

## Popper in Latin America

Carlos Verdugo-Serna

Emeritus Professor at Universidad de Valparaíso- Chile. E-mail: [cverdugoserna@gmail.com](mailto:cverdugoserna@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

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The reception and influence of Popper's philosophy of science and his political philosophy in Latin America have depended heavily on the translation of his major works originally published in German and English. Thus, for example, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, which was originally published in 1959, was translated into Spanish in 1962 and into Portuguese only in 1974. Similarly, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, originally published in 1945, was translated into Spanish twelve years later in 1957 and into Portuguese in 1974. But apart from a discussion of the impact of the translations of his books, I also want to show that the political situation in some Latin American countries, for example, Chile, Cuba and Peru, has played a very important role in the introduction, reception and influence of Popper's philosophy of science in general and his social and political thought in particular. Accordingly, the main purpose of this article is to examine the reception of Popper's ideas in Latin America and give an account of his influence and legacy in some of the Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

#### Keywords:

Popper, reception, influence,  
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When Sir Karl Popper died on 17 September 1994, it was internationally recognized that he had been one of the most important and influential philosophers of the 20th century. As David Miller, who was his assistant in the 1960s and then his collaborator for three decades, pointed out:

He made outstanding (in some cases revolutionary) advances in the philosophy of science, the theory of probability, the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, social and political philosophy, and the philosophy of history; he contributed importantly (usually controversially) to our understanding of logic, the history of philosophy (especially the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Marx), classical mechanics, classical thermodynamics, quantum physics, evolutionary biology, psychology, and music. (Miller 2006: 2)

Something quite similar happened in the Iberian sphere when the Spanish philosopher Angeles J. Perona organized at the Facultad de Filosofía of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid a research seminar entitled "Models of Rationality: Philosophy and Science in Karl Popper". This was to celebrate the centenary of Karl Popper's birth. Dr. Perona later expressed her surprise noticing that "Popper's work was more alive than expected and that it continued to motivate us to think and debate". This motivated her to publish a book in 2008 to critically analyze the intellectual legacy of the Austrian-British philosopher. In the presentation of the book *Contrastando a Popper [Testing Popper]*, she says:

Karl Popper (1902-1994) was undoubtedly one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. From his *Logic of Scientific Discovery* to *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, through *The Poverty of Historicism* or *The Self and Its Brain*, all his work has produced important changes in the different branches of philosophy: his criticism, his doubts, his alternative proposals extend to the epistemology of the natural sciences, that of the social sciences, political philosophy, metaphysics and the history of philosophy. (Perona 2008:9)

Similarly, now at the Latin American level, a large group of intellectuals from Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay participated in the IV Seminar of the Working Group "Epistemology and Politics", belonging to the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1983. The theme of this seminar was "Social sciences and politics (discussion of Karl Popper's theses)". There they met for several days to discuss what they called "the influential Popperian theses on the social sciences". Subsequently, in 2004, the Argentinean philosopher Felix G. Schuster edited the book *Popper y las Ciencias Sociales, [Popper and the Social Sciences]* which contains a large proportion of the papers presented at this Seminar.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It is puzzling that not even one supporter of Popper's ideas was invited to this conference on Popper and the social sciences. This had the consequence that very debatable and distorting interpretations of Popper were not questioned, among them the claims that Popper was a positivist, a neoliberal and even an anti-democratic liberal.

As highlighted in the Foreword to this book, the organizers of this Seminar recognized that Popper's contributions went far beyond the social sciences and encompassed epistemological and methodological problems related to the natural sciences as well as problems of political philosophy and the philosophy of economics. Finally, it was acknowledged that Popper's thought, "has been influential at the economic and political level". These quotations are just a few examples of the recognition of Popper's importance in different Spanish-speaking countries.

The main purpose of this article is to examine the reception and influence of Popper's philosophy in Latin America. As we know, Latin America is both a geographical and a linguistic term that refers to a region of the American continent made up of twenty countries and characterized by the use of languages mostly derived from Latin, mainly Spanish, but also Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, French. Because of this large number of nations, we can only concentrate this time on the countries with the longest philosophical tradition and the deepest concentration on the problems with preoccupied Popper for more than 75 years. In this sense, because of the breadth of the subject and the limitations of space, our work can only be considered as a preliminary and incomplete study of the presence and legacy of Popper in Latin American countries. Also, I must indicate that the extent of the analysis of each country is just due to the accessible sources of information.

### **Reception and influence of Karl Popper's philosophy in Latin America**

Undoubtedly the reception and influence of Popper and critical rationalism have been closely connected with the access, mainly in Spanish, of Popper's first two and most important works originally published in German and English. Thus, his book *Logik der Forschung* published in Vienna in the autumn of 1934 (with the printing date "1935"), first translated into English in 1959 as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, was the basis for the Spanish translation in 1962 under the title *La lógica de la investigación científica*. On the other hand, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, published in London in 1945, was translated into Spanish in 1957 as *La sociedad abierta y sus enemigos*. These two translations have been the main basis for characterizing Popper as a philosopher or methodologist of science and a philosopher of politics respectively.

Moreover, I will try to show that, in general, Popper as a philosopher of science has been more widely read and influential than as a social and political philosopher. I also believe that Sir Karl's philosophy of politics has been subject to greater distortion and, therefore, to more unjustified criticism than his epistemological and methodological theses, although labeling him a "positivist" has tended to discourage his being read and has prevented a proper understanding of his philosophy of science.

As indicated above, it was only in 1962 that the Spanish version of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* became available and twelve years later in 1974 in Portuguese as *A Lógica da Pesquisa Científica*. These translations made known the most important issues and problems of scientific methodology analyzed by Popper, among them, his rejection of induction or inductive inference as the method of science, as a method both for discovering and for justifying scientific theories, the adoption of the deductive method of testing scientific theories, that is, the method of critical testing

of theories, the problem of demarcation understood as the search for a criterion to distinguish between empirical sciences (the empirical method) and mathematics or logic and metaphysics and his proposal of falsifiability as such a criterion, his conception of theories as a set of universal statements and his deductive model of scientific explanation.

We know that all these proposals on the logic of scientific knowledge understood by Sir Karl as a theory of theories, were in total disagreement with the theses of the Vienna Circle's Logical Positivism. All this has led to the fact that in the history of the development of the philosophy of science in the 20th century, the theses put forward by Logical Positivism are seen as closely linked to, but diametrically opposed to, Popper's proposals. This has also been the case in Latin America in the study of Popper's philosophy of science.

The following is an alphabetical description and account of Popper's reception and influence in Latin American countries, starting with Argentina.

### **1. Argentina**

It has been thanks to the invaluable assist of Argentine academics and friends that I have been able to obtain adequate information on Popper's impact and importance in the development of philosophy in this country. Thus, for example, the Argentine philosopher Diego Rosende acknowledges that Sir Karl's influence was partly due to the action of the physicist and philosopher Mario Bunge and above all of the mathematician and philosopher Gregorio Klimovsky. Bunge influenced the interest of Klimovsky, who not only permanently disseminated and taught Popper's ideas in his philosophy of science courses at the University of Buenos Aires, but was also close to Popperian thought, as was evident in his book *Las desventuras del conocimiento científico* [*The misadventures of scientific knowledge*] published in 1994. Actually, after Bunge's departure from Argentina, Klimovsky was the philosopher who played the most decisive role in making Popper's ideas known and valued by an important number of students and professionals, among them the inevitably conjectural character of human and scientific knowledge, as well as considering science as a necessarily critical activity. This role has also been expressly highlighted by the Argentine philosopher Alejandro Cassini who, referring to Klimovsky, argues that "in the courses he taught at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, he introduced Popper's falsificationism, a position to which he himself always remained close" (Cassini 2017: 9). In fact, Cassini admits that it was Bunge who introduced Klimovsky to Popper's books and that it was certainly the reading of *Logic of Scientific Discovery* that was decisive for the formation of Klimovsky's philosophy of science and, consequently, for the dissemination of Popper's thought.

The importance of Popper's works for Argentine philosophy has also been underlined by the philosopher Gabriel Zanotti who, in the preface of his book *Búsqueda con esperanza* [*Searching with hope*] dedicated to Popper's thought, and whose objectives include attempting a synthesis between Popper's realism and Thomistic realism, states: "Popper's philosophy of science is so important for us that we could say without fear of exaggeration that the philosophy of science as a discipline could be divided into before and after Popper" (Zanotti 1993: 6). However, this

Argentine philosopher analyses in his work not only the methodology and other epistemological problems of Popper's philosophy, but also important aspects of Sir Karl's social and political philosophy.

It must be remarked that the study and dissemination of Popper's philosophy are also due to other universities and some study groups related to epistemology, the philosophy of natural and social sciences, the philosophy of economics and social and political philosophy.

An example of this has been the Bases Foundation in the city of Rosario, which was initially chaired by Federico Fernández, who is a renowned Popper scholar. In fact, in 2004, Fernández organized the International Congress "Karl Popper: validity and transformation of his thought", which took place at the Facultad de Humanidades y Letras of the Universidad Nacional de Rosario. Undoubtedly, this congress was most important in terms of the quality and number of participants and presentations. This meeting was attended by more than thirty distinguished academics from Argentina and other countries, including Fred Eidlin (Canada), David Miller (UK) and Mark Notturmo (USA). I also attended it as an invited Chilean academic. In later years, Bases also organized some conferences on Popper's and von Mises' liberalism, as well as online courses including one given by Notturmo on Popper's philosophy.

Popper's reception and influence have been discussed also in other Argentine universities. For example, at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Mendoza there has been a group of outstanding researchers from different disciplines, including Guillermo Cuadrado, Ernesto Calderón, Pascual Gargiulo, Santiago Gelonch, Raúl Milone and Juan Torres. All of them have examined and taught different aspects of Popper's philosophy. Their interest in Popper's philosophy led to the organization of an international colloquium "The Thought of Karl Popper" held on 23-25 November 2011. In this meeting in addition to the people mentioned above, David Miller (UK) and I too participated as international guests. To conclude, I should also want to point out that Sir Karl's philosophy of science has been a topic of discussion in several of the more than 30 Jornadas de Epistemología e Historia de la Ciencia del Cono Sur [Conferences of Epistemology and History of Science in the Southern Cone] held at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina.

## **2. Brazil**

In general terms, and as the Brazilian philosopher Otávio Bueno let me know in a personal communication, Popper's reception, importance and influence were undoubtedly immense. Thus, of all the 20th century philosophers of science, Sir Karl has been the most discussed in Brazil by philosophers and scientists alike. Moreover, his influence has been so marked that in general, graduate courses and seminars in philosophy of science were very often organized around his philosophy, for example, in subjects such as Logical Positivism and Popper's criticisms, Popper and the development of Critical Rationalism, the objections and criticisms of Popper made by philosophers such as Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend and Laudan. At least in the early 1990s this was the way the courses were organized.

In addition, Professor of Law, Dr. Vinícius Monteiro de Barros of the Pontificia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais (PUC Minas), has informed me that the reception of Popper's philosophy has been excellent in the Postgraduate Programme in Law especially where it has been studied in depth. A clear example of this is found in this same university where there is a field of study and research in the Postgraduate Programme in Procedural Law in which Popper's critical rationalism was adapted to scientific research in Law. This was due to the Neo-institutionalist Procedural Theory of Law, proposed by Professor Rosemiro Pereira Leal. Professor Leal is co-founder of the Postgraduate Programme of PUC Minas. He is also founder and honorary president of the Popperian Institute of Legal Studies (INPEJ).

Everything said above shows that critical rationalism has been quite influential and very positive especially in Law. As we have already highlighted, Popper's ideas influenced Professor Leal to create a Legal-Procedural Theory (Process in the Implementation of the Democratic Rule of Law) which has served since 1997 until today as an important source of research for PUC Minas students at the graduate level in Law as well as in Master, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral programmes in Law.

Professor Barros has also pointed out that the epistemology of critical rationalism has been at the basis of all the courses that he teaches at PUC Minas, among them "Criminal Law", "Criminal Procedural Law" and "Epistemology of evidence in the criminal process". Moreover, Barros indicates that there have been some obstacles preventing a more extensive and in-depth study of Popper's thought. Among them is the accusation popularized by Habermas and uncritically accepted by students and academics that Popper was nothing more than a positivist.

### **3. Chile**

In Chile, the presence and importance of Popper's critical rationalism has been, as in other Latin American countries, mainly related to the development of philosophy of science as an autonomous discipline cultivated exclusively in universities and their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. But, concerning Popper's socio-political philosophy, its reception and influence in Chile was closely linked to the existence and influence of the main ideological trends of the 1960s and early 1970s. On the one hand, were the communitarian philosophy put forwarded by Emmanuel Mounier and the integral humanism of Jacques Maritain and, on the other, the Marxist socialist thought and the influence of the Cuban revolution on the left-wing political parties. Thus, the doctrines of Mounier and Maritain were the ideological basis of the Christian Democratic Party which, under the slogan "Revolution in Freedom", led the lawyer Eduardo Frei Montalva to the presidency of Chile (1964-1970).

Subsequently, the election of the doctor and founder of the Socialist Party Salvador Allende Gossens, supported by the Chilean Communist Party and groups admiring Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, meant that Marxist doctrines practically dominated the spaces of ideological discussion, especially among many of the academics and students in Chilean universities. In these circumstances, the reception and influence of liberal thinkers, especially Popper and his devastating criticisms of Marxism, were almost impossible.

Regarding the study of the philosophy of science, especially Popper's philosophy of science, I think it was due to the return to Chile of some academics who left the country to specialize in epistemology and philosophy of science. So it happened, for example, with the Chilean philosopher and Professor at the Instituto de Filosofía of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, (PUCCH) Dr. Luis Flores Hernández, who informed me that he became acquainted with Popper's works during his studies in France (1972-1976). After Flores returned to Chile, Karl Popper was an essential author in Flores's philosophy of science courses, a discipline that did not exist in the study programmes at PUCCH. Thus, students had to read selected texts from *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, *Objective Knowledge* and *Conjectures and Refutations*. This also happened in my case when I returned to Chile after four years of specialization in philosophy of science in the USA (1974-1979).<sup>2</sup>

For Flores, Popper's works have been of crucial importance for the development of the philosophy of science since Sir Karl has been a necessary bridge to understand the transition between the Vienna Circle and post-positivist authors. The importance attributed to the Viennese-British philosopher in Chilean philosophy of science was clearly manifested when the Faculty of Philosophy of the PUCCH organized the International Symposium "Karl Popper and Critical Rationality" (16-18 November 1988, Santiago de Chile). This activity was coordinated by Prof. Flores and was sponsored by the Austrian Embassy. I was able to participate in this activity as one of the academics from six Chilean universities. The international guest was the philosopher Paul Weingartner from the University of Salzburg. This number of Chilean academics and their contributions to this Symposium showed that already in the late 1980s Popper's philosophy was more widely known and studied.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the opening of postgraduate programmes has also been very important for the study of Popper's philosophy of science. This, for example, was brought to my attention by the Chilean philosopher Juan Omar Cofre, a former member of the Universidad Austral de Chile. According to him, in 1978 the first Master's programme in Philosophy offered in Chile was inaugurated at that university by the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences. In 1986, one of the courses in that programme was "Popper and Bunge: two conceptions of science". On the other hand, Popper's political philosophy was not studied, let alone confronted with other

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<sup>2</sup> At the University of Chile, Valparaíso campus, in the sixties and seventies, there was no course or seminar in philosophy of science in the undergraduate programme. As an academic in the Department of Philosophy I obtained a Fulbright scholarship to travel to USA in 1974 to specialize in the philosophy of science. After my return to Chile in 1979, I was able to establish and teach, for the first time, some courses and seminars in the philosophy of natural and social sciences including, of course, Popper's philosophy of science. Later on, when the Master's programmes in Philosophy of Science were created at the University of Santiago in 1986 and then a similar one at my own university in 1987, I was able to teach Popper's philosophy of science in both programmes.

<sup>3</sup> Actually, the academics invited to the Symposium were from the most important universities such as the Universidad de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Universidad de Santiago de Chile y Universidad de Valparaíso.



liberal or Marxist thinkers. Finally, Cofre remembers that he read Popper for the first time during his undergraduate studies in 1972, precisely in a philosophy of science course.

At the University of Chile, which is the oldest institution of higher education in Chile, the study of Popper was apparently due, according to a personal communication with Professor Luis Ramírez, to the first philosophy of science courses given by Professor Jorge Estrella in the 1960s and 1970s. In these courses, Popper's philosophy of science began to be analyzed. Nowadays these courses are taught by Ramírez and include the reading of Popper's *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. However, one cannot speak of a real influence of Popper at the University of Chile, but he is certainly studied alongside other classical philosophers of science such as Hempel, Feyerabend and Kuhn. Another important factor for the development of the philosophy of science in Chile was the creation of Master's programmes in Philosophy of Science at the University of Santiago of Chile in 1986 and at the University of Valparaíso in 1987. In both programmes I was responsible for deepening the study of Popper's epistemology and philosophy of science.

Certainly, in the last two decades Popper's philosophy of science has become widely known and has been the focus of continued interest and discussions. For instance, for the purpose of commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Karl Popper's death, the Centre for Studies in Science, Technology and Society and the Instituto de Filosofía of the Universidad de Valparaíso organized the International Colloquium "The Legacy of Karl Popper: Reflections 20 years after his death", which took place on 22 and 23 September 2014. In this activity, which was attended by international guests among them David Miller (University of Warwick, UK), Jeremy Shearmur (Australian National University), Angeles Jiménez Perona (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain), it was my privilege to participate on behalf of the Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile.

It is also worth noting that Popper's socio-political philosophy has been advanced by the Public Studies Center [Centro de Estudios Públicos – CEP] in Santiago, which is a private non-profit organization of an academic nature and enjoys national and international fame. Founded in 1980, one of its most fundamental objectives is to contribute to the knowledge and dissemination of those values and principles that are at the basis of an open, free and democratic society.

In fact, in 1989 the journal *Estudios Públicos*, which belongs to the CEP, invited me to contribute to the publication of the work "Selección de escritos políticos de Karl Popper" ["Selected socio-political writings of Karl Popper"], which also included a brief introduction to Popper's philosophy. In 1996, after Popper's death in 1994, the same journal published my article "La filosofía de la ciencia de Karl Popper" ["Karl Popper's Philosophy of Science"].

But sadly, to say, Popper's political philosophy has not been studied much in Chile. And in some universities his theses have been disfigured by academics of a clearly Marxist and anti-liberal bent, accusing Popper of being, along with Hayek, simply a representative of neo-liberalism, or claiming that Popper's open society would be nothing more than a capitalist consumer society, and even questioning the democratic character of Popper's political philosophy.

Finally, we would like to show that although Popper has not played a role in the ideological bases of Chilean political parties, he has indeed exerted an important influence on two Chilean



writers and politicians who have played a prominent role in Chilean politics and who have publicly acknowledged their intellectual debt to Popper for their liberal views opposed to socialism. The first of these is the internationally renowned writer Roberto Ampuero, who served as Chile's ambassador to Mexico and Spain and later on as Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs (2018-2019). The second is Mauricio Rojas, an economist, writer and politician, of Chilean and Swedish nationality, who is a former member of parliament for the Liberal People's Party of Sweden. In 2018, Ampuero and Rojas published the book *Diálogo de conversos* [*Dialogue of converts*], dedicated to Mario Vargas Llosa, whom they recognize as a "liberal friend and teacher of converts". The main purpose of the book is to show the transition that both had in their philosophical and political development from Marxist socialist positions to liberal stances. In this process of political change, Mauricio Rojas acknowledges the influence of Popper's and Isaiah Berlin's philosophy.

Similarly, Roberto Ampuero recognizes the importance of taking Popper's advice to heart when liberalism, without the necessary attitude of modesty and intellectual humility, attempts to solve economic, social and political problems:

This sense of modesty in the face of proposed solutions is something I have missed in a certain liberalism that sometimes seems as utopian as communism. Progress towards greater freedom for more and more people should be seen from a "Popperian" perspective, i.e., as a process of trial and error, where each expansion of freedom can bring new dilemmas and where state intervention should not be stigmatized a priori. (Ampuero and Rojas 2018: 205)

However, the importance and influence of Popper on Ampuero's philosophical and political thought became much more evident in a personal communication where he refers to this subject and informs me that he read Popper in German in 1983 after emigrating from communist Germany to the West. The book that most influenced his political conception was *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and what most captured his interest was the analysis therein of the role of Plato, Hegel and Marx in the development of historical determinism and the difference between an open society and a closed, totalitarian society. This was to be expected after he had lived between 1974 and 1982 under the totalitarian regimes of the German Democratic Republic and Fidel Castro's Cuba.

Ampuero also informed me that the subject of that book was not a purely intellectual but a vital issue. He fully identified with Popper because Sir Karl destroyed the essence of his communist creed, namely the conviction that communism, due to the laws of history, was an inevitable stage in human history.

I cannot end without reporting Roberto Ampuero's response to the question of which of Popper's theses or opinions on social and political philosophy are still important and valid in the political sphere in general and particularly in Chile. According to this prominent writer and politician, they are, among others, the demystification of Marx's historicist determinism; the clarification of the essence of totalitarianism and its contrast with the open society; the crucial role of ideologists and

their philosophical account, as well as that of politicians in the imposition of totalitarianism and, finally, the paradoxes of tolerance that afflict the open society.

#### 4. Colombia

As for Colombia, Dr. German Guerrero of the Universidad del Valle, Cali, has informed me that it was Popper's philosophy of science and epistemology that had the greatest influence in this country in almost the last three decades of the twentieth century. In fact, it was around Sir Karl's philosophy of science along with the philosophy of logical positivism, Kuhn's historicist vision and Feyerabend's epistemology that philosophy of science studies were institutionalized in Colombian universities. Popper's influence in this country has been clearly acknowledged. In his article "La filosofía de la ciencia en Colombia. Historia de su desarrollo", ["The philosophy of science in Colombia. History of its development"] the Colombian philosopher Juan C. Moreno says:

In addition to the previous approaches to Logical Positivism, the birth of the Philosophy of Science in Colombia had as 'pioneering' contributions some publications and translations on the philosophical thought of Karl Popper developed towards the end of the seventies and especially during the eighties by the following authors: Carlos B. Gutiérrez (1977), from the Universidad de los Andes, Adolfo León Gómez (1978), from the Universidad del Valle, Rubén Sierra Mejía (1979 and 1985), from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, and Blanca Inés Prada (1983), from the Universidad Industrial de Santander.(Moreno 2010: 161).

I think that it is important also to mention other authors such as Carlos García Duque of the Universidad de Caldas y Jorge Mejía Escobar of the Universidad de Antioquía.

Besides Professor Guerrero has remarked that given the diversity of topics and problems that have been part of Popper's thought, among them some of a general nature such as epistemology, the philosophy of empirical sciences, ontology, social and political philosophy, as well as more specific problems such as the mind-body problem and interpretations of the probability calculus, it is not strange that his contributions to these fields have been subjected to diverse studies, analyses and criticisms by Colombian scientists and philosophers, for example, at some Faculties of Social Sciences and Economics.

It should also be noted that around 2007 the "Mundo 3" research group headed by Dr. Campo Elías Burgos emerged with the aim of proposing an educational theory based on Popper's critical rationalism. Subsequently, in 2010, Burgos published the book *Teoría de la Educación según el Racionalismo Crítico de Karl Popper: bases epistemológicas y teoría sociopolítica* [*Theory of Education according to Karl Popper's Critical Rationalism: epistemological bases and socio-political theory*].

## 5. Cuba

As was to be expected, Popper's presence and influence on the philosophy of science and political philosophy in Cuba has been strongly linked to the socialist definition of the Cuban political regime in 1961. As the Cuban academics Jorge Núñez Jover, Lourdes Alonso Alonso and Grisél Ramírez Valdés state in their article "La filosofía de la ciencia entre nosotros: evolución, institucionalización y circulación de conocimiento en Cuba" ["The philosophy of science among us: evolution, institutionalization and circulation of knowledge in Cuba"] (2015), the development and evolution of the philosophy of science in that country has been closely linked to the socio-political and also ideological context. It should be noted that these academics have been directly involved in the development of this area of philosophy, especially as members of the Universidad de La Habana. They also point out that the first attempt to distance themselves from official Soviet philosophy between 1964 and 1971, carried out in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Havana and in the journal *Pensamiento Crítico*, [*Critical Thinking*] ultimately failed. In fact, both this department and the journal were closed down in 1971.

From then on, the conceptions and schemes of official Soviet philosophy, including the doctrines of dialectical and historical materialism, became hegemonic. As a result, when the undergraduate programmes in philosophy were opened in 1976 at the Universities of Havana and Oriente, the curricula that had to be adopted, and in which there was no mention of philosophy of science or epistemology, were mainly those existing at Moscow State University.

On the other hand, the authors of the article stress that, in fact, all contributions and studies of science coming from the Western world were often labeled as "bourgeois philosophy" and thus ignored or critically mentioned. The main modification of this situation of complete domination of the general view of philosophy and philosophy of science in particular occurred only from 1982 onwards. The following events were crucial factors for this change. As this quote from page 5 of the article mentioned above indicates:

The creation of the Latin American Society for the History of Science and Technology in 1982 (Puebla, Mexico), the publication of the journal *Quipu* and the holding of its first congress in Havana in 1985, generated important contacts and intellectual influences that led us to think about science in its history and context (Saldaña 1982; Polanco 1986). Between 1982 and 1984 our bibliographic holdings were enriched, basically through personal efforts, with important works of the Western philosophy of science: Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend and the debates among them. (Suppe 1979)

More recently, a clear and open recognition of the importance of Popper's epistemology and philosophy of science in Cuba can be found in the book *Filosofía de la ciencia I. Selección de lecturas* [*Philosophy of science I, Selected readings*], edited by Grisél Ramírez and María de Lourdes Alonso in 2011. In this publication, it is recognized that "The first fundamental work of the Viennese epistemologist Karl Popper (*The Logic of Scientific Discovery*) is, in our time, the

obligatory point of reference for all epistemological work" (Ramírez and Alonso 2011: 86). Moreover, this book includes an article I wrote on Popper and scientific explanation, which was the first one to be included in a selection of texts intended for the teaching of the philosophy of science in Cuba.

Finally, it is quite obvious that the socialist-Marxist regime in Cuba is a clear example of what Popper has characterized as a closed society, i.e., one opposed to political freedom and the right of citizens to criticize their rulers. This amply explains why *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism* have not been studied, let alone taught in Cuban universities.

## 6. Mexico

As has been the case in other Latin American countries, Popper's philosophy of science and social and political philosophy have had a great influence on the formation and philosophical perspectives of a large group of Mexican philosophers and academics. Dr. Armando Cíntora, Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa and author of the book *Los Presupuestos Irracionales de la Racionalidad* [*The Irrational Assumptions of Rationality*] published in 2005, has informed me that among them are Dr. Ambrosio Velasco Gómez of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Dr. José de Lira Bautista of the Universidad Autónoma de Aguas Calientes and Dr. Luz María Chapa Azuela of the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México. The impact and influence of Karl Popper's philosophy were mostly related to various problems in the areas of both the philosophy of science and political philosophy. Although the importance of Popper's thought was recognized mainly in the last decades of the twentieth century, this influence continues and is indispensable in postgraduate studies and in the training of any philosopher who wishes to participate in current discussions and debates in the aforementioned areas.

A good example of the continuing importance and influence of Popper's philosophy in current debates in México was the International Colloquium Popper-Kuhn Fest 2012, held in October 2012 (15-17). The opening address was given by David Miller on the pragmatic problem of induction. And the closing address, also by Miller, was on decision making under uncertainty and risk. This meeting was attended by academics from Argentina and Colombia as well as from several Mexican universities.

## 7. Peru

As in the case of Cuba, the analysis of the reception and importance of Popper's philosophy in Peru cannot be understood without recalling the political situation in the country after the removal of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry, who governed the country from 1963 to 1968. In that year, Belaúnde had to leave power after being ousted by the military coup led by the left-wing nationalist general Juan Velasco Alvarado, who ruled Peru from 1968 to 1975.

Velasco's government was characterized by profound changes in Peru's economic, social and political structure and by a total rejection of liberal political and economic ideas. In fact, his government was considered the highest representative of what was called "Latin American Military

Socialism". This government, also known as the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces, was overthrown in 1975 by another military coup led by General Francisco Morales Bermúdez. This second stage of the military government was characterized by the fact that he canceled many of the reforms initiated by Velasco and called a new democratic election. As I will show, the influence of Popper's political philosophy was already present before and after the Velasco government.

All this political review allows a deeper understanding of the information provided to me by Professor Richard Orozco of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (UNMSM) according to which during the 1960s and 1970s the identification of epistemology with the philosophy of science was mostly due to the influence of Marxist tendencies that conceived the problems of knowledge simply as related to scientific knowledge. This Marxist influence meant that Popper's works were absent from the official bibliography. This was also pointed out to me by Dr. Raymundo Casas in a personal communication stating that the reception and importance of Popper in Peru took place at the end of the 1970s when the teaching of historical materialism was shifted towards the philosophy of science at the UNMSM.

Although at first this shift was centered on the conception inherited from Logical Positivism, gradually Popper's conception of science became increasingly significant. Also, the enormous difference between the doctrines of the Vienna Circle's logical positivism and Popper's ideas had to be acknowledged. Here we can cite Casas's illuminating and important essay entitled "La epistemología en el Perú: una aproximación crítica" ["Epistemology in Peru: a critical approach"] (2007) in which, after describing the inherited conception of scientific theories, he rejects the frequent misrepresentation of Popper as another neo-positivist philosopher. Casas, in addition to recognizing Popper's historical importance as a hinge between logical positivism and the later historicist trends initiated by Kuhn, points out:

Although it can be said that Karl Popper's approaches form the background to some of the epistemological work carried out in Peru, there is still no overall view that can gauge the true scope of the master of the *London School of Economics*. Only the notion of falsifiability has been elucidated (on the basis of the technical notion of the potential falsifier) but Popper's critical approach has not been subjected to a revealing or exhaustive treatment. (Casas 2007:206)

Thus, before this shift from Marxist conceptions that has been very influential during Velasco's regime, Popper's philosophy was very limited in the most important Peruvian universities such as the UNMSM and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Apparently, according to Orozco, some knowledge of Popper's philosophy of science would have been due to Dr. Julio Sanz (1938-1997), who was the founder of a whole school of philosophy of science at the UNMSM and of disciples with a clear Popperian tendency, among them the philosophers Luis Piscoya and Carlos Alvarado de Piérola.

In more recent times, one of the most important acknowledgements of the presence and validity of Popper's epistemology and philosophy of science was the organization of the IV International Colloquium on Epistemology "Rethinking Karl Popper: 25 years after his death" (24-26 October 2018). This Colloquium, which took place at UNMSM, brought together Peruvian and international philosophers such as David Miller (UK), Carlos Verdugo (Chile), Alexander Gómez (Colombia) and Diego Rosende (Argentina).

Concerning Popper's social and political philosophy, I believe that it had a clear relevance and influence in two quite distinct moments in Peru's political history. The first it is related to the emergence of Acción Popular [Popular Action], the political party founded in 1956 by Fernando Belaúnde Terry, who in turn was the creator of the party's ideology called "Perú como Doctrina" ["Peru as a Doctrine"]. Belaúnde was president of Peru for two terms: from 1963 to 1968 and then from 1980 to 1985. The party was originally conceived as a center-left party close to democratic socialist positions. The development and theoretical foundation of Acción Popular was largely carried out by the prominent Peruvian philosopher Francisco Miró Quesada, who was Minister of Public Education during Belaúnde's first government.

In the first part of his book *Acción Popular. Manual Ideológico. Primera parte [Popular Action. Ideological Manual. First part]* published in 1964, Miró Quesada rejects what he calls "speculative ideologies", the greatest example of which would be Hegel's philosophy. On the contrary, he defends ideologies that he calls "axiomatic ideologies", Acción Popular being one of them. The latter ideologies are characterized by the use of new methods close to science itself as well as by their rigor and clarity. According to this Peruvian philosopher, important examples of these ideologies are, in addition to the research of Karl Mannheim and Schumpeter, "Karl Popper's criticisms of speculative ideologies". In a footnote Miró Quesada, after naming Popper's books, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism*, states that "These two works are decisive in the modern process of the critique of ideologies" (Miró Quesada 1964: 242).

Moreover, twenty-four years later in 1988 in the book written by Belaúnde Terry et al., *El Perú como doctrina, aportes a la tesis [Peru as a doctrine, contributions to the thesis]*, Miró Quesada in his article "Las ideologías y Acción Popular" ["Ideologies and Popular Action"], criticizes materialism and its claims such as that only matter exists and that, therefore, the spirit does not exist, as well as the assertion "that consciousness is nothing but a product of matter... that everything that happens in consciousness is nothing but a consequence of physiological brain mechanisms" (Miró Quesada 1988: 17). Most noteworthy here, is his appeal to mind-body philosophy, in particular, the interactionist thesis advocated by Popper and Eccles. Thus, Miró Quesada wrote:

There is an extremely interesting book, which I enthusiastically recommend to anyone interested in the problem of matter and spirit, written by the greatest specialist in brain physiology in recent years, Professor Eccles, and by a philosopher who is well known above all to scientists and those interested in the

philosophy of science, Karl Popper, entitled "The Self and Its Brain", which shows how the latest studies of brain physiology do not allow any conclusion to be reached about the material composition of psychic processes. (Miró Quesada 1988: 17)

But, undoubtedly, the most important and recent example of the influence of Popper's political philosophy on some prominent intellectuals who have ventured into real politics is the case of the world-famous Nobel Prize winner, the Peruvian novelist, essayist and playwright Mario Vargas Llosa. He was the founder of the Movimiento Libertad [Liberty Movement] and in coalition with the aforementioned Acción Popular party and the Partido Popular Cristiano [Christian Popular Party] he presented his presidential candidacy in 1990, which was not as successful as expected.

In his early youth he became associated with the Communist Party. Later an admirer and supporter of the Cuban revolution, Vargas Llosa became totally disillusioned with Fidel Castro in 1971 following the famous case of the self-criticism of the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla imposed by Castro. This episode was to produce a complete turnaround that led him to a total rejection of Marxist socialism and, later, to a liberal position that he has never abandoned. It is precisely in this development of the Peruvian writer's political thought that Popper's influence is clearly manifested.

His intellectual and political evolution from socialism to liberalism has been described in detail by Vargas Llosa himself in his book *La llamada de la tribu* [*The call of the tribe*] published in 2018. In this work, he explains that coming to liberalism was a process of intellectual reflection that lasted several years. Thus, he confesses that his stay since the late seventies teaching at the University of London allowed him to get to know Thatcher's government and the importance of Hayek and Popper in it. Vargas Llosa says of it:

She had no qualms about saying that she consulted Friedrich von Hayek and that she read Karl Popper, whom she considered the greatest contemporary philosopher of freedom. I read both of them in those years and since then *The Open Society and its Enemies* and *The Road to Serfdom* have become my bedside books. (Vargas-Llosa 2018: 12)

As he stated in the same book, he considers Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies* to be a key and fundamental book for the formulation and defence of modern liberal and democratic thought, as well as his gradual approach to the liberal democratic method for a piecemeal consensual transformation of society.

Finally, I think the following quote from the chapter on Popper clearly shows the importance and influence of Popper on Mario Vargas Llosa:

I will quickly say, as I hope has been documented in these pages, that I consider Popper to be the most important thinker of our time, that I have spent a good part of the last thirty years reading and studying him, and that if I were asked to point out the most fruitful and enriching book on the philosophy of politics of the 20<sup>th</sup>



century, I would not hesitate for a second to choose *The Open Society and its Enemies*. (Vargas Llosa 2018: 125)

All of the above leads us to state that Peru is one of the countries where the influence of Popper's critical rationalism expressed in his political philosophy has been most evident and relevant.

## 8. Uruguay

Unfortunately, we have not been able to obtain much information on the reception and importance of Popper in Uruguay. Only thanks to a personal communication from Professor Lucía Lewowicz of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the Universidad de la República, I can say that except in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and the undisputed recognition of Popper's role in the history of the development of the philosophy of science, his presence and influence have been rather scarce. As she has also pointed out to me, his own relation to Popper's political philosophy has been rather critical, especially of fragmentary social engineering, and she considers Popper not simply a liberal but rather a neo-liberal.

## Conclusions

Several Latin American countries have recognized the importance and influence of Karl Popper's philosophy of science and social and political philosophy. In relation to his philosophy of science, Popper's ideas began to be known after the translation of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959) into Spanish in 1962 and into Portuguese in 1974. The same happened with regard to his political philosophy after *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) was first translated into Spanish in 1957 and into Portuguese in 1974.

Even under certain adverse political conditions as happened especially in Cuba before the 1980s, Popper's philosophy of science has been present and studied mainly in the postgraduate programmes of Latin American universities. It has also been shown that the development of philosophy of science as an autonomous philosophical discipline has been a decisive factor in the reception and influence of Popper. His critical rationalism has been the basis in countries such as Brazil not only for the development of lines of research in law, but also for the creation of new and very important academic institutions such as the Popperian Institute of Legal Studies founded in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

In the vast majority of Latin American countries, for example, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia, the interest and impact of Popper's philosophy has led to the organization of numerous conferences, symposia and international meetings on his contributions to the philosophy of science and politics. Although for reasons of time and space we have not attempted to survey the publications that have been made on Sir Karl's work, they have been and will continue to be numerous.

A somewhat unexpected result has been to note the influence and validity of Popper's political philosophy in the political life of Peru and, to a lesser extent, Chile. We believe that one of the main reasons for the ignorance and rejection of Popper's political philosophy is that he has been identified as a defender of neo-liberalism and the excesses of an unfettered capitalism without

social sense. On the other hand, in the area of philosophy of science, there has been a tendency to ignore his work by appealing to the unfounded legend of his being, especially in the social sciences, a mere representative and defender of neo-positivism.

Finally, I do hope that in Latin America, Popper's philosophy will continue to be considered not only as an indispensable part of the training of any serious researcher in the philosophy of science, but also a necessary and effective means to protect and advance an open and democratic society.

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