

# Éducation et Sociétés

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## Special report project

### Re-conceptualising resistance in the sociology of education

#### Discourse and practices challenging educational standards issued from globalisation

#### Coordination

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*Éducation et Sociétés* identified very early the crisis and critique which accompanied the creation of a new organisation of capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello 1999). A report published in 2004, “La posture critique en sociologie de l’éducation [The critical posture in the sociology of education]”, analysed the difficulty of social sciences in reconstructing their exteriority with regard to an ordinary world which had broadly integrated the contributions of the critique of the 60s and 70s. The journal also stated very early the need to review anew the Hirschman trilogy: *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (1970). Between withdrawal, which is not always possible, and protest, which is expensive and requires a minimum organisation, pop culture historians highlighted the multiple ‘arts of doing’ which poach from the territory organised by the powerful (de Certeau 1980) without opposing them formally. Contemporary sociology has begun to thematise these arts of avoidance and ruse (Scott 1990, Latouche & Singleton 2004).

A report published in 2007, drew attention to these surreptitious forms of resistance which were being developed against new requirements which weighed as much upon teachers as upon students in the first era of globalisation: “Le quotidien du politique : ruse, souffrances et petits bonheurs [The everyday life of politics: ruse, suffering and small pleasures]”. At the time these were circulating and attracting a certain level of visibility, Neuman (2015) raised the difficulty social sciences were having in interpreting these new social movements and Caygill (2013) or Worth (2013) classified the re-conceptualisation of ‘resistance’ as one of their most urgent tasks.

This special report proposes an in-depth study and analysis of the paths which were opened by previous reflections by thinking together, and in new terms, the concepts of power, resistance and critique in the field of education. By shifting the reflection from legal and Marxist traditions, Foucault (1982) highlighted the cognitive aspects of power: a capacity to arrange an order of the world and the instruments which render it governable. The journal discussed this topic in two recent editions: Tom Popkewitz gave an in-depth analysis in the field of education by proposing a trip around the world around the theme: “La raison éducative comme question sociale [Educative reason as a social issue]” (2013). The article “L’Europe : une mise en ordre cognitive ? [Europe: a cognitive putting into order?]” (2012), co-published by *Éducation et Sociétés* and *Globalisation, Societies and Education* analysed the role of knowledge instruments (statistics, large-scale surveys, coding categories and conventions...) in the implementation of the Europe of education.

This article returns to this notion, but it focuses above all on the reticular design of the social in which power like resistance takes on plural shapes (1976) Swarming in very diverse spaces, resistance reveals ‘possible’; necessary, improbable, spontaneous, wild, solitary,

concerted, rampant, violent, irreconcilable forms, one which are prompt to transaction, self-serving or sacrificial (Foucault 1976). This helps it to acquire the same productive capacity for social change as power (Heller, 1996).

This approach distinguishes itself significantly from the theories of resistance which were being developed at the same time by Anglo-Saxon Neo-Marxist sociologists (Willis 1977, Apple 1982, Giroux 1983, Aronowitz & Giroux 1985, Wexler 1987). They were attempting to produce a global theoretical system on the behaviours of opposition to the educational form by interpreting them as an opposition to the reproduction of class identity. This work opened up interesting perspectives via the discovery of actors and highlighted the absence of total domination, but it did not lead to any significant theoretical advances in comparison to the work by Bourdieu on the symbolic violence of schools and its effects on working-class children. Furthermore, they appear today to be out of sync with the new forms of domination.

The reorganisation of the social world has in fact generated a multiplication of centres of power which call for a renewal of critique and a dissemination of forms of resistance within the networks which drive the new procedures of domination (Boltanski 2009, Boltanski & Fraser 2014). In the field of education, this evolution has been accompanied by the appearance of new references of justice. The issue of exclusion and the rise of claims for the recognition of cultural, ethnic and regional differences at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Honneth 1995) destabilised a system of conventions, which were based on a tension between the demand for civil equality and the search for performance which was necessary for preparing the division of social work (Derouet and Derouet-Besson 2009). Injustices in terms of recognition are interlinked with economic injustices, and represent the two main obstacles which are today blocking the social participation process. Nancy Fraser (2005) encourages us to leave the fragmented fields of the politics of identity revalorisation and the politics of economic redistribution, to imagine a model which pleads not just for multicultural recognition, but also for economic redistribution.

In the North as in the South, these identity claims are based on the return of God in secular academic universes (Martuccelli 2004) which implicate a renegotiation of the large division between science and religion (Latour 1988, 1991). One of the latest editions of the journal looked at this competition of discourses of truth (2014). In Sub-Saharan Africa, Islam presents itself as a structured political approach, which has integrated “all the criticism addressed against colonisation, against the imbalance between the countries of the South and the North, against globalisation” and proposes a practical alternative via Koranic teaching (Charlier 2004).

However, the context of globalisation confers a status of evidence to the new forms of domination which has often led to them being seen as unsurpassable by actors (Martuccelli 2005). The first task is obviously to question this set of false evidences. In a renewed version of the Marxist tradition, Susan Roberston suggests that we question the mystification constituted by this false consensus, that we deconstruct the unified tale of globalisation and we unblock the diverse rationalities which today converge around this project, in order to highlight their possible internal contradictions (Roberston 2006). This approach no doubt constitutes a necessary propaedeutic for hearing discordant voices and in particular, those arising from the South.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2011) is already developing theoretical and methodological tools which aim to analyse the practices, knowledge and experiences of the South, and ones which distances themselves from the Western-centric model of Neoliberal governance. By basing his work on the study and valorisation of the knowledge and practices of the South, Santos (2006) proposes the construction of a new critical social theory - the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences - which should participate in the deconstruction of reality, and the identification and creation of counter-models of society. The emancipating objective of this critical sociology is social transformation, via the reinforcement of local experiences straying from the dominant model promoted by power. It aims to create

“constellations of knowledge and practices which are strong enough to provide credible alternatives” to Neoliberal globalisation (Santos 2006, 104).

In search of an alternative educational agenda, Teodoro (2007) has put into educational perspective Santos’ critical theory. He believes that the sources of the new educational agenda - which should offer solutions to the structural challenges of the contemporary education model: inequalities, unequal exchanges, exclusion, dependence - are not only found in narrow national frameworks, but also in the more global framework of “cosmopolitan globalisation”. He considers that the new educational agenda should put the principle of equality at the same level as the principle of the recognition of differences. In more practical terms, this means ensuring an ideal synthesis between principles: equal opportunities and intercultural dialogue “not only between different forms of knowledge, but also between universes of difference meanings”.

This special report therefore proposes to make an in-depth analysis and review of this program of conceptualising the new forms of resistance, which have manifested themselves in the field of education and socialisation as much in the North as in the South, whether they are making claims for an alternative model or not.

- The special report proposes to draw up an inventory of the forms of resistance which appear in the educational field in both the North and the South and then to link them to a common theoretical framework. This research aims to examine the hidden or explicit, organised or non-structured forms of protest against educational forms. It shall go beyond the power-resistance dialectic and adopt a more reticular approach of resistance or any other approach which takes as its starting point, the analysis of the multiplicity “of forms of resistance against different forms of power” (Foucault 1982, 780).

- The aim of this special report is to seize the nature, action and justification logics which underpin these behaviours. The research shall identify the registers of justification which serve as a support to behaviours of opposition against the educational form and shall take into account the organisation methods and the action of actors.

- Finally, the special report shall observe how the logics of actors echo alternative teaching models or projects. It shall pay particular, but not exclusive, attention to the tensions between Islam and schools, given the breadth of the phenomenon these past few decades. Special attention shall also be given to sociohistorical and ethnographic studies, doubled with rigorous theoretical approaches.

### **Calendar and practical organisation**

- Projects are to be sent to the editor, Jean-Louis Derouet (jeanlouis.derouet@ens-lyon.fr), before 1 November 2016.

- The proposals shall be examined by a Scientific Committee composed of Jean-Émile Charlier (UCL), Sarah Croché (Université Jules Verne, Amiens), Jean-Louis Derouet (ENS de Lyon), Oana Panait (UCL), Antonio Teodoro (Lusophone University of Lisbon)

- The authors shall receive a response before 15 November 2016. They will then need to send a corrected version of their proposal before 15 December 2016.

- The editorial preparation shall begin in January 2017 and shall be published in edition number 39, the first edition of 2017.

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