IDEAS FOR MAPPING LIFEWORLD AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN PRACTICAL SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

Xavier Úcar

Department of Theories of Education and Social Pedagogy
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona

ABSTRACT. Since the 1970s, the concepts of "lifeworld" and "everyday life" have been part of the discourse of social pedagogy and social and educational work in general. Xavier Úcar's objective in this article is to generate and communicate socio-pedagogical knowledge that helps social pedagogues to build socio-educational relationships that are more effective, more sustainable, more satisfactory, and ultimately richer in terms of both experiences and learning for participants. A conceptually oriented, nonsystematic analysis procedure was used to conduct this research. The procedure involved an in-depth investigation of documents that focus on the two target areas of this study: (1) social pedagogy, and (2) lifeworld and everyday life. The results describe the theoretical background of lifeworld and everyday life, discuss the development of the perspective of "lifeworld orientation" within the framework of social pedagogy in Germany, and analyze how everyday life is understood through actions undertaken by social pedagogues. These results provide ideas for mapping the essential dimensions of everyday life from the perspective of social pedagogy.

KEY WORDS. educational theory; social pedagogy; lifeworld; everyday practice; social education; pedagogical knowledge

> The [current] assault on lifeworld … seems ruthless to me. In our times, the most urgent thing is to tell the ordinary citizen that they are right in their prejudices, that they shouldn't allow anyone else to come and tell them what to think, what to laugh at, what to drink, what to eat …, let them build their life from the elements they have around them. … Let us be humble in lifeworld.[1]

> I believe finally, that education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing.[2]

Since the 1970s, the concepts of "lifeworld" and "everyday life" have consistently been part of the discourse of what we call the social professions. Social pedagogy, social education, social care, and social and educational work in general have used these concepts to describe, illustrate, and prescribe certain ways of doing things in the social sphere. Within social pedagogy[3] generically, contexts

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1. Gregorio Luri, "Lo que permanece en educación" [What Remains in Education], *Teoría de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria* 34, no. 2 (2022): 8, https://doi.org/10.14201/teri.27573.

2. John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," *The School Journal* 54, no. 3 (1897): 79. Also available in the informal education archives, http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm.

3. This generic name is used to refer to the three types of professional currently working in or associated with the discipline of social pedagogy. There is still no detailed, homogeneous, and globally accepted mapping of these disciplines — social pedagogy, social education, and social work — and the relationships between them, nor of the professionals doing this work. Depending on the country, these professionals may be referred to as social educators or social pedagogues and/or social workers. See Àngela Janer and Xavier Úcar, "An International Comparison: Social Pedagogy Training," *Journal of Social Work* 19, no. 2

and methodologies of intervention, perspectives of analysis, and the principles and theoretical approaches for action have referred to "lifeworld" and "everyday life orientation" with very different objectives and meanings.[4]

These concepts, which originally evolved within the disciplines of philosophy and sociology, found their place in social professionals' socio-educational activities and interventions in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It should be noted that how these terms are understood and applied has also changed considerably over the last few decades — not only as a result of epistemological, scientific, or professional analysis, but also because of the evolution of social and societal life. The acceleration in social and community life, in social change, and in the rhythms of life that is due to, among other things, technology,[5] has contributed to blurring any previous image we had of the form, meaning, and content of everyday life.

Analysis of the academic literature on everyday life and social pedagogy raises more questions than answers. Is everyday life a descriptive or a normative concept? Does it refer to the time and place of an intervention or to the way in which life should be lived in everyday life? How do professionals' technical actions relate to participants' life actions? Is the technical side separate from living; are they separable and distinguishable dimensions within everyday life? And, finally, and among many other questions, is socio-educational intervention something added, artificially, to the (natural) course of participants' everyday lives?

To answer these questions, I have used an oriented, but not systematic, analytical procedure. It is oriented conceptually, since the aim is to make an in-depth analysis of documents that focus on the two areas of this study: social pedagogy, and lifeworld/everyday life.[6] I am interested in academic documents of

XAVIER ÚCAR is Professor of Social Pedagogy at Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona; email xavier.ucar@uab.cat. His primary areas of scholarship are social pedagogy, social education, community education, youth empowerment, and educational theory.

research and reflection, as well as those focused on the more technical and practical side of what are commonly called the social professions. The aim of this study is therefore to provide an up-to-date reflection on the interactions between social pedagogy and lifeworld/everyday life. This reflection should allow us to identify the principles or key elements of what constitutes people's daily lives. Aware of the theoretical and practical impossibility of drawing up a precise and accurate map that reflects the complexity of everyday life, I have set myself a more modest objective: that of identifying some of the key elements of everyday life that enable intervention by social pedagogues.

The aim of this article is not to determine what everyday life consists of today. Nor is it to analyze the concept in depth based on how it has been interpreted by different authors or how it has evolved over time. What I am interested in is how social pedagogy professionals interpret and deal with the everyday lives of the people they are working with. My aim is to develop a useful and applicable socio-pedagogical knowledge that helps the protagonists in socio-educational relationships — social pedagogues and participants — to make those relationships more effective, more sustainable, and more satisfactory, that is, to make them richer in experiences and learning for the people involved.

A socio-educational relationship occurs when a social pedagogue and a person, a group, or a community interact and connect, each from their own situations in the world, in a singular sociocultural context over a variable period of time. The aim of this relationship, which is dynamic and evolves in time and space, is to generate learning and promote the emergence or expansion of capacities that help the participants transform and improve their life situations in their own environment.[7]

This paper is divided into five sections. In the first section, I relate everyday life to social pedagogy and family and school pedagogies, highlighting the differences between them. In the second section, I navigate between philosophy and sociology to briefly reconstruct the theoretical and conceptual path of "lifeworld" and "everyday life." Then I analyze the emergence and development of the perspective known as "lifeworld orientation" within the context of pedagogy and social work in Germany. The next section analyzes the way everyday life is understood in relation to the actions of social pedagogues. Finally, the article finishes with a

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[Life and the World: A Conceptual Distinction between the World of Life and Everyday Life], *Sociológica* 15, no. 43 (2000): 103–151; and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Everyday-World and Life-World as Philosophical Concepts: A Genealogical Approach," *New Literary History* 24, no. 4 (1993): 745–761.

7. This definition is clearly based on Herman Nohl's concept of the pedagogical relationship. The difference, among others, is that in my case, the relationship is not only between a pedagogue (adult) and a child/young person, but with people at all stages of life. See Elina Nivala, Juha Hämäläinen, and Eine Pakarinen, "A Social Pedagogical Model for Counselling Immigrant Students in Non-Formal Adult Education," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 11, no. 1 (2022): https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2022.v11.x.002; and Norm Friesen, "Asymmetry in Pedagogical Relations" (paper presented at the workshop, "Relationale (Medien)pädagogik," Vienna, Austria, March 2020), 1–7, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340091974_Asymmetry_in_Pedagogical_Relations.

summary of ideas that contribute to mapping the essential dimensions of everyday life and developing guidelines for social pedagogues' interventions. The overall aim is to provide elements that help social pedagogy professionals develop better and more effective socio-educational relationships with their clients.

Perspectives of Social Pedagogy, School Pedagogy, and Family Pedagogy in Relation to Everyday Life

At the end of the nineteenth century, Paul Natorp, the founder of social pedagogy, formalized the idea that the community is the geographical and sociocultural context in which, and through which, people grow and are educated. The community, with its diversity of participants, spaces, and times, is the channel through which people acquire the education, training, and experience necessary for life. Social pedagogy is thus a specific type of pedagogy,[8] different from family pedagogy or school pedagogy. Social pedagogy is, as Herman Nohl would say years later, "the third space": that which is neither the family nor the school.

The fact that social pedagogy takes place in and through the community means that, unlike the school or the family, there is neither a specific or fixed time and place that is unique to social pedagogy. Nor are there any specific curricula or methodologies within the framework of social pedagogy. Rather, learning happens organically, in and through social activities and relationships.

If instead of conceptualizing education exclusively as a teaching-learning process mediated by the school curriculum, we understand it as an experience-learning process mediated by life (in which school is only one of those experiences), the field of pedagogical interventions opens up considerably. Within this conception, learning occurs throughout life, and one of the roles of social pedagogues is to facilitate meaningful learning experiences regardless of where they occur.[9]

Social pedagogy draws on the material of everyday life itself within the community and social contexts; hence, it diversifies the times and spaces in which it takes place. Unlike education in the family or school, it has neither a specific focus of action, for example, previously established content, nor a specific and generalized location in which it takes place, such as the school or the family environment. Social factors are intangible and permeate people, groups, collectives, and communities: wherever they meet and relate to each other, the activities of social pedagogy can be found.

Social pedagogy is about accompanying people in their daily life processes in the sociocultural and environmental settings in which these take place. It is a

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8. Here, I refer to the way social pedagogy is understood in Spain, since for Natorp all pedagogy was social pedagogy. See Conrad Vilanou Torrano, "Introducción," in Paul Natorp, *Pedagogía social. Teoría de la educación de la voluntad sobre la base de la comunidad* [Social Pedagogy: Theory of the Education of the Will on the Basis of the Community] (Madrid, Spain: Biblioteca Nueva, 2001), 11–63.

9. Daniel Schugurensky, "Social Pedagogy and Critical Theory: A Conversation with Hans Thiersch," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2014): 4–14, https://uclpress.scienceopen.com/hosted-document?doi=10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2014.v3.1.002.

process aimed at equipping people with the learning resources necessary to live their lives in a dignified and harmonious way in their territorial and community environments. It could therefore be said that social pedagogy is a pedagogy of life and for everyday life.

Edgar Allan Poe said that, because of their length, he preferred to read short stories rather than novels. The action stays cohesive throughout the plot of a short story, because it can be read in one sitting from beginning to end. The action in a novel, on the other hand, is constantly interrupted by life; you have to learn to put the narrative and the plot on hold to go shopping for bread, to commute to work, or to sleep. To learn to connect and disconnect with the plot of a novel is to learn to deal with the interferences of space, time, events, incidents, and happenings that life generates in everything that is done in everyday life. Perhaps it could be argued that school pedagogy is closer to reading a story, while social pedagogy is closer to reading a novel.

This analogy provides a conceptual approach to understanding the difference between the pedagogical interventions in more-or-less closed and focused institutions such as schools and families, and socio-educational interventions in the more open context of the social sphere. In the former, times, spaces, and relationships are, in general, established, temporally structured, and isolated from social living that takes place "outside the walls." The second is a continuity made up of discontinuities. It takes place in "real time," that is to say, in the specific place and at the precise moment in which the intervention takes place, whatever that place and that moment may be. It could be said, in other words, that school pedagogy is, in terms of time and space, *intensive*, while social pedagogy is *extensive*. In this sense, family pedagogy would be closer to social pedagogy than to school pedagogy.

The fact that it operates in such versatile, flexible, ductile, influenceable, and often unstructured spaces as those of everyday life has historically endowed social pedagogy with distinctive characteristics compared to pedagogies that operate in organized and highly structured institutional contexts. It is these characteristics that make it suitable for responding to the complex situations and problems posed by everyday life in today's societies.

It should be noted, however, that the differences between these ways of dividing life into specific pedagogies are currently becoming increasingly blurred. As I have noted elsewhere, these pedagogies are useful in simple societies, where the social and pedagogical agents are clearly identifiable and the institutions that receive them are separate and clearly differentiated.[10] In complex societies, such as ours, where institutions are increasingly permeable to the physical, digital, and sociocultural environment, and where pedagogical and social agencies are diverse, diffuse, and not always completely transparent, those pedagogical

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10. Xavier Úcar, *Pedagogías de lo social* [Pedagogies of the social] (Barcelona, Spain: UOC Publishing, 2016); and Xavier Úcar, "The Rupture of Education: Perspectives from Pedagogy and Social Education," *Teoría de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria* 35, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.14201/teri.27805.

differentiations tend to blur. This can be clearly witnessed in Spain, for example, by the increasingly clear presence of social educators, as social pedagogy professionals, *in* the school environment.[11]

Within the framework of social pedagogy, both families and schools are very important socio-educational resources, but they are not the only, nor even necessarily the main, resources in any given community. They serve as resources for learning about life and for the life to which social pedagogy is oriented, with all the other resources that make up communities, from health centers to libraries, associations and entities, shops and markets, cultural societies, public squares, churches, or the city. All of these, as places where everyday life takes place, are potential spaces for socio-educational intervention by social pedagogues and for the development of socio-educational relationships.

From my point of view, everyday life is a continuous dimension that can only heuristically or analytically be divided into sectors on the basis of diverse categories. It is true, however, that when we practitioners or academics of social pedagogy refer to everyday life, we are thinking of a typology of activities that are different from those usually considered pedagogical or educational activities, i.e., focused on specific contents to be learned, be it in the family or at school.

This is especially true in the English-speaking world. Literature on the subject has highlighted the difficulties that those in English-speaking contexts find in gaining a precise understanding of social pedagogy, since it has only recently been incorporated within social work in English-speaking countries,[12] where pedagogy has always referred to teaching–learning processes. Pat Petrie has stated that it can be understood as "education in the broad sense," meaning education not only at school but in the community as a whole.[13]

It might seem, based on what has been said so far, that social pedagogy activities only take place in unstructured, informal, or unregulated spaces of everyday life. This is not the case. Social pedagogy activities can be performed in both

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11. The incorporation of social educators in schools was first institutionalized in Spain in 2002. Five autonomous regions across the country currently have legislation mandating the participation of social educators in schools. As I have discussed elsewhere, "It is worth noting that, historically speaking, social pedagogy appeared in this original form as an alternative space to the school. For most of its history, it has acted in non-school socio-cultural environments characterized by problematic situations, whether due to the existence of deficits, risks and conflicts, or some type of personal, group or community vulnerability" (Xavier Úcar, "Social Pedagogy and Socio-educational Work with Young People," in *Working with Young People: A Social Pedagogy Perspective from Europe and Latin America*, ed. Xavier Úcar, Pere Soler-Masó, and Anna Planas-Llado [London: Oxford University Press, 2020], 15).

12. Jacob Kornbeck, "Reflections on the Exportability of Social Pedagogy and Its Possible Limits," *Social Work in Europe* 9, no. 2 (2002): 37–49; Søren Hegstrup, "Tendencies and Trends in Social Pedagogy in Denmark at the Turn of the Millennium," in *Perspectives and Theory in Social Pedagogy*, ed. Juha Hämäläinen, Anders Gustavsson, and Hans-Erik Hermansson (Gothenburg, Sweden: Bokförlaget Daidalos, 2003), 72–83; and Filip Coussée, Lieve Bradt, Rudi Roose, and Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "The Emerging Social Pedagogical Paradigm in UK Child and Youth Care: Deus Ex Machina or Walking the Beaten Path?," *British Journal of Social Work* 40, no. 3 (2010): 789–805.

13. Pat Petrie, "Extending 'Pedagogy'," *Journal of Education for Teaching* 31, no. 4 (2005): 293–296.

"closed" institutional environments, such as a Residential Centre for Educational Action (CRAE) for children and adolescents, as well as "open" environments, such as a public square where we interact with a group of young people. Therefore, applying Poe's metaphor in relation to the novel, it is possible to characterize everyday life as a continuity made up of discontinuities.

A good example of how learning is situated in the quotidian are the activities that social pedagogues and children and young people do together in residential centers: cooking, preparing meals, laying the table, doing recreational and sporting activities, walking, chatting, and many other things.[14] "Everyday life," states Claire Cameron, "refers to the day-to-day, mundane, familial or institutional environment that is often rendered invisible, but which for children [and for everyone] is a primary context for interpersonal, moral and educative experience with the potential for normative integration and/or therapeutic intervention."[15]

The social pedagogy that has evolved in the English-speaking world since the beginning of the twenty-first century has focused almost exclusively on socio-educational intervention with children and young people. Continental social pedagogy, on the other hand, is active in all stages of life.[16] That is why, from the Continental perspective, in this text, I generally refer to the people involved, regardless of their stage of life.

The Meaning of Everyday Life and Lifeworld

It is generally agreed that the philosopher Edmund Husserl was the first to discuss the concept of lifeworld in depth, in his studies on phenomenology.[17] According to Ruyu Hung and Andrew Stables, Husserl attributes two main meanings to the concept.[18] On the one hand, lifeworld refers to what is *pre-given*, that is, the world around us, which is shared with all other people. On the other hand, lifeworld also refers to the *personal* world that each individual constructs through his or her own experiences.

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14. Mark Smith, "It Really Does Depend: Towards an Epistemology (and Ontology) for Everyday Social Pedagogical Practice," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 9, no. 1 (2020): 18, https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2020.v9.x.018; and Claire Cameron, "Towards Recognising Practitioners Working in Out-of-Home Care as Experts in Everyday Life: A Conceptual Critique," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 9, no. 1 (2020): 19, https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2020.v9.x.019.

15. Cameron, "Towards Recognising Practitioners Working in Out-of-Home Care as Experts in Everyday Life," 6.

16. See Jacob Kornbeck and Niels Rosendal Jensen, eds., *Social Pedagogy for the Entire Human Lifespan*, vols. 1 and 2 (Bremen, Germany: Europäischer Hochschulverlag, 2011, 2012). This Continental perspective is why I generally refer in this text to the people involved, regardless of their stage of life.

17. Although other authors, including Simmel, Hofmannsthal, and Insel, had already used the concept before Husserl. See Føllesdal and Benítez, "El concepto de *Lebenswelt* en Husserl."

18. Ruyu Hung and Andrew Stables, "Can We Experience Nature in the Lifeworld? An Interrogation of Husserl's Notion of Lifeworld and Its Implication for Environmental and Educational Thinking," *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 8, sup. 1 (2008): 1–8.

All subsequent research and reflection focused on the different ways of understanding and interpreting these two meanings, and how they relate to each other. In other words, throughout the twentieth century, philosophers and social scientists discussed the relationships between what was (pre)given and what was constructed; between the objectifiable or the intersubjective and individual subjectivities; between "the individual and the social; the natural and the historical; [and, finally,] between the original and the everyday."[19]

Within the field of social science, Klaus Grunwald and Hans Thiersch have identified five main lines of research and reflection in relation to lifeworld and everyday life:

> 1. *The hermeneutic-pragmatic tradition of pedagogy*, which includes authors like *Dilthey, Nohl, Weniger, Mollenhauer, and Roth*.[20] This tradition asserts that looking at people from the outside is not enough to understand them, but that it is necessary to start from their own concept of self and the subjective patterns they use to interpret the world.
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> 2. *Phenomenological sociology*, which encompasses the work of *Schütz, Berger, and Luckmann*.[21] Everyday life is interpreted as an intersubjective reality, in other words one that is constructed and shared with other people. This approach relates people's thought patterns to life's structures (institutions, organizations, etc.) in which everyday life is experienced. It considers interaction and intersubjectivity to be interdependent situations and characterizes "face-to-face" interaction as the most important social interaction experience.[22]
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> 3. *Symbolic interactionism and the Chicago School*, based on the work of *Mead and Goffman*.[23] This perspective affirms that subjectivity is formed based on the exchanges and interactions among people and emphasizes the key role played in them by the sociocultural and geographical context of those interactions (the *framework*, the *situation*) and the rules that

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19. Marta Rizo García, "Construcción de la realidad, comunicación y vida cotidiana – Una aproximación a la obra de Thomas Luckmann" [Construction of Reality, Communication and Everyday Life — An Approach to the Work of Thomas Luckmann] *Intercom – RBCC* 38, no. 2 (2015): 24.

20. Klaus Grunwald and Hans Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," *Journal of Social Work Practice: Psychotherapeutic Approaches in Health, Welfare and the Community* 23, no. 2 (2009): 135.

21. Ibid.

22. Philippe Corcuff, *Las nuevas sociologías. Construcciones de la realidad social* [The New Sociologies: Constructions of Social Reality] (Madrid, Spain: Alianza Editorial, 1998); Rizo García, "Construcción de la realidad, comunicación y vida cotidiana"; and Kristian Šmitran, "Social Pedagogy and the 'Life-World' Concept in the Time of New Media," *Kultura i Wychowanie* 3 (2012): 123–130.

23. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 135.

regulate them.[24] Self-affirmation and self-representation of the individual in society are also very important in this approach.

4. *The critical theory of the everyday*, which is based on the work of *Heller, Kosik, and Lefèvre*.[25] This perspective highlights the dependence of everyday life on social forces and emphasizes the ambivalence between the given and the possible, that is to say, hopelessness and resignation in the face of living conditions, on the one hand, and struggles to improve those conditions, on the other.[26]

5. *Contemporary analysis of social structures*. This perspective includes authors such as *Habermas, Bourdieu, and Beck*,[27] who analyze the reconstruction of lifeworld and everyday life, giving visibility to the problems that affect them and critiquing those problems. The colonization of the lifeworld by the system, human modeling through the *habitus*, and, finally, the awareness of defenselessness in the face of a *risk* that affects all dimensions of life are, respectively for these authors, current contingencies of everyday life and lifeworld.

Apart from the different approaches themselves, some aspects of all of them are key for the socio-pedagogical analyses I conduct. First, the emergence of the category of *everyday life*, which gives focus, visibility, and scientific importance to a field of action and to the people involved in it that, until then, had not been taken into consideration. The "normal" person, the person in the street, with no need for any other attribution than that of being a human being, now became the center of attention.

A separate category emphasizes that people are not isolated, but are linked, in many very different ways, with everything and everyone that surrounds them. Each person is situated in a personal, community, organizational, and institutional context, with which they relate and interact; as well as a territorial, sociocultural, and now also digital context, which individuals themselves contribute to constructing and maintaining through their actions. Peter Sloterdijk notes that, metaphorically, people exist "within a curved operating space, where actions have repercussions

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24. Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: Los marcos de la experiencia* (Madrid, Spain: Centro de investigaciones sociológicas, 2006); and Mauro Wolf, *Sociologías de la vida cotidiana* [Sociologies of Everyday Life] (Madrid, Spain: Cátedra, 1982).

25. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 135.

26. Susann Bialas, *Lifeworld-Orientation in Social Work: Concept and Consequences for the Institutions, the Social Worker, and the Client* (Munich, Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2008), https://www.grin.com/document/1152668.

27. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 135.

on the agent him- or herself."[28] Situation, articulation, agency, and recursion are thus elements that constitute and shape lifeworld and everyday life.

This means, among other things, that lifeworld and everyday life become manageable places where it is possible to act and to intervene. This is what organizations have historically done and continue to do, especially the different institutions that integrate, configure, and articulate society, like schools, social services, companies, charity and third-sector organizations. This diversity of influences leads to the extraordinary complexity of everyday life and the difficulty of mapping and analyzing it more or less accurately.

Lifeworld or everyday life is an uninterrupted sequence of activities (choices) carried out by a person, a group, or a community across a continuum of frameworks: temporal, sociocultural, and geographical, in-person and digital. One could say that metaphorically everyday life is a crossroads, a matrix, a crucible, or a black box from which the personal decisions and choices that shape the multiplicity and diversity of activities that make up and sustain individual and collective life at any given moment continuously and uninterruptedly emerge.

Everyday life is what people construct and experience in their own living environments as a result of everything they do at every moment. It is a web of choices, activities — projections and reactions — and relationships that is woven in the *here and now* and that influences, decisively, what may happen in the next moment.

Everyday life is not rational, it is not fair, it is not orderly, it is difficult to predict, and it is by no means simple. And it is none of those things because, in every instance, everyday life is always moving within a continuous and infinite matrix of possibilities of action, between what is individual and what is collective, what is given and what is possible, what is permitted and what is prohibited, between resignation and emancipation, what is legal and what is illegal, what is good and what is bad, what is wanted and what is unwanted, and an infinite number of other possible choices.

The Emergence of the Lifeworld Perspective and Everyday Life Orientation in Social Pedagogy

Hans Thiersch gave the concept of everyday life natural status within the broad framework of German social work.[29] In 1978 he published an article titled "Everyday Life Orientation."[30] In it he argues that, within the framework of Critical Theory — specifically, within Habermas's theoretical framework — people's

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28. Peter Sloterdijk, *Has de cambiar tu vida* [You Have to Change Your Life] (Valencia, Spain: PRE-TEXTOS, 2013), 148.

29. In this section I use the terms "social work," "social care" or "foster care," and "social pedagogy" interchangeably. In the German-speaking world, they are all part of, or closely related to, social work.

30. Schugurensky, "Social Pedagogy and Critical Theory: A Conversation with Hans Thiersch." It is important to note that, in addition to the perspectives presented in the previous section, Thiersch

everyday life and social professionals always lie between "the system" and "lifeworld."[31] This means that social service institutions and social work professionals always run the risk, according to Thiersch, "of colonizing the 'everyday world' like any other system."[32]

In 1990 Thiersch produced a report for the German government in which he presented this concept of "everyday life." His approach ended up being the main paradigm in debates about social work and social care and in the training of social workers.[33] In the same year, a youth and welfare law inspired by the everyday life approach was passed, and which is still in force today.[34] Since then, the everyday life orientation has become a key element in the training of social workers and social pedagogues.

In order to contextualize and understand Thiersch's perspective on this *everyday life orientation*, two additional elements should be taken into account. The first is that his approach represents a radical critical option[35] in opposition to neoliberal capitalism, which was already beginning to become widespread

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emphasizes the influential role Siegfried Bernfeld, Ivan Illich, and Paulo Freire played in the development of this perspective due to their relevance in terms of social pedagogy.

31. As is well known, one of Habermas's fundamental theses is that "the System" has colonized lifeworld. Richard Jacob Bernstein explains this view, stating that, "what has happened in modern society (and continues to happen in an alarming way) is a selective process of rationalization — where deliberate-rational rationalization prevails, intrudes into and deforms the world of everyday life." Obviously, the concept of "deliberate-rational rationalization" refers to the values and working dynamics generated by the modes of production and life in neoliberal capitalist societies. See Richard Jacob Bernstein, "Introducción" [Introduction], in *Habermas y la modernidad* (Madrid, Spain: Cátedra, 1988), 47.

32. Schugurensky, "Social Pedagogy and Critical Theory: A Conversation with Hans Thiersch," 9.

33. Other theories and models in social pedagogy include Michael Winkler's "subject orientation"; Lothar Böhnisch's "psychosocial coping paradigm"; Ulrich Deinet and Christian Reutlinger's "socio-spatial models"; and Gabriel Eichsteller and Sylvia Holthoff's "diamond model." For more on these, see Christian Spatscheck and Pat Petrie, "Little Signs, Local Seeds, Learning and Development: An Interview on Social Pedagogy in the UK and Germany," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 11, no. 1 (2022), https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2022.v11.x.008; Heinz Suenker and Rita Braches-Chyrek, "Social Pedagogy/Social Work in Germany: Theories and Discourses in Social Pedagogy and Social Work: From Disciplinarisation of the Poor to an Emancipatory Democratic Perspective," *Pedagogía Social: Revista Interuniversitaria* 27 (2016): 19–44, DOI:10.7179/PSRI_2016.27.03; Philipp Sandermann and Sascha Neumann, "On Multifaceted Commonality: Theories of Social Pedagogy in Germany," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2014): 15–29; and Gabriel Eichsteller and Sylvia Holthoff, "Conceptual Foundations of Social Pedagogy: A Transnational Perspective from Germany," in *Social Pedagogy and Working with Children and Young People: When Care and Education Meet*, ed. Claire Cameron and Peter Moss (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2011), 33–53. Petrie added to these models other concepts, or even methodologies, including, e.g., the "head, heart, and hand," the "common third," and the "3Ps" (Spatscheck and Petrie, "Little Signs, Local Seeds, Learning and Development," 8).

34. Schugurensky, "Social Pedagogy and Critical Theory: A Conversation with Hans Thiersch."

35. Griet Roets, Rudi Roose, and Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "Researching Child Poverty: Towards a Lifeworld Orientation," *Childhood* 20, no. 4 (2013): 535–549.

in those years[36] and was beginning to impose certain ways of acting on social professionals.[37] The second is that his approach connects directly with Nohl's socio-pedagogical theory of everyday life.[38] "Social pedagogy is the other face of social work," according to Nohl, "without it, social work would lack its ultimate goal and its decisive means, the support of people and the reconstruction of man and his cultural environment."[39] Nohl understood social pedagogy in a practical way, aimed at solving social problems through pedagogical means.[40] Therefore, and because of the aforementioned influence of Habermas's ideas, it makes sense that the general perspective of the *everyday life orientation* Thiersch developed was directed at the reconstruction of everyday life and well-being.

Thiersch places the action of social work and social assistance in what he calls a "contradictory compromise"[41] between people's received life social conditions and the efforts they make to cope with them using their own resources and abilities; in the second half of the twentieth century, these social conditions were characterized "by the transformation of society by reinvigorated capitalism, by globalization, by new technologies and by the disembedding of lifeworlds."[42] Thiersch argues that social pedagogues should immerse themselves in the complex realities of life and in the concerns and experiences of people and among people in the context of community life. An orientation toward people's everyday lives implies more than just intervening in social spaces. In his opinion, this approach

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36. Ralf Dahrendorf, *En busca de un nuevo orden. Una política de libertad para el siglo XXI* [In Search of a New Order: A Policy of Freedom for the Twenty-First Century] (Paidós, 2005).

37. Xavier Úcar, "Constructing Questions for the Social Professions of Today: The Case of Social Pedagogy," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2021): 9.

38. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care."

39. A Spanish translation of Herman Nohl's *Jugenwohlfahrt: Sozialpädagogische Vorträge* (Quelle & Meyer, 1927), is published in José María Quintana Cabanas, *Educación social. Antología de textos clásicos* [Social Education: Anthology of Classic Texts] (Madrid, Spain: Narcea, 1994); the quotation here is from the Spanish edition, p. 157 (my translation).

40. As Quintana points out in reference to Nohl's social pedagogy: "It is concerned with helping to remedy the human problems and needs created by industrial society and marginalization" (*Educación social*, 150). This is one of what I have called "the two historical and traditional souls of social pedagogy: one attempting to resolve problems deriving from life in society and another seeking to build a better and more just society. In both cases, obviously, by means of pedagogical and educational strategies" (Xavier Úcar, "Social Pedagogy and Socio-educational Work with Young People," in *Working with Young People: A Social Pedagogy Perspective from Europe and Latin America*, ed. Xavier Úcar, Pere Soler-Masó, and Anna Planas-Llado [London: Oxford University Press, 2020], 15).

41. Thiersch, cited in Susann Bialas, *Lifeworld-Orientation in Social Work: Concept and Consequences for the Institutions, the Social Worker, and the Client* (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2008), 3. In "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," Grunwald and Thiersch say, "[The] actions [of the people in their everyday life] can be located between pragmatic, situational open-enedness on the one hand and the reliable comfort of routine on the other," 137.

42. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 143.

involves accompanying and connecting and coping with everyday life situations, and the routines and practical strategies that people use to face them on a daily basis.

The role that Thiersch assigns to the social pedagogue is to help people analyze their problems critically, to reflect on the social causes of the individual and community problems that generate them, and to find the options — in other words, the resources, skills, and opportunities — that will lead them to live better in their daily lives. "The dimensions of lifeworld experience are paramount: learning, with reference to the care tasks of the everyday, and with reference to spatial, temporal and social relational structure*s*."[43] The aim is to connect helping people with political action, in the context of social justice and well-being, while acknowledging the existence of social and political resources and the ways in which they can be used to help people.

In their research into the theories of social pedagogy in Germany, Philipp Sandermann and Sascha Neumann analyze the relationship between social pedagogy and everyday life orientation in the way proposed by Grunwald and Thiersch.[44] In this research they note that the everyday life orientation is more than just a theoretical approach for analyzing and describing social work and social pedagogy. What it aims to do, as Thiersch himself indicates, "is to generate ideas for better social work practice."[45] From an in-depth analysis of the texts that reflect the double call to (1) generate a specific theoretical framework for everyday life, and (2) characterize the actual practice of social pedagogy, Sandermann and Neumann conclude that what Grunwald and Thiersch say is "a tautological reasoning or an ontological reification,"[46] since they attribute to a single theory — the everyday life orientation — what in fact constitutes the whole discipline of social pedagogy. Following Grunwald and Thiersch, they also say, "social pedagogy and lifeworld orientation end up being the exact same thing. In other words, with Grunwald and Thiersch social pedagogy finds its true inner self only through lifeworld orientation."[47] This would mean that social pedagogy only has substance and meaning if it is a pedagogy of everyday life as Grunwald and Thiersch define the concept.

I agree with Sandermann and Neumann's conclusions. For Thiersch, everyday life is more than a descriptive concept referring to a space and time in which people perform a range of activities in order to cope with the challenges they

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43. Ibid., 140.

44. Sandermann and Neumann, "On Multifaceted Commonality"; and Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care."

45. Sandermann and Neumann, "On Multifaceted Commonality," 19. On this point, they cite Hans Thiersch, *Positionsbestimmungen der Sozialen Arbeit. Gesellschaftspolitik, Theorie und Ausbildung* [Position Determinations of Social Work: Social Policy, Theory and Education] (Munich: Juventa Verlag, 2002), 128.

46. Sandermann and Neumann, "On Multifaceted Commonality," 23.

47. Ibid., 22.

face. It is a normative concept that understands that "social work and social care with a lifeworld orientation is a representation of the modern social justice project, binding justice with equality."[48] Perhaps the explanation that justifies this "ontologization" and helps to understand it derives from the social situation in which the everyday life approach originated. As noted above, it was born as a radical critique of a state of affairs, that of neoliberal capitalism, which generates major problems in people's lives. By claiming to be a fighting response to that state of affairs, it could not avoid generating normative standards of action and, in doing so, putting itself on the same level as, and becoming confused with, social work and social pedagogy, both normative sciences.

Everyday Life and the Actions of Social Pedagogues

From the preceding analyses it is evident that, from a socio-pedagogical perspective, my approach to everyday life is descriptive and non-normative. Everyday life is the sociocultural, spatial, and temporal framework within which social pedagogues act and establish socio-educational relationships with the people involved. The normative element that the socio-pedagogical perspective introduces derives from at least two elements: first, on the socio-educational values that guide the actions of social pedagogues and that, from my perspective, are based on human rights, democracy, and social, economic, and cultural justice; and, second, following Freire's ideas, on the deeply held conviction that, through awareness-raising and learning processes, people have the capacity and the possibility of dignifying and improving their lives and those of the communities in which they live. This, in my view, is the basis for and the meaning of socio-pedagogical action in everyday life.

Many European authors, possibly influenced by the perspective of social work, especially in relation to socio-educational work with children and young people, have pointed to well-being as one of the objectives of social pedagogy.[49] In my opinion, this cannot be one of the pedagogical or educational objectives that guide the actions of social pedagogues, at least not directly.[50] It might be a by-product of the actions of educators directly and explicitly aimed at fomenting scenarios that, through learning, help people improve themselves and the environment in which they live. According to Dewey's idea of education, socio-educational

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48. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 132.

49. Xavier Úcar, "Social Pedagogy, Social Education and Social Work in Spain: Convergent Paths," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2021): 1–17. DOI: https://uclpress.scienceopen.com/hosted-document?doi=10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2021.v10.x.001.

50. It should be noted, however, that both historically and in social pedagogy today there are authors who defend the idea that well-being is an objective of social pedagogy. Some examples include Schleiermacher (Norm Friesen, "'Education as a *Geisteswissenschaft*': An Introduction to Human Science Pedagogy," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 52, no. 3 [2020]: 307–322); Nohl (Quintana, *Educación social*, 1994; and Friesen, "Asymmetry in Pedagogical Relations"); Grunwald and Thiersch (see their "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care"); and Eichsteller and Holthoff (see their "Conceptual Foundations of Social Pedagogy").

relationships aim to help participants rework their own life experiences, beyond the consequences they may have on their personal well-being.

It has already been noted that social pedagogy practitioners act within the many and varied contexts in which people's daily lives unfold. These are dynamic and complex contexts in which constant change, immediacy, uncertainty, flexibility, and creativity are core ingredients of the daily activities in which social pedagogues and the people, groups, and communities they work with are involved.

As stated in the paper's introduction, this raises a whole series of questions and problems, especially within the framework of socio-educational relationships, regarding the role or function of social pedagogues in the everyday life of the people involved. I will now specifically discuss the two that seem most relevant to me when analyzing the relationship between everyday life and social pedagogy.

The first refers to defining the social pedagogues as "everyday life experts," a definition applied[51] specifically to those working in residential centers for children and young people.[52] I can agree with Cameron's rationale for this classification: "I aim to move beyond the limitations of defining it as 'care work', to bring relational, creative, practical, educative and advocacy competences to the fore, and *to recognize practitioners as professional experts who should be valued and rewarded as such*."[53] However, I do not agree at all with the name itself. I agree, in this case, with Neil Postman's idea that there are no experts, nor can there be, in living life or in loving.[54] Life is always lived in the first person and is an experience that can only be felt and understood in its fullest and deepest sense by those who are experiencing it. These professionals are, in any case, experts in accompanying and helping children and young people (and any person, group, or community, more generally) in their everyday life situations. This is precisely what Claire Cameron, Daniela Reimer, and Mark Smith state: "[F]oster carers specialize in knowing about, and educating young people into, everyday life at home, and in negotiating spaces between home and all other spheres young people come into contact with."[55]

The second problem questions the intervention of social professionals. "Recognizing the artificiality of intervention," Alfredo Carballeda points out, "basically implies tending to denaturalize it, understanding it as a device that intrudes into

51. See Claire Cameron, Daniela Reimer, and Mark Smith, "Towards a Theory of Upbringing in Foster Care in Europe," *European Journal of Social Work* 19, no. 2 (2016): 152–170; Cameron, "Towards Recognising Practitioners Working in Out-of-Home Care as Experts in Everyday Life"; and Smith, "It Really Does Depend."

52. Sebastian Monteux and Angelika Monteux, "Human Encounters: The Core of Everyday Care Practice," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 9, no. 1 (2020): 15.

53. Cameron, "Towards Recognising Practitioners Working in Out-of-Home Care as Experts in Everyday Life," 2 (emphasis added).

54. Neil Postman, *El fin de la educación* [The End of Education] (Barcelona, Spain: Octaedro, 1999).

55. Cameron, Reimer, and Smith, "Towards a Theory of Upbringing in Foster Care in Europe," 163.

a space, insofar as there is a demand for it."[56] It seems to me that this distinction, and often confrontation, between the natural, on the one hand, and the artificial and technical, on the other, has been losing meaning since the last decades of the twentieth century. The world has changed considerably since Habermas's work on system and lifeworld, a thesis based on denunciation and criticism that helps to highlight the arrogance of human beings who want to ignore what they themselves have been doing since the beginning of time. The technical and "the technological have always been social and human."[57] Or, as Benjamin Bratton more precisely states, "it's not just that we use technologies to survive, but that we evolved in symbiosis with the technical cascades that shaped us, and we are nothing without them."[58]

Everyday life remains everyday life both for the social pedagogue and for the people they intervene with, even if this means something different for each of them depending on the role they play in the socio-educational relationship. And this is true in all cases, regardless of whether the social pedagogue's socio-educational intervention is closer to the technical or to the activities that Grunwald and Thiersch call "'pre-pedagogy' — forms of living together and simply getting on well."[59]

The Complexity of Everyday Life: Ideas for a Socio-pedagogical Mapping

Everyday life is complex and unfolds in complexity. Complexity is neither an obstacle to socio-educational intervention nor something to be controlled. It is neither a good thing nor a bad thing. It is an observation, a starting point, that is absolutely necessary for social pedagogues, as it allows them to contextualize and understand a given situation or to empathize with the person or people who are experiencing it. Uncertainty, fluidity, dynamism, unpredictability, immediacy, and flexibility, among many other attributes, constitute the very nature of the complexity that defines and characterizes the essence of everyday life. Working within the context of people's daily lives, whether in specific institutions or outside them, means having to deal continuously with situations that are difficult to foresee. It is true that, over time, experience will provide socio-educational professionals with the tools to interpret more and more accurately the situations in which they intervene. It is also true that this same experience will help them make

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56. Alfredo Juan Manuel Carballeda, *La intervención en lo social. Exclusión e integración en los nuevos escenarios sociales* [Social Intervention: Exclusion and Integration in the New Social Scenarios] (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós, 2002), 93.

57. Mark Coeckelbergh, *Ética de la inteligencia artificial* [Ethics of Artificial Intelligence] (Madrid, Spain: Cátedra, 2021), 73.

58. Benjamin Bratton, *La terraformación. Programa para el diseño de una planetariedad viable* [Terraforming: Program for the Design of a Viable Planetarity] (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Caja Negra, 2021), 64.

59. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 141.
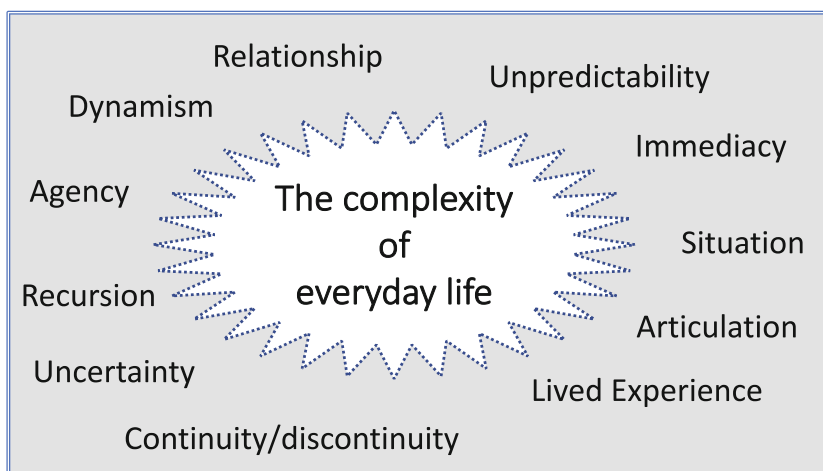
Figure 1. Core dimensions of everyday life from a socio-pedagogical perspective.

better decisions about how, when, and where to act. It is a fact, however, that they will never be able to foresee clearly and exactly what they will encounter in a given socio-educational intervention situation or what the correct or appropriate way to respond to such a situation should be. This is precisely where the complexity lies.

Throughout the previous analyses, a series of characteristics has emerged that, from my point of view, can be interpreted as core features of what everyday life is and what it means for social pedagogy and the activities of its practitioners. These features — dimensions and data — constitute a mapping that social pedagogy practitioners should consider, investigate, interpret, and try to understand before or during any socio-educational intervention. They are substantial dimensions of any socio-educational relationship. These dimensions can be seen in Figure 1:

1. Everyday life is built on and sustained by relationships and encounters among people.[60] *Relationships* are the foundation of everyday life, and socio-educational relationships have been defined by most authors as the core of practical social pedagogy.[61] "Social pedagogy," state Claire Cameron, Peter Moss, and Pat Petrie, "is an avowedly relational practice. Whatever the setting, social pedagogues build and work with relationships that are trusting and democratic. The aim is to create situations in which human beings learn, informally, about themselves and their world."[62]

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60. Cameron, "Towards Recognising Practitioners Working in Out-of-Home Care as Experts in Everyday Life"; and Šmitran, "Social Pedagogy and the 'Life-World' Concept in the Time of New Media."

61. Xavier Úcar, *Relaciones socioeducativas. La acción de los profesionales* [Socio-educational relations: The action of professionals] (Barcelona, Spain: UOC Publishing, 2016).

62. Claire Cameron, Peter Moss, and Pat Petrie, "Towards a Social Pedagogic Approach for Social Care," *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2021): 7.

Relational links forged by social pedagogues with participants, whether individual or collective, via socio-educational relationships are the basis and the seed of the latter's learning and changes.

2. The *situation* in which people live their daily lives has a decisive impact on the way they experience their lives. Everyday life always takes place in a specific spatial context (home, street, neighborhood, area, organization, institution, virtual space, etc.), a temporal context (any given moment during the 24 hours of the day, or any day of the year), and a sociocultural context (where there may be status, languages, ethnicities, resources, cultures, and customs, among many other varied and differentiated elements). This is what Erving Goffman calls a "frame."[63] We are not always fully aware of our own frames: a young person from a disadvantaged sociocultural environment may not understand or perceive the obstacles or opportunities in his or her life. Nor does this person experience his or her life in the same way as someone from a wealthy sociocultural environment. Social pedagogues' intervention in everyday life requires knowledge and experience of many of these situations in order to accompany people and help them to help themselves — as Pestalozzi and Nohl point out — in the struggle to live through, improve, or escape them.

3. *Continuity/discontinuity* is a characteristic of people's everyday lives, only (and not totally) interrupted by periods of sleep or unconsciousness. This continuity, as already mentioned, is made up of the discontinuities caused by the different actions and activities that make up the life of a person or a community. This dimension is important because it can be experienced very differently by social pedagogues and the people involved. Carballeda's reflection mentioned in the previous section is relevant here: to what extent can people participating in socio-educational relationships consider the social pedagogue's actions to be an intrusion in the continuity of their daily life?[64] This is something that can undoubtedly be reaffirmed in situations that involve a forced change in what, until then, was a person's normalized daily life (for example, a young offender who is placed in a juvenile justice education center). It is obvious to point out that a discontinuity that is neither chosen nor desired can hinder both the action and the effectiveness — even the goodness — of the social pedagogue's socio-educational intervention.

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63. "Any primary frame of reference," says Goffman, "allows its user to situate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete events as defined by its terms" (Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 23). One could say that the "frame" is a cognitive device and a practice of organizing social experience that allows a person to understand the situation they are living in and to take part in it. Frames structure how we define and interpret each situation and, consequently, our way of engaging in different courses of action. Mauro Wolf states that the "frame" refers to the system of "premises and instructions that are necessary for making sense of the flow of events" (Wolf, *Sociologías de la vida cotidiana*, 41).

64. Carballeda, *La intervención en lo social*.

4. *Dynamism*. The social field is, by its very nature, a living, dynamic field that is permanently changing. It is a field of intervention that is also regulated, influenced, or determined by at least three elements that present opportunities and limitations for the actions of social pedagogues:

   a. The sociocultural and educational policies within which socio-educational actions and interventions take place.

   b. The limits that socio-educational professionals set for themselves within the framework of (1) their own personal ethics; (2) the professional codes of ethics that regulate their actions; and (3) the more general framework of human rights.

   c. The actions of the participants or their environment — singular actions that derive from their specific life trajectories and that obviously differ in each situation within the socio-educational intervention.

5. *Immediacy*. Grunwald and Thiersch pointed out that the complexity of the concept of lifeworld orientation for social pedagogy practice "may be summarised through the idea of structured open-endedness."[65] People live their lives in "real time"; that is, they are both closed and open at the same time, as social pedagogical actions can be. Life does not stop to give socio-pedagogical professionals time to think about how they should react to a specific problem, or to choose the best or most appropriate strategy of action or technique to face it. It is often said that social professions are "under construction,"[66] especially in the field of social education. But that does not mean that there will come a day when they are finally built. It seems to me that being under construction is more of an essential than a conjunctural or provisional attribute,[67] precisely because of the characteristics of everyday life. We will *always be* in construction, as professions and as professionals, because we work in and with people's daily lives, which neither stop nor end until we die.

6. *Articulation* is a defining characteristic of life in groups, communities, and societies. It is the set of relationships that, covering a very wide and diversified range of degrees, intensities, and densities, connects each person with all the elements, human and nonhuman, that make up the

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65. Grunwald and Thiersch, "The Concept of the 'Lifeworld Orientation' for Social Work and Social Care," 140.

66. Susana Torío López, "La pedagogía social en España" [Social Pedagogy in Spain], in *Pedagogía Social*, ed. João Clemente De Sousa Neto, Roberto Da Silva, and Rogério Adolfo Moura (São Paulo, Brazil: Expressão & Arte, 2009), 95, 109; José Antonio Caride Gómez, *Las fronteras de la pedagogía social* [The Frontiers of Social Pedagogy] (Barcelona, Spain: Gedisa, 2005); and José Ortega Esteban, "A la búsqueda del objeto, del espacio y del tiempo perdido de la pedagogía social" [In Search of the Object, the Space and Lost Time of Social Pedagogy], *Cultura y educación* 9, no. 4 (1997): 103–119.

67. Úcar, *Pedagogías de lo social*.

situation in which that person's everyday life takes place. The result of this articulation, at a given moment in a person's life, corresponds, at least in terms of interpersonal relationships, to what has been defined as "personal social capital." This type of social capital refers to all those relational resources that enable a person to gain benefits from belonging to or being connected with groups of other people, networks, or social structures.[68] It can be essential for social pedagogues to have access to, or knowledge of, this social capital when creating a well-adjusted socio-educational relationship that helps the person improve him- or herself and their environment. A young person's situation cannot be analyzed independently of his or her family, community, or group of peers, and their living conditions.

7. The concept of *agency* is very complex and has been interpreted in many different ways.[69] In the context of socio-pedagogical actions within the framework of people's everyday lives, agency is understood here as the everyday activities of a person, a group, or a community. Elsewhere I have described social pedagogy as a pedagogy of choice,[70] based on the idea that the choices we make throughout our life trajectory are what define us and shape us as unique individuals. Socio-educational interventions accompany the people involved by fomenting situations that allow them to analyze, reflect on, and learn about each choice or action before, during, or after making them.

8. *Recursion* refers to the effects that agencies have on people, on their daily lives, and on the daily lives of those around them: the consequences of one child's aggression toward another, for example. The way parents or educators react to this event will have an impact on the aggressive child's daily life, influencing his or her subsequent behavior and whether or not he or she will be violent in the future. In keeping with pedagogy as a question of choice, which I referred to earlier, recursion is a very effective pedagogical resource. It can be used in socio-educational interventions to induce processes of self-reflection in participants, before or while doing certain activities; in decision making about life events; or, finally, to

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68. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–258; and Nan Lin, "Building a Network Theory of Social Capital," *Connections* 22, no. 1 (1999): 28–51.

69. See Sabina Alkire, "Subjective Quantitative Studies of Human Agency," *Social Indicators Research* 74, no. 1 (2005): 217–260. In this article, Alkire lists the following definitions: "John Finnis refers to *practical reasoning* or *authentic self-direction*; Martha Nussbaum refers to *practical reasoning* and *control over the environment*; Doyal and Gough to *autonomy*; Max-Neef to *participation*; Ryan and Deci to *autonomy*; Narayan et alto *freedom of choice and action*; Schwartz to *self-direction*; Galtung to *being an active subject*; Allardt to *self-determination*; Andrews and Withey to *independence*; Lasswell to *power*; Qizilbash to *autonomy* or *self-determination*" (225).

70. Xavier Úcar, *Pedagogía de la elección* [Pedagogy of Choice] (Barcelona, Spain: UOC Publishing, 2016).

performing specific actions. Once again, Dewey's idea of education as a re-elaboration of experience appears. Recursion provides an educationally appropriate opportunity to rework one's own experiences.

9. *Lived experience* refers to the different and very diverse ways in which each person, group, or community experiences the facts and events of everyday life. It is related to the subjectivity, individual or collective, that individuals and groups construct throughout their life trajectories. Only by getting to know or living with people is it possible to understand why they experience a particular event in a certain way. That is why their involvement in socio-educational relationships is so essential; because only they, as the protagonists of their own lives,[71] are authorized voices and have the necessary keys to interpret both what happens to them and their reactions. However, this does not mean merely subjecting the relationship to the interests, demands, needs, or desires of the participants. Biesta puts the following question to the participants: "Is what I desire also desirable for me?"[72] The role of the pedagogue is precisely to help answer this question.

10. *Uncertainty/ Unpredictability*: We can never know what is going to happen in the instant following the one we are in now. This means that there is an essential uncertainty about the results of our actions as social pedagogues. It is because of this that our actions must be based on validated experiences and practices, and on theories or theoretical perspectives. This will ensure that our actions are not trivial or frivolous. We do not do just anything in any situation. On the contrary, we typically have good, sound reasons for doing what we do in every situation; whether, for example, it is working with a boy who has run away from school and his family, or with a group of neighborhood organizations that wants to attain more and better community services. Through our actions we can provide the other with reasons to act in one way rather than another. We can expand their scope for action and accompany them in the process of choosing the course of action that may best help improve their situation and that of their community. The social pedagogy actions we propose seek to broaden the perspectives and worlds of the people we work with, since social pedagogues are aware that by expanding perspectives, we are

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71. This is the first of the four general pedagogical and methodological principles that — based on the theories of authors such as Vygotsky, Dewey, Engeström, Wenger, and Freire, among others — should guide, in my view, any socio-educational relationship. The remaining three are (2) People learn, grow, and improve by doing — that is, through their activities within their sociocultural and environmental surroundings. (3) Interpersonal relationships mediate learning — people learn with and through other people, who can become mediators of their learning. Participation is the context, the medium, and the content of learning. (4) Nobody educates anybody, just as nobody empowers anybody. People educate and empower themselves through the relationships they establish with others and through their activities. See Xavier Úcar, *Pedagogías de lo social*

72. Gert Biesta, *Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 114.

also expanding individuals' capabilities and opportunities for action. It is a pedagogy of choice that aims to accompany and assist individual and collective subjects in their decisions and choices regarding what may be best for them.[73] And with that I mean what may be, and not what is or will be, because we must not forget that a socio-pedagogical action, like any kind of educational action, is always in some way a commitment to the future in which we will never be able to fully anticipate its results.

It is only possible to create this mapping of everyday life analytically and heuristically. Each of its constituent elements is a theoretical construct that, in the course of everyday life, is absolutely inseparable from the rest. It seems to me that the usefulness of this mapping lies, above all, in the formative use that can be made of it in the training of social pedagogy students or professionals.

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73. Úcar, *Pedagogía de la elección*.