

GESTÃO DEMOCRÁTICA E CRISE ESTRUTURAL DO CAPITAL: ALGUNS APONTAMENTOS

GESTIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA Y LA CRISIS ESTRUCTURAL DEL CAPITAL: ALGUNAS NOTAS

DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURAL CRISIS OF CAPITAL: SOME POINTS

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RESUMO: O artigo objetiva debater o princípio da gestão democrática em relação à crise estrutural do capital, que, segundo Mészáros, tem início na década de 1970. Opta-se por uma pesquisa teórica, documental e bibliográfica. Sob a orientação desses pressupostos, observa-se que os desdobramentos dessa crise assolam todos os complexos sociais. Os sistemas educacionais, sobretudo os localizados nos países que orbitam na periferia do grande capital, como o Brasil, passam a ser monitorados pelos organismos internacionais. Essas agências têm como finalidade desresponsabilizar o Estado de suas atribuições de execução e financiamento educacional. Para isso, montam requintados processos de monitoramento. A gestão democrática para a educação imersa nesse cenário apresenta-se como um princípio que deve corroborar com as políticas de diminuição das funções estatais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação. Gestão. Crise estrutural do capital.

RESUMEN: El artículo tiene como objetivo el debate del principio de gestión democrática en relación con la crisis estructural del capital, que, según Mészáros, comienza en la década de 1970. La opción es por una investigación teórica, documental y bibliográfica. Bajo la guía de estos supuestos, se observa que las consecuencias de esta crisis afectan a todos los complejos sociales. Los sistemas educativos, especialmente aquellos ubicados en países que orbitan en la periferia del gran capital, como Brasil, ahora son monitoreados por organizaciones internacionales. Estas agencias tienen el propósito de hacer que el Estado no sea responsable de sus atribuciones de ejecución educativa y financieras. Para esto, establecieron especiales procesos de monitoreo. La gestión democrática para la educación inmersa en este escenario se presenta como un principio que debe corroborar con las políticas para reducir las funciones estatales.

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PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación. Gestión. Crisis estructural del capital.*

ABSTRACT: *The article, as a theoretical, documentary and bibliographic research, aims to debate the principle of democratic management in relation to the structural crisis of capital, which, according to Mészáros, begins in the 1970s. Under the guidance of these assumptions, it is observed that the consequences of this crisis affect all social complexes. Educational systems, especially those located in countries that orbit the periphery of big capital, such as Brazil, are now monitored by international organizations. These agencies have the purpose of making the State not responsible for its educational execution and financing attributions. For this, they set up exquisite monitoring processes. Democratic management for education immersed in this scenario presents itself as a principle that must corroborate with the policies to reduce state functions.*

KEYWORDS: *Education. Management. Structural crisis of capital.*

Introduction

The exhibition focuses on democratic management and its relationship with the structural crisis of capital. The research is located under the coordinates of materialist ontology, inaugurated by Marx and recovered by Lukács, who conceives the social being as a complex of complexes, which has its founding moment in work.

The work for Marx is the time when men and women through teleological acts, transform nature while modifying human nature itself. Work is the founding moment of the social being and it is through it that humanity moves away from natural barriers. Work as a mediating activity between the human subject and nature, when creating the social being, becomes a model for other social complexes. The needs posed by work gradually give rise to new social needs. The emergence of new social complexes, such as education, politics, law, among others, feedback on work enriching it. Between these new social complexes and work, a certain degree of ontological dependence and relative autonomy is created, in which the predominance falls on the founding moment.

The method, in turn, represents an expression of the movement of the real, which starts from the innumerable determinations linked to the studied phenomenon, articulated with the process of social reproduction in its entirety.

In this sense, the social function of education, within the process of social reproduction, is to allow individuals to appropriate the knowledge, skills, values and behaviors that allow them to participate in the human race, that is, the appropriation of the historically accumulated human heritage.

Education as a social complex, therefore, could not fail to be permeated by the contradictions now posed by the current mode of production. In the specific case of democratic management, we have a constitutional principle under which education should be organized in Brazil; this principle, which the present research intends to analyze, based on a theoretical and bibliographic investigation, highlighting, above all, the role it plays in the current context of contemporary capitalism, and in addition to understanding the limits and possibilities of management within the public school.

With the objective defined, the article was divided into two articulated parts: in the first, there was a brief discussion about the structural crisis of capital and in the second, the emergence of democratic management and its trajectory in the field of Education was contextualized, seeking to demonstrate that the principle of democratic management reappeared at a time called by Mészáros (2011a) as a structural crisis of capital, and that it was linked to the country's restructuring policies, strongly articulated with the international demands that guide less financial participation by the State, from encouraging community participation, keeping policies and decision-making power centralized.

Structural crisis of capital: a brief understanding

There is no doubt that the world today is experiencing a crisis unprecedented in its history. There are several hypotheses about the origin and outcome of such a crisis. The present exhibition, in order to understand the current moment, prioritizes the research of Mészáros (2011a), whose analysis understands that today the world is experiencing a *structural crisis of capital*. For this author, the contemporary crisis presents a dangerous distinction from those seen in the past. This is not like the previous ones, cyclical; it is a structural crisis.x

According to Mészáros (2011b), the structural crisis has four main aspects: (1) its character is *universal*, and for this reason it is not restricted to the financial and commercial spheres, or to a particular branch of production; (2) its reach is global, insofar as it is not limited to a particular set of countries; (3) its *time scale is permanent*, that is, the crisis is intermittent and its reflexes are always present and; (4) this crisis unfolds in a creeping way, given the vast arsenal that is set in motion to lessen its effects.

The structural crisis of capital differs from the crisis of a cyclical essence, in that, in this new phase, there are no intervals between moments of expansion and recession, but it consists of moments marked by “*the appearance of increasingly frequent and continuous*

precipitations”⁴ (MÉSZÁROS, 2011a, p. 12). Another divergence between the cyclical and the structural crisis is that this class of crisis “[...] affects the totality of a social complex in all its relations with its constituent parts or subcomplexes, as well as with other complexes to which it is articulated”⁵ (MÉSZÁROS, 2011b, p. 796), while in times of cyclical crises only parts of a complex are affected.

The Hungarian philosopher, to demonstrate the distinctions between what we live today and the economic upheavals of the past, recalls that in Marx's time the confidence of the ruling class was so great, that it used the pages of the newspapers to talk to itself. Nowadays, this same class needs a “[...] propaganda organ for mass circulation, with the aim of general mystification”⁶ (MÉSZÁROS, 2011a, p. 19). Humanity's problems are told from the point of view of those who need to mask the real causes of the problems.

Can anyone think of a greater accusation for an allegedly insurmountable system of economic production and social reproduction than this: at the height of its productive power, is it producing a global food crisis and the suffering resulting from the countless millions of people around the world? This is the nature of the system that is now expected to be saved at all costs, including the current “division” of its astronomical cost (MÉSZÁROS, 2011a, p. 21, our highlights).⁷

There is a clear attempt to hide the crisis, either through the system that seeks to ignore the manifestations of the conflict, but also through its misrepresentation. When these conflicts appear undeniably, in such a way that their concealment and / or mystification is impossible, they are treated as mere effects or defects to be corrected, generally, by State intervention.

The structural crisis of the capital system as a whole is destined to worsen considerably, affecting not only the world of global finance, but reaching all areas of social, economic and cultural life, making explicit Mészáros (2011a, p. 17) who claims that it is not a massive financial crisis, but the possibility of self-destruction both of the social reproductive system and of humanity itself and, for example, he asks what would happen to our planet if the rest of the world adopted the same consumption pattern as the United States.

⁴ “eclosão de precipitações cada vez mais frequentes e contínuas”

⁵ “[...] afeta a totalidade de um complexo social em todas as suas relações com suas partes constituintes ou subcomplexos, como também a outros complexos aos quais é articulada”

⁶ “[...] órgão de propaganda de circulação em massa, com o objetivo de mistificação geral”

⁷ Alguém pode pensar numa *maior acusação* para um sistema de produção econômica e reprodução social pretensamente insuperável do que esta: *no auge de seu poder produtivo, está produzindo uma crise alimentar global* e o sofrimento decorrente dos incontáveis milhões de pessoas por todo o mundo? Essa é a natureza do sistema que se espera salvar agora a todo o custo, incluindo a atual “divisão” do seu custo astronômico (MÉSZÁROS, 2011a, p. 21, grifo nosso).

Another aspect of the structural crisis in capital is that it is not due to scarcity, but is the result of overproduction, that is, the supply of excess products without the corresponding increase in demand, a fact that generates a fall in the prices of goods causing the decrease in profit.

As part of the strategies to solve the problem of overproduction, capital in its commodity production system decreases the use value of things, which is characterized by a reduction in the useful life of goods, which largely corroborates the devastation of the environment: "[...] with voracious waste of the *limited resources* of our planet, which is further aggravated by pollution and *poisoning of the human environment*, resulting from the mass production of garbage and affluent"⁸ (MÉSZÁROS, 2011a, p. 73).

Human beings are, in turn, converted into “necessary labor power”, which, under the yoke of capital, become a “marketable commodity”, like all others.

As a consequence of the deepening of the structural crisis, we have the subjugation of use value to exchange value and the realization of a production more intensely focused on the self-reproduction of capital, and only in the background to meet human needs, thereby intensifying destructive consequences such as precarious work and the destruction of nature.

Unemployment, in turn, reaches a chronic character of structural unemployment, which is no longer limited to the reserve army. Also noteworthy is the erosion of contracted and regulated work, which has been replaced by the various forms of "cooperativism", "entrepreneurship", "voluntary work", "atypical work", which in turn, are moving towards structural precariousness of the workforce.

In this moment of structural crisis, marked by the destruction of the productive forces of the environment, as well as the human labor force, starting from precarious work and on the margins of the production process, capital seeks strategies to guarantee its reproductive cycle, implanting a huge restructuring process. Complexes such as education, for example, come to be seen as instruments capable of maximizing the productive process, both in terms of forming the worker useful to the new capitalist production process and in the process of manipulating consciences. In this process, the State starts to assume a central role with regard to its operationalization, strictly linked to neoliberalization and the mandatory weight of international organizations, such as the IMF and the World Bank, with emphasis on the commitment assumed from the World Education Conference for Everyone and their goals.

⁸ “[...] com desperdício voraz dos limitados recursos do nosso planeta, o que é posteriormente agravado pela poluição e pelo envenenamento do meio ambiente humano, decorrentes da produção em massa de lixo e afluentes”

The World Conference on Education for All, held in 1990, is a good illustration of the relationship between the reforms demanded by capital in structural crisis and the educational complex. The event took place in Jomtien, Thailand, and was sponsored by the World Bank. From that conference, the 155 participating countries and 120 non-governmental organizations signed and approved the World Declaration on Education for All: Plan of Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, whose main commitment was to universalize basic education.

Based on the Jomtien Conference, six goals for education were outlined: goal 1 - expansion of care and activities for children of preschool age; goal 2 - universal access to basic education; goal 3 - improvement of learning; goal 4 - reduction of adult illiteracy; goal 5 - expanding learning opportunities for adults and young people; goal 6 - the construction of knowledge, skills and values for a better life and sustainable development. The World Bank, in order to guarantee the fulfillment of the goals stated in the respective document, determines that all socio-economic agreements from then on will have as a prerequisite the fulfillment of the “required” reforms.

The World Declaration on Education for All becomes one of the main documents guiding Brazilian education policies in the 1990s. The document begins with an account of educational problems, bringing data such as the number of children who do not have access to primary education, of illiterate adults, that is, data on lack of schooling. In the sequence, it presents what is defined as a “dark picture of problems” related to the socioeconomic picture, in an attempt to relate them:

These problems hinder efforts to meet basic learning needs, while the lack of basic education for significant sections of the population prevents society from addressing these problems with vigor and determination (UNESCO, 1990, p. 1).⁹

It is noteworthy that for this declaration, the world is on the eve of a new century full of hopes and possibilities, categories that could be related to that which Mészáros (2011a) described as *trust*, which, according to the aforementioned author, has been the repeated word to cover up all other diagnoses about the crisis for the purpose of general mystification.

Another aspect that we highlight in the Action Plan presented is the constant recommendations to co-opt for education, new financing agents and assistants in the process of

⁹ Esses problemas atropelam os esforços enviados no sentido de satisfazer as necessidades básicas de aprendizagem, enquanto a falta de educação básica para significativas parcelas da população impede que a sociedade enfrente esses problemas com vigor e determinação (UNESCO, 1990, p. 1).

meeting basic learning needs. We have, for example, Article 7, which establishes the strengthening of alliances as one of the objectives, justifying this:

Education authorities at national, state and municipal levels have a primary obligation to provide basic education for all. However, they cannot be expected to meet all the human, financial and organizational requirements necessary for this task. New and growing articulations and alliances will be needed at all levels [...] (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5).¹⁰

Defense also present in article 9, which presents the argument: “In order for basic learning needs for all to be met through actions of a much wider scope, it will be essential to mobilize current and new financial and human, public, private or voluntary resources”¹¹ (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5). In another excerpt, it even appeals to “[...] governments, interested organizations and individuals, to add to this urgent enterprise”¹² (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6).

In line with the demands placed by the capital, the Brazilian government prepared the “Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus”, a document that “[...] defines objectives and establishes guidelines for the reform of the Brazilian public administration”¹³ (BRASIL, 1995, p. 6), justifying that:

One of the central aspects of this effort is the strengthening of the State so that its regulatory action is effective, within the framework of a market economy, as well as the basic services it provides and the social policies it needs to implement (BRASIL, 1995, p. 6).¹⁴

According to the referred Master Plan (1995, p. 11), the State would be incapable of “[...] efficiently meeting the overload of demands directed at it, especially in the social area. The reform of the State is not, therefore, an abstract theme: on the contrary, it is something demanded by citizenship”¹⁵, and thus conceives the reconstruction of the State, as a means by which it can recover its financial autonomy and its capacity to program public policies.

¹⁰ As autoridades responsáveis pela educação aos níveis nacional, estadual e municipal têm a obrigação prioritária de proporcionar educação básica para todos. Não se pode, todavia, esperar que elas supram a totalidade dos requisitos humanos, financeiros e organizacionais necessários a esta tarefa. Novas e crescentes articulações e alianças serão necessárias em todos os níveis [...] (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5).

¹¹ “Para que as necessidades básicas de aprendizagem para todos sejam satisfeitas mediante ações de alcance muito mais amplo, será essencial mobilizar atuais e novos recursos financeiros e humanos, públicos, privados ou voluntários”

¹² “[...] aos governos, às organizações interessadas e aos indivíduos, para que somem a este urgente empreendimento”

¹³ “[...] define objetivos e estabelece diretrizes para a reforma da administração pública brasileira”

¹⁴ Um dos aspectos centrais desse esforço é o fortalecimento do Estado para que sejam eficazes sua ação reguladora, no quadro de uma economia de mercado, bem como os serviços básicos que presta e as políticas de cunho social que precisa implementar (BRASIL, 1995, p. 6).

¹⁵ “[...] atender com eficiência a sobrecarga de demandas a ele dirigidas, sobretudo na área social. A reforma do Estado não é, assim, um tema abstrato: ao contrário é algo cobrado pela cidadania”

The proposed reform was aimed at reducing the functions of the State, from being an executor, or direct service provider, to a regulator and provider, with emphasis on Education and Health programs considered essential. Governance would be strengthened through the gradual adoption of a new model of administration, “[...] from a type of bureaucratic, rigid and inefficient public administration, aimed at itself and internal control, for a managerial, flexible public administration and efficient, focused on serving the citizen”¹⁶ (BRASIL, 1995, p. 13).

The Federal Constitution of 1988 also presents a correlation with the proposals for the respective reform of the State when it provides, for example, in its Art. 205 that “Education, the right of all and duty of the State, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and their qualification for work”¹⁷ (BRASIL/CF, 1998, p. 121).

The State Apparatus Reform (1995) deregulated the economy and opened up the market through privatization measures and decentralization of public policies, at the state and municipal levels. There is also a transfer of responsibility for the provision of social services, such as education and health, to municipalities, as well as a decrease in federal investments in these policies.

This perspective comes in response to the demands of the World Bank, which, from the 1980s, together with other multilateral financing agencies, started to “[...] play the role of agents in the management of international credit relations and in the definition of economic restructuring policies, through structural adjustment programs”¹⁸ (MENDES SEGUNDO, 2005, p. 47), even seeking to associate the logic of governance with structural reform under the premise that failure to carry out the reform will result in a strong political crisis, because according to the author (2005, p. 59):

The World Bank, as responsible for the resources offered to peripheral countries, will seek to maintain the order established by reducing public spending, deregulating markets, opening up the economy, privatizing state-owned companies and decreasing the social role that the State could have.

With the argument that the State is too big and slow to act, the assumption of the Reform of the State Apparatus was intended to increase efficiency and effectiveness mainly on the use

¹⁶ “[...] de um tipo de administração pública burocrática, rígida e ineficiente, voltada para si própria e para o controle interno, para uma administração pública gerencial, flexível e eficiente, voltada para o atendimento do cidadão”

¹⁷ “A educação direito de todos e dever do Estado, será promovida e incentivada com a colaboração da sociedade, visando ao pleno desenvolvimento da pessoa, seu preparo para o exercício da cidadania e sua qualificação para o trabalho”

¹⁸ “[...] desempenhar o papel de agentes no gerenciamento das relações de crédito internacional e na definição de políticas de reestruturação econômica, por meio de programas de ajuste estrutural”

of public resources, a presupposition also present in the Action Plan to Meet the Needs Basic Learning, (1990, p. 11), about which, in item 23, provides:

Promoting effective basic education does not mean offering at lower costs, but using all resources (human, organizational and financial) more efficiently to obtain the desired levels of access and school performance. The previous considerations regarding relevance, quality and equity are not alternatives to efficiency, but represent the specific conditions under which it must be obtained. In fact, in some programs, effectiveness will require an increase, not a reduction in resources. However, if existing resources can be used by a greater number of learners or if the same learning objectives can be achieved at a lower cost per student, then basic education will facilitate the achievement of access and performance goals for groups currently unassisted.¹⁹

The action plan elaborated from the Jomtien Conference, as well as the Reform of the State Apparatus, has a strong tendency to require private and non-state institutions to share the provision of public services, such as education.

Democratic management then emerges as a principle under which Education should be organized, which was regulated through the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases - LDB 9394/96, and is also articulated with the guidelines of international organizations and consequently with the reform of the State apparatus, as we will demonstrate.

LDB in its art. 15 points out as a condition for the establishment of democratic management that the education systems ensure “[...] to the public basic education units that integrate them, progressive degrees of pedagogical and administrative autonomy and financial management, observing the general rules of law”²⁰ (BRASIL/MEC, 1998, p. 168), autonomy that favors the guidelines formulated from the Jomtien Conference, such as the strengthening of alliances and articulations, the mobilization of financial and human resources, public or private for education, considered essential. The Reform of the State Apparatus (1995) is also linked to article 15 of the LDB, when it defends a managerial public administration and assumes as one of the strategies to guarantee the autonomy of the administration in the management of financial, material and human resources so that this achieve the proposed objectives.

¹⁹ Promover uma educação básica eficaz não significa oferecer a mais baixos custos, porém utilizar, com maior eficiência, todos os recursos (humanos, organizativos e financeiros), para obter os níveis pretendidos de acesso e desempenho escolar. As considerações anteriores relativas à relevância, à qualidade e à equidade não se constituem alternativas à eficácia, representam, antes, as condições específicas em que esta deve ser obtida. De fato, em alguns programas, a eficácia irá exigir um aumento, e não uma redução de recursos. No entanto, se os recursos existentes podem ser utilizados por um número maior de educandos ou se os mesmos objetivos de aprendizagem podem ser alcançados a um menor custo por aluno, então será facilitada à educação básica a consecução das metas de acesso e desempenho para os grupos atualmente não assistidos.

²⁰ “[...] às unidades públicas de educação básica que os integram, progressivos graus de autonomia pedagógica e administrativa e de gestão financeira, observadas as normas gerais de direito financeiro”

According to Mészáros (2009), in this period of structural crisis in capital, there is a constant defense about the ideology of “modernization” and, in that tone, it is proclaimed that countries that have not improved their employability levels have not done so because they are not able to modernize, and advertising now defends “democracy and development” as new objectives to be achieved. We realize that “democracy and development” are also related to the principle of democratic management, let us see as an example what the Ministry of Education - MEC (2007, p. 28) provides:

Another policy that will certainly contribute to the democratization of basic education is the democratic management in public schools, already established by the Federal Constitution of 1988, but still in need of regulation. With this, it is expected that the democratic experience to be lived by the various social segments will be the path long awaited for the awareness of society regarding the importance of education for the economic, cultural and political development of Brazil. It is known that education alone will not solve Brazil's structural problems, but it is also known that without it, they certainly cannot be solved.²¹

Faced with the economic crisis, education as an important mediation complex for social reproduction is also affected, in the most varied ways. According to Tonet (2003), one of these ways is to point out as inadequate the previous forms of education in face of the new model of production, as well as the new social relations. In the specific case of educational management, the previous model that takes the administrative principles of companies for school is criticized, and democratic management is taken as a new model of practice, let us see the scenario in which the referred paradigmatic change occurs.

Democratic Management and Education: interfaces and relations

The beginning of the 1980s, in Brazil, was characterized by the prospect of the resurgence of a democratic state. According to Rodrigues (2001, p. 12), in the 1980s there were many opinions regarding the way in which the renewal of institutions and the establishment of the participatory regime should take place, however, as the author points out, pressure from

²¹ Outra política que certamente concorrerá para a democratização da educação básica é a gestão democrática nas escolas públicas, já estabelecida pela Constituição Federal de 1988, mas ainda carente de regulamentação. Com isso, espera-se que a experiência democrática a ser vivenciada pelos diversos segmentos sociais seja o caminho tão esperado para a conscientização da sociedade a respeito da importância da educação para o desenvolvimento econômico, cultural e político do Brasil. Sabe-se que a educação sozinha não resolverá os problemas estruturais do Brasil, mas sabe-se também, que sem ela, eles certamente não poderão ser resolvidos.

social movements was fundamental “[...] to win the opening, but not to guarantee its really democratic conduct”²².

In mid-1983, the movement in defense of direct elections, called “Diretas já”, intensified, gaining several followers, constituting different movements of fight, which culminated in the approval, in 1988, of a new Constitution for the country that, among other measures, provided for the suspension of censorship, the recognition of the right to strike and the non-intervention of the State in union organizations.

It was in this political and economic context that emerged the first studies in the educational area that criticized the Taylorist-Fordist model of administration for the organization of the educational system, in favor of a model that predicted, above all, greater participation and control of society.

As historicized Tonet (2005), around the 1980s, many educators committed to the working class, and who endeavored to think about an education that could contribute to a revolutionary transformation of society, starting from “[...] a kind of shock in the field of education, which would establish entirely new foundations”²³ (TONET, 2005, p. 8), replaced this perspective of the revolution, with the articulation between education and citizenship. Taking the formation of the so-called democratic left, which was divided between those who defended the democratic path to socialism and those who would criticize Marxism.

In education, the education/revolution link has largely been replaced by the link between education and citizenship/democracy. According to Tonet (2005, p. 8) “Since then, talking about citizen education, education for citizenship, citizen school, has become sort of usual, assuming that citizenship would be synonymous with freedom”²⁴.

Authors such as Paulo Freire and Gaudêncio Frigotto were examples of educators who, according to Tonet (2005), abandoned the struggle for the construction of an effectively free society, made up of fully autonomous people, subjects of history, for the struggle around the formation of citizens, which would mean that “[...] for the popular classes, fighting for citizenship would not be fighting for a determined form of freedom, not even for mediation for effective freedom, but for freedom *tout court*”²⁵ (TONET, 2005, p. 8).

²² “[...] para a conquista da abertura, mas não para garantir sua condução realmente democrática”

²³ “[...] de uma espécie de choque, no âmbito da educação, que instituiria fundamentos inteiramente novos”

²⁴ “De lá para cá, falar em educação cidadã, em educação para cidadania, escola cidadã, tornou-se mais ou menos lugar comum, dando por suposto que cidadania seria sinônimo de liberdade”

²⁵ “[...] para as classes populares, lutar pela cidadania não seria lutar por uma forma determinada de liberdade, nem sequer por uma mediação para a efetiva liberdade, mas pela liberdade *tout court*”

Paulo Freire, for example, wrote a work entitled *Alfabetização como elemento de formação da Cidadania* (Literacy as an element in the formation of Citizenship), in which he defends the thesis that literacy can be an instrument for the formation of citizens, and, therefore, a political act, and never neutral. However, Tonet (2005, p. 8) points out that:

There would be nothing to object to these statements, if it were not for the fact that the great objective that guided all the reflection and all the practical work of Paulo Freire was the struggle for the construction of an effectively free society [...]. So, to the extent that he himself does not make any restrictions, it seems reasonable to admit that by the fullness of citizenship he means full freedom, understood, obviously, as a process of permanent construction.²⁶

Frigotto also expresses, according to Tonet (2005), the influence of the so-called democratic path for socialism, see an excerpt from the work *A educação e a crise do capitalismo real* (Education and the crisis of real capitalism):

The new social movements, political parties and new unionism and the educational policies that are being developed in several capitals and countless municipalities by these political forces [...] signal that the alternative [of education in a democratic socialist perspective] is underway in the political-ideological, ethical and theoretical-practical plan (FRIGOTTO *apud* TONET, 2005, p. 12).²⁷

The text *Administração da educação, poder e participação* (Administration of education, power and participation), written by Miguel Arroyo, was, according to Souza (2006, p. 19), an article “[...] cited by several other authors as being the provocative work, in the field of management school, for new, more critical looks towards its own objects”²⁸. In that text, Arroyo (1979, p. 36), elaborates a “[...] reflection on the political dimensions of current trends in administration in Brazil”²⁹, in which he establishes a dialogue that questions the accountability of the educational system for chronic problems that affect it, justifying the author that the origin of the problems is not in the school, or in the administration, but in a model of society.

²⁶ Nada haveria a objetar a estas afirmações, se não fosse pelo fato de que o grande objetivo que norteou toda a reflexão e todo o trabalho prático de Paulo Freire foi a luta pela construção de uma sociedade efetivamente livre [...]. De modo que, na medida em que ele mesmo não faz nenhuma restrição, parece razoável admitir que por plenitude da cidadania ele quer significar plenitude de liberdade, entendida, obviamente, como um processo de construção permanente.

²⁷ Os novos movimentos sociais, partidos políticos e sindicalismo de novo tipo e as políticas educacionais que se desenvolvem em várias capitais e inúmeros municípios por estas forças políticas [...] sinalizam que a alternativa [da educação numa perspectiva socialista democrática] está em curso no plano político-ideológico, ético e teórico-prático (FRIGOTTO *apud* TONET, 2005, p. 12).

²⁸ “[...] citado por diversos outros autores como sendo o trabalho provocador, no campo da gestão escolar, por novos olhares mais críticos para com os objetos que lhe são próprios”

²⁹ “[...] reflexão sobre as dimensões políticas das tendências atuais na administração no Brasil”

Arroyo (1979), in turn, defends the democratization of education, in the sense that State decisions are debated and controlled by public opinion, with the creation of mechanisms that would allow greater participation of society in the politics, administration and planning of the educational system.

Moacir Gadotti (1999, p. 9), when writing his shared management experience in the book entitled *Escola Cidadã* (Citizen School), defends the following thesis: “The school that is losing its autonomy is also losing its capacity to educate for Freedom”³⁰. The author claims that Socrates already defended autonomy as an educational principle. In his work, Gadotti describes his shared management experience. For him, after this experience, the thesis of a radical and revolutionary transformation of society should be abandoned, since the most important is the defense of small changes. In the author's words:

At the time I thought that small changes prevented the realization of a big change... Today, my certainty is different... today I believe that it is in the daily struggle, in the day-to-day, changing step by step, that the amount of small changes in a certain direction offers the possibility to operate the grid change (GADOTTI, 1999, p. 26).³¹

In education, the defense of the principle of democratic management understood as the establishment of relations of equality in function of the socialization of the power of decision, supposing in the direction of the school, maximum collegiate bodies, composed of several organized segments of the school community (teachers, students and employees, parents and representatives of society, linked to the public school) are articulated to the principles of the democratic path towards socialism, insofar as it defends democracy as a space for the formation of citizens, and democratic spaces.

Democratic management is a principle guaranteed by the Federal Constitution (CF) of 1988, which foresees as one of the principles under which teaching will be taught, as well as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) no. 9,394 of 1996. However, we emphasize that there is no legal provision that ensures the way democratic management of public education in basic education will be defined, which, according to LDB in its Art. 14, must be organized according to its peculiarities and according to the following principles: a) participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project; b) participation of communities, school and local, in school councils or equivalent.

³⁰ “A escola que está perdendo a sua autonomia também está perdendo a sua capacidade de educar para Liberdade”

³¹ Na época eu pensava que as pequenas mudanças impediam a realização de uma grande mudança... Hoje, a minha certeza é outra... hoje eu creio que é na luta cotidiana, no dia-a-dia, mudando passo a passo, que a quantidade de pequenas mudanças numa certa direção oferece a possibilidade de operar a grande mudança (GADOTTI, 1999, p. 26).

Democratic management is a constitutional principle that provides, among others, for an administration model that opposes the bureaucratic model, see what the government proposes to us through the document published by the Ministry of Education (MEC, 2006, p. 8): “Municipal education systems lack effective management tools that allow them to accurately identify problems, formulate, implement and monitor policies developed at the municipal level”³².

In another moment, the official wording describes how this form of school organization would be, carried out through:

[...] adoption of new models of administrative and management organization, in which popular participation and social control are guaranteed, based on the concept of democratic, intersectoral management, which is opposed to managerial, bureaucratic and centralizing management processes (CONAE *apud* GADOTTI, 2014, p. 9)³³

Decentralization and participation also appear as presuppositions to this model of democratic management. However, we emphasize that the three governmental spheres: Union, State and Municipalities have not shared responsibilities and that traditionally, decentralization has proved to be a practice that, in general, is limited to transferring responsibilities from the central government to state and municipal governments, while decision-making power remains centralized.

In this way, we can affirm that decentralization has not occurred and what we have in fact found are policies of relaxed power, characterized by actions that delegate “[...] certain functions to the local community, keeping centralized decisions about financial, administrative and pedagogical aspects”³⁴ (VIRIATO, 2004, p. 47).

The participation, in turn, is contemplated in LDB no. 9,394/96 in its article 14, when it delegates to each public education system of basic education, which establishes the norms of democratic management according to its peculiarities and following the principles: the participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project and the participation of the school and local communities in school councils or equivalent. However, authors like Lima (2004, p. 19) claim that in the 1980s:

³² “Os sistemas municipais de ensino carecem de instrumentos eficazes de gestão que lhes permitam identificar com exatidão os problemas, formular, implementar e monitorar as políticas desenvolvidas no âmbito municipal”

³³ [...] adoção de novos modelos de organização administrativa e de gestão, nos quais sejam garantidos a participação popular e o controle social, baseado na concepção de gestão democrática, intersectorial, que se contrapõe aos processos de gestão gerencial, burocrático e centralizador (CONAE *apud* GADOTTI, 2014, p. 9)

³⁴ “[...] determinadas funções à comunidade local, mantendo centralizadas as decisões sobre os aspectos financeiros, administrativos e pedagógicos”

[...] the policies implemented in the school as participatory forms (school councils, unions, decentralization) have lost their character of popular control due to the bureaucratization of the state apparatus. In other words, the forms of control via centralization were not broken, but the discourse that supported such policies persisted in participatory models.³⁵

Saviani (2009) is another author who writes a work to debate the theme of democracy at school: *Escola e Democracia* (School and Democracy). In the aforementioned work, the author defends the thesis that “[...] the more was said about democracy within the school, the less democratic the school was; and how, when less was said about democracy, the school was more articulated with the construction of a democratic order”³⁶. This is because the time when the most talked about democracy was in the period of the new school, conceived as the traditional method of anti-democratic education for not considering individual differences.

It is understood, then, that this way of understanding education, by reference to traditional pedagogy, has shifted the axis of the pedagogical question from the intellect to the feeling; from the logical to the psychological aspect; from cognitive content to pedagogical methods or processes; from teacher to student; from directivism to non-directivism; from quantity to quality; from a philosophical-inspired pedagogy centered on the science of logic to an experimentally inspired pedagogy based mainly on the constructions of biology and psychology. In short, it is a pedagogical theory that considers that the important thing is not to learn, but to learn to learn (SAVIANI, 2009, p. 8).³⁷

In view of this analysis, Saviani argues that the school in the period of traditional education was more articulated with the construction of a democratic order that, in this model, it would be the teacher's role to guarantee his students “[...] the acquisition of content richer and without whom there will be no time, there will be no chance to participate in society”³⁸ (2009, p. 45), that is, Saviani defends the thesis that the most democratic model of education is that

³⁵ [...] as políticas implementadas na escola como formas participativas (os conselhos escolares, os grêmios, a descentralização) perderam seu caráter de controle popular pela burocratização do aparelho do Estado. Ou seja, não foram rompidas as formas de controle via centralização, mas o discurso que sustentava tais políticas persistiu em modelos participativos.

³⁶ “[...] quando mais se falou em democracia no interior da escola, menos democrática foi a escola; e de como, quando menos se falou em democracia, mais a escola esteve articulada com a construção de uma ordem democrática”

³⁷ Compreende-se, então, que essa maneira de entender a educação, por referência à pedagogia tradicional, tenha deslocado o eixo da questão pedagógica do intelecto para o sentimento; do aspecto lógico para o psicológico; dos conteúdos cognitivos para os métodos ou processos pedagógicos; do professor para o aluno; do diretivismo para o não-diretivismo; da quantidade para qualidade; de uma pedagogia de inspiração filosófica centrada na ciência da lógica para uma pedagogia de inspiração experimental baseada principalmente nas construções da biologia e da psicologia. Em suma, trata-se de uma teoria pedagógica que considera que o importante não é aprender, mas aprender a aprender (SAVIANI, 2009, p. 8).

³⁸ “[...] a aquisição dos conteúdos mais ricos e sem os quais não se terá vez, não se terá chance de participar da sociedade”

which allows the student to appropriation of the necessary knowledge so that he can participate more actively in society.

We emphasize, however, that education as a complex founded on work could not fail to be crossed by social antagonisms. According to Tonet (2005, p. 142), “In a class society, the interest of the dominant classes will always be the determining pole of the structuring of education. Which means that it will be configured to prevent any break with that social order”³⁹. The struggle, however, can and must occur, since human acts have a certain degree of freedom and because of this they are not previously determined, in spite of that, “[...] we cannot nurture the illusion of structuring an emancipatory education as a systematic and largely practicable set as opposed to a conservative education”⁴⁰ (TONET, 2005, p. 143).

For Tonet (2005, p. 155), “[...] an educational activity that intends to contribute to form really free men and subjects of their history must have as their ultimate objective, human emancipation and not citizenship”⁴¹. Citizenship represents what Marx called political emancipation, which separates the lives of men and women in two: one as a member of the political community and the other as a private person, while human emancipation represents an indefinitely perfect space, where men and women, not capital, will be the ones to control the production process.

When we put the problems of the school in management, and democratic management as a solution, we are denying the principle of totality, whose matrix is the economy. We agree with Tonet (2005) when he states that the most important contribution that education can offer for the transformation of this society is exercising its specific role in the best possible way. This consists of enabling the appropriation of knowledge accumulated by humanity, allowing the individual to be constituted as a being belonging to the human race, not forgetting the articulation of this knowledge with revolutionary practice.

Final considerations

Since the 1970s, we have been experiencing an unprecedented historical crisis, called by Mészáros (2011a) as a structural crisis in capital. A crisis that is born due to the process of

³⁹ “Em uma sociedade de classes, o interesse das classes dominantes será sempre o polo determinante da estruturação da educação. O que significa que ela será configurada de modo a impedir qualquer ruptura com aquela ordem social”

⁴⁰ “[...] não se pode nutrir a ilusão de estruturar uma educação emancipadora como um conjunto sistematizado e largamente praticável em oposição a uma educação conservadora”

⁴¹ “[...] uma atividade educativa que pretenda contribuir para formar homens realmente livres e sujeitos de sua história deve ter como objetivo último, a emancipação humana e não a cidadania”

overproduction, and that, for the first time, plagues the whole of humanity, spreading through all social complexes.

Education, in this moment of structural crisis, is now seen as an instrument capable of maximizing the productive process. International organizations, especially the World Bank, are now monitoring and determining more directly the educational policies of peripheral countries and the agreements reached at the World Conference on Education for All and their goals.

Brazil, in turn, adheres to the demands placed on capital in crisis and prepares the State Apparatus Reform. This reform was a document signed by the Federal Government, which established guidelines for the reform of the country's public administration.

In Education, we have the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases no. 9.394/96 as documents that started to guide educational policies, duly articulated with international prerogatives.

We also present, as marks of this period, the centrality of democracy, with regard to the country's economic political moment. In education, we have the abandonment about the education/revolution articulation by some educators, who start to defend the education, citizenship and democracy articulation.

We conceive, however, based on classical Marxism, that democracy, despite representing an advance, should not be conceived as the ultimate goal to be pursued by society, as this does not represent effective freedom, but only a path. A struggle that demands radical change must be the horizon to be pursued. That is, the break with the capitalist mode of production.

Today, with the structural crisis of capital, education is being placed, more strongly, on the economic agenda, not only as a means to obtain profits, but as a means of manipulating consciences. And democratic management? It appears as a way to meet the demands placed by the society of greater participation. In essence, however, what actually occurs, apart from delegating to society parts of the government's responsibilities, is the passing on to society of some execution and monitoring activities, giving the appearance of democratic management.

Participation in the management of education, with real power of decision, despite representing an advance, should constitute a step towards a greater struggle: the struggle for an emancipated society.

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