

Biopolitics, Education and Latin America

Introduction by Julio Groppa Aquino & Maura Corcini Lopes (Editors)

After the last quarter of twentieth century, it has become almost impossible not to take into consideration the importance of the contributions of Michel Foucault's legacy, and hence, its impact on various fields of human knowledge, concerning the achievement of a more refined comprehension of current social issues. In educational field, in particular, whether in regard to the analysis of the discursive and non discursive practices that currently take place in schooling and beyond it, or in studies on the subjectivation processes and, still, in investigations on the resonances between education and the political, economic and cultural changes in present times, the fact is that Foucault seems to be more alive than ever.

As is well known, even without having dealt directly and preferably with education, the French thinker created several conceptual instruments that, when put to work, happen to be very fertile to reframe the theorizations and certainties on which relied—and still rely—many of the educational practices and policies invented by Modernity. Undermining supposed truths and casting new lights on “realities” that remain in shadow when using traditional pedagogical theories, those *tool-concepts*—expression coined by the philosopher himself—have been particularly powerful in the research conducted in education. Among them, biopolitics merits special attention.

Even though the concept has not been invented by Foucault, he gave it a new meaning, understanding biopolitics as the manners implied, “since the



eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems arose to government practice by the proper phenomena related to a set of living people constituted as a population: health, hygiene, birth, longevity, races...".¹ Like that, biopolitics is bound both to the birth and to the governmentalization of modern states regarding liberal and neoliberal rationalities, which operate as specific styles of being and doing. These styles are self-reflexive and, at the same time, guided by conservation feedback.

Thus, implications between education and biopolitics become evident. It is precisely on such implications this special issue is dedicated.

The articles that compose it were written by Latin American experts from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. They all assume the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics and use it as an analytical tool to discuss various issues related to the present education, its transformations and its connections with multiple and rapidly changing social contexts, today, in Latin America.

Issues such as the crisis of the disciplines, inclusive education policies and practices, continuing education programs, adult figure deletion, cultural racism and intercultural education, relations of the social subjects with themselves, with others and with the truth, entrepreneurship pedagogy and school routine are placed side by side with theoretical discussions.

Given the variety of themes and the complexity of the connections, it is impossible to approach them either in terms of amplitude or of depth. Nevertheless, what the editors and authors hope is to contribute in order to offer a more nuanced understanding on education role in an increasingly globalised and uncertain world, submitted to the liberal and neoliberal rationalities and, therefore, guided by the logic of market, competitiveness and social inequities.

REFERENCE

FOUCAULT, M. (2006). Naissance de la biopolitique. *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 79^e année, Histoire des systèmes de pensée, année 1978-1979, p. 367-372. *Dits et écrits III (1976-1979)*. Paris: Gallimard.

¹ Originally: "on a essayé, depuis le XVIII^e siècle, de rationaliser les problèmes posés à la pratique gouvernementale par les phénomènes propres à un ensemble de vivants constitués en population: santé, hygiène, natalité, longévité, races..." (Foucault, 2006, p. 818)



