959, he conducted mathematical analysis studies (1 and 2) and algebra (1 and 2) at the School of Physical and Natural Sciences [*Facultad de Ciencias Físicas y Naturales*], UBA. Between

1961 and 1962, he completed the Master's degree in General Economic Planning [*Maestría en Planificación Económica General*] at the Development Studies Center [CENDES, from the Spanish *Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo*] at the Universidad Central de Venezuela. In the year 1965, he studied Introduction to Computer Science and Advanced Computer Science at the School of Sciences [*Facultad de Ciencias*] of the Universidad Central de Venezuela. From then on, his professional life was linked to the planning field, working on investigations, teaching, and consultancy in almost every Latin American country, hired by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) [*Organización Panamericana de la Salud*], the World Bank, and many universities.

A synthesis of his thinking may be appreciated in what we consider to be the central concept of his reflections. Thus, in a critical reference to the CENDES/PAHO method, to which design and development he contributed,⁽¹²⁾ he states: "we assigned zero value to a variable whose only value should not be zero," [own translation] referring to power and conflict. Such reflection was influenced by the *system dynamics* approach developed by Jey Forrester in the 1950s at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).⁽¹³⁾ It should be noted that one hundred years earlier Nietzsche declared: "Within the origin lies the conflict"⁽³⁾ [own translation]. Between the years 1976 and 1978, in the city of Montes Carlos, Brazil, Testa advised Francisco de Assis Machado, best known as *Chicão*, a pediatrician and director of a health center, from whom he adopts the following statement: "it is not about establishing rules, but about triggering processes" [own translation].^(14,15,16) If Testa were asked "what is the purpose of triggering processes?", the answer would be to construct new social players to take part in the game.⁽¹⁷⁾ And if he were asked the same question again, the answer would be: to establish new items for discussion on the government agenda.⁽¹⁴⁾ This reflection, formed in the second half of the 20th century, which in our view summarizes Testa's intellectual effort and activism, indicates a clear separation

from rational planning methods. With regards to his relationship with Matus, Testa claims:

Carlos and I agree on many things, I think that we both believe, deep down in our hearts, that planning is inevitable...You should plan, but problems are not solved by planning.⁽²⁸⁾ [Own translation]

The reflection above is validated by processes that have been triggered in the last decades in Argentina by the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo [*Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*] association, the first pickets in Plaza Huincul (Neuquén) and Tartagal (Salta), and the women's movement ("Not one woman less" [*Ni una menos*]), the fight to legalize abortion, and the "me too" movement in Argentina), among others. Those processes were not planned. They were spontaneous actions with enough people behind them to create social movements that established debates in the public agenda. These processes would have been impossible to be thought of as *a priori*, especially considering the ways and perspectives that initially led to them or the time in which they were triggered. For Testa, the concept of *processes* is related to the concept of *event*, which we will later discuss.

Carlos Matus was born on December 19, 1931, in Quillota, Valparaíso, Chile, into a middle-class family. His mother, Eugenia Romo, held an undergraduate degree in piano, granted by the music conservatory, and his father, Julio Matus, was a bank employee. Both belonged to several generations of Chilean families, and for this reason, the processes of the arrival of both families' first immigrants in Chile are unknown.

Matus graduated from the Military School [*Liceo Militar*] in 1949, and in 1955, he was awarded an undergraduate degree in Commercial Engineering, granted by the Universidad de Chile. Between the years 1955 and 1956, he obtained a Master of Public Administration at Harvard University, majoring in senior management and strategic planning, with a scholarship granted by the Department of the Treasury of the Chilean

government, where he used to work while he was studying at university. Matus married María Juanita Mac-Niven (her parents were English), whom he had met at the school of economics. She did not graduate because she followed Matus to the US and did not finish her thesis. They had three children: Patricia, Rodrigo, and Sol.

From 1957 to 1959, he worked as an advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury and as an assistant professor of the subject Economic Policy within the graduate course of studies in Planning and Development delivered by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) [*Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)*] and the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning [ILPES, from the Spanish *Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social*], in Santiago de Chile. He was also a member of various planning consultancy missions oriented to many Latin-American countries. Between 1965 and 1970, he was the director of the Advisory Services Division of the ILPES [*División de Servicios de Asesoría del ILPES*], United Nations, Chile. He led the team of technicians who developed the methodology of the annual operating plan [POA, from the Spanish *planes operativos anuales*], which was spread to many Latin-American countries, having missions in Central America, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Perú, and Colombia, among others. Between 1970 and 1973, under Salvador Allende's government, Testa was appointed president of the Pacific Steel Company [*Compañía de acero del Pacífico*], when he created the iron and steel complex and carried out the nationalization of copper. He was later appointed Finance Minister of Chile and President of the Production and Development Corporation Council [*Consejo de la Corporación de Fomento y Producción*]. In 1973, he worked as the President's economic advisor and as President of the Central Bank of Chile. Due to the military coup, he spent three years in prison, first on Dawson Island (Strait of Magellan),⁽¹⁸⁾ and then in Ritoque (Valparaíso region). When

Table 1. Postulates on Planning.

Postulates	Normative planning	Situational planning
Postulate 1	Subject separated from object	Subject inside the object containing subjects
Postulate 2	Explanation as diagnosis	Situational explanation
Postulate 3	System which observes the rules	System which observes and creates the rules
Postulate 4	Power is not a limited resource	Power is a shared resource
Postulate 5	Economic calculation of the ought to be	Situational calculation
Postulate 6	Well-structured problems	Quasi-structured problems
Postulate 7	Certainty	Uncertainty
Postulate 8	Close ending	Open ending

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Matus⁽²⁵⁾.

he was released due to international pressure over the Chilean dictatorship, he moved to Venezuela to work for CENDES (where he had worked a few decades before). In 1986, he left the United Nations and, in 1988, he created the High Direction Foundation [Altidir, from the Spanish *Fundación de Alta Dirección*], where he provides consultancy and training services for several government institutions from Latin America.⁽¹⁹⁾

Matus had to go through the experience of Allende's government to be faced with a crisis regarding planning as the main goal and to prioritize instead managing/governing over planning; a crisis which is reinforced when he realizes that other Latin American leaders, regardless of their ideology, were making the same mistakes that he had made in the Popular Unity government of Chile. For this reason, he starts to think and write about government capacities,^(20,21,22) which he considers to be the main reason for weakness when it comes to governing and which he also experienced during his time in government.⁽²³⁾ Due to all these events, he stated in 1988 "I no longer speak about planning, I speak about government theories and methods now."⁽²⁴⁾ [Own translation].

The epistemology of Planning

In the 1960s, within the framework of the Alliance for Progress in Latin America [*Alianza para el Progreso en América Latina*] (1961-1970), normative planning was considered a

central tool for the progress of these countries. At the end of the 1970s, due to the failure of normative planning and in an effort to escape from that normative and inflexible planning method, Matus proposes situational strategic planning (SSP)⁽²⁵⁾ [PES, from the Spanish *planificación estratégica situacional*] (Table 1), in which he identifies the "other", disrupting the Cartesian/Kantian matrix of the subject-object relationship, and he incorporates the "everybody plays" idea.⁽²⁵⁾ However, Matus cannot escape from the notion of time and from the omnipotence of reason, as he continues to believe that future events can be predicted through reason.

In their last works, both Matus and Testa strongly address the concepts of language and playing,^(19,26,27) which we intend to take up again in this article. Matus' posthumous book is entitled *Teoría del Juego Social*⁽¹⁹⁾ [Social Game Theory], and in Testa's book *Saber en Salud*⁽²⁷⁾ [Knowledge in Health], we discover arguments based on Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), Jürgen Habermas (1929-), Julia Kristeva (1941-), and Jean Piaget (1896-1980), authors who are not present in his previous work and whose ideas are far from the epistemic view of his theoretical references from his time as a planner, which is reflected in this quote made by Testa:

...it is true, I used to work in science, not in politics, then, I worked in politics, not in science...but it was since the defeat in 1976, when the necessary space was

created to reconsider this science-politics articulation.⁽²⁸⁾ [Own translation].

Planning, as a domain of reason, does not include play. If we look up the word “*juego*” [play] in the *Diccionario de planeación y planificación: un ensayo conceptual* [Dictionary of scheduling and planning: a conceptual essay], we learn that it is not included.⁽²⁹⁾ Planning, as we know it, is the result of modernity and the Cartesian subject. It was conceived as a tool for progress, a positivist concept strongly criticized by Nietzsche, who considered progress a pagan substitute in light of God’s death.⁽³⁾ Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), using the metaphor of the *Angelus Novo*, based on Paul Klee’s painting, also sees progress as destruction⁽³⁰⁾; and Cardozo and Faletto, in their traditional essay written between 1966 and 1967, incorporate the idea of dependency to confront the idea of progress.⁽³¹⁾ Many critical references were made regarding the idea of progress, but we will only mention, as a tribute, a quote from Silvia Bleichmar (1944-2007), who in the 1990s in Argentina wrote: “progress is reduced to the technical-scientific advancement, without creating expectations of a protected life.” [Own translation].⁽³²⁾

Can we reduce the analysis of 60 years marked by ideas of planning and progress to a story about the good against the bad? Can we move forward, beyond old structural proposals and ask ourselves why smart people like Matus and Testa were so wrong? Are there any epistemological issues at stake which must be addressed so as not to keep making the same mistakes and fueling new defeats? Why does politics betray its own political essence? Or is it not true that government administrations many times break or divert political promises made, even during progressive, leftist, or popular governments? Not only is it about exceeding the Cartesian-rational basis, but also about considering the architectural sense of politics: how is it constructed? How is it executed? How to govern? And how are social issues considered and understood?^(8,33,34) The foregoing, in general, is not part of the reflective processes of those

governing or intending to govern. The discursive conscience places politics within the logical concept of the “must be,” ignoring the Nietzschesian idea which affirms that “the logical way is not a must be, but a want to be.”⁽⁶⁾ [Own translation]. Thus, the practical conscience leads to denying many aspects of the “must be.” The gap between both consciences is not questioned. Therefore, the distance between them increases, as well as society’s distrust of agents/leaders and from communities of their institutions.

Why do we plan? Because we fear uncertainty. Planning has damaging effects at an individual level (it prevents the development of the being) and at a demographic level (projection of inflation rates and other rates). Problems are not solved through planning. Complex problems are exchanged in rational processes, through organization and teams, through actions where reason, desire, experience, fate, play, and the ludic element may interfere, all of them, or some of them, without us being able to specify *a priori* which one, when, and at which level of intensity.

The idea of planning might seem to have a Biblical origin, because, just as the original sin, it has marked us all. Planning is the rationalization of our desire in the future, forgetting that desire only applies to the present, and it is not rational. Planning must not be confused with organization either. Planning is the result of theories that collide when facing problems in practice, since they may bring up theoretical problems for which scientific knowledge is – at the very least – inadequate.⁽¹⁹⁾ When we plan, representations of reality are brought to mind, but when we play, the self is stripped bare, and its practices become visible.

The future as the dominant notion of time in modernity

According to Milton Santos, “space is an unequal accumulation of times”⁽³⁵⁾ [own translation]. It is like a maze, it is relational, it is ludic. On the other hand, planning conceives just one time, which is linear, rational,

and synchronic. Therefore, it is disruptive regarding social play, which is essentially diachronic.

As long as we continue to place problems in the future, they will continue to be unfulfilled tasks. Hence, “we plan what we do not do, and we do what we did not plan to do.”⁽²⁵⁾ Action has only one possible time: the present, continuous.⁽³⁶⁾ We do not understand action as a reflex reaction, rather, it is a strategic move, and by being loyal to that move, the event may occur, which can only be acknowledged in hindsight (contrary to the predictive aspect of planning).^(37,38) The event may coincide more or less with what was planned, and its effects may even exceed it. This move may be compared to the potential falling of drops on a stone, which is pierced by constantly striking over the same spot in a continuous present. The move differs from the drop because its repetition is not mechanical; hence, we talk about fidelity rather than repetition. This fidelity does not depend on a place or a time; it stands firm and constant based on the desire that conditions that idea/desire to which one is loyal.

When discussing planning, the notion of time has a significant influence. If the future is the dominant notion, we just have to plan, but if the dominant notion is that of the present continuous (the only time in which we have lived, live and will live), we have to act, follow the move and be loyal to those moves. Boaventura Santos recovers the notion of time portrayed by Walter Benjamin⁽³⁶⁾ and Ernest Bloch,⁽³⁹⁾ which is also found in Nietzsche’s work, who sees the instant as a unity of the present, past, and future.⁽³⁾ Boaventura Santos critically describes the future as an expansion (an unfulfilled present in its unfulfilled time), and therefore, he proposes to compress it. At the same time, he defines the present as compressed, including the unfulfilled past, and consequently, he proposes to expand it. Thus, actions find their space in the present (unfulfilled), which helps to recover what is unresolved (unfulfilled past), providing actions with a historical context, thus, avoiding a decontextualized doing.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Planning attempts to predict the future through various techniques,⁽⁴¹⁾ denying the nature of the unfulfilled present in its unfulfilled time.⁽⁴⁰⁾ As a result of the prevalence of the future, the significance of the doing is underestimated, as well as the organizational forms and the creation of task-centered groups, which are considered essential processes in order to expand the present time as a compressed time dragging an unfulfilled past with it.⁽⁴⁰⁾

PLAY: DIONYSUS’ DOMAIN

In this section, we will briefly discuss an overview of the presence of play in history across different cultures and thinkers, and then we will discuss the *Homo ludens* proposal by Johan Huizinga (1872-1945).⁽⁴²⁾

Games have been part of humanity since ancient times; they were and still are the subject matter of different fields and disciplines, which does not mean a univocity of interpretations.

According to Nietzsche, Heraclitus (540-470 BC) was the first person to introduce the notion of play into philosophical thinking.⁽⁶⁾ Then, especially after the Platonic Matrix, play was considered as useful, instrumental, helpful, and complementary to the social order, rather than a constituent aspect of life. Games became something of everyday life that had to be at the service of an order, which degraded the notion of playing.^(6,43) In ancient Greece, sophists discovered that rhetoric applied to politics was a ludic expression of agonal magnitude. Plato, despite his conservatism in “The Laws”, addresses the issue of playing and highlights its usefulness in education, as expressed in the idea of teaching through play.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Herodotus (484-426 BC), a Greek historian, describes how Attis, King of the Lydians, faced a severe shortage of food by inventing games and pastimes that entertained and amused the Lydians, who spent days without eating. By doing so, they could overcome the critical food shortage.

We find in Aristotle the concept of “*eutrapelia*,” to describe people’s capacity to abandon seriousness to get amusement without excess. This concept will influence St. Thomas (1225-1274), who validates certain games and prohibits others. For example, he prohibits private games (especially those where money is involved), while he promotes equestrian games.⁽⁴³⁾

Different indigenous peoples living on the American continent have developed many games which constituted – until the time of the conquest – a central part of their sociability and culture. Slave labor would later be used as a means to end those games in order to eradicate every trace of their culture and confine their lives to slavery.

In the 17th century, under the Cartesian dominance, René Pascal (1623-1662) considered play as a mathematical problem, as well as a paradigm and a moral determinant, and he states: “a man spends his life without weariness in playing every day for a small stake.”⁽⁴⁵⁾

In the 18th century, in the field of mathematics, play was incorporated from a rational perspective.⁽⁴³⁾ Play was considered a pedagogical element by Jean J. Rousseau (1712-1778), which is reflected in his book *Emile, or On Education*, from 1762:

To bound from one end of the room to the other, to judge a ball’s bounces while still in the air, to return it with a hand vigorous and sure...; such games are less suitable for a grown man than useful for forming him.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Kant (1724-1804) would be less optimistic regarding ludic activities; he will not think of them as being beneficial, as he will insist on preparing children and young people for the work field.⁽⁴³⁾ In his book *On Education*, published in 1785, he writes:

We may be occupied in games, which we call being occupied in our leisure time, and we may be occupied by compulsion, which we call work. Scholastic

culture constitutes work for the child, free culture constitutes play.⁽⁴⁷⁾

The 19th century is considered the century of serious matters. During this period of time, the Victorian morals displaced play as a socialization method because it took time from people’s lives, and that time was needed for work, which required the complete commitment of the workforce. Those were the demands of the industrial revolution, mediated by England’s imperial vocation.⁽⁴⁸⁾ During this time, the dominance of the economy established the idea of productivity, and games were considered unproductive “children stuff,” considering them the opposite of serious matters. Playing was infantilized and replaced by false games, like sport games of worldwide relevance, thus losing its ludic nature.^(42,44)

Nietzsche considers play as the activity performed before the implementation of the forms.⁽⁶⁾ According to Ambrosini, Friedrich Nietzsche finds in play a practice that breaks with every traditional knowledge scheme, since there is no *a priori* instance, as play creates and anticipates itself into forms. Hence, according to Nietzsche, play is a theoretical object, an interpretative scheme, and an unconditioned project, which refers to the concept of immanence in the sense of questioning traditions of thought, customs, authorities, and acquired reasoning.⁽⁶⁾ In this way, Nietzsche is only confronting the concept of transcendence, which is so valued in Kantian thought.

In 1907, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) stated the relation between play and poetic creation, and he claimed that adults replace childhood games with fantasizing (daydreaming), of which they are generally ashamed due to a potential social punishment.⁽⁴³⁾ From the psychology field, the importance of play in childhood will be emphasized as a means to shape one’s personality and to learn in an experimental way how to socialize and how to solve conflictive matters and situations. Games for children and adults are examples of conflictive and cooperative situations where we can identify situations and rules that are frequently repeated in the real world.

During the 20th century, thinkers like Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and Jerome Bruner (1915-2016) recovered the role of play from the perspective of cognitive psychology and highlighted the strong connections between play and learning. In his work, Piaget makes an indisputable reference to children's games' contribution to cognitive development.⁽⁴³⁾ Donald Winnicott (1896-1971) also reflects on play, which he considers to be a free action – unlike Piaget – and he attributes to it a therapeutic value, establishing a difference between play and game, assigning to play the therapeutic aspect.^(49,50) During this century, sports gained professional status and, therefore, their spontaneous and care-free nature was lost.

In the real world, situations whose results depend on the combination of different agents' actions are common. A technique used to analyze this occurrence is the "game theory", introduced by mathematicians John Von Neuman (1903-1957) and Oskar Morgenstern (1902-1962), which was created to develop strategies and analyze conflicts (known as games) that involve conflicts of interests between two or more participants.⁽⁵¹⁾ Planners discussed these theories in light of the first failures in normative planning, through the implementation of mathematical models.⁽⁵²⁾ During the following decades, game theory experienced a great development, so much so, that many Nobel Prizes in Economic Sciences were based on that theory. The Nobel Prize for the year 2005, granted to Robert Aumann (1930-) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and to Thomas Schelling (1921-2016) from the University of Maryland, was based on game theory. They analyzed the instances when cooperation becomes more difficult, which they concluded are when there are many participants, when they interact infrequently, when the time limit is short, and when others' actions cannot be clearly observed. The previous four situations are very common in public institutions in the social field, especially those with a higher number of workers.

In 1958, the sociologist Roger Caillois (1913-1978) published his book *Man, Play*

and Games, where he critically highlights the absence of a classification of play in the work of Huizinga, and therefore he undertakes the task of doing such a classification. In light of this, he divides play into four categories depending on the predominance of the type of game: *agon* (competition); *alea* (chance); *mimicry* (simulation); and *ilinx* (vertigo). Thus, from those four classifications of types of games, Caillois discerns two dimensions according to attitudes of play: *paidia*, where entertainment, improvisation, invention, freedom and fantasy for new forms and rules are dominant; and *ludus*, where discipline, arbitrary conventions, and activities that involve ingenuity, ability, skill, and patience dominate, and where rules are followed, in other words, it is play governed by rules.^(6,53,54) The meaning that Caillois gives to the concept of *ludus* is not the same meaning that we use when referring to the ludic in this article, in which we agree with the concepts of Huizinga. Caillois assigns to *paidia* the meaning that we use for the ludic nature. At the end of his book, Caillois resumes the matter of masks and their social function: masks that have been found in every culture since ancient times and that, in general, constitute a central part in different types of games, rituals, dances, and fights.⁽⁵³⁾

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), in a clear anti-Cartesian position, distrusts the "I think" as a unit of analysis and proposes an innovative approach by developing the concept of *language games*, which does not allude to the command of linguistic rules, but to the use of words and the functioning of the language as games, where rules are learnt, used, and created. Wittgenstein acknowledges that there are orders in the language, but they do not follow an "order", which is the main search of modern metaphysics.^(55,56,57)

The sociologist Norbert Elias (1897-1990), in his book *What is Sociology?*, published in 1970, employs the notions of game and Primal Contest as interdependent processes that show the relational nature of society. Playing builds networks of mystery, which imitate the violent nature of individuals and open the door to the emotions and impulses culturally controlled by society.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Erving Goffman (1922-1982) develops the idea that, in daily life, people perform every type of role and stage acts, offering their performance and showing their function⁽⁵⁹⁾ through a game in which they develop their everyday nature.

The notion of game is essential in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. According to him, the agents “play” in the different fields with the resources available to them, and in that game, they contribute to reproducing and/or transforming the social structure. He considers games from a non-utilitarian perspective: players do not play for economic purposes, but instead, their aim is to be invested in the game they are playing. Therefore, the game holds greater dispositional value than representational value, and it will gain meaning and value depending on the position occupied in the social space. The concept of game is associated with the concept of *illusio*, which Bourdieu develops based on the work of Huizinga. The *illusio* is to “be involved in the game,” “to be part of the game,” essentially because “it is worth playing it.” The *illusio* belongs to the field of action and not to the field of principles, and it reflects total adherence within the boundaries of that field, which is ruled by people’s opinion (*doxa*). According to Bourdieu, players play because the game deserves to be played and not because of a contract. In his opinion, the *doxa* appears as an irrefutable truth, installed in common sense and never questioned, which maintains the belief in the game and what is played. What is at stake is the product of the competition among players (*enjeux*), where the individual must interact with other people (“social games”). In this sense, success in one field depends on the habits and resources that each individual brings to the game in that field, and that the vision of the game is expressed in a practical sense (the field is in the mind). Each field generates its own *illusio*, which is the condition for its functioning and leads the agents to invest in the game, captivated by it. The *illusio* is to be engaged in the game. It is to agree on a certain social game, and that what happens in that game has a purpose and that its moves

are important and worthy of continuance.^(60,61) Lack of interest – apathy – in the game is denominated *ataraxia*.

In Argentina, in 1963, in one of his first scientific publications, Eduardo Menéndez published an essay about the hopscotch game. Three years later, Julio Cortázar published the novel *Rayuela* [Hopscotch].⁽⁶²⁾ Graciela Scheines’s work, *Juguetes y jugadores* [Toys and players], acknowledges philosophers Carlos Astrada and Vicente Fatone⁽⁴⁴⁾ as referential figures in the matter in Argentina.

Homo ludens

In 1938, the Dutch historian and philologist Johan Huizinga published his book, *Homo ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. From the phenomenology perspective, Huizinga analyzes the social and cultural importance of play in the development of human beings and establishes a genealogy of culture in relation to play.⁽⁴²⁾ When mentioning play, he highlights that it is older than culture itself, even older than writing and reading, and that in play there is something “at play” due to its non-materialistic quality, symbolic character, and its components of freedom. According to Huizinga, culture emerges and is reinforced in the form of play, thus expressing its social, historical, and biological nature⁽⁴²⁾: children performing the roles of adults, offspring of different animal species play simulating situations they may face as adult animals, which does not mean to reduce play to instinctive behavior.⁽⁴²⁾ Huizinga defines play as follows:

...a free activity that proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner though willingly accepted, action that has a purpose in itself and is accompanied by a feeling of tension and joy and the consciousness of “being different” outside ordinary life.⁽⁴²⁾

The author thinks of play in terms of its essence and not in terms of its functionality,⁽⁵⁴⁾ unlike the concepts of *Homo Sapiens* and

Homo Faber, which are notions that originated from a utilitarian perspective. Therefore, he attempts to restore the relationship between play and culture, driven by the clear purpose of releasing the ludic abilities that dwell within people.⁽⁴²⁾ The contribution of Huizinga complicates what until then was a dual vision, the *Homo sapiens* and the *Homo Faber*, when he incorporates into that asymmetric relationship the figure of the *Homo ludens*. The concept of *Homo sapiens*, introduced by Carl von Linné (1707 – 1778) in 1758, refers to the individual who understands, who knows, the wise individual, different from the rest of the animal species, placing the human being as the most developed hominid, given the symbolic ability granted by language. *Homo Faber*, a concept created by the philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in 1907, refers to the individual with the ability to make, which is not exclusive to human beings, and that puts a distance from the evolutionary concept of *Homo Sapiens*. According to Ambrosini, differentiating the *Homo ludens* from the *Homo sapiens* restores their relationship with the animal world from which they were separated due to their ability to think and their intellectual activity.⁽⁴³⁾

As per Huizinga, human play always belongs to the festival and ritual sphere. Play is carried out beyond and above the necessity, utility, and seriousness of ordinary life. Play does not know of hierarchy: it brings civility, it can create an order within its own world, and to that end, play establishes limits and territories. Play is sovereign and must not be confused with reason. The activity of playing requires the player's full engagement, as playing is not mere "fun", it is rather serious and it can even be sacred, which accounts for the agonistic dimension it can take. During play, it is possible to "lose one's mind". Hence, not only do people get to know the game, but also the spirit of the player.⁽⁴²⁾ The mythical, the mystic, and the utopic are brought into the moment of play.⁽⁴⁴⁾

There is no logical or biological determination in play. However, there are recognizable processes with rules that exceed any

material nature, and this only highlights that the essence of play is non-materialistic, for what comes into play is passion, which describes play as a social act. Although play is thought as the opposite of seriousness, – understanding seriousness as reason – play expresses sociability modes, and thus becomes thinkable and understandable, and therefore, it can be interpreted as a cultural and historical activity.⁽⁴²⁾

In his work, Huizinga carries out a historical-philological work on the word "*juego*" [play]. In this way, he observes that in modern languages, the word "*juego*" derives from the Latin *iocus*, *iocari* (joke, prank). He also takes from Greek culture the concept of *agon* and its triple meaning of game, celebration, and sacred action. Huizinga explains that it is at the beginning of a culture when the agonistic phase of playing is clearly manifested and then, during the process of consolidation of that culture, play is relegated to a second place and the agonistic nature tends to disappear as culture becomes more serious.⁽⁴²⁾

In the fields of science, religion, law, and politics, when play becomes more organized, the presence of the ludic element decreases. Born in the sphere of play, only poetry has always been part of the ludic field and does not pursue seriousness: poets play on words.⁽⁴²⁾

In his philological analysis, Huizinga proves that, regardless of the language, the common element in the word "play" is the idea of "fast movement". Where there is "something at play," winning or settlement are the goals, and there are players, as well as cheaters, who receive such denomination when trespassing against the rules.⁽⁴²⁾

For Huizinga, the presence of ludic elements is required in order to label an activity as play, and thus he affirms that an individual, while playing, must become a child. Ludic nature is, primarily, a free activity where the subject is pleased and spontaneity dominates. There are no rules, and it is played out of pleasure, for the sake of doing, or of experimenting. It is not competition, it is collaboration. In this way, the ludic element has a cultural nature that exceeds material interests; it does not have any other goal than the

very logic of playing.^(42,54) Therefore, *meaning*, *tension*, and *intensity* are concepts that Huizinga uses to refer to the ludic elements, as they appear by converging creativity, limits, change, and risk.⁽⁶³⁾

The ludic element creates new meanings; it is chaos at the same time it brings order. Play is a ceremony, and it is also a celebration. Play is not only representation; it is anticipation and is characterized by its alterity and sovereign nature.^(42,43,54,63) By playing, the world becomes indefinite, hierarchies are lost, classifications and labels are disrupted, and the indefinite predominates. The power of play breaks apart the map of reality and transforms those players into inhabitants of the chaos.

Play, as part of the work process, is more visible in practices that are less organized and thus more free. When ludic elements are missing in play, Huizinga defines it as a “false play,” including in this category, sports and calculation games.

Play can be part of the institution, but once instituted, it seems that the importance of the ludic element becomes diluted, and it evolves into seriousness by becoming instituted. Play always represents a potential danger to the institution. It utterly opposes the predictability guaranteed by planning. Hence, the need to regulate play and bring seriousness to it from an institutional perspective.⁽⁴³⁾ The mistake of establishing seriousness and play as opposites positions work in the dimension of seriousness, ignoring that – mainly in the social field – work is impregnated with the ludic element, and it is then when work reaches its best when it comes to task quality.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN APOLLO AND DIONYSUS IN THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIAL FIELD

At the beginning of the article, it was stated that, according to Friedrich Nietzsche, the confrontation between Apollo and Dionysus was an undecided and endless battle, which

is part of Western culture. Let’s analyze this idea through the institutional life and organizational forms of public institutions in the social field. These institutions have a serious problem not included in their agendas, which is that they lack their own organizational theories (in Foucault’s sense of theory as a toolbox), to account for the idea of the relational (a typical characteristic of the social field), for manual work (an ontological characteristic of work in the social field), and for the performative dimension of language (doing things with words).^(64,65,66,67,68,69) The problem is not only the lack of a toolbox, but that they are attempting to compensate for this absence by copying models of the General Administrative Theory. These models were created to solve problems based on instrumental relationships of subject-object nature, where the knowledge and the orders are attributes of the *Homo Sapiens*, and worker is considered as the role of the *Homo Faber*, all characterizations that belong to the industrial logic but not to the social logic.

Capitalism, which originated at the end of the 17th century in England, took almost three centuries to find its organizational theory, which was designed during the last years of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century by Fayol and Taylor.⁽⁵¹⁾ It was not easy for capitalists to create a theory regarding organizational forms. How were institutions managed and organized back then? By copying the actions of two millennial institutions: the Church and the army.^(51,70)

In the search for organizational forms for the social field, we find a “ludic void,”⁽⁴⁴⁾ so we propose to recover the *Homo ludens* to involve him in work-related spheres, organizational forms, institutionality and the administration of the social field, while recognizing and validating the importance of play in any of the previously mentioned dimensions. In this attempt, the Spanish language does not help much, given that it does not distinguish between the ludic element (play) and game the way the English language does. In the face of this difficulty, we will use the concept of Huizinga, who establishes play as false when the ludic elements are missing.⁽⁴²⁾ In this way,

we manage to solve the idiomatic limitations of the Spanish language.

In social institutions, it is often heard that “there is a cultural problem that must be changed, but it is very difficult, and it takes a long time”. The expression “long time” tends to discourage any attempt to introduce any process of change. This situation is recurrent regardless of the subjects, ideologies, time, place, and institution. Therefore, and in light of the dominating nihilism, new myths must be installed where play can perform a central role.

In the social field, planning as rationality (the institutionalized) and play as an everyday natural activity (the institutionalizing), live together. In this dynamic, planning is placed at the transcendental level (beyond being), and play is placed at the immanence level (being). Deleuze, following Spinoza and Nietzsche’s ideas, places the immanence level as a superior reality to the Platonic world of ideas, deeming the immanence level as the level of events, singularities, and intensities.⁽³⁷⁾ In this way, while planning helps to imagine a future, play, as part of work, builds up the present. Therefore, we acknowledge that these institutions have more spaces to play than spaces where individuals of reason can plan. Understanding play, as a strategy of immanence, is essential to the proposed thinking of social institutions in terms of spaces that allow play and facilitate the emergence of the “institutional soul,” thus paving the way for the dispute between the Dionysian and the Apollonian natures to create values that support new organizational forms and institutional actors. This new myth will always pose the risk of pretending to have found a new religion as the will of power is also the will of reason. Thus, play must be deemed as a counter-myth, a strategy grounded in the immanence.^(6,53)

It is not about establishing play but acknowledging that play actually exists; it is real, but not planned. Social institutions are characterized by having practices void of concepts.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Therefore, given that practices are void of meaning and clarity, the subject suffers as a result of the tension produced by imagining a way of doing the job that does

not match the actual way of doing it, which can affect the health of the worker, the quality of his work, the organizational forms, and the institutional quality. Play, when integrated with work, improves work and thus leads us to work with undisciplined practices that place the “Yes, I want to” before the “you must,” a struggle that Nietzsche places between the moralists and the superman.⁽³⁾ This gives room to missing concepts in the Cartesian reasoning such as desire, game, and the ludic element. According to Nietzsche, that “Yes, I want to” resembles the frenzied “I want” of lunatics, wise people, and artists, and it is opposed to the moralist conception of “you must” that supports the “ought to be” idea of planning.⁽³⁾ This is confirmation that life is undisciplined and that it runs away from the scientific disciplines that, in their regulations, are far from understanding the complexities of life that occur in the social field.⁽⁷¹⁾

Institutions, as well as society, are dominated by the Cartesian culture that validates the ironic statement of Sartre: “hell is other people.”⁽⁷²⁾ The dominant logic is focused on the relationship subject-object (of Kantian heritage), which diligently seeks techniques to achieve the perfect management; an assumption that, in order to be accomplished, would require for people to be born with an operation guide.

The predominant organizational notion is industrial logic (the factory), with its management forms focused on orders given by the *Homo Sapiens* and a manual worker, the *Homo Faber*, who obeys those orders. Why should this model not be applied to public institutions in the social field, and if so, why does it denaturalize them? Because in the social field, the work process of manual nature predominates and the singularity of the relationship that is established breaks any matrix that aims at mass production. Practices are structured based on manual work of a relational nature, supported by the performative nature of language, with a strong ludic component, especially work that professionals perform on the basis of the organization, where there is a freedom that would

be unimaginable in a factory, thus building up a professional bureaucracy far distant from the mechanical bureaucracy typical of the factory.⁽⁷³⁾

This autonomy of workers on the basis of social institutions, which is the result of the technical power and relational processes necessary to perform the task, makes this autonomy unique and accounts for its manual nature.^(67,68) This reality allows us to think of *Homo ludens* as a constituent element of social institutions due to the fact that play, inevitably, intervenes in the doing, which most of the time becomes a central issue when it comes to reaching an agreement based on the understanding of the relational process. This situation is an observable reality upon which we seek to reflect in order to be able to recognize it, and therefore, validate it, and which the development of capitalism intends to modernize as a form of domination of worker.⁽⁷⁴⁾

The utilitarian conception of play strikes a difference between work which is “serious,” and the break and leisure reserved for the ludic space, which is useful to renew energies and come back to work. Having this in mind, work would imply suffering, given that it is presented as an activity that does not bring pleasure, but rather the opposite. Therefore, work is dignified through pain; “you shall eat bread by the sweat of your brow.” Hence, working is an obligation, as pleasure at work is neither necessary nor possible.

Connecting work to play does not intend to infantilize either play nor work, nor the institution. We know and maintain that the purpose of work does not involve play for its participants, but rather to provide a public service of quality. However, in order to achieve quality in work, it is necessary to build an “us” (institutionality) between the self and the other (relationality), for which it is essential to perform work connected to the ludic nature without losing the purpose of providing a public service of quality.

Acknowledging the ludic elements within work processes helps to make the task more pleasant and to create a better bond among workers, users, and the managing staff. The

existence and quality of these bonds make the difference, both in the inner part of an institution as well as among them. How can these differences be explained? The most probable explanation is that they consist of teams with high quality performance who include ludic elements in their work practices. The explanation above is not thought of, and whenever visualized, it is referred to as a “gift.” This explanation emerges as a result of the incapacity to think in relational terms. It is an expression of the control of the scholastic that influences Cartesian reasoning, where there is no place for play. Therefore, as what is happening cannot be explained, pre-Cartesian explanations that refer to the religious nature, such as the “gift”, are resorted to.⁽⁶¹⁾

When play becomes serious, it is transformed into competition, and conflicts arise. Play can become trivial when it loses its ludic element when it is regulated and becomes serious in its forms, or because it never ends, hence it ceases to be a game.⁽⁶⁾ However, play also becomes trivial when it is played for the own “self”, and then, the apathy for the institutional becomes the own self-interest. Therefore, the work process – and as a consequence the subject himself – does not join the dialectic process series-group-organization-institution,^(72,75) and play becomes individual (solitary) and not collective, hence, not social. Playing alone is a narcissistic act in institutions with public funding. This behavior is not consistent with the social function of a public institution that must provide a service to those in need, as the state should not be limited to being a source of employment.

Graciela Scheines includes in the game of life the mystic, humor, and utopia,⁽⁴⁴⁾ concepts that summon the collective groups to develop skills and to create another order when appropriating the reality.⁽⁴²⁾ According to Huizinga, play begins with language,⁽⁴²⁾ which is the principal instrument of work in social institutions where things are done through words. Hence, an organization is known as a network of conversations, and the quality of the institution largely depends on the quality of those conversations. In this way, by combining language with play, both

are strengthened because things are done through words in a network of conversations that form part of ludic activities.^(64,65,69,76,77)

Play accepts organizational forms that are visualized from the organizational orthodoxy's perspective as anarchic and disruptive of the regulated world. Play brings to the institutions the tension between the opposites: rules and freedom, creation and alienation. For Caillois, play is games,^(42,54) and the playing of games in an institution can result either in social fabric or in a social hole due to the conflicts, vertigo, chance, and the agonistic elements that control play.⁽⁵³⁾

In social institutions, the organizational forms are based on the work of people with each other. However, in general, it is unknown that the etymological root of the word person comes from *persōna*, "mask used by actor", "theatrical character", "personality", or "person", and it is also unknown that the etymology of the word "*personaje*" [character] comes from person.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In these institutions, there are practices with strong ludic content. Therein, worlds are built on a daily basis, where individuals or groups with different masks, outfits, and costumes, perform as characters that, while creating mystery, also build social fabric or create holes in that social fabric. Thus, we encounter fabrics that are pierced and holes that are mended. Hence, the institution ends up not wearing a tuxedo that indicates seriousness as planned, but clothing with patches and stopgap repairs, which resembles the clothing of a band of street musicians. All of this must be hidden, and for this purpose ceremonies and protocols exist, attempting to hide the ludic elements and denying the institutional soul, even at the risk of losing joy and naturality.⁽¹⁷⁾ Intrepidly, attempts to reach the tuxedo level are pursued. All of the above-mentioned account for the difficult co-existence of play and the rules in the everyday routine of institutions.

Developing ludic dimensions within work does not necessarily mean playing a specific game. In the everyday life of any social institution, a worker performs different characters. In order to perform these roles,

workers resort to their wardrobe of masks and outfits that accompany them in different acts and rituals. In these games, it is allowed to "be different", to be "as if", expressing all the potential of the ludic nature.⁽⁴²⁾ We can imagine the previous situation as a parade of infinite Matryoshka dolls contained one inside the other. The difference is that when we open each of them, the doll we find is not the same as the previous one. In fact, they can be totally different from one another. Upholding a Cartesian subject in these performances given the complexity of subjects and the chaos in practices is not easy for a worker to tolerate.

Within social institutions, work, generally, does not come from orders, but instead it is defined by workers operating from the foundations of those organizations following the footprints left in the field, which accounts for the management complexity, especially when it comes to introducing change. In spite of the above, the impression that predominates is that the institutionalization process is an administrative act void of semiotics. Thus, training is designed centered on the "must-be," denominated as the banking model of education by Paulo Freire⁽⁷⁹⁾ as the problem identified by "the people in charge," is the inexperience of what must be done. The results? A lot of training and little change.

The tension within these institutions mostly depends on the number and size of the teams at the institutions. The number of people working at the institutions is one of the principal enemies of play, which, when repressed, becomes competition, turning the institution into an archipelago. Against the dominant ideas of large institutions that follow manufacturing models, we uphold the necessity of thinking of small teams of no more than twenty or thirty people. In other words, on a human scale, not meaning to idealize smallness, as smallness is also human, according to Nietzsche.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The permanent increase in the number of people at the central part of an organizational form becomes the primary source of conflicts, which is explained on the basis of the description written by the sociologist Norbert Elías (1897-1990)

		Orientation of Action	
		Success Oriented	Understanding Oriented
Action Status	Non-Social	Instrumental Action	--
	Social	Strategic Action	Communicative Action

Figure 1. Types of action in social situations.

Source: own elaboration based on Habermas⁽⁸³⁾.

regarding his analysis of *game models: models of interweaving processes with norms*.⁽⁵⁸⁾

What types of games are not played by a social agent? The work of the agent is a great example to highlight the mistake of confusing representations with practice.⁽⁸¹⁾ Hence, while representations find the agent immersed in logical, well-considered, and calculated projects, the practice is turbulent, chaotic, and random, marked by contradictions, aporia, enigmas, and paradoxes.⁽⁸²⁾ Play appears before the agent, who is not allowed to decide on the moment, the duration, or the type of game. The agent is marked with a pan-ludic experience which he does not always get to think of, but that at the same time he is being marked by, it becomes part of him, and it is at that moment when management practice urgently needs to include the *Homo ludens*, otherwise management is doomed to fail.⁽⁸²⁾

Therefore, we affirm that the necessity to understand play precedes the utility of the technique. However, management is thought to depend on the technique. Play must be understood and felt, otherwise, techniques will become useless. Minimizing the solutions to the problems to the techniques overlooks the importance of knowing the play being played. On account of the fact that this is about play and not about techniques, we should prioritize the building-up of creation of teams, practices, and not only personnel training, so in this sense, we consolidate culture and then we add the techniques. It is evident that the person who plays better and enjoys play

is the one who knows the game, plays the game, and also has and forms teams (*illusio*). Instead, the dominating ideas attempt to apply techniques without understanding play. Hence, training focused on techniques is given, aimed at workers that imagine those organizational forms based on rationality and plans. The implementation of the techniques is valid when the action is not social, but in the social field, the relational nature of work requires verbal and non-verbal language and understanding. This explains the necessity to think of ludic elements, games, players, moves, language, and conversations instead of techniques (Figure 1). Being able to make that difference is fundamental to building an identity and a mystic.

QUESTIONS TO THINK THE UNTHOUGHT OF

In a Western world that is more and more westernized, the crisis of reason is evident, and the myth of the battle between Apollo and Dionysius is more alive than ever. In light of that, the impossibility of the academic and scientific fields to respond to social problems shows the limitations of their knowledge, techniques, and languages to address the complexity of social nature, which they attempt to objectify. Cortázar states in *Rayuela* [Hopscotch]: "The absurd thing is not things themselves; what is absurd is that

the things are there and that we think they are absurd.”^(84,85) We find there a dialogue with Sartre, when he mentions that the degree of adversity of things does not spring from the things themselves, but rather is given to the things by the individual.⁽⁷²⁾

Most probably, readers have discovered – not without surprise – how play influences its work in social institutions. Now, if readers are not members of the social or academic field, their surprise could be even greater as they will question how it is possible that university graduates do not understand what they do, nor how they do it, provided that what they do was certified by a university after completing a six-year degree program.

Should we expect the existence of an organizational theory specifically designed for the social fields in order to produce a change in them? Limiting the hope to the above implies omitting that players do not always want to discover “the truth” and that they live surrounded by hidden mechanisms that are displayed in order to maintain the economy of symbolic exchanges that constitute the social

order.^(61,86) There is not a transformative effect produced by reading, nor does the understanding of play guarantee that forms of playing it will be changed. Therein lies the complexity and the challenge that must be thought of in relation to the structures that are structuring but that, at the same time, they are structured by the action of agents.⁽⁶¹⁾

This article seeks to address the readers, inviting them to think and think of themselves, and in so doing to make an effort to change discourses and practices. Above all, it seeks to make readers think why things are the way they are. Exploring an answer requires addressing strategies of the mechanism of production and social control that underlies the social order and in so doing to analyze the tension between the doing and the understanding, which escapes any mechanical explanation that assigns a lineal cause to structures, by confusing reproduction with repetition. The reproduction of the existing elements, reason, fear, culture, and also play may take part. The element rarely missing is interest.^(60,61,87)

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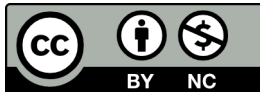
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