

The Intervention of Social Work Against the Governance of Sustainability: Review, Analysis and Discussion From 1976 to 2022

¹Javier Carreon Guillen, ²Victor Hugo Meriño Cordoba, ³Carmen Ysabel Martínez de Meriño, ⁴Cruz García Lirios

¹*Department Social Work, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*

²*Department Administrative Sciences, Universidad Catolica Luis Amigo*

³*Department Administrative Science, Universidad Catolica Luis*

⁴*Department Social Work, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Mexico*

Abstract

The purpose of the work was to review, analyze and discuss the epistemic, contextual and interventional origins of Social Work in the face of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). A documentary, systematic, retrospective and prospective study of the profession and its competitive advantage observed in the intervention or translation of social needs for the construction of public policy was carried out. Sources indexed to national repositories were reviewed: Latindex, Redalyc and Scielo considering the period from 1976 to 2022 through the search by keywords. An asymmetry was found between the SDGs and the social demands that the profession identifies as ungovernability. In relation to the state of the art, lines of study related to a prospective of the discipline are proposed.

Keywords: Analysis, Discussion, Intervention, Sustainable Development Goals, Review, Social Work.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of social work is oriented towards the intervention of social relations between rulers and ruled (Espinoza et al., 2022). It means then that the discipline of social work is framed in the evaluation of the State towards its institutions and professional employees. In this process of evaluation of the public administration and the supervision of people as beneficiaries of social programs, the intervention of social work has been subject to levels of measurement of its performance.

This is the case of Social Work for sustainability. Based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), criteria established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the intervention follows the guidelines

for comprehensive management of natural resources and public services.

However, the criteria of extraction, transformation and distribution of natural resources are incompatible with the needs of current and future generations (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals

Source: UN (2022)

- The first purpose of the SDGs is to reduce poverty, although the sectors with the lowest income seek to guarantee their forms of family or social organization before having to migrate (Carreón et al., 2017).
- The SDGs second seek zero hunger, but communities threatened by drought or erosion develop green walls to contain desertification (Bello, 2021).
- A third objective for sustainability is access to health and wellness services without the social support that distinguishes communities (García et al., 2016).
- The fourth objective is about quality education, but schools organize themselves around experiential learning that reinforces their sense of community (Ramón et al., 2019).
- If the SDGs seek, in a fifth category, gender equality and equity, feminist organizations rather seek to achieve citizen security in this sector (Montero, 2021).
- The sixth item refers to the right and universal access to water and sanitation based on a tariff system, although users demand a regularized supply consistent with the quality of the service (Cañizares et al., 2020).
- The seventh objective is an energy supply with clean energies, but the neighborhood associations have advanced towards self-management through homemade

technologies invented by university students (Sierra et al., 2021).

- The eighth section suggests full employment, social security and prosperous growth, contrasting with the solidarity economy that offers 3 out of 5 new jobs during the pandemic (Barroso, 2021).

- The ninth mandate refers to the innovative company, but the formation of human capital is oriented towards entrepreneurship or self-employment in informal activities (Carreón, 2015).

- The tenth item is due to the reduction of inequalities, although migrant communities only seek to be selected in order to access a formal labor market (Calles, 2020).

- The eleventh suggests sustainable cities and communities without considering that ecovillages develop authoritarian self-management systems (Rodríguez et al., 2019).

- Responsible production and consumption is the twelfth mandate, but civil sectors accumulate seeds and food to guarantee their subsistence in the medium term before developing despair that leads them to consumerism (Mante et al., 2019).

- Climate action is the thirteenth objective, although citizen participation develops farsightedness that consists of reducing local problems and amplifying global disasters (García et al., 2017).

- Underwater life is the fourteenth objective, although four out of five live in cities and only seven percent know the mangroves (Guzmán & Cisneros, 2019).

- Terrestrial ecosystems are the fifteenth purpose, but overcrowding in cities limits environmental education and the practice of compost cultivation (Huamanchumo & Valera, 2021).

- Peace and justice represent the sixteenth purpose, although the pandemic brought with it more violence against women and an increase in femicides in their own homes (Hidalgo, 2021).

- The last objective seventeen suggests strategic alliances to achieve the previous purposes without considering that organizations and institutions form intellectual capital in an asymmetric way (Pecci, 2020).

The SDGs and the needs of communities and civil sectors are long-term oriented (Díaz et al., 2020). In contrast, the State and Social Work professionals must guarantee each of the 17 items in the short term through an intervention system that this paper puts into discussion.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to review the selected and pertinent literature to open the discussion about the differences between state policies and social needs with respect to the profession of Social Work as intervener of the discrepancy.

Are there significant differences between the intervention axes of the SDGs with respect to the intervention of social work in scenarios of demands from the environment versus personal resources?

The premises that guide this work suggest that Social Work has its epistemic origin in the Sciences of the Spirit and the Sciences of Understanding (García, 2007). This is so because the intervention of Social Work consists of the systematic observation and recording of people's environment (Molina et al., 2019). It then means that the discipline is

distinguished from other social sciences by its orientation towards contrasting the behaviors of people and the demands of their family, work or daily environments (Carreón et al., 2017). In addition, social work compares the resources of people with the demands of their environment in order to establish an imbalance or balance to guide their intervention (García & Bustos, 2013). In this process of diagnosis and intervention, three paradigms were consolidated: systemic positivist, critical dialectic, and comprehensive interpretive (Rosas et al., 2019). From these traditions of knowledge, social work developed intervention models that allowed it to be coupled with other disciplines of the social sciences and natural sciences.

Method

A documentary, cross-sectional, exploratory and bibliometric study was carried out with a selection of sources indexed to national repositories: Latindex, Redalyc and Scielo during the period from 1976 to 2022 in order to establish the specificity of the discipline and its relationship with the social and natural sciences before the SDGs, as well as the axes and topics of discussion on the professional agenda (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Sample Descriptives*

Repository	SDG				NS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
latindex	one	one	one	one	one	one	one	one
Redalyc	two	two	one	one	two	one	two	two
Scielo	one	two	one	one	one	one	one	one

Source: Prepared with study data

The Delphi Inventory was used, which includes qualifications of expert judges on the topics and the research agenda in the field of SDGs and social work. Respondents were asked about the significant relationship and discrepancy between the SDGs and social needs.

The participants were contacted through their institutional mail where they were informed about the objectives and those responsible for the study, as well as the guarantee in writing

and through a confidentiality agreement regarding their opinions and qualifications. The standards for human studies of the Helsinki protocol were followed, as well as the APA standards for research with expert subjects.

The data was captured in Excel, coded in JASP and processed in CytoScape following the guidelines of non-parametric samples, as well as the requirements of neural networks to establish the degree of learning of the literature regarding the review, analysis and discussion of the axes. and SDG issues and social needs.

The information was processed in content analysis matrices and synthesized in an intervention model as a proposal to asymmetries between state policies versus the needs of social sectors. The parameters of centrality, grouping and structuring were estimated for the contrast of the hypothesis regarding the significant differences between the agenda reported in the literature with respect to the review, analysis and discussion of the present study.

Results

Figure 2 shows the structure of relationships between nodes and edges. Based on the theory of neural networks that highlight significant learning when the input of information is greater than the output of data, it suggests that social needs are transferred as SDGs.

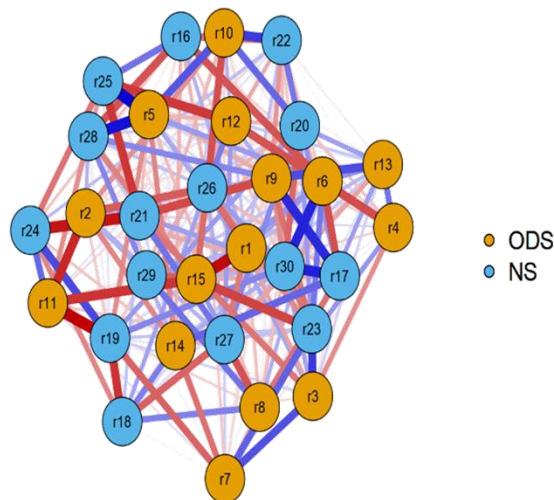


Figure 2. Network of the relationships between SDGs and Social Needs in the literature from 1976 to 2022

Source: Prepared with study data

The centrality parameters, according to the neural network theory, indicate the distance from the edges to the nodes. A value close to zero suggests a centrality that would explain the structuring of relationships as a didactic learning sequence. In this sense, the nodes related to the SDGs are more consistent, significant and centralized than the nodes corresponding to social needs. That is, the literature published from 1976 to 2022 seems to

indicate that the relationship is asymmetric between the SDGs and social needs because it is the nodes of the latter that are more dispersed than the nodes of the SDGs. While the literature is emphatic on the 17 purposes, the literature concerning social needs seems to be more ambiguous and volatile in its criteria. Such a difference would explain why the literature consistently reports that social needs would be adjusted to the SDGs as long as they involve a dialogue between the parties involved (see Figure 3).

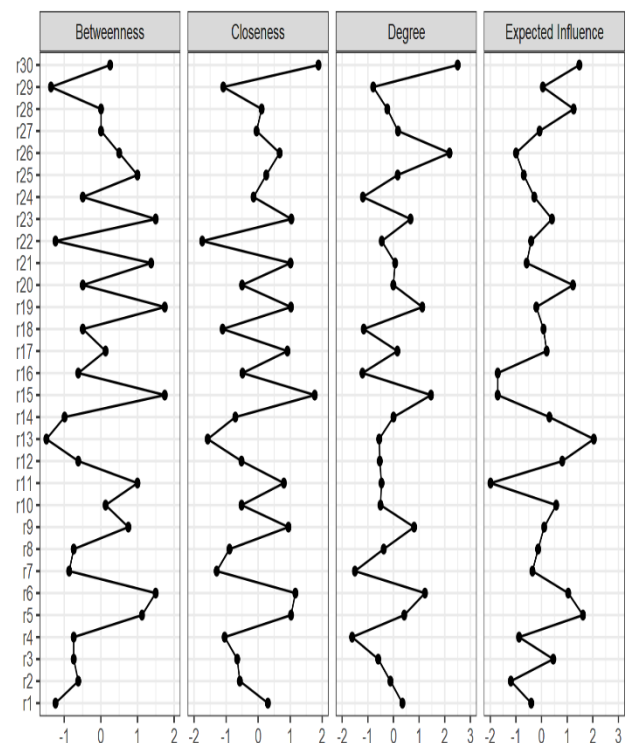


Figure 2. Centrality of the relationships between SDGs and Social needs in the literature from 1976 to 2022

Source: Prepared with study data

Regarding the grouping of the nodes with respect to both dimensions, the values show that the nodes of the SDGs are configured more profusely and with greater connectivity than the nodes alluding to social needs. It means that the literature seems to report all 15 SDG nodes as part of a project while the social needs nodes are more inconsistent.

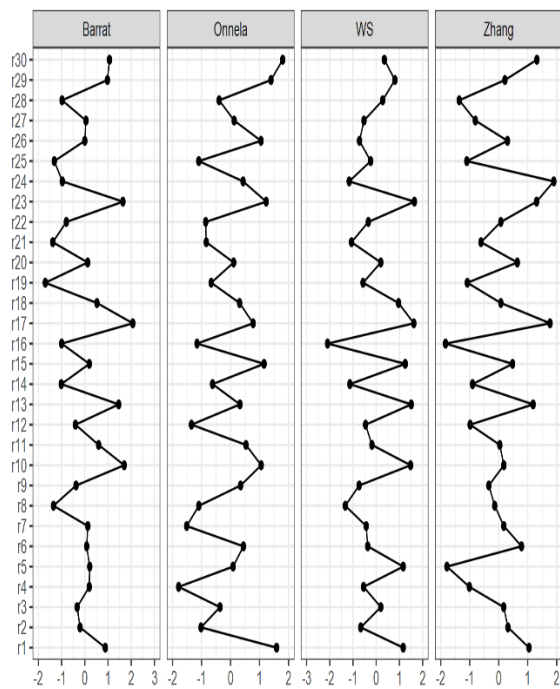


Figure 3. *Clustering of the relationships between SDGs and Social Needs in the literature from 1976 to 2022*

Source: Prepared with study data

In summary, the findings published in the literature from 1976 to 2022 suggest that the differences between the SDGs and social needs are due to the fact that the social sciences and humanities, as well as the behavioral sciences and administrative economics, have been oriented towards a paradigm that measures generalities of social needs without considering the complexity of the regions or localities in front of the sustainable development project. The asymmetries between the grouping, centrality and structuring of the SDG nodes with respect to the nodes of social needs indicate an observable learning in the literature that opts for translating the demands of the environment into public policies.

Discussion

Regarding the contribution of the discussion that has been handled regarding the theoretical paradigms used by social work, this concern can be initiated from a scientific task, locating ourselves from the two traditional positions: the positivist and the interpretive. These

philosophical currents have influenced countless investigations and generations of studies which try to glimpse into social problems, in order to understand our society.

However, it is important to point out that Social Work has been highly influenced by a positivist and generic approach. What allows us to contextualize the epistemological discussion that bases the approach of the social work methodology, being clear about what the paradigms of knowledge are. In the historical development of the formation of the discipline of Social Work we find that it is linked in turn to a systematic and fundamental concern of the profession, in terms of the object of study, the object of intervention, object of knowledge, the problematization of the subject-object relationship and theoretical and methodological ambiguity, emphasizing analysis and reflection.

Social Work had a decisive development from the moment of reconceptualization; In this movement, the analytical discussion regarding the scientific nature of the profession opens, giving way to the debate about the method and its object. These contextual references will refer us to an epistemological discussion about Social Work. We have different ideological currents around social work that allow us to start with our epistemic discussion:

- The reconceptualization takes up the paths towards research, diagnosis, plan, execution and evaluation, however, by incorporating the procedures of this organization, there was an anchor between the use of the methodology with a positivist approach, with the existence of a Marxism in the methodological constructions of Social Work.
- The Marxist approach to social work looks at reality as a process of transformation, which is directly related to the social, economic and political situation of the 60s and 70s in Latin America, giving way to a professional intervention from the materialist category. - dialectic, where the assumption base is all theory is ideological.

The contributions, analyzes and reflections made during the last five decades on the

problem of the object in the discipline are numerous and would require a more detailed and detailed analysis to reconstruct the debates and trends that have historically arisen in relation to this topic. Therefore, it is not the intention of this work to relate the historical-contextual baggage from where Social Work is positioned, much less to initiate the discussion regarding the choice of the best historical moment of Social Work, but rather to show what some interpretive lines have been with which our discipline has looked at. These paradigms reveal the different processes of knowledge and mainly give us a look at the analysis of the background and changes in the development of thought in our inquiry into reality.

Regarding Social Work, it allows us to see that there is a capacity to address the three approaches mentioned above, as well as the quantitative and qualitative paradigms for social innovation where it allows us to persuade a look with different perspectives at social reality, knowledge of it, processes of production and the way of interpreting subject-object. Allowing to overcome the assumption that social work with a quantitative approach (explanation, prediction and data control) is overcome by the qualitative approach (understanding, meaning and action in social practices) or vice versa. In other words, overcoming the rupture between paradigms will depend on the understanding of our object of study. As well as opting for mobile and creative methodologies that have the ability to explain reality, build premises and build connections to find the meaning of the problematization.

- Include Social Work as a discipline without making a distinction between the profession
- Analyze the relationship between subject and object not only from a dialectical, critical and positivist perspective.
- The importance of defining and delimiting the problem object of intervention.
- The issue of necessity is the basis of the requirement of the profession. (historical necessity and its social function)
- Use theory in articulation with the totality of reality and with history
- Have clarity in object of knowledge and object of intervention
- Problematized relationship between subject and need
- Incorporate categories such as daily life, social needs and subject and social actor.
- The relationships between the configuration of the social issue and professional intervention.
- Do not limit the analysis of the object of intervention to a mere epistemological question.
- Social reality must be seen as fragmenting and partializing it.
- Social reality is epistemic, that is, produced by the social, cultural and historically by the subjects.
- The analysis of the historical process as a search for various social actors.
- Interaction of the subject, knowing his reality and environment
- Knowledge about a concrete reality is put in virtue of achieving understanding about that reality that is complex and that must be apprehended in order to change it.
- Use the theoretical categories in social work as epistemological dimensions (as forms of knowledge of reality) and ontological (which refer to the social being).
- Transcend the pragmatism and empiricism that characterized professional practice, in the use of scientific research as a constitutive part of our professional practice and not as a merely academic activity or of a few.
- Decipher reality and build creative work proposals capable of preserving and making rights effective, based on emerging demands in everyday life.

- We want to advance that the matter or object is what a discipline studies and/or transforms by its action and that, according to the particularities of doing Social Work, this object unfolds into other objects.

As a final reflection, we wish to advance in the particularities of doing Social Work, taking into account that the object of study of social work is unfolding into other objects of study, where it allows us to open new lines of interpretation of our discipline.

Conclusion

The objective of the present work was to open the discussion about the epistemic and contextual origin of the work intervention. Once its genealogy was established, the horizon of the discipline was projected, considering the asymmetries between social needs and state policies. Therefore, the contribution of this work to the state of knowledge lies in the revision of paradigms, context analysis and perspective of Social Work in the face of the Sustainable Development Goals. The dialogue between the discipline with other disciplines will open the debate on the future of the profession and its intervention as a competitive advantage over other disciplines. Social Work is expected to build a language capable of translating social needs for the construction of social policies more in line with civil sectors. In addition, the management of social needs will guide the discipline's intervention models towards new dialogues with other disciplines. Future work of review, analysis and discussion will allow progress towards the configuration of an inter, multi and transdisciplinary Social Work.

Reference

- [1] Barroso Carrillo, L.O. (2021). A critical look at the troubled situation in Latin America, from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals; Chile and Colombia cases. *Strategic Formation*, 2 (1), 1–10. Retrieved from <https://www.formacionestrategica.com/index.php/foes/article/view/17>
- [2] Kumar, S. (2022). A quest for sustainium (sustainability Premium): review of sustainable bonds. *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal*, Vol. 26, no.2, pp. 1-18
- [3] Allugunti VR Reddy CKK , Elango NM (2021). Prediction of Diabetes Using Internet of Things (IoT) and Decision Trees: SLDPS, *Intelligent Data Engineering and Analytics*, 2021.
- [4] Reddy DAB A. Viswanatha, Jayaramaiah D., Prasanth A. (2012). Multi Agent Management System for Next Generation Mobile Networks [MAMS for NGMN], *International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT)*, Vol.1
- [5] Bello Knoll, SI (2021). The Sustainable Development Goals and design. *Notebooks of the Center for Design and Communication Studies*, (128). <https://doi.org/10.18682/cdc.vi128.4864>
- [6] Streets, C. (2020). SDGs and higher education. A look from the research function. *Journal of Higher Education and Society (ESS)*, 32 (2), 167-201. <https://doi.org/10.54674/ess.v32i2.288>
- [7] Cañizares Ruiz, MC, Benito del Pozo, P., & López Patiño, G. (2020). Industrial heritage in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and territorial resilience: from theory to practice. *Annals of Geography of the Complutense University*, 40 (2), 323-344. <https://doi.org/10.5209/aguc.72977>
- [8] Carreón Guillén, J., Amemiya Ramírez, M., Bustos Aguayo, JM, Juárez Nájera, M., Limón Domínguez, GA, Pérez Ortega, MI, & García Lirios, C. (2017). Local Development Governance: Towards a Social Work device for water sustainability. *Realities Journal of the Faculty of Social Work and Human Development*, 6 (2), 39–51. Retrieved from <https://realidades.uanl.mx/index.php/realidades/article/view/a2a2n2>
- [9] Carreón Guillén, J. (2015). Labor commitment of social work in the health sector. *Accounting and Administration*, 60 (1), 31-51. Retrieved on May 15, 2022, from <http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?scrip>

- t=sci_arttext&pid=S0186-10422015000100003&lng=es&tlng=es .
- [10] Díaz Román, C., Martín Cano, M. del C., & De la Fuente Robles, YM (2020). Redefining Social Work: new sources of employment in aging. A proposal from social intervention. *AZARBE, International Journal of Social Work and Welfare*, (9), 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.6018/azarbe.444621>
- [11] Espinoza-Morales, F., Sánchez-Sánchez, A., & García Lirios, C. (2022). Corporate reputation in a public university that trains public health social workers. *GEON (Management, Organizations And Business) Magazine*, 9 (1), e-747. <https://doi.org/10.22579/23463910.747>
- [12] García Lirios, C. (2007). The problem of sustainability. *Diversitas*, 3 (1), 141-150. <https://doi.org/10.15332/s1794-9998.2007.0001.09>
- [13] García Lirios, C., & Bustos Aguayo, J. (2013). Psychological studies of water sustainability. Applications to the consumer tariff system. *Journal of Social Sciences*, (139). <https://doi.org/10.15517/rcs.v0i139.11349>
- [14] García Lirios, C., Carreón Guillén, J., Hernández Valdés, J., & Bustos Aguayo, JM (2017). Institutional power and civil influence in the mediation of social work in the face of social policies and needs. Criticism and Resistance. *Journal of Latin American Social Conflicts*, (4), 250-264. Retrieved from <https://www.criticayresistencias.com.ar/revista/article/view/97>
- [15] García Lirios, C., Carrión Guillén, J., Hernández Valdés, J., & Bustos Aguayo, JM (2016). Attitude of social workers towards carriers of the human immunodeficiency virus in community health centers. *Health & Society*, 4 (1), 60-68. <https://doi.org/10.22199/S07187475.2013.0001.00005>
- [16] Guzmán Jiménez, L., & Cisneros Trujillo, C. (2019). The city in the SDGs and the 2030 agenda. Special reference to the case of the management of public space in Colombia. *Euro-Latin American Journal of Administrative Law*, 6 (2), 189-223. <https://doi.org/10.14409/redoeda.v6i2.9104>
- [17] Hidalgo Velasquez, E. R. (2021). Pandemic by COVID -19 and the Intervention of the Social Worker in the affiliates of the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security. *Frontier Social Magazine*, 1 (2), 1–19. Retrieved from <https://www.revistasocialfronteriza.com/ojs/index.php/rev/article/view/6>
- [18] Huamanchumo Sánchez, L., & Valera, A. (2021). Current challenges of extension in relation to SDG 10. *Masquedós - Revista De Extensión Universitaria*, 6 (6), 15. Retrieved from <https://ojs.extension.unicen.edu.ar/index.php/masquedodos/article/view/121>
- [19] Kruse, H. (1976). *Introduction to the Scientific Theory of Social Service*. Buenos Aires, ECRO
- [20] Manté, MI, Hermida, M., Picón, J., Delgado, J., & Guillamet Charge , C. (2019). The SDG agenda and its measurement from a comprehensive approach. The case of Tierra del Fuego. *Disclosure. Graduate Academic Profiles*, 4 (10), 165–177. <https://doi.org/10.48160/25913530di10.116>
- [21] Molina Ruíz, HD, Martínez Muñoz, E., Bustos Aguayo, JM, Juárez Nájera, M., & García Lirios, C. (2019). Peri-urban socio-environmental representations. *Kuxulkab'*, 26 (54), 05-12. <https://doi.org/10.19136/kuxulkab.a26n54.3029>
- [22] Montero Caro, M.D. (2021). Education, Open Government and progress: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the educational field. A critical vision of the LOMLOE. *Journal of Education and Law*, (23). <https://doi.org/10.1344/REYD2021.23.34443>
- [23] United Nations Organization (2022). *Sustainable Development Goals*. Gynevra: UN <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/en/goals-for-sustainable-development/>
- [24] Pecci Oviedo, ME (2020). Good practices towards compliance with SDG 7 "Affordable and Non-polluting Energy". *UCSA Scientific Journal*, 7 (3), 72–75. Retrieved from <http://revista-ucsa-ct.edu.py/ojs/index.php/ucsa/article/view/36>

- [25] Ramón Pineda, Miguel Ángel, Lalangui Pereira, Julio Honorato, Guachichulca Ordóñez, Laura Alexandra, & Espinoza Freire, Eudaldo Enrique. (2019). Specific skills of the social work professional in the Ecuadorian educational context. *Conrad*, 15 (66), 219-229. Epub March 2, 2019. Retrieved on May 15, 2022, from http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1990-86442019000100219&lng=es&tlng=es.
- [26] Rodríguez Sierra, S., & Córdoba Cuarán, M. (2019). Challenges of an Eco-environmental public policy with an SDG approach in Bogotá vs Reversion clauses in cleaning services. *Legal Mission*, 12 (17).
<https://doi.org/10.25058/1794600X.1051>
- [27] Rosas-Ferruzca, FJ, Sandoval-Vázquez, FR, & García-Lirios, C. (2019). Contrast of a prospective decision model of sustainability. *INVURNUS*, 14 (2), 9–19.
<https://doi.org/10.46588/invurnus.v14i2.13>
- [28] Sierra-Zamora, PA, Sanjuán Pabón, LK, & Pulido Castelblanco, Ángela P. (2021). Human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals: Entrepreneurship and innovation in the National Army. *Compass Hotbeds Research*, 9 (18), 14-22.
<https://doi.org/10.21830/23460628.94>