



The Commodified Consumption Of The Vulnerable: A Solution To Their Precariousness? Summary

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ABSTRACT

The article was elaborated to interpret the importance of the concept of commodification/decommodification in the analysis of the consumption of the vulnerable, supported by monetary transfers from the State, which was justified with beliefs that have identified the deficiencies of the social function of the State due to its cost to decommodify public services, considered as social rights. However, in the Mexican case it was corruption, which emerged as the main cause of the failure to address the needs of the vulnerable, transforming cash transfers, without the intervention of the government bureaucracy, into social programs to support the commodified consumption of a part of the universe of the poor or vulnerable.

Keywords: Commodification, decommodification, precariousness, vulnerability, monetary transfers. Commoditized consumption on the part of the vulnerable. A solution to their precarious situation?

Introduction

The contradiction between commodification and decommodification in modern capitalist societies, as a social conflict, would manifest itself through the accumulation of social advantages for the privileged, in the face of the existence of a gradual concentration of its opposite: accumulation of social disadvantages for a majority, transformed, in turn, into a vulnerable group (Mora and de Oliveira, 2022).

For this reason, for the vulnerable, living conditions are precarious or unlivable and, to a certain extent, their collective protests could, from a general point of view, shape demands that would seek to improve their living conditions, that is, to transform their precarious life into a life, I insist, more livable where there is a decrease in the adversities experienced as risks and dangers (Butler, 2018, pp. 27-30).

However, the contradiction enunciated will be considered as a starting point to construct a social meaning that helps to interpret, firstly, neoliberal ideology as a positive re-actualization of the policies of commodification, and secondly, as a way of concealing the role that social policies or state intervention has played in controlling, regulate or impede the expansion of commodification, which has not only been driven by capital, but also by the State, especially when it has concocted a neoliberal economic policy (Castro, 2023).

Therefore, there are arguments against state intervention because not only has it not stopped the expansion of the commodification of capitalist businesses, but has encouraged it, although the idea of decommodification, turned into interpretation, has been used by communities or groups to defend their rights over their properties and the possession of natural resources. subsequently acquiring a new meaning when they are analyzed more as part of environmental problems (Altvater, 2011, pp. 25-30).

In accordance with the above, the objective of this article would be to interpret the role of commodification in the expansion of social vulnerability, which has not been addressed by social policies because, as has happened in Mexico, cash transfers have urgently sought to support the consumption of social groups that have been classified as poor. Or, failing that, as in the United States, social programs their meaning has been derived from the coercion or punishment used by the State to force the vulnerable to accept precarious jobs and also to monitor them, using their registration at the time of receiving social assistance and when they do not accept the precarious jobs offered, state support would be withdrawn. evidencing their fragility in the face of government abandonment, increasing the probability of suffering punishment in case of carrying out illegal survival activities, showing that illegality is monitored by the exercise of punitive power by the police and armed forces (Wacquant, 1998, pp. 7-11).

However, in the following sections, some general interpretations will be presented based on the concept of commodification/decommodification, which alludes to some kind of contradiction in capitalist society, which

has not found a solution entirely from the State because, according to my argument, it has been present in the configuration of social programs aimed at reinforcing the commodified consumption of a part of the vulnerable¹. *Commodification versus Decommodification: A False Dilemma?*

Dubet's (2000, p. 9) analysis of social inequality was based on the consequences derived from the presence of formal or legal equality, with universal features in modern capitalist societies, coexisting with real economic inequality, which was addressed by the State's agenda through social policies, however, he did not use the concept of commodification, which did not detract from his interpretation of it as an individual or collective experience expressed through negative emotions (Dubet, 2011).

However, commodification was not only a concept, which helped to elaborate different interpretations about the conversion of different aspects of social life into commodities, but its importance also lay in the fact that it was used to consider it as a particular and negative characteristic of capitalism, which was interpreted earlier by Karl Polanyi (2017) as a threat not only to human existence, but for nature. And, consequently, rather than visualizing progress when the State supported the development of a diversity of private businesses in different localities and regions and even countries, it considered it as a risk or danger when a new situation was built, without eradicating social conflicts, where everything would have a price as commodities offered in the market, realizing the utopia that social life would be organized by the market.

In this case, neoliberal ideology established commodification as a justification for the expansion of capitalist businesses towards what was visualized as new opportunities to reactivate accumulation through services that ceased to be social rights or protections for all wage earners², later converting their situation or condition into vulnerability and precariousness where low wages and scarce or no social protections, evidenced their fragility or weakness, in the face of events that individualized suffering such as illness, unemployment, old age, compared to those who compete individually through merits, abilities and knowledge, converted into human capital (Carreras, Sevilla & Urbán, 2006, pp. 15-19), thus the former would be classified as disposable, while the latter, they would be successful thanks to their individual initiative aimed at supporting the process of commodification (Laval & Dardot, 2013, pp. 99-104).

On the other hand, in capitalist societies, although it is denied, social inequality is persistent (Tilly, 2000) because it has acquired different physiognomies over time, however, it ceased to be interpreted as a negative consequence of the asymmetrical relationship between capital and labor, especially when employment was linked to a welfare system that addressed the risks of being a worker. where unions, in turn, became an initial and important protection of labor rights, also directly linked to social rights, supported by the presence of a welfare state (Adelantado and Gomá, 2000, pp. 63-96).

Thus, in my view, interpretations of social inequality were subsequently displaced by the concepts of vulnerability and social precariousness (Gil, 2002, pp. 23-46). This fact was the result of the crisis of the labour society, in other words, when salaried employment ceased to be the main mechanism for accessing certainty based on social rights (Montagut, 2008, pp. 40-41). For this reason, social rights, as part of the so-called citizenship, could not be identified with the market or commodification either, not only because the logic of the state bureaucracy has not been linked to the objectives of efficiency of the profits of private companies, but also to a rationality linked to citizen rights, but interpreted as another way to achieve social cohesion or solidarity (Paugam, 2007, pp. 5-9).

In this way, in summarized terms, neoliberalism would be an ideological version of support for commodification, which was legitimized as an economic policy, in the face of the decrease in public financing of public services, which were the main support of social protections by becoming part of labor rights, which expanded the participation of capital in the commodification of public services and, consequently, opportunities to increase private profits were expanded (Chauí, 2018, p. 66).

At the same time, the concepts of vulnerability and social precariousness were also a way to describe the generalized situation of unskilled and low-wage employment, protected by temporary labor contracts, that is, long-term employment, which was protected by social rights, with a production that has been dispersed and

¹These facts, as changing experiences, even if in a general way, would have the purpose of testing the interpretative capacity of the concepts used to avoid the danger arising from a reductionism that has conferred a greater explanatory capacity on methods (quantitative or qualitative) alien to social circumstances or situations (Bourdieu, 2024, pp. 35-36). To this argument would be added the narrative derived from the concepts used by the sociologist for the construction of interpretations of events or cultural phenomena that have been transformed, however, it is tested, not in empirical terms, but the epistemological arsenal chosen and expressed as a binary narrative to study experiences or experiences. individual or collective, which was not done in this article (Reed & Alexander, 2009, pp. 23-24).

²The distributive function of public services subsidized by the State has a different rationality from that of capital because its meaning is in social rights, not in the logic of the market. However, in the case of Mexico, faced with the accumulation of social backwardness, the different neoliberal governments presented privatization, that is, the private production of some public services, as a commodified solution, where private profits were imposed on social rights, whose place on the public agenda was occupied by targeted social programs, which only met the basic needs of those classified as extremely poor (Ordóñez and Alegría, 1991, pp. 5-6).

fragmented, favoring the boom of the service sector, organized by science and technology and transformed into a support of control functions in charge of skilled workers (Chauí, 2018, p. 67).

However, this dispersion and fragmentation of production, such as an unequal geographical distribution, responded to a new division of labor caused by the industrial crisis, creating unemployment and emigration, reducing sectoral specialization, separating, in turn, the functions of control from those of execution, where the latter absorbed unskilled or poorly qualified labor. where a majority part was made up of women (Massey, 2012, pp. 66-80).

But reference is also made to another significant fact: the strengthening of political elites to articulate the national economy with the international market, which was the result of the globalization of neoliberal economic policy, transformed into a strategy to turn the market into the organizer of social life, which happened in Mexico after the economic crisis of 1982 (Salas-Porrás, 2017, Escalante, 2015).

Thus, the commodification/decommodification relationship, from what is thought, has been expressed today as a risk or danger for the vulnerable and at the same time for human existence, in general, whose meaning would be located more in the devastation of nature undertaken by capital. For this reason, Esping-Andersen (1993, pp. 50-55), in his study of social welfare, which some have only focused on the dimension of the social rights of citizens, did not limit himself to denunciation as if it were a legal issue, but to establish the importance of public services in the realization of a more livable life, which would cause them not to have a price as if they were commodities offered in the market, using the concept of decommodification to strengthen this argument. Behind this argument, according to my interpretation, there was a general consideration about human life: commodification based on a mass production of goods and services did not solve the problems of human existence, on the contrary, it aggravated them and, for this reason, it was necessary to address them within the public agenda, as a social issue. what acquired a public dimension, in other words, ceased to be a personal problem or a problem of religious conscience and altruistic groups, generating a new task or function for the modern or contemporary State (Castel, 2014, pp. 7-20).

Thus, commodified social life was the manifestation of new expansionist strategies of capitalism, that is, new types of commodification, based on the creation of new personal tastes and preferences, which were, in the end, useful to maintain the accumulation of capital despite the different economic crises of the twentieth century (Parrique, 2024).

In this way, human needs have been met by the market and the State, however, it was lost sight of that the state welfare system was a way of controlling the expansion of social vulnerability and with it regulations were established to prevent, to a greater or lesser degree, the extension of capital's domination over collective well-being (Offe, 1999, pp. 62-87).

Consequently, the welfare state, more than functional to the accumulation of capital, was a protection of human life against the destructive forces derived from capitalist mercantile actions. For this reason, the destruction of human life and its natural environment was legitimized through the ideology of industrial progress and modernity concretized in an expansion of comfort, identified only with consumption.

Progress and capitalist modernity, from an optimistic version, did not solve the problem of social inequality or social vulnerability, but the latter was studied as a consequence of the end of the welfare state, characterized by the multiplication of uncertainties, which had supposedly been reduced when salaried employment was linked to social policies (Beck, 2006).

Therefore, in a society, human needs were organized for attention as a matter of the State, through programs and policies, which would be far from the dynamics or logic of the capitalist market (Gough, 2003).

It should come as no surprise, on the other hand, that the principle of equality would be strengthened when the negative effects of capitalist commodification manifested themselves as greater social inequality, but what actually happened was the increase of the vulnerable with precarious lives and deteriorated environments, as well as the emergence of a collective or individual defense of cultural and natural heritage from the dispossession mechanisms of neoliberal capitalism (Harvey, 2021).

In short, expressing that the market is against society (Parrique, 2024, pp. 101-102) has been another way of affirming that commodification, in its destructive version, has undermined the principle of solidarity that has been the pillar of social life, which is not only due to the deterioration of ecosystems, but also to evidence their vulnerability, fostered by the scarce possibility of any type of protection of their lives by the State, when their social functions have been weakened or have been subordinated to the logic of punishment or punishment against the vulnerable (Wacquant, 2017).

However, the idea of commodification could not be understood without that of decommodification (Alexander, 2019), but not apprehended as dilemmas, that is, in the sense of supporting one or the other based on discarding, which is sustained, at the same time, in beliefs and values, but in an interpretative alternative introduced by the notion of social vulnerability, where risks and dangers, with socioeconomic or natural origins, place human life in situations of death or destruction, although socially they have been called human losses, without establishing that decommodification had the purpose of stopping the destructive or negative effects of capitalist commodification, which did not make explicit the principle of social equality analyzed as part of the social struggle, whose objective was to stop, to a certain extent, some of the "disasters" of the capitalist commodification process (Piketty, 2023, pp. 7-8).

Social Vulnerability: With Commodified Protections?

From the notion of social vulnerability, the presence of a regime or system of management or administration of precariousness could be interpreted, considered as a domain exercised through social programs to control the social behaviors of some of the groups that suffer some degree of lack of protection from the State (Lorey, 2016).

For this reason, government aid has been aimed at supporting the consumption of the vulnerable, however, the question that is asked would be: Why? And an immediate response would highlight the importance that the commodification of the human needs of the vulnerable has acquired for the State (Lorey, 2016, p. 26).

In other words, political domination over the vulnerable would be based on their consumption mediated by the market, which would not only reproduce the state ideology of commitment to the precarious or poor, but now commodification has been transformed into a strategy to meet some of their needs and without taking into account that their situation or condition of vulnerability has been the result of commodification led by the new mechanisms of accumulation of the environment. capital.

For this reason, neoliberal ideology has also been concealed under the so-called postliberalism, that is, a version of liberalism to legitimize government actions aimed at recovering the organizational capacity of institutions, but under the principle of freedom, which would not be at odds with the commodification capitalist dynamic (Contreras, 2015).

In this way, social institutions would be guarantors of freedom, which would hide their position against state intervention, when the latter, within the conception of the welfare state, was a way of addressing the vulnerability created by industrial capitalism, but in reality it was a control over the negative consequences, derived from the process of capitalist commodification (Conteras, 2015, pp. 16-18).

Consequently, the risks and dangers of being a worker in industrial capitalism, after the Second World War, were addressed by state intervention, through social policy, despite its differences in content and implementation, in relation to public services to meet the needs of health, education, disability, old age, unemployment, under a political logic not necessarily subordinated to the logic of capital accumulation. but to that of social utility, without visualizing that it was taking charge of some negative consequences of commodification on social life³.

For this reason, Esping-Andersen and Palier (2009) only highlighted in their analysis the transformations that the welfare state would undergo in an economic context organized by post-industrial or service capitalism, to meet, for example, the specific needs of working women as heads of household or also by increasing their participation in the service sector. where low wages predominate. That is, their needs as women with or without a family would rethink state intervention in their well-being, leaving aside the idea of commodification and its new manifestations in a capitalism of services, which had displaced industrial production as the basis of national economic development.

However, in this interpretation, the institutional variable, identified with the welfare state, from a general perspective, was still useful in the analysis that pointed out the importance of state intervention to satisfy in some way basic human needs (housing, health, education), whose universal character lay in the legal order, that is, in the so-called citizen rights. which is later discarded, in a neoliberal reading, when the State has transformed its commitment to well-being through the transfer of money to the vulnerable, defined by a threshold established based on the level of income, that is, a quantified level where only those with low incomes would directly receive the aid. It meant the end of state responsibility in the creation of situations of well-being through public services to subsidize only the consumption of some of the vulnerable individuals in the market of public services produced by capitalist businesses (Zamora, 2017, pp. 101-102).

The commodified state attention to the needs of some vulnerable groups would lie, on the one hand, in the normalization of behaviors governed by the market, and on the other, their exclusion from welfare institutions, favoring the domination of the economic power of capitalist businesses. But from another point of view, it would be the end of the relations established between the structures of industrial capitalism and the state institutions that drive commodification and at the same time decommodification embodied in the social welfare system (Zamora, 2017, p. 89).

The welfare state did not have as its sole objective the security of citizens to guarantee their freedom from acts of violence, as the liberal state did, but to intervene in various aspects of human life to control uncertainties and generate a feeling of security in exchange for normalizing state surveillance and control (Zamora, 2017, p. 27).

What I would finally highlight, albeit in a synthetic and even provisional way, is that social struggles multiplied because their only common objective would be a recognition of their needs not only as rights, but as an urgency to change the way in which the necessary power was redistributed to address situations of uncertainty, identified with social exclusion. because cash transfers that supported the consumption of some vulnerable people were still within the threshold of benefits. The latter, according to Zamora (2017, pp. 96-97), was

³Claus Offe visualized it this way when he used the idea of decommodification as part of his conceptual arsenal to study the welfare state and to argue about the logic of state bureaucracy, the so-called social utility, which showed a potential for conflict with the logic of capital, ruling out that the state was only at the service of the interests of capital (Offe, 1992).

favorable to critics of the universal nature of the welfare state so that its actions were further limited and then only those who, due to their precariousness, demanded support were helped. However, state monetary support fulfilled the function of assisting a population through consumption, which could be complemented with the low income obtained through formal or informal employment, without forcing them to join any paid economic activity. Although, for Wacquant (2017, pp. 183-185), these state cash transfers are coercive because they monitor the behavior of the beneficiaries so that they meet the objectives established by these programs, for example, to join temporary jobs and with low incomes or to attend, in the case of their infant children, for example, the deteriorated public school or precarious health care without being a real option, finally, to overcome their vulnerability, generating situations of dependency that have been functional to the struggles between the political elite itself, which is not monolithic, in defining the destination of the distribution of monetary aid and public services: For whom and under what requirements, legitimizing the state power of welfare wrapped in the ideology of commodification or decommodification, as the case may be (Paugam, 2014). On the other hand, state or governmental attention to some situations of social vulnerability would not really be a protection because it would be acting on the consequences, in any case, and according to the above, it would be more of a saving of the state budget because welfare institutions have been dispensed with for their distribution, supposedly seeking efficiency in their distribution. fulfilling a neoliberal purpose, where the consumption of these individuals would be sought to be carried out through the market and in an efficient way. In this case, the value of equality or social justice would acquire a new meaning in the social behaviors of the orbit of commodified consumption, whose well-being would be defined by income defined only by its purchasing power. This, in my opinion, has favored the analysis of poverty observed through the behavior of incomes, from which the probable improvement of their situation has been derived, based on the following consideration: a higher income would increase consumption, which would be the final support of well-being⁴. In the case of state aid to a vulnerable group, it has also been interpreted as part of a process of deinstitutionalisation, which has supposedly favoured the birth of radical leaderships, some against representative democracy and neoliberal policies, which have increased the number of vulnerable individuals (Illades, 2024, p. 20).

However, monetary or direct transfers have been the result of the establishment of a regime of domination, that is, subordinated to the political logic for the configuration of a mass of support among the vulnerable, which is useful to justify through the belief in justice and equality, the government actions of distribution of public income for some groups known as poor or vulnerable (Illades, 2024, p. 21).

Although, in the Mexican case, from a generalization, monetary transfers, accompanied by criticism of their bureaucratic management, in a leftist government such as that of Andrés López Obrador (2018-2024)⁵ was, supposedly, to establish a new way in the distribution of monetary aid, banishing the deficient actions derived from the corruption of the high public officials of previous neoliberal 'governments, which was normalized through its conversion into a law introduced in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States from which it would be guaranteed, beyond future conflicts between political elites, its compliance, that is, its obligatory nature, regardless of whether political power was exercised by a party contrary to the ideals of social justice⁷.

⁴However, and according to Piketty (2023, pp. 41-43), social inequality is not reduced only by the simple increase in the income of the poor (I would add the vulnerable), but by access to public services such as education and health. This perspective leads to putting back into the academic debate the importance of the welfare state in the creation of solidarity as an organizing principle in the search for equality through distribution based on public services.

⁵That president came to power through a coalition of political parties, led by his party called the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) and self-appointed as Together We Will Make History, whose opportunism was evident due to the fact that the number of militants of these parties is small and they only sought, with the coalition, to preserve their registration as parties (Illades, 2024, p. 27).

⁶This did not prevent the corruption of President López Obrador's former legal advisor, who resigned from office on September 2, 2021, when from his position and with privileged information he did judicial business with associated firms, obtaining personal gains and also for their participants or partners (Gómez, 2023, pp. 16-17). In addition, I would add that corruption as a social practice to obtain personalized benefits has been a characteristic of public administration, both of neoliberal governments and of the current one has been a recurrent denunciation normalized by public opinion (Buchahim, 2024).

⁷In Article 4 "(...) The State shall guarantee the provision of economic support to persons who have permanent disabilities (...). Priority will be given to those under eighteen years of age, indigenous people and Afro-Mexicans up to the age of sixty-four, and people who are in a condition of poverty... Persons over sixty-eight years of age have the right to receive a non-contributory pension from the State under the terms established by law. In the case of indigenous and Afro-Mexican people, this benefit will be granted from the age of sixty-five (...) The State will establish a scholarship system for students at all school levels of public education, with priority given to those belonging to families who are in poverty, to guarantee the right to education with equity" (Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, 2024, pp. 15-16).

But returning to the process of deinstitutionalization, it can be said that it began during neoliberal governments, where public administration was based on corruption and illegal business between public officials and private companies, sustained by influence peddling, which configured an inefficient bureaucratic apparatus at the service of private businesses. However, López Obrador, in the name of austerity, canceled public trusts⁸ and also some functions and tasks of the bureaucracy, transferring some of them to the armed forces⁹, but the relationship between politicians and businessmen to do business through the awarding of direct contracts in the execution of public works continued and was also supported by the discretion and influence peddling of the Moreno government (Illades, 2024, pp. 41-44).

For this reason, according to Rosiles (2024, pp. 113-115), in the document (2018-2024), Proyecto de Nación, whose author was President López Obrador, since his presidential campaign, proposed transforming the administrative apparatus of government by reducing its budget for its operation and hiring new personnel. Above all, because he considered austerity as a remedy to eliminate corruption and even ideologized it by stating that it was not only a way of life, but also of government.

It is not intended, therefore, to elaborate an evaluation of the actions or programs of the Moreno government, but to highlight that the monetary transfers to groups defined as poor by the López Obrador government have served to accelerate the process of deinstitutionalization, justified by the existence of corruption, which allowed public money to be accumulated by high neoliberal officials for their private benefit. which forced it to transform austerity into a means to generate savings with public money, which would later be channeled, supposedly, into social programs (Roldán, 2024).

But what did austerity really mean beyond the benevolence preached by the López Obrador government and supposedly, in turn, converted into more budget for social aid? The answer would be a greater inability of the State to meet the needs of health¹⁰ and education and care for infants and the abandonment, at the same time, of the road infrastructure that served to facilitate the mobility of the vulnerable in rural and urban locations (Roldán, 2024, pp. 19-20).

Therefore, the behavior of social spending would have to be analyzed through the amounts exercised through social programs, which, according to the Ministry of Welfare, were concentrated in four: pension for the elderly, support for working mothers, people with disabilities, rehabilitation and inclusion, which from the government has meant a tripling of its monetary support between 2019-2023. However, according to Ríos (2023a, p. 14), if only the total budget of social programs is considered, its increase was 27%. However, what the government did achieve was to increase cash transfers by 53% compared to those of the previous government (Peña Nieto, 2012-2018) which was 43%. In other words, it did not increase social spending, but its distribution through cash transfers¹¹.

⁸It eliminated the Tourism Promotion Council, the Special Economic Zones, the Presidential General Staff, ProMéxico, TURISSSTE, the National Institute of Educational Physical Infrastructure, the Federal Police, the National Institute of Entrepreneurship. To this was added the presidential decision to eliminate from the public budget the expenses of personal services of high-level officials, major medical expenses, and individual separation insurance. Meanwhile, he transformed other institutions by changing their name as the Center for Investigation and National Security into the National Intelligence Agency. Or the Seguro Popular replaced it with the Institute of Health for Welfare and the Prospera program of social inclusion, in relation to education, it changed it to Benito Juárez Scholarships for Welfare, as well as the Program of Children's Stays to support Working Mothers is now called the Support Program for the Welfare of Girls and Boys, children of Working Mothers (Rosiles, 2024, pp. 116-117).

⁹The negative connotation of corruption has acquired a particular meaning when President López Obrador has justified the participation of the armed forces not only in relief tasks for the population affected by natural disasters or other types of emergencies, but also in the construction of public works because as they are "uniformed people" they are not corrupt nor do they belong to the privileged classes. It has also transferred to them civilian tasks or functions of public security and customs control (Garza, López, Martín, Marván, Salazar, & Salmorán, 2024, pp. 118-119).

¹⁰Health care during the self-appointed government of the 4T was in two ways: the first was configured by the definitive hiring of medical personnel, a condition to overcome situations of job insecurity, in the health system organized by the IMSS-Bienestar, but due to the cuts in its budget the objective has not been met because it has only hired half of its workers definitively. In addition to having absorbed the employees who worked at the defunct Institute of Health for Welfare (Insabi), reducing their benefits such as the amount of pensions by not recognizing their work seniority (Gómez, 2024, p. A16). And the other path was to turn the government into the main buyer of medicines for distribution in the different public hospitals and store them in a megapharmacy, thus seeking the eradication of corruption, which decreased the supply by 70% and before the government of López Obrador was 98%, according to the director of the National Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry (Canifarma). In addition, the government owes them 10,000 million pesos and 6,500 million pesos are from the defunct Insabi (Cota, 2024).

¹¹According to Gerardo Esquivel (2024, p. 16), between 2006 and 2018, during neoliberal governments, income poverty increased from 42.9% to 49.9%, that is, the poor population increased from 46 to 61 million during those years and with a rate of extreme income poverty increasing by 2 million. However, when it made a

But cash transfers do not fully reach the poorest households, especially because the precarious conditions of some vulnerable people in rural locations that are difficult to access, due to lack of roads, the latter has become an obstacle for cash aid to reach them, while, and according to Ríos (2023b, p. 10), there is an articulation between monetary transfers and the guidelines of MORENA political activists, whose activity has sought to form electoral clientele¹².

The support for the consumption of some poor individuals and elderly people through social programs of cash transfers, accompanied by an increase in the minimum wage, have become the main bases of a prosperity narrated as the result of the republican austerity that avoided corruption and has taught, in general terms, public officials to live on "medium" salaries because their employment is a service to meet the needs of the people¹³.

Therefore, austerity was a mechanism established by López Obrador's government to finance its infrastructure works (Dos Bocas refinery, the Mayan Train and the Felipe Ángeles airport) as well as its social programs, whose costs, from a qualitative narrative, have meant suffering and death¹⁴ as a livable experience personally or individually in the face of the lack of institutional attention because by not having the necessary budget, they ceased to fulfill their functions of care or minimum social protection, although their greatest social achievement was the reduction of income poverty by decreeing the increase in the so-called minimum wage¹⁵.

In this case, social vulnerability has not disappeared because the social protection institutions, which would include health and education, have decreased their intervention due to the lack of budget and in the event of having money from a trust, its dissolution by government decision would directly transfer that monetary resource to the Treasury of the Federation. where it has been impossible, according to Roldán (2024, p. 256), to know its fate because it has been assimilated with other government revenues, what the López Obrador government has done, consequently, is to subordinate public revenues to its logic of domination, based on the construction of electoral loyalties among some vulnerable groups, what has been called populist authoritarianism (Illades, 2024, pp.45-46).

Thus, Mexican social vulnerability is multiple and diverse, but its negative effects are experienced as a personal, individual experience, where institutions have a weak presence, which has contributed to some conflicts being transformed into situations of violence, where resentment and frustration are expressed in the absence of solidarity, above all, when the common has been dissolved through the mechanism of republican austerity (Dubet, 2020). However, it has been supported by a regime or system of domination that was engendered by neoliberal economic policy and consolidated with the government of López Obrador, where the savings built with budget cuts to the public administration have meant a progressive reduction of the State in the distribution of public¹⁶ services in exchange for handing over money for the consumption of the services produced for the

comparison with the period of 2018 and 2022, income poverty decreased from 49.9% to 43.5%, translated into absolute numbers from 61.8 million poor to only 56.3 million. In turn, the rate of extreme poverty by income went from 14% to 12.1%, decreasing by 1.8 million. But it was clarified that during neoliberal governments their social programs were focused, now with the government of López Obrador, they present a greater progressivity or universality.

¹²In a rally organized in the municipality of Ixtlahuaca, located in the State of Mexico, on December 8, 2023, where the elderly and beneficiaries of the pension program for the elderly, with the presence of President López Obrador, attended, it was to listen to his speech on the need for his social programs to continue once his term is over and, then, a 78-year-old woman in attendance said that it was because the official (called by López Obrador servants of the nation), who is in charge of notifying them when the pension payment will arrive, warned her via a message on her cell phone that she had to show up to the rally and there she found out that it was because the president (Ricardo, 2023, p. 5).

¹³The presidential candidate of Morena and former governor of Mexico City, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, has guaranteed among her supporters in her various rallies of support that if she wins the presidential elections she would continue with the same social policy (Belmont, 2024, p. 10).

¹⁴A creation of the neoliberal governments was the so-called popular insurance, now defunct, which aimed to finance the expenses of hospitals in the treatment of 66 diseases that put life at risk, such as cancer and malignant tumors, through the Social Protection in Health Trust, constituted with contributions of money from the central government. state and the beneficiaries with their fees ranging from zero to 11 thousand pesos, which depended on their socioeconomic situation. The trust in 2018 had 119 billion pesos, however, in 2019 the popular insurance disappeared and was replaced by the Health Fund for Welfare that in 2023 had only 45 billion pesos, the López Obrador government transferred the rest of its income to the Treasury of the Federation and it is suspected that it was used to finance the construction of the Mayan train and that in 2023 it had a budget of 138 billion pesos (Roldán, 2024, pp. 81-83).

¹⁵Controlling inflation has been a limited effort by López Obrador's government because the country's increased inflow of remittances, as well as "... at least 700 billion pesos to the economy, via social programs, raise the monetary circulation and consolidate a constant pressure with higher prices for products, services and credits" (Villegas, 2024, p.52).

¹⁶The candidate for mayor of Mexico City for the Coalition Va X la Ciudad de México, made up of the National Action Party (PAN), the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution

market. In addition, adding a difference, some are not the same, but unequal compared to those who do receive monetary support to continue commodifying their consumption (Hibou, 2013).

Final Thoughts

The concept of decommodification has made possible the emergence of arguments used to interpret what the welfare state was in the distribution of public services as citizen rights, although the concept of commodification served to characterize the renewed process of accumulation of profits for capitalist companies in the face of the weakness or absence of state controls.

However, the arguments presented, although in a general way, have shown the conceptual relevance of the so-called social vulnerability and precariousness, which has acquired a particular meaning when it has been related to the establishment of a system or regime of domination over the behaviors of a part of the universe of the vulnerable, commodifying their consumption through monetary transfers.

However, it is not disputed whether these monetary transfers have served to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries, what was found, albeit provisionally, was that the commodification of their consumption emerged from the criticisms made against the loss of the decommodification capacity of the welfare state.

In this way, state welfare institutions were weakened, which has been in a differentiated way, for their collective distribution, which reinforced, later, the belief that efficiency should be achieved only through the market.

For this reason, a non-commodified distribution was dispensed with, in some cases gradually and in others in a limited way, so that its place could be taken by the commodified one, directly or indirectly helping the accumulation of capital.

In the case of Mexico, what stood out briefly was that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's narrative in favor of commodification was covered up under accusations against the corruption of officials of neoliberal governments when they had public money to attend to their privileges¹⁷.

In this way, commodification became the new mechanism for distributing monetary transfers without institutional presence, which was replaced by new government employees (called the servants of the nation) in charge of the administrative control of the beneficiaries to turn them into a reserve of votes at the service of the current presidency and also for the next presidential election.

For this reason, it was stressed that the law sought to guarantee, as rights, the commodified consumption of some vulnerable groups, which is not necessarily identified with the universalization of social rights carried out with the intervention of the welfare state.

The above is debatable, however, with the evidence, which appears here only outlined, allows the elaboration of hypotheses or conjectures about the exclusionary potential of commodified consumption in the face of the generalization of precarious living conditions, where it has driven the transformation of suffering into an individual matter, which has been contrary to the belief in equality, which has been the basis of solidarity, whose importance lies in reducing the disintegrating or destructive factors of collectives or of society itself.

So the problem of violence would be introduced into the analysis to make it part of a narrative that has considered it as the main cause of the dissolution of institutions in order to, as the neoliberal creed preached, make individuals themselves responsible for everything, regardless of whether it is good or bad, not the government or the market.

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(PRD), Santiago Taboada, narrates the social inequality of Mexico City as a problem of distribution of public budgets. which has made it impossible, in his opinion, to establish equal opportunities, the latter as an organizational principle is discarded from the logic of the system of political domination, from which economic transfers for the vulnerable are operated, because it has been identified with the competence derived from differentiated knowledge and skills promoted by private schools and universities (Taboada, 2024, p. 10).

¹⁷The Mexican public administration, as a system of privileges, has been organized by the instruments of commodification for the conduct of business with the participation of some public officials and businessmen or with leaders of criminal groups, as has happened in the judiciary, when a part of its important decisions have been the result of influence peddling and the disbursement of significant sums of money to suspend legal or other sanctions. Lemus (2024, pp. 9-32) has investigated this situation and has concluded that there is a judicial cartel within the Supreme Court of Justice. Something similar happens with the notaries authorized in each state of the country by the governor, whose legal power, in some cases, has been used to "legalize" the operations of companies that evade the payment of taxes, manage the diversion of public money for private purposes or to strip criminal money of that label (Ramírez, 2024, p. A14).

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