

The End of Democracy and the Modes of Resistance in Education

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Abstract Our scope is to show how democracy has been trivialized as a concept and, more worryingly, as a mystified practice of consented servitude, which supposedly would bring to its very end. In fact, for the emblematic occidental societies, democracy has, at the best, been reduced to a consumerist way of life, under the capitalist liberal order, and the façade of a 'spectacularized' electoral process. Overall, the word 'democracy' is currently used to mask different forms of authoritarianism, from which nor even western societies escape. In such context, as to the promises of democracy for schools' systems, we see nothing but a bureaucratic centralization, allowing no more than an instrumental autonomy of power of execution through which the players only enjoy a 'voluntary servitude' to the neoliberal naturalized ideology of efficiency, competitiveness and pseudo meritocracy. We thus conclude by suggesting possibilities of resistance and the empowerment of the subject.

Keywords Democracy, Voluntary Servitude, Resistance, Education, Struggles for Recognition

1. Introduction

In a recent chronicle, José Gil (2014), a very wary of our times Portuguese philosopher, exposes how democracy has been trivialized as a concept and, more worryingly, as a practice, which means that it has come to an "end". Regarding the emblematic occidental democracies, at the best, democracy has been reduced to a "spectacularized" electoral process, within which problems and arguments are replaced by the performative mediatic exercise of politicians. Overall, the word "democracy" is currently used to mask different forms of authoritarianism, from which nor even western societies escape from. "Democracy is over!"

If it is so, how right was Fukuyama (1992), when he

predicted the "End of History" and the coming of the last man corresponding to the triumph of western liberal democracy and liberal economic capitalism? Regarding the "End of History", as such, the quoted author understood it as the achievement of mankind's end point of ideological evolution with the universalization of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. Following a mild form of Hegel's idealism, which admits the influence of material circumstances, Fukuyama attributes to the evolution of conscientiousness the main role in the supposedly teleological process. Besides, the author recognizes two forces acting as main historical drives: the logic of modern science and the struggle for recognition. But, one should be aware that the former was understood as driving men to fulfil an ever-expanding horizon of desires through a rational economic process, which is totally congruent with the latter being taken under the liberal scope that Foucault (1997) analysed as the principle and the method of rationalizing the activity of governing human behaviour in the framework of, and by means of, state institutions, obeying the internal rule of maximum economy. Hence, even fight for recognition -the very motor of History according to Fukuyama- is putted under the scope of performativity, once democracy itself is conceived within the liberal understanding of society and its relation with State and its ruling form of administration, which in fact covers the nature of power relations rooted in the whole network of the social, more precisely, a set of microphysical networks of disciplinary power across intersecting domains compelling individuals to internalize their own surveillance and control (Foucault, 1979). This conclusion will be useful when we consider the two aspects it entails: a self-inflicted process and a domination process.

Putting for the moment aside the so-called "muscle democracies", which is no more than a euphemistic expression of western complacency regarding certain forms of authoritarianism, if democracy has come to an end, the question now is to clarify how this came to affect western societies. At this point, "Discourse on voluntary

servitude” (La Boétie, 1975: 46) still could be quoted to explain the process, although one must change the tyrant and the conveyer of the self-inflicted tyranny he was describing:

Poor, wretched, and stupid peoples, nations determined on your own misfortune and blind to your own good! [...] He who thus domineers over you has only two eyes, only two hands, only one body, no more than is possessed by the least man among the infinite numbers dwelling in your cities; he has indeed nothing more than the power that you confer upon him to destroy you. Where has he acquired enough eyes to spy upon you, if you do not provide them yourselves? How can he have so many arms to beat you with, if he does not borrow them from you? The feet that trample down your cities, where does he get them if they are not your own? How does he have any power over you except through you? How would he dare assail you if he had no cooperation from you? What could he do to you if you yourselves did not connive with the thief who plunders you, if you were not accomplices of the murderer who kills you, if you were not traitors to yourselves?

Regarding western “impure” democracies, we can now recognize the use of a homologue strategy –although applying different instruments– that transform “democratic obedience” into “voluntary servitude”. As a matter of fact, one must realize that the basis of our democracies is no longer the conscious acceptance of a contract defining a regimen underpinned by certain rules; we have also been lead to love our magical and numbing tyrant. The only difference is that there is no longer an individual tyrant – such phase has pass and rendered ineffective after the middle XX century totalitarian experiences–, one can no longer rule by explicit tyranny. As Gil (2014: 33), so acutely, notes

There is no tyrant, nor a govern in particular, but several layers (political, economic, financial) that render the universal access to power indices, meaning this the very image of the democracy they have constructed, the ground of consistency and attraction where citizens have to inscribe themselves. The freedom, the equality and the universality in principle, of the people’s behaviour (that use and consume what globalized capitalism offer them), constitute the conveyer through which the ‘tyrant’ (‘democracy’) now captures the forces that undergo to love what makes them tyrants of themselves. What shall this be? The very illusion of omnipotence harnessed from the smallest crumb of power.

Such a condition also corresponds to a form of “voluntary servitude”. *Mutatis mutandis*, so does our freedom has been captured, with our own connivance, by globalized capitalism through the eager sip of power

crumbs, while underpinned by the compensation taken from the spectacular- mediatic consumeristic complex.

The “sip of power crumbs” expresses the “begging mentality” which is the form of participation allowed in the capitalist society. Such a system corresponds to: on one side, the debtor-creditor relationship Christian paradigm of western morals, that Nietzsche (2006) presented in *The Genealogy of Morals*, as serving to control individuals Will of Power through a Bad Conscience of ascetic self-denial; and, on another side, to Calvinist’s subject ascetic formation of hard-working ethics, that Weber exposed as the form of self-denial “contingent upon the demands of capitalist progress to provide a well-oiled machinery through compliant and long-suffering workers who conscientiously prove their ‘grace’ by making profits for paternalistic bosses” (Ball, 2006: 66). Thus, in the context of such a paternalistic framework, what should we give to these “children” but a big playground, totally attuned with capitalism goals of course? And what better playground than the one of consumption, lived as a (profitable) valve for self-denial?

As Aldous Huxley (1958-2000) has noticed in “Brave new world revisited”, domination was already being installed at his time not by force but through the enslavement of desires. Brunne (2005) prefers to propose the concept of consu/mption/bmition -which became the new form of connivance in one’s own “voluntary servitude”. These two approaches resonate with Marcuse’s (1991) analysis of “repressive desublimation”: by offering instantaneous, rather than mediated gratifications, capitalism hinders sublimation while installing consumption desires and divertissement as the mainstreaming way of gratification. The which, once again, take us back to a process of a self-inflicted acceptance of some form of domination, or an internalized self-domination, not to be confused with some kind of ethical self-guidance. Nowadays this issue goes deeper. According to Ball (2006: 66), “the calvinist underpinnings of Weber’s work ethic have evolved into an increasingly hegemonic force in neo-liberal ideology that ‘equates moral responsibility with rational action’ and thereby configures ‘morality’ entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences.”

However, such a strain on the “dayside” could be easily compensated by opening a childish valve on the “nightside”: more and more consu/mption/bmition made of never-ending forms of divertissement that are made available for adults. Besides, it is not just the case of some punctual divertissement puffs, but the settlement of the very society of spectacle (Debord, 1995): “Now you work hard, then you can play, while consuming”. Spectacle and consumption has become the same thing, because consuming has been made a spectacle and spectacle is always an act of consumption.

Truth is that also outside the limits of the economic field, neoliberal orientation confronts us with a new performative

rationality that aims to subsume, in its sphere of interpretation/action, the political, social and cultural realms. Hence it has been gradually asserting itself as an ideology of authoritarian nature that many have denounced (Giroux, 2004; Steger, 2005; Klein, 2007), despite the apparent kindness of the "free market" and the benefits propelled by the imperative of innovation it raises. "Equating capitalism with democracy" seems tempting, but the "voluntary servitude", that nowadays does nothing but to proliferate, comes to erode the intrinsic meaning of democracy, making it unnecessary in many circumstances. As Patomäki (2009: 440) explains:

the process of introducing, strengthening or simulating competitive markets undermines democracy in a number of ways. Existing property right regimes, especially when based on the conception of absolute and exclusive rights, disenfranchise the have-nots. Simulation of markets and corporate governance within public organisations and systems of education tend to displace democratic principles of participation and representation. More generally, neoliberalisation reduces the scope of democracy: the domains of life and social relations under democratic control. It also affects the quality of liberal institutions by allowing money and commercial media an increasingly important role in determining the outcome of elections.

Indeed, by narrowing social rights, which formed the backbone of the welfare state, the neo-liberal ideology came to envisage itself as compelled to step up control procedures on individuals in public and private organizations, with the view to ensure productivity levels compatible with free competition markets. In this sense, Stephen Gill uses the Foucauldian metaphor of "global panopticon", to refer to the growing threat to individuals via the amplification of surveillance means. As the author (1995: 2) puts it:

The introduction of information technology in general, and surveillance capabilities in particular, in the context of the growing influence of neo-liberal discourses, is often introduced by, and may favour internationally-mobile fractions of capital –especially corporate capital and financial services firms. The tendency of these fractions of capital is to both deepen their activity within civil society and the economy, and to internationalise as they seek to maximise profits and offset risks. The use of surveillance and sorting techniques for maximising knowledge about, and influence over workers, savers and consumers appears to be growing.

In fact, the increase provided by new technologies amplifies its paradoxical effects and makes crucial the democratic control over such means, under penalty of being withheld the right to privacy, as have been social

rights, so laboriously conquered and granted within social-democracies implemented after the war.

Truth is that, by effect of the global recession in the last quarter of the last century, business practice of post-industrialism has relocated part of production to peripheral countries, reducing labour costs, especially those who came from social benefits associated with labour activity. Trying to conquer new markets and reduce production costs, through a model of mergers and acquisitions, big capital, while looking for tackling downturn and conquering multiply earnings, has changed the central focus of its industrial activities to the speculative and financial sector, thus giving birth to what can be referred as "casino capitalism" (Hans-Werner, 2010).

The financial crisis resulting from lack of regulatory activity gives credit to criticism about neoliberal solutions. As pointed by Sanf elix, "the capital-labour pact that allowed the development of welfare societies seems broken" (2013: 292). In this sense, neoliberal markets appear to cultivate the logic of apartheid, and the appeals to philanthropy are particularly significant in our societies, leaving off notions of justice and equity regarding the distribution of resources. Thus, as Sanf elix highlights (2013: 291), "the liberal democracy of the countries in crisis is increasingly acquiring a delegative tinge."

As is well known, the financial crisis has increased the rates of poverty and exclusion in our developed societies, restraining freedom of choice for millions of individuals. "Transitions discourses" (Escobar, 2015) began to emerge and, even not being consensual, they highlight the damaging effects of neoliberal order in our sense of democracy and its materiality, thus requesting substantial transformations. In less extreme scenarios –than those proposed by "transitions discourses" –, authors must be alert to the risks that neoliberal hegemony entails for democracy, as does Patom aki (2009: 440), who wonders if "After neoliberalism: global Keynesianism?" Such criticism comes to meet many others (as the ones made by: Giroux, 2004; Steger, 2005; and Klein, 2007), which did not fail to highlight the ideological authoritarianism of the neoliberal onslaught, very much bound to simulate neutrality in many of its options for the public domain.

2. Power, Education and Forms of Resistance

Shifting fields, but not the subject, one may ask what we should expect from the field of education under the same regimen of domination. As a matter of fact, the promises of democracy for schools have produced nothing but a bureaucratic centralization, allowing no more than an instrumental autonomy of power of execution through which the players enjoy (?) power of voluntary servitude to the neoliberal naturalized ideology of efficiency,

competitiveness and meritocracy (Carvalho, 2014). But what kind of evidence do we have from the stated process, namely, regarding the Portuguese national school system? Well, we can now watch a blatant bureaucratic centralization, corresponding to: a) an instrumental autonomy of execution and b) a voluntary servitude to performativity and competitiveness without regard to the dense complexity of a successful education.

In fact, in this scenario that makes imperative the subordination of the political dimension to the very laws of the market, the neoliberal model promotes a new training schedule for schools that could render measurable and comparable their productivity results, in order to justify the investments made in the education sector. In this sense, performativity, while being required as instrumental and teleological purpose for education, comes to impose a consistent implementation of quality management models which operate in the validation of school benchmarking. That is, the standardization of the measurement processes of teaching quality is sustained in the repertoire of pre-defined objectives, to which the positioning and the decision making of the subject/learning agent is erased, even when are invoked methods centered on an active pedagogy. Hence, what we really have is a return to taylorism (Biesta, 2015), which makes the teacher the key performer for enabling the students with the mastery of supposedly desirable skills; but really a performer of extraneous deliberations or, in a more autonomous scenario, a conceptor of projects that clearly should be governed by principles of performativity, according to a logic that is inherent to the hegemonic instrumental rationality.

Such return to taylorism, where new technologies are instrumentalized, in their made apparent asepsis, the process of "learnification", alluded by Biesta (2015), renders reductionist the educational project, by not complying with the ideals of progressive education and so the recentering in the learning process only comes to apparently promote a project of pedagogical "emancipation", misadjusting policies to the practices effectively implemented and ideated in function of an "accounting rationality" (Lima, 1997). That is why, for undertaking a pedagogical renewal process, in higher education but also in other educational levels, "it is urgent to rescue the spirit from the machine", if we want to critically hanker the fulfilling of the Bologna promises, largely biased by this return to a new taylorism supposedly more fitted to discern –in the complexity of the educational act– the operating principles that, cumulatively, must articulate the hierarchical organization of the learning tasks.

Without questioning the obvious need to clarify the goals of teaching and learning, what seems to elicit a diffuse or assumed unrest in the classroom is the imposition of criteria that are extrinsic to the pedagogical dynamics and, for the same reason, figure as unrelated to determination of the teaching-learning actors, while

constrained by forms of external control, which become increasingly extensive, as has been reported locally and internationally (Au, 2011)¹.

As so judiciously says Stoller (2015, 325), referring to the neo-taylorism that pervades the teaching management models: "Taylor's system also required an elaborate and broad-reaching system of management and accountability, because it dissolved trust at all levels". In this sense, the author warns for the operational reinforcement of the fact that quality management models developed over the last three decades in the U.S.A., and expanded to Europe, under the assumptions already explained, consecrate prioritarily policies of economic character. Policies that denote a democratic deficit, as the forms of control, which have multiplied in relation to the activity of teachers, imply a backlash against the rights granted to educators' professionalization, which are consequently remitted to an executive function of an extrinsic mandate, aside the contextualized assessment they can do of the particular conditions of teaching and learning.

By assuming, in a constructivist perspective, that education does not simple change what students know, but it changes what they want to know, it thus becomes clear that the strengthening of control models to assess teaching performativity narrows the space allowed for freedom of reflection, expectedly developed by educational agents and the community of "learners". Hence, such lack of freedom must be taken as ideologically conditioned and conditioning, when the new reflexivity formats around the teaching and quality management models, aimed at its operability, set a teleological approach that makes the determination activity extrinsic to the educational agents' autonomy. That is why, setting the student as a service customer rather than as a subject in evolution, within a formation course, distorts what most essentially configures the educational act while taking into account the utopian nature that vertically constitutes it.

Like it or not, such crisis of meaning of contemporary pedagogy is not limited to disciplinary spraying – methodological and thematic–, it extends to the question of educational teleology, hostage of a reductionist and metric logic that kidnaps the very epistemic substantivity that defined educational knowledge. It is a fact that, thanks to the business philosophy arising from the new forms of

¹ According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2012), in descending order, schools have around or less than 30% in global decision making in the following countries: France, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Portugal, United States, Japan, Canada, Turkey, Mexico, Norway, Luxembourg and Greece. From Portugal downwards the values are close or less than 20% and Greece gets lower than 10%. Globally, schools have their autonomy very much limited to the organization of instruction and around or less than 30% in decision making regarding: personnel management, planning and structures and resource management. Besides, one can suspect that this so-called autonomy is narrowed to execution, which is not contradictory with "consented servitude" model we have identified, once the role of unipersonal leadership, of strong and authoritarian leadership has been spreading with the "managerialistic" neoliberal model applied in education.

capitalism, education policies develop as normativity a greater flexibility and adaptability to individual pathways, from which the crediting system of skills is an example. But the appeal to these individualized pathways must be understood in the context of an increasingly competitive design of a “banking” educational model, which induces a concentration in individual performativity, more than social solidarity.

And if, in this apparent horizontality and openness of the Knowledge Society, justice and democracy should be included as articulating axes, it is a fact that the pragmatic polarized perspectives for individual meaning and effectiveness make rhyme the “connected society” with the rise of an exclusionary narcissism prone to accept new forms of authoritarianism, which promise an individual redemption. Indeed, if the concept of cyberdemocracy denotes new capabilities of civic participation through digital media, there are risks inherent in the use of the concept itself. For as emphasizes Panayota Gounari (2009), the illusion of a participatory democracy perfect image and a new “public sphere” is created in a highly commercialized sphere as is the Web. To this extent, the author comes to figure out that the emergence of cyberspace as an alternative public sphere could mean growing “depoliticization” perpetrated by the neoliberal economic rationality that sets the digital space, while conditioning its use.

Do we accept it or not, the fact is that new technologies have the operational capability of “pre-formating” the modalities of access to information, making falsely spontaneous the vision of the social world. Hence, if these modalities can be a potential space for a collective expression, and operationalize a hermeneutic of democratic significance, they can also cannibalize collective projects, reinforcing the multiple devices and propellers of voluntary servitude.

3. Resisting Capitalist Totalitarianism of “Voluntary Servitude”

The question here is what we should do to face the current subtle strategies of domination. In line of Max Weber’s definition of power, Emerson (1962: 32) has proposed the following: “The power of actor A over actor B is the amount of resistance on the part of B which can be potentially overcome by A”. Now, one must conclude that conversely the more resistance B can present to A the less power A can really exercise over B. Thus, the point now is to define the lines of resistance to pursue, particularly in the field of education, although we should not lose the global puzzle perspective. Once power entails more than force and it is always relational, in such a way that no one is ever completely left without any power at all, one should also consider the possibilities of resistance by creating zones of uncertainty regarding compliance to power (Carvalho,

2014). This could mean negotiation, complaint, denouncement, rejection and also subversion, namely the subversion of the current strategies of masked domination².

Generally speaking, in many schools, such domination appears nowadays disguised under the arguments of performativity. Hence, it is quite crucial to question the forms of performativity, as well as to advance theoretic and practical alternative approaches within our schools and universities. In this context, resistance could be, for instance, a professor refusing to be assessed through a bureaucratic process, while questioning the validity of the process to really assess what being a good teacher or a good researcher is – namely if it is to be defined by applying the current paper indexing metrology. There is although another issue.

The theory of power recognizes that as well as absolute power doesn’t exist neither absolute lack of power is a real condition, in fact power is situational and roles can be shifted accordingly to different situations, meaning this that the actors could, in principle, exchange places or positions in different moments (Carvalho, 2014). Such an expectation may be true in general, however, in our point of view, nowadays, the “layered power complex”, above referred, has been protected by a castes system build in order to immunize the upper castes to be obliged to ever found themselves in a one down position. How many times do the powerful escape justice, not only for scandalous crimes but also for a simple traffic fine? What kind of power is right now assigned to Schools’ Directors and what kind of discretionary deliberations and actions can they carry out?

One must also bear in mind that too many times the above mentioned upper castes are difficult to identify or to personalize, although they don’t lack organization. Such castes, as networks of power not covered by any treaty, namely the G20 (Moreira, 2013), keep on masking their identities while setting the rules of the game of power under the framework of globalized capitalism. For facing such humbug, debunking complaint, contestation and opposition are viable forms of resistance. However, for really counter such a power, we need to advance an alternative capable to overcome the current consumerist capitalism framework.

To accept Fukuyama’s thesis of the “End of History”, one should answer positively to the following questions: can we identify any fundamental contradictions in human

² A complementary line of resistance could be developed by: questioning capitalist principles, namely: Why does capitalism (the apologetic of competition) has currently no competition? Although we have enough reason to question capitalism itself: the widening of wealth gaps between classes and regions, the extensive phenomenon of disguise of slavery, ecological unsustainability and financial manipulations, ending up in harsh global crisis. We can also put under questioning the principles of: infinite growth, when we know resources are limited; infinite enrichment, which leads to perversities like companies buying entire countries; and unregulated competitiveness, which allows masked slavery, propitiates corruption, tax evasion to “financial paradises” and savage attacks to vulnerable economies.

life that cannot be resolved in the context of modern liberalism that would be resolvable by an alternative political-economic structure? Are there any other ideological competitors left? Are there contradictions in liberal society beyond that of a class that are not resolvable?

Aside fascism and communism, which have been swept out as concrete answers to our questions, apparently we cannot foresee any alternative to democracy in the political and economic realms. But to what kind of “democracy” are we referring to, the liberal one? If so, the above adduced objections are strong enough to disavow the acceptance of the “End of History”, if ever there will be one end of History where all essential contradictions will be resolved, only remaining everyday minor quarrels.

Much more realistic is the hypothesis of the triumph of an ideology or supremacy carried out by the current superpower that is trying to ensure its supremacy gathering the three essential powers, the military, the economic and the financial, although the latter being the most determinant in times of (relative) peace.

It is the offspring of such mislead the doctrine of the End of History, formulated by Fukuyama, meaning that, after the closure of the conflict between NATO and the URSS, the world shall be dominated by the American model, i.e., the market under the American format, thus forgetting that democracy is an equivocal concept, that covers a democracy of the majority as much as a democracy of governance in the interest of the majority in the sovietic semantics, or a democracy of the higher interests (Moreira, 2013: 18).

Although the latter has not being able to overcome exclusion of different sorts and the increase of misery, which means that we are more likely to watch the triumph of a democracy of the big interests, apparently supporting human, civil and politic rights, but in fact fiercely eroding the economic, social and cultural ones, thus pursuing by all means the destruction of the so called Welfare State that weights the national budgets. No wonder that the world crisis has brought about the rebirth of the neo-liberal movement, which is openly against a democracy that added to the civic and politic rights the economic, social and cultural rights, actively, seeking to discard the latter ones.

An equivalent to throw hope through the window, while taking democracy to replace the Rights Declarations by the Income Declarations” (Moreira, 2013: 20).

The current transformation of “democratic obedience” into “voluntary servitude” and the present perversions of globalized capitalism –namely the widening of wealth gaps between classes and regions, disguised slavery, ecological unsustainability, financial manipulations and so on– give us enough reasons to question liberal *status quo* and strive for other options. To envisage liberal order as the “End of History –even if we agree with the principles of universal

freedom and equanimity– is no more than a trap to block the fight for recognition by numbing some of the interested counterparts. While the revival of fundamentalisms attests the broad unhappiness generated by the impersonality and spiritual vacuity of liberal consumerist societies as well as the dissatisfaction with disguised “voluntary servitude”, we know that fundamentalisms are not the answer to our problems. They represent a kind of escape by retrogression. In order to trigger a breakthrough for contemporary liberal capitalist contradictions we must strive for alternatives that haven’t perhaps been invented or are not being considered by those who are currently in the one up position.

4. Education and the Struggles for Recognition

Overcoming capitalist totalitarianism of “voluntary servitude” -which has not been taken without any fight, one must say– is our contemporary most crucial work, once it could lead to a paradigmatic change. A way of resistance could be the simple boycott of consumerism, i.e., to break the chain of consumption/bmition -or the pursuing of happiness through consumption-, which means to break the chain of “voluntary servitude” via the enslavement of desires. A self-thwarted condition we should disavow. And, regarding liberal capitalism itself, for now we want to suggest a thoroughly deconstruction of several capitalist principles, which work together as a system: the principle of infinite growth; the principle of infinite enrichment and, among others, the principle of unregulated competitiveness. In order to move towards such goal requires a deepening of a core issue.

Recently, the struggles for recognition of individuals’ rights have been under reflection, this time not so much in a legal focus, but rather by the encompassing social, political, and philosophical perspectives (Honneth, 1995). Such approaches are due to the need of overcoming the traditional conception of citizenship, understood as a characteristic attributed to a subject linked to specific territories, which has been associated in the last decade with the necessity of defending once more the social, cultural and economic rights. These have fall into weakness and even under questioning, because of the economic recession that surrounds us, as well as due to the functioning of contemporary democracies that seem not to be interested in their revitalization, but rather are masking their reality by imposing an understanding of their supposed harmful nature for competitiveness and flexibility, whose counterparts in the field of education would be performativity and long life learning. Again the logic of performativity appears serving the economic and political fields in the liberal ideological discourse.

However, according to the above quoted author, social struggles are above all a consequence of individuals’ quest for recognition that, at the same time, come to collectively

defend their dignity. Hence, the background texture of these struggles is in fact of moral nature –expressing the moral grammar of social conflicts– that at a first glance are seen as mechanisms and instruments serving the search for material collective interests.

Without being an invitation to social unrest or mobilisation of the masses against certain states of affair, the honnethian explanation of social struggles, regarding legal recognition, is a good starting point to understand the struggles for the defense of citizenship rights that today are multiplying worldwide, especially in contexts where the effects of the post-2008 recession are most felt, and these struggles are led, in no small measure, by movements and social actors whose self-understanding is sharply achieved in moral and ethical terms (Barbosa and García, 2016: 286).

In such context, education can and must come into play, although remaining the issues of knowing how to frame and what to do in education in order to put the subject in a dynamic of resistance. Such dynamic, would give a help to overcome the state of insecurity that social rights³ have suffered under the current capitalist order. Within the scheme of reflection we have carried out so far, by exposing how the subject has been surpassed by the economic dynamics that also subdues political management to the point of turning it into its sham and accomplice, the answer can only come from a conception and pedagogical practice able to endow an empowerment of the subject. Such empowerment must go beyond the cognitive competences and the postmodern procedures installed by the educational policies of the European Higher Education Area within the so-called Bologna process. This means to develop an individual, collective, cognitive, political and social -in short axiological-empowerment able to propitiate the subject an intelligible and sustainable deconstruction of the global world in terms of thought and human action. Such a deconstruction would bring forth the understanding that growth and enrichment cannot be taken as infinite, once material and human resources are indeed limited. Besides, it would also stress the need to put under criticism the current grounding of consumption and productivity supported by the ideological advances of the cognitive sciences.

5. Final Remarks

Castoriadis (1997) has admonished us that real democracy would never come to existence without a democratic education, thus requiring that the school assume a compromise with democracy itself. Such compromise, ought to be developed while we face the very

implosion of the current unidimensional way of thinking, that however still denies any alternative path to neo-liberal order imposed by the globalized logic of commodification.

If, in some way, post-modernity has been ideologically supporting the modernization of capitalism, adapting to the anthropophagic rules of competition and accumulation, it becomes evident that such dynamic exposes a fracture of rationality against which current pragmatism reacts by requesting from School an increasingly technical specialization of the new generations. The truth, however, is that such conforming educational function, following the logic of the market economy and the neoliberal development models, opposes to education's emancipatory vocation oriented to critical reflection on society and the values that conform it.

That is why, at the dawn of the new modernity, which is consumed before our eyes, school education for citizenship has to face challenges that seem paradoxical. No doubt that the new modernity, being designed by the emergence of the Knowledge Society, entails ambiguous requirements for school and teacher's roles. If the "project-city", interpreted under the principles of justice and democracy, that appear as motives and hinges for school policies of the post-war decades, are being passed over due to pragmatic perspectives polarized by the individual meaning and effectiveness, it is clear that the "connected society" can rhyme with the rise of an exclusionary individualism that distorts any attempt of community work and precludes any possibility of intercultural dialogue understood as a community project. If the pressures of economic competitiveness on the struggle for markets raise a reactivation of the vocational school model, enacting the concerns with school productivity, it also becomes crucially important that such productivity does not falls under a narrowing process, nor slips into the masking of the central role that School has to meet regarding the moral education of the young generations along with their preparation for the exercise of an active citizenship (Moura, 2013). Although the institutional school was an architectural pillar of the European modern mentality, the need for its transmutation, before the paradoxical demands of the "new" modernity, has now become strikingly evident.

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³ Added by the so-called Welfare State to political rights, along with open forms of governance and citizenship

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