



State Of The Research On Philanthropy In Chili. Preview On The Past 20 Years

By Luis Garrido, Pedro Narvarte and Mario Radrigán

Professors of the Management and Public Policies department, Faculty of Administration and Economy of the University of Santiago in Chili. Researchers of the International Center for Social and Cooperative Economy, CIESCOOP.

Translation by Katherine Mac Donald, PhiLab

1. General presentation

The tradition of philanthropic and social action took root in Chili as of the Spanish conquest in the mid-16th century, under the protection of humanitarian actions encouraged by the different religious orders that were supporting the Spanish conquest and colonization of the Americas.

This tradition was then spread and developed over two hundred and fifty years without interruption, still via the religious orders. These latter, supported by the great agricultural and commercial fortunes of the time, concentrated their activities in the sectors of health, education and in the care of widows and orphans.

Already during the republic of 1810, and up until the mid-19th century, the philanthropic tradition, Catholic in origin, diversified into two new traditions that are still exercised today. On the one hand, we find secular philanthropic actions in direct reaction to the strong presence of the Catholic Church's social charities in Chili. These new philanthropic practices are led by the Freemasons and the budding Radical Party. In parallel to these two trends, as of the second half of the 19th century, social actions stemming directly from the great commercial fortunes of the country begin to emerge. They occur either through direct action of their economic units, or through institutional donations to different social action groups, be they religious or secular.

These three traditions (religious, secular and commercial) of the first half of the 20th century are connected to the actions of the State who is starting to build the foundations of a future welfare state.

More generally, these three trends as well as their different strategies of complementarity/exclusion of different public policy and social development orientations have maintained and developed themselves up until today. The only innovative element of the last few years is related to the emergence, almost 25 years ago, of Corporate Social Responsibility practices and its different modalities in Chili.

While there exists a long and interesting tradition of research and reflexion on philanthropy in Chili up until the end of the 20th century, this article will focus on the systematization of the research processes of the past

twenty years, by giving special attention to the lines of research that will open up in the future, by recognizing the advances and the shortcomings of the research practices advocated up to now.

The research tradition in the philanthropic sector, at the turn of the century, is focused on the issue of local researchers to make a constant effort to try to surpass the trends of case studies with data and a scope which are limited in time. They are looking for additional information which would allow to quantify and size, in a panoramic fashion, the reality of the nonprofit sector in Chili. In this sense, the work of Irrarazaval (2005) was a pioneer in this new trajectory, because he was directly connected to the initiative endorsed at the international level by the Center of civil society studies of the John Hopkins University in the United States, known under the name of the International Research Project on the nonprofit sector (IPRNPS).

The results of these first efforts allowed, for the first time, to have an overall preview of the reality of the nonprofit sector in Chili, of its GDP, of its full-time paid employees and volunteers, of its financing sources and of its part in social activities, in accordance with the framework of the IPRNPS. This work also allowed to compare Chili's reality with that of other Latin American countries, as well as those on other continents.

The research project's results described in the previous paragraphs concluded with an intense debate on the relationship between the nonprofit and philanthropy sector and that of public politics, in particular with regard to the improvement of donation laws and the fiscal treatment associated with the creation process of nonprofit entities.

3. Research practices and tendencies of the 21st century's second decade

The present decade in terms of philanthropic research trends in Chili gave place to three research themes.

First off, there is the trend of quantifying the nonprofit sector and its relationships with the philanthropic practices initiated during the previous decade by Irrarazaval (2016, 2016b, 2017). However, this new trend aims at updating the statistical information of the last decade and allowing for a direct dialogue between social action nonprofit organizations, public politics as well as donor companies, that are called "Company foundations" (private foundations?).

Up until now, this new direction of research, directed by Magdalena Aninat (2015, 2016b) of the Adolfo Ibañez University, pays a particular attention to the identification of the public's perception of the philanthropic actions coming from the commercial sector of Chili, by exploring the vision civil society has of the role of entrepreneurs in social action. The objective is to meld this action at the level of territories or social actions zones with domains such as health, education, the environment or culture, with its usual commercial behavior in domains such as the preservation of the environment, work relations or its fiscal contribution.

The third axis of research of this decade is carried by Magdalena Aninat (2016, 2017, 2017B, 2017c), who highlighted the fact of diving into the motivations or values that guide the decisions of companies and great

fortunes of the country at the moment of making a social investment or of developing systematic philanthropy, in particular through their founding of social action.

4. Lines of research in the philanthropic domain for the future

While significant progress was made over the past twenty years to improve the knowledge of philanthropy in the nonprofit sector in Chile, there is still much to do to improve the quality of information of this sector, which would allow different actors to make decisions.

In a preliminary way, we can identify the following lines of actions which would allow to delve into the reality, projections and impacts of philanthropy in Chile:

4.1.- The development of methodologies to measure the impact and the results of philanthropic action in Chile, in comparison with the actions of other socio-economic actors and of the State itself.

4.2.- It is urgent to know both the systematic and comparative logics of the internal functioning, the decision processes, the owner and investor reports, and the different community liaison strategies of company foundations.

4.3.- Research on the work and collaboration relations both with nonprofit and for profit entities who receive funds from company foundations, and with civil society in general.

4.4.- Research on the formulas of articulation with public politics, normative and legal frameworks and the user procedures of different laws or regulations concerning donations.

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