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Neoliberalism and Western Education crisis. Causes, consequences and opportunities for the change

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Abstract

The crisis of neoliberalism is the crisis of the West, unable to redirect its course and threatened by internal and external contradictions. The emergence of the postmodernism has generated a new uncritical *ethos* that relativises Western rights and freedoms. The invasion of capitalist mercantile logic into the school, under the neoliberal paradigm, has displaced any political training from the school, contributing to contemporary cultural relativity. In the present work we will review the course of neoliberalism from its origins to the present day, and we will analyse its impact on the Western school. This journey is carried out from a critical approach. Two main consequences are detected: the substitution of knowledge by labour competences, and the promotion of a homogeneity that benefits competitiveness, but deteriorates democratic culture. We conclude with the requirement for schools to abandon relative narratives and embrace democratic values in order to improve the coexistence and the political participation.

Keywords: Liberalism. Neoliberalism. Crisis. Postmodernism. Education.

1 Introduction

The ideological and economic models which sustain capitalism have suffered both good and bad moments throughout the 20th century. These crises facilitate the positioning against some aspects, and the need of change for others. For

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both sides, the crises feed the reflection which, due to polarization, can generate a superficial analysis of the situation, which leads many people to think that capitalism is an inefficient, perverse and exhausted economic system. Thus, capitalism is an amoral economic system and the ethical direction of its dynamics is established by the State through the law. However, the analysis is more complex, multifaceted and multivariable, because capitalism is not unitary, but diverse. Hence, capitalist societies have lived in different conditions under the Keynesian liberal ideology and under the neoliberal ideology. While the capitalist system has insurmountable effects on communities, and on the very ethos of citizenship, many of these consequences are well in tune with the great aspirations which emerged after the French Revolution, and which guided the liberal democratic sense of the West thereafter. Nevertheless, the State's ethical direction of how capitalism should be deployed may contravene its ends.

The quest for efficiency, which is expressed in the formula of the *maximum profit with minimum investment*, has often led the political sense of the West, which is tempted to manage material and human resources in the same way without taking into account the consequences. In view of the enormous development of the nations affiliated with this formula, any political direction that benefits its fulfillment has been legitimized. In this way, neoliberal agendas surrender completely to its potential by sacrificing the human, social and environmental value of the formula. In spite of everything, these minarchist theses have not only failed to reduce inequality, but have also contributed to social and community defragmentation, giving rise to an era marked by the relativity and isolation of individuals. The Western public school is one of the fundamental elements in sustaining this formula for two reasons. First, because it makes it possible to extend a minimum training to the citizenry that will achieve a higher labor performance in economic terms. Secondly, because through it, it is possible to transmit codes, values and behaviours appropriate for the functioning of the community.

In this sense, it is noted that neoliberalism subjugates Education, puts it at the service of the market and capital, which demands well-prepared, servile workers. Thus, from the neoliberal ideology and practice, the school plays a fundamental role in the construction of identities, in the architecture of domination and hegemonic practices, a role played by the school as builder and reproducer of the rules of order and submission to the hegemonic ideology (ALTHUSSER, 1977). Consequently, Education is placed at the service of neoliberalism insofar as it responds to a simple proportional relationship: the better the Education of

citizens, the better their performance and the higher their productivity (DÍEZ, 2010; GARCÍA, 2010; GIROUX, 2001; PETTY, 2001).

The aim of this paper is to analyse, from the socio-critical paradigm, the transition from Keynesian capitalism to neoliberal capitalism and its consequences on the school. The working hypothesis is that the school, sustained by the metanarrative of Modernity, has contributed to improve the labor competencies of the citizenry, but also to its homogenization and conformity. It concludes with the idea that the crisis of neoliberalism is the crisis of Western society, and it shows the exhaustion of a discourse and practices that are manifestly unsupportive and anti-humanist. An educational teleology is presented that generates critical social and educational practices through the promotion of critical thinking in students to ensure a democratic citizenship, capable of defending it against the advance of internal and external threats.

The crisis of neoliberalism based on technocracy and the globalization of the most aggressive and individualistic capitalism has shown. The crisis of 2008, and the arrival of Covid-19 have unmasked the absence of an authentic human conscience of solidarity, and this crisis has shown the need for changing the structures, both political, social and educational, since the crisis of neoliberalism is the crisis of neoliberal Education, whose miseries have shown the closure of schools due to the pandemic (CÁCERES-MUÑOZ; JIMÉNEZ-HERNÁNDEZ; MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ, 2020), jeopardizing participation and social justice for millions of people around the globe (JIMÉNEZ-HERNÁNDEZ; CÁCERES-MUÑOZ; MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ, 2021). In this paper, bases of neoliberalism will be analyzed. In particular, the focus will be on the deviations of neoliberal work, and its implications. That includes not only the way that workers are trained, but also the contradictions between the democratic liberal values and the working conditions. To do this, a hermeneutical methodology will be employed.

2 Crisis of capitalism and the rise of keynesianism in the 20th century

The crisis of capitalism is the crisis of the Western economic and political system. Since the 20th century, we have witnessed several capitalist crises, and various attempts to overcome them. The year 2008 marked a major crisis of the neoliberal capitalist model which, far from restructuring itself, is trying to reassert itself. However, the crisis of the capitalist model and its advanced neoliberalism is an opportunity for change and opens the possibility of another, more human

and participatory social development. Not in vain, this crisis of model serves to evidence the perversity and danger of the neoliberal capitalist model, because this crisis calls the essence of liberal democracies into question.

The first decades of the 20th century saw a period of growth and prosperity in Western countries in general. This does not deny the fact that there were still intolerable levels of inequality and poverty. Compared to other nations with different socio-economic models and considering the speed of development after the Industrial Revolution, the West experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity. The enthusiasm of the time would eventually flood all areas of everyday life, and would end up being synthesized in the famous term of *roaring twenties*. Nonetheless, while the possibilities seemed endless, in reality it did have an end: the crash of 1929, which led to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

There was a spread of mistrust of capitalism as it was incapable of avoiding economic crises or of completing the liberal narratives. This idea would expand during the following years after the devastation of World War II and the rise of socialism. In this context, in which the battle between ideological blocs began, the Keynesian model, proposed by Keynes (1965), emerged as an achievable proposal for preserving the virtues of the liberal capitalist model while making certain concessions to socialist theses. This model did not satisfy everyone, neither the more conservative sectors, affiliated with more traditional economic theories, nor the neoliberals, who aspired to a greater separation between the State and economic affairs. The Keynesian model allowed the Western world to continue the process of capitalist globalization, within the liberal framework, while avoiding financial crises and the growth of economic inequality. During this period, interest in public Education increased and the concept of universal, free and compulsory Education was definitively established in the vast majority of Western democratic countries.

3 The crisis of keynesianism and the rise of neoliberalism

Since the 1970s, the capitalist system suffered a stagnation of the economic market, became less profitable, and generated an increasing State intervention for its development (MAISUIRA, 2014). Although the Keynesian model of economy seemed to have fostered economic growth, it was unable to alleviate the cyclical crises of capitalism. From then, various economic currents would emerge that sought to recover the original foundations of classical liberalism. All these currents came together in a group known as *neoliberalism*, which encompasses actually very different economic movements, but with a common

premise: to reduce or eliminate the powers that the State has over the economy in order to allow it to develop freely. The school and the contemporary educational systems were the target of the neoliberal ideological and political current that, as a key to hegemonic domination, became established in contemporary Western Education (HILL; ROSSKAM, 2009).

The most outstanding proposal was monetarism, proposed by Milton Friedman. His measures were tested in Pinochet's Chile (1973-1990), during the period of the military dictatorship (HARVEY, 2007). Despite the repression and the curtailment of freedoms, the economic measures (decentralization of economic control, reduction of public spending or privatization of State enterprises) yielded very positive results in economic terms, so that the model proposed by Friedman soon found powerful allies in the Western world after the Chilean test period.

As the virtues of the economic model proposed by Friedman spread, it began a progressive process of privatization of sectors that the State does not consider profitable, or believes can be exploited more efficiently under private management (KEYNAN, 2016). Within the neoliberal framework, the economic position of the Austrian School of economics, which is even less interventionist, would also emerge. These are situated in libertarian positions from which they have criticized the State interventionism promoted by the Chicago School. An interventionism that has been branded as Keynesianism by liberal economists such as Huerta de Soto (2006). In other words, the neoliberal economic trend began to distinguish itself, differentiating its main guidelines from more traditional liberal economic trends.

In this way, Western democratic societies, began to restructure the State and its obligations, reducing its presence in areas such as health or Education (GIROUX, 2014). Actually, privatization processes means a decrease in the Education budgets. Critical Pedagogy has pointed out that this hinders citizens' access to certain basic services. And in the specific case of Education, this also implies weakening a fundamental tool for the political support of the State, which threatens its continuity (GIROUX, 2004; RASCO, 2020). This goes against the meaning of democracy insofar as it does not guarantee a fundamental circumstance for its existence.

Schools and society, which are faced with the fallacy of individualistic, asocial and unsupportive freedom, can count on pedagogy as one of the strongest tools for social change and equity. Precisely, through a participatory and active pedagogy, children and adolescents are able to express their voice (NIKOLAKAKI, 2020).

Social justice is possible through equal participation, fulfilling the conditions of fair redistribution, equal status, real and equal representation, and critical social activism (BELAVI; MURILLO TORRECILLA, 2020). Social justice is the right to Education for all in order to achieve human dignity so as to have the power to change the world (CZEREPANIAK-WALCZAK, 2020). The consequence of the success of neoliberalism is its close and well-executed relationship between the school and the neoliberal policies of Western governments since the 1970s (HILL *et al.*, 2015).

4 Effect of neoliberal policies in Education

The influence of neoliberalism is currently manifested through the political agendas of Western executive bodies, resulting in a weakening of public assets and the concept of society in favor of greater individual freedom and autonomy (KEYNAN, 2016). Thus, those with the greatest economic or political influence are also those who have directed the way of Western public action in favor of the free market and minimal State intervention (APPLE, 2011; HURSH, 2005; MCLAREN, 2002). In this way, citizens are denied praxis through their work and are instructed in terms of economic performance in their passage through the educational system. From the very beginning, the ideologists of neoliberalism understood that the control of the public educational sphere by the financial oligarchies was the easiest way to inoculate neoliberal values within national educational systems (MCLAREN, 2012). This required reorganizing the public school on the basis of its ideals, transforming a public service into a market and training center for obedient and disciplined workers because they are willing to maintain the capitalist ideology of the free market at any price (MCLAREN; HUERTA-CHARLES, 2011).

Critically, two main conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, knowledge-based Education has been sacrificed for one marked by the acquisition of competences. This is a disquisition that was already identified by Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2018), and has been explored by other authors related to critical pedagogy (ALLMAN, 2010; APPLE, 1999; MCLAREN, 2015). It is an evaluation of the needs of the labour market to the detriment of the liberating aspirations of Education (GLINKA, 2020). The relationship between students and teachers is mediated by students' integration into a competent economic system, for which Education becomes an instrument for professional and economic development, a mere preparation for employment (KEMMIS, 1998). What is more, this produces a monotonous learning to become competent and useful subjects from the labour point of view (MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ; FLORES-RODRÍGUEZ, 2018). As a result, the school speaks of competencies,

which should be understood as necessary knowledge, and here lies the object of analysis, in the concept of *needs*, because neoliberalism poses traditional Education as systemic, ideological, labour and social reproduction. However, they are not students' needs, but those on which the neoliberal educational curriculum is articulated: those of capital and market (CASSEY, 2011). Therefore, Education structures itself as a framework based on the profitability of knowledge, which conceptualizes it as competence: whoever is not *competent* for the school, is not *useful* for the labour system (CASEY, 2011).

The second main consequence is the denial of access to public praxis through the homogenization processes that take place in the classroom. As Fromm points out, the new labour relations that emerge in the framework of Western industrialization are intervening on personal relations (FROMM, 2013). Just as the capitalist selects in the market the best tools to produce, and the workers are in fact the tools that can be acquired in that market, the characteristics they present will determine their employability, performance, productivity or loyalty to the company. If there is a global market, constituted under capitalist logic, there are consequently a series of rules and norms shared throughout the world so that the market can operate in the same way and under the same conditions everywhere. Hence, States promote the characteristics that will allow them to compete in better conditions in this global market.

This further contributed to the standardization of Education, first in Western countries and later in others. Critical Pedagogy, which is faced with this scenario, defends the promotion of students' critical spirit as the only tool capable of restoring their autonomy. Through autonomous thinking, citizens can regain control over their own will, which means that they would recover their individuality and their ability to establish an otherness that allows them to recognize the rights of others, as well as their own. If Education seeks the improvement of the human being, it is necessary to ask ourselves, from a critical pedagogy, what kind of people we want to build, and in this sense, one of the main objectives of Education is the construction of an active, useful, participatory and fair citizen, who builds a better society (NIKOLAKAKI, 2020). Through this path, political freedom is stronger because it is built by a citizenry that understands and respects the rights of others.

5 Neoliberal crisis and crisis of the modern meta-narrative

If there were universal values around which to articulate civic identity, postmodern society has called them into question. Contemporary Western culture, socially

fragmented but economically ordered, has resulted in an attitude that relativises social progress and questions the validity of grand narratives, while seeming to have found a productive direction based on economic performance. These emerging phenomena, which give shape to what we know as the *cultural postmodernity*, are configuring a new *ethos* detached from the legitimacy of the tradition to which it belongs.

The issue lies in the inability of contemporary Western society to establish an identity that would enable the citizenry to establish itself as a single culture through the establishment of shared criteria and norms. Cultural divergence, partly motivated by the conditions of capitalist production, but also due to the material and spiritual particularities of the West, has led to a rupture in the line of identity affiliation. As a result, values that once seemed universal and unquestionable are now the subject of discussion. This fragmentation of Western identity has also been reinforced by the triumph of individualism. At a time when the individualist and collectivist theses were at odds with each other, the establishment of the capitalist economic system reinforced individualism. Here emerges the classical liberal notion of individualism, which orbits the Saxon sphere, and which was defined by Hayek as true individualism (1992). In this way, he differentiated it from the Gallic-influenced continental individualism which, led by Rousseau, extracted from individualism the rights and freedoms inherent to every human being (ROUSSEAU, 2018). This is not a deliberate action, but rather a *Darwinian social selection* (SANDÍN, 2000) which has rewarded citizen attitudes that benefit the progress and performance of the dominant economic system. In this way, a lax identity emerges, but adjusted to the criteria of the material conditions of production (capitalism) and spiritual conditions of the West (individualism).

The fact that the economic dynamics of a community end up transforming its structure and functioning is not peculiar to the West. In general, human communities tend to optimize the processes that benefit them most, which ultimately implies a transformation of the way of life of the citizenry. And in this sense, capitalism benefits from competitiveness and efficiency in the management of resources for its own growth. This is why the values embodied in individualism are so well attuned to the needs and demands of today's market, while collectivist theses point to the threat that social competitiveness may result in the growth of inequality and the isolation of individuals. The important thing is that the confrontation between these social positions has resulted in the victory of the better system not because of its internal foundations, but because its external characteristics have been better adapted to the present socio-economic scenario.

Neoliberalism has its greatest contradiction in front of it: an extreme disintegrating individualism that threatens to dilute its hegemony. Standardized training produces the isolation of individuals, who share the trait of mutual competition, but have almost completely sacrificed otherness. Not only does this produce a cultural gap, which is left without any previous tradition, but it also disintegrates the power structures in a libertarian welter in which an employee can become an employer, and vice versa.

In Education, the neoliberal capitalist logic has been completely installed in the school. Sometimes, it manifests itself explicitly, driven by those contemporary slogans such as *the entrepreneurial spirit* or *the culture of effort*, which is normalized and transmitted from childhood, fostering among students a competitive attitude in a context of marked meritocracy. Other times, it manifests itself through more abstract psychological mechanisms, which, already in the area of personality formation, influence the way in which students construct their vision of the world (MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ; FLORES-RODRÍGUEZ, 2018). In this way, the society of performance is elevated to the dimension of ideas, to the form that customs, traditions and other matters belonging to the cultural heritage have. A place from which it is very difficult to construct critical thinking without resorting to pre-existing experiences.

6 The school in the face of contemporary challenges

Neoliberal agendas are currently facing two major contradictions. First, it faces the internal contradiction of identity fragmentation and the moral relativity of citizenship. The global capitalist market operates under the cultural direction set and directed by neoliberalism. This is a cultural imposition that tends to run counter to its own identity and threatens to isolate communities. On the other hand, it must confront the external contradictions posed by Asian nations and powers, which have managed to establish a more stable economic course, albeit at the expense of citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.

These argumentative contradictions lead to a growing distrust of the citizenry towards classical institutions, which in turn translates into greater disenchantment, the growth of xenophobic and homophobic attitudes, and the rise of political populism. This scenario is only possible in a context in which the great values that emerged from the French Revolution are called into question. And this attitude has been reinforced by the most extreme versions of liberal individualism, which, beyond being established in the defence of individual rights and liberties, have gone far from the barrier of liberal democracy to move towards minarchist theses.

The rejection of the State is the rejection of the community, adjusted to rules that determine how coexistence will be.

In this sense, the Western school functions as a catalyst for the social defragmentation that threatens democracy. Through the introduction of methods, signs, habits, and all kinds of content, students are introduced into the logic of the current labor market. This has positive effects on the production and economic development of a community but erodes other aspects related to coexistence, participation and, in short, democratic identity. A kind of identity that requires a sense of community, apparently contrary to the individualistic theses with which neoliberalism flirts, and that are reflected in Thatcher's famous statement: *there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women.*

Neoliberalism considers public and universal Education as an indoctrinating institution that violates the natural right of human beings to be educated freely in nature or in their community. From their perspective, Education should be treated like any other market product, where the parents would be the consumers, and the teachers would be the producers. In this way, families' right to choose the Education that best suits them would be assured (ÁLVAREZ, 2011). However, as Aristotle reminds us, "what is common must be learned in common, and it is a big mistake to believe that each citizen is master of himself, when all belong to the State, since they constitute its elements" (ARISTOTLE, 2019, p. 177). In the same way that children's Education is parents' responsibility, as they grant the status of *child*, it is the State's responsibility to educate the citizenry, since their status depends on the former. Otherwise, we would not be dealing with an Education of citizens, but with an Education of classes.

On the other hand, it is not true that universal, formal Education under the care of the State eliminates student diversity. Democratic Education assumes the value of that diversity, and fosters the channels and resources necessary for meaningful political participation. An Education focused exclusively on the demands of the labour market threatens democracy for this reason. Without sufficient dialectical preparation, students are left at the mercy of the dominant discourses, to which they will only have access through the mastery of praxis (FREIRE, 2018). In this sense, it is essential to promote critical thinking that contributes to strengthening the attitudes and characteristics that are desirable for the community. In addition, those that are more harmful and perverse should be rejected since they emanate from both the most authoritarian and the most minarchist positions. The alternative lies in the empowerment and resistance of the individual through critical thinking, and democratic and participatory citizenship. The main function of Education is

to generate dialogues for decision-making, where Education acquires a human meaning that constitutes the organizing principle of society, providing experiences and developing critical consciences to understand the world and possibilities to generate justice and equal opportunities for everyone (HERNÁNDEZ ARTEAGA *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, this must be done from the plurality of approaches, with a new broad and comprehensive epistemology, which understands that Education and knowledge are not homogeneous, but influenced by culture and context, because homogenization does not help to observe or explain what is happening (CLEMENS, 2020), it is neither fair, nor just, nor equitable, nor even humanly acceptable.

7 Conclusions

The most harmful effect of capitalism on schools are in fact the political consequence of neoliberal interference. Capitalism is nothing more than an economic system whose consequences are manifested in society according to norms that it itself establishes. Neoliberalism has directed the way in which the West relates to the market, exalting the most disintegrating aspects of individuality. Moreover, it has fostered a competition that eliminates the sense of democratic community. This occurs through the elimination of political Education, but also through training for a labour market.

Despite the apparent crisis of the system, it seems that neoliberalism is here to stay in today's Education system (JONES *et al.*, 2008; MAISURIA, 2014; SANTA CRUZ; OLMEDO, 2012; VIÑAO, 2001, 2012). The school assumes a discourse and a practice for life, marked by economic dogmas. In this sense, neoliberalism dominates discourse and practices, dominates policies and places the market and profit above all other considerations. What is more, it understands learning in terms of economic growth (DAMIANIDOU; PHTIAKA, 2016; HURSH; HENDERSON, 2011).

The contemporary crisis of neoliberalism is the crisis of identity suffered by Western postmodern society. The consummation of the modern narrative has opened the door to a new culture that has begun to redefine its characteristics. The exhaustion of the dialectical fuel of Modernity pushes society to seek new ways of justifying our present. In this process, modern values such as the absolutization of justice or colonization are considered exhausted, but also values associated with contemporary democracies, such as diversity or participation (FLORES-RODRÍGUEZ; MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ; 2022). This poses a risk to democracy and the values it embodies. Without the proper

cultural context, the rights and freedoms that have been won can be reversed. For this reason, a reformulation of the school is urgently needed that, without abandoning job training, takes into account students' political skills. A school that assumes a critical perspective must empower and transform itself, move away from the ideals of neoliberalism and generate lived and experienced, participated, shared and democratized essences (PALLARÈS-PIQUER; MUÑOZ-ESCALADA, 2017).

In this sense, Freire tried to turn the student into an active subject who must observe social reality, understand the role played by the different agents, and intervene in the relationships established between them (FREIRE, 2018). No form of knowledge has more legitimacy than another because of the position of power of the one who wields it, but because of the validity of that construction and its capacity to exercise as liberating Education (KOHAN, 2019). Thus, the student body, as citizens, possesses a political value with the capacity for change through revolutionary praxis or reflexive action (IGELMO, 2013). Through the practice of politics, citizens strengthen their community status, which in turn strengthens democracy. And it is through a solid citizenship Education, truly democratic, that they can actively and consciously participate in the political life of states and in the democratic decision-making process (SCOTTON, 2019). The government of all must be exercised by all.

Likewise, contemporary Western Education cannot abandon its dimension of training for work. The capacity for progress is determined, in part, by the productive capacity of workers. Consequently, Education must take these aspects into account. In any case, a critical attitude forces us to try to avoid those aspects present in the current labor context that go against democratic values. The strengthening of the public Education system is a necessary condition for adequate individual and social development. And this is above and beyond training for the labor market. As school is not a market, it is necessary for the school to remain outside the interests of the economic market, because its times and spaces are different. The logic of the school is not the logic of capital and performance, efficiency, and profitability; the logic of the school is the logic of study, discussion, participation and socialization, because human relations are valuable in themselves (GÓMEZ RAMOS, 2020).

It is a fundamental element for the definition and dynamics of development models, as well as for the establishment of levels of equity and social justice, since it ensures a balanced coexistence and avoids the creation of unfavorable distributive trends (MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ; CASARES-ÁVILA; CÁCERES-

MUÑOZ, 2021). Therefore, society must determine the labor context it wants to build, and the school must respond to this conceptual framework. This requires a social pact that includes all citizens in order to establish new labour relations. The deterioration of political Education in schools is, in part, the abandonment of neoliberalism in the affairs of the State. A conscious and directed abandonment that is very beneficial in economic terms, but that disintegrates the community and democratic conscience. The crisis of neoliberalism is a triple crisis that drags the neoliberal school to the dehumanization of capitalism: it does not respond to the triple crisis of society, diversity and democratization. It does not respond because neoliberalism is incapable of responding to this crisis due to its inability to generate a new social contract that puts human beings before capital (AVIS, 2021).

Overcoming the crisis of neoliberalism (and of cultural identity) means empowering citizens to assume an active role in the community. The present alternative shows us a narrative stagnation that fosters the emergence of political populisms, which seek to normalize authoritarian discourses in a context of uncertainty. Therefore, the school has the task of transmitting a democratic political culture that does not try to impose specific cultural characteristics, or specific methodologies, but aspires to the independence of the student body so that it can establish itself as an individual political subject. To this end, it must train them in the tools of participation that allow them to establish meaningful discourses without reaching the most harmful effects of the confrontation of ideas. Education is participation, based on equal opportunities, dialogic and democratic, which fosters social involvement, and relationships among the subjects (SIMÓN *et al.*, 2019; TELLADO, 2012). So it is an essential requirement for the school to encourage the participation and autonomy of students in order to provide them with critical thinking and the necessary tools to face social changes in the construction of a collective identity. But also a critical and participatory one, an identity of transformation and resistance in the face of injustice (IGLESIAS *et al.*, 2020).

The crisis of neoliberalism is an opportunity for educational change. Education is not market; true Education happens to be dialogical, which is why it is essentially opposed to the ideology of neoliberalism. Truly dialogical Education is not based on hierarchy, hegemony or market power, but on the plurality and richness of knowledge; a human knowledge, built in participation, from shared experiences. The human being develops in community, and the educational relationship is the result of human thought, which cannot be done if it is not from one with others, from others among others (ZORROZA, 2015).

The contemporary school is in crisis because society and models are in crisis. The drift of social events shows the need to build a solid and participatory educational system, which clearly establishes the role of democratic citizenship, and responds to a formation according to a socio-political model of participation and social justice.

Neoliberalismo e crise da educação ocidental. Causas, consequências e oportunidades para a mudança

Resumo

A crise do neoliberalismo é a crise do Ocidente, incapaz de reorientar o seu curso e ameaçada por contradições internas e externas. A emergência do pós-modernismo gerou um novo ethos acrítico que relativiza os direitos e liberdades ocidentais. A invasão da lógica mercantil capitalista na escola, sob o paradigma neoliberal, deslocou qualquer formação política da escola, contribuindo para a relatividade cultural contemporânea. No presente trabalho iremos rever o curso do neoliberalismo desde as suas origens até aos nossos dias, e analisaremos o seu impacto na escola ocidental. Esta viagem é levada a cabo a partir de uma abordagem crítica. São detetadas duas consequências principais: a substituição do conhecimento por competências laborais, e a promoção de uma homogeneidade que beneficia a competitividade, mas deteriora a cultura democrática. Concluimos com a exigência de que as escolas abandonem as narrativas relativas e abracem os valores democráticos para melhorar a coexistência e a participação política.

Palavras-chave: Liberalismo. Neoliberalismo. Crise. Pós-modernidade. Educação.

Neoliberalismo y crisis de la educación occidental. Causas, consecuencias y oportunidades para el cambio

Resumen

La crisis del neoliberalismo es la crisis de Occidente, incapaz de reorientar su curso y amenazada por contradicciones internas y externas. La emergencia del posmodernismo generó un nuevo ethos acrítico que relativiza los derechos y libertades occidentales. La invasión de la lógica mercantil capitalista en la escuela, bajo el paradigma neoliberal, ha desplazado cualquier formación política de la escuela, contribuyendo para la relatividad cultural contemporánea. En el presente trabajo revisaremos el curso del neoliberalismo desde sus orígenes hasta nuestros días, y analizaremos su impacto en la escuela occidental. Este viaje se realiza desde un enfoque crítico. Se detectan dos consecuencias principales: la sustitución del conocimiento por competencias laborales y la promoción de una homogeneidad que beneficia a la competitividad, pero deteriora la cultura democrática. Concluimos con la exigencia de que las escuelas abandonen las narrativas relativas y abracen los valores democráticos para mejorar la coexistencia y la participación política.

Palabras clave: Liberalismo. Neoliberalismo. Crisis. Postmodernidad. Educación.

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