



Education and quality: two sides of the same right

Educação e qualidade: duas faces de um mesmo direito

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Abstract

If education is a right, its warranty is realized only with access to school? There is respect for the right to education when devoid of minimum quality indicators? Education without quality would not be a right half? Fueled by these inquiries text proposes a reading of quality public education from the results of an empirical research on media products in the time frame from 2001 to 2011, collated with theoretical anchors that deal with education as a right. Winning a place in the public school is part of the right to education, which will only flow if this job also makes contemplated by reference quality. The text considers further that the issue of quality in education is not a philosophical issue, but political, orbiting in the practical sphere and guarantee human rights. In conclusion, the text supports the premise that the achievement of a right is not detached from contextual and objective conditions of its existence, which can effectively guarantee this right, beyond declarations and intentions. Do not just put everyone

in the school to achieve the guarantee of the right to education. We need to go beyond vague: ensure continuity, school success and a minimum standard (decent) quality at school and in the processes inherent in this institution. In this order, the right to education would only be fulfilled by quality references such as sides of the same coin.

Keywords: Right to education. Public school. Quality. Human rights.

Resumo

Se a educação é um direito, a sua garantia concretiza-se apenas com o acesso à escola? Há o respeito pelo direito à educação quando desprovido de indicadores mínimos de qualidade? Educação sem qualidade não seria um direito pela metade? Alimentado por essas indagações, o texto propõe uma leitura sobre a qualidade na educação pública a partir dos resultados de uma pesquisa empírica em produtos midiáticos no recorte temporal de 2001 a 2011, cotejada com ancoragens teóricas que versam sobre a educação como um direito. Conquistar uma vaga na escola pública é parte do direito à educação, que só terá vazão se esta vaga também se fizer contemplada por referenciais de qualidade. O texto pondera, ainda, que a questão da qualidade na educação não se trata de um tema filosófico, mas político, que orbita na esfera prática e de garantia dos direitos humanos. Como conclusão, o texto defende a premissa de que a consecução de um direito não está descolada de condições contextuais e objetivas de sua existência, que possam garantir este direito efetivamente, para além de declarações e intenções. Não basta colocar todos na escola para alcançar a garantia do direito à educação, é preciso ir além da vaga: garantir a permanência, o sucesso escolar e um padrão mínimo (digno) de qualidade na escola e nos processos inerentes a essa instituição. Nessa ordem, o direito à educação só seria efetivado mediante referenciais de qualidade, como faces de uma mesma moeda.

Palavras-chave: Direito à educação. Escola pública. Qualidade. Direitos humanos.

[...] provided that there can be no quality without quantity and quality without quantity [...], all contraposition of the two terms is, rationally, a contradiction. And, in fact, when quality is to quantity [...] in reality, a certain quality is counterpoised to another quality, a certain

quantity to another quantity, namely, a particular policy and not a philosophical statement is made (GRAMSCI, 1986, p. 50).

Brazil, on the verge of achieving the universalization of basic education, faces the strengthening of a discussion that rises at the end of the 20th century, covering especially public educational systems: the increase in the number of vacancies and the attainment of broad access to school did not exactly mean the assurance of quality education for all.

The wide access has not necessarily prospected a direct relationship with school success, and this mismatch constitutes a scenario about which reactions that render in two perspectives occur: on one hand, public and private efforts committed to the materialization of public policies that guarantee the quality in education are notorious and commendable and, on the other hand, there is an intense academic movement, deepening discussions on the so alluded “quality”.

This text is the result of this second perspective: it proposes a reading of the phenomenon from an empirical research and of theoretical anchors that deal on education as a human right. It starts, therefore, from the following premise: being education a right (Brazilian Federal Constitution, Article 205), all efforts made to ensure quality in education (whether through policies, indicators or theoretical-conceptual appropriations) are considered assertive instruments aiming to ensure this right, because the quality in education is fundamental to fully attain such right.

Methodologically, the text was organized based on a search on a limited set of media products extracted from a documentary base composed of two of the greatest variety internet websites: Globo (<http://www.globo.com/>) and Terra (<http://www.terra.com.br/>), within a ten years timeframe — from 2001 to 2011.

As a methodological driving before the *corpus* of documents selected, content analysis for the examination of the reports was prioritized, understanding that the speech and the positions contained in such reports are not “a finished product, but a moment in the process of preparation, with all contradictions, inconsistencies, imperfections that

this involves” (BARDIN, 2007, p. 164). For this reason, a media product is not only what is contained in its lines, requesting, to its interpretation, the critical eye of the researcher, the eye of one who “[...] seeks to know what’s behind the words one rests his mind on” (BARDIN, 2007, p. 38).

Finally, it is imperative to inform that this text is part of the partial results of a survey that aims to establish quality benchmarks for education in public school systems and networks, as well as the compositional elements of the current educational agenda.

Developing the theme: education as a right

So far, no other historical context was so intense and overwhelming as the 20th century (HOBBSAWM, 1995). A myriad of events served as dialectic, imbricating and ensuring the screenplay of a century that has seen times of war and peace; moments of crisis and progress; rises and falls; revolutions and abidance; sometimes as sides of the same coin, sometimes composing the cause/consequence binomial.

And, within this script, among other possible actors, the event of the Second World War (1939-1945) protrudes, a conflict of appalling proportions and actions. Among all of them, perhaps the most terrifying was the explicit violation of human rights committed by the belligerents. Wether by number of victims (mostly civilians), or by the deep disrespect to life — materialized in different ways and anchored, in particular, in the concentration camps —, the Second War showed the worst side of men.

On the face of the “barbarous 20th century” (HOBBSAWM, 1995), as soon as the armistice was enacted there were some compulsion to the collective and international commitment to build structures to ensure that the excesses committed during the war period were not repeated. As a concrete action of this commitment, in the plenary of the United Nations, in December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was announced, representing

the culmination of an ethical process that, having been started with the Declaration of independence of the United States and the Declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen, of the French Revolution, led to the recognition of the essential equality of all human beings in their dignity as a person, that is, as a source of all values, regardless of differences in race, color, sex, language, religion, opinion, social origin, wealth, birth or any other condition, as said in its second article (COMPARATO, 2003, p. 228).

Although formally constituted as a letter of intent, the Declaration materializes as an important and recognized policy that aims to curb morally a new edition of the inhumane acts committed during the war, whether in new contexts of war or in times of peace. This is, therefore, a moral structure, a set of recommendations, of requirements that, if considered, can ensure the human integrity and development.

From this perspective, among the Rights expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a moral structure, on Article XXVI, the right to education is expressed: “1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. [...] 2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality” (DECLARAÇÃO..., 2000)¹.

The same article of the Declaration also defines that the education will have as a principle the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, because it is not just about of the right to education, but ensuring an education focused towards the achievement and respect for other human rights. This is a methodological mechanism within the prescriptive structure, both approaching education as a human right.

Still within Article XXVI, the declaration goes beyond and indicates, materially, which the principles should support this education,

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available at: <<http://www.onu-brasil.org.br>>. Access on: Jul. 23, 2000.

as its gratuity, the accountability of the State, the role of the family and its basement in principles tuned with human rights. The Declaration not only regards the education as a right, but expresses parameters for the materialization of this right.

It is spread “[...] the idea that men as such has rights, by nature, that no one (not even the State) can subtract” (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 29), as well as the principle that “human rights are those whose recognition is a necessary condition for the improvement of the human person, or to the development of civilization etc.” (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 17), thus, its application must not consist in a grant, in mere altruism or simple donation; the defense of these rights needs to be fierce, steadfast and uncompromising and, above all, by not being a single philanthropic act, the application of a right cannot happen rain or shine, without a minimum benchmark that indicates whether, in fact, this right is being respected.

Thus, if human rights need defending, it is because, while the proclamation or explanation of a consideration to human dignity, they are fruits of historical contexts — that belong to different times and places —, born from certain demands or expectations managed gradually.

Human rights are not born, “all at once and not once and for all” (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 5), and their warranty depends on a permanent mobilization that transcends any mere discursive premise.

However, the speech is a necessary symbolic element. The excerpt below refers to the constant reaffirmation and vigil around the achievement of human rights (especially social ones) and, likewise the epigraph that announces this text, it differs a philosophical problem from a political problem:

[...] It must be remembered that the strongest argument adopted by the reactionaries of all countries against human rights, particularly against social rights, is not their lack of grounds, but their unenforceability. When it comes to listing them, the agreement is obtained with relative ease, regardless of the greater or lesser power of conviction of its absolute foundation. When it comes to taking action, even if the foundation is unquestionable, the reservations and the oppositions begin. The fundamental problem in relation to

human rights, today, is not so much to justify them, but to protect them. It is about a problem, not philosophical, but political. It is undeniable that there is a crisis of grounding. It is not a question of finding the absolute foundation — sublime enterprise, however desperate — but to seek, in each case, *the* several possible foundations (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 23-24).

From the elements announced by Bobbio, it can be concluded that the need for constant allusion and defending human rights constitutes itself in a problem of political (action), and not philosophical range (intention).

Human rights express a relatively consensual concept (despite their historical condition) and relevant to different areas of knowledge and human operating fields. Paradoxically, and for this very reason, they find some difficulty in their materialization in everyday actions.

It is one thing to proclaim this right, another is enjoying it effectively. The language of rights has undoubtedly a great practical function, which is to lend a particular strength to the claims of the movements that demand for themselves and others the satisfaction of new moral and material necessities; but it becomes misleading if it obscures or hides the difference between the right claimed and the right recognized and protected (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 10).

For its rotund and consensual dimension, it can pass the mistaken feeling that its assurance depends on macro-level efforts (diplomatic, legal, State etc.), being its achievement independent of everyday and constant actions that guarantee its application in daily life.

In reality, the laws and diplomatic agreements are nothing more than a mechanism of moral and discursive reaffirmation, prior to a concrete instrument of coercion or punishment; so much so that in some situations, to be put into practice, Human Rights need the coercive power of the economy (sanctions and trade injunctions).

It is possible to divide the human rights, regarding their constitution and historical condition, in first generation rights (civil and

political rights); second generation (economic and social rights), as well as third-generation rights (collective rights). Within this definition, the right to education is among the second generation rights (BOBBIO, 1992), for its historic Genesis is relatively recent, dating back to the late 19th century, early 20th century (CURY, 2000).

However, the right to education is recognized as a principle of access to the cultural heritage of a people and frankly defended because, still according to Bobbio, “there is currently no charter of rights, [...] that does not recognize the right instruction — growing, otherwise, from society to society” —, first elementary, then secondary, and little by little even academic (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 75).

There is, however, a thriving symbiotic relationship between education and human rights: the guarantee of the education legitimates and prepares the support and consolidation of those. It is a relationship of cause and effect which ensure the right to education is realized on the other also guarantee rights.

When making use of the classical political division between left and right (BOBBIO, 1995), it is possible to affirm that the education is treated, currently, like an instrument both as propaganda for the left, from the perspective of emancipation; as in the speech of the so called, in a perspective of regulation, but, in any case, the need for systematic and institutionalized education is pretty much a consensus.

Otherwise, education is perceived as one of the principles of support and consolidation of democracy, because it is understood:

- a) that today the democratic method is necessary for the safeguarding of the fundamental rights of the person, which are at the base of the liberal State; (b) that the safeguarding of these rights is necessary for the correct functioning of the democratic method (BOBBIO, 1994, p. 43).

Social justice and the guarantee of minimum rights inherent to the human condition are, in this light, aspects that transcend the political discourse and settle on the need for improvement of humanity itself.

In defense of quality in public school

Education is considered, with tone of unanimity, a fundamental right guaranteed by documents (legislation, statements, intentions, proposals, proclamations etc.) both national and international. The way it is put into practice... this seems to be another story.

Nationwide, the laws that stress the right to education are not few. The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 (with justice), considered the most democratic in the country's history, quotes the right to education as a constitutional commandment (Art. 205).

Education is also listed as the first of the ten social rights presented in Article 6 of the same Magna Carta: "Education, health, food, work, housing, leisure, safety, social security, maternity and childhood protection, assistance to the helpless, are social rights, in the form of this Constitution" (Wording by Brazilian Constitutional Amendment n. 64, in February 4, 2010).

Coadjutants to the Brazilian Federal Constitution, both the *National Education Bases* and *Guidelines* Law (NEBGL) as the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (SCA) confirm this right. In Article 5° of the federal law number 9.394 of December 20, 1996 it is informed that education lies in the sphere of rights, moreover "the access to basic education is a public subjective right", as well as referring, in the previous article, how the duty of the State regarding the education must be accomplished.

Likewise, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (SCA — Brazilian Federal Law n. 8.069/90), as it regulates the Article 227 of the Federal Constitution and serve as a mechanism to ensure basic rights to children and adolescents such as life, health and education, contributed indelibly to the recognition of the child as a citizen and the duty of the State regarding education. Taking another step toward ensuring minimum quality standards for achieving the right to education, the SCA reports that "it is the right of parents or guardians to be aware of the pedagogical process as well as to participate in the definition of the educational proposals" (Art. 53, sole paragraph).

However, it seems that Brazil, historically, has achieved more success in legally regulating the right to education, finding some difficulty

in transposing such right from the legal basis to the daily practice, unveiling a paradox that implies,

on one hand, the presence of a legal system like the NEBGL, able to forward the educational process to the principles and purposes of education (art. 206) on the basis of the Democratic-Republicans grounds (art. 1). But, on the other hand, the recurrent signaling of universalist goals, not made effective with the reiterated proclamation of the free and compulsory right to school education in elementary school and supported in the binding budget, shows how much of a social debt there is to be rescued, as a result of the slave regime prevailing in the country until 1988, and of the socially exclusive regimes that followed (CURY, 2000, p. 583).

The redundancy and repetition in legal citations that support the understanding of education as a right, also aims to set up a mechanism of legitimacy and protection of the right to education, considering that:

The declaration and the assurance of a right become indispensable in the case of countries such as Brazil, with strong elitist tradition and that traditionally allow only privileged social strata to this social benefit. Thus, declaring and ensuring is more than a solemn proclamation. Declaring is removing from oblivion and proclaiming to those who don't know, or have forgotten, they continue to bear an important right. From this it follows the necessary complaint of this right when it is not respected (CURY, 2002, p. 259)

To recognize, countersign, reaffirm, recall, proclaim, publicize, study, discuss, review, summarize, boast and search the legal evidence would be, on this account, more than verbalizations, but to constitute monitoring and billing strategies regarding the expectation and action in obtaining the right to education.

But the assumption of education as public subjective right extends the democratic dimension of education, especially when it is declared, required and protected for the entire elementary school and throughout the

national territory. This, without doubt, can cooperate with the universalization of the right to elementary and free education. The public subjective right helps and brings an institutional legal instrument capable of transforming this right into a real way of making an educational democracy effective. (CURY; BAIA HORTA; FÁVERO, 2001, p. 26).

It happens, however, that declarations and laws compete to establish the universalization of access to education as a goal. However, on the verge of attaining this goal, it is necessary to have another ambition in relation to education: the defense not only of the access, but also of the success in school benches, and this does not depend only on the declaration of a right, but of its assurance by the State.

While the rights of freedom are born against the superpower of the State — and, therefore, in order to limit the power — the social rights require, for their practical implementation, that is, for the passage of purely verbal declaration to effective protection, exactly the opposite, namely, the expansion of the powers of the State (BOBBIO, 1992, p. 72).

To denounce, tease, talk, discuss, and compose, thus, the verbs related to a scenario of the establishment of a new goal: public education for everyone but, with equal quality for all.

Education without quality: half of a right?

In the face of the inducements made previously, a survey was developed in a limited set of media products extracted from a documentary base composed of two of the greatest variety of internet websites: Globo² and Terra³, with the temporal delimitation of ten years: from 2001 to 2011. It is imperative to inform that neither the editorial line of the

² Available at: <<http://www.globo.com/>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

³ Available at: <<http://www.terra.com.br/>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

website, nor the ideological content of the reports were subject of examination. The analysis of the content was restricted to objective information contained in the media products selected.

For the preparation of the research and, consequently, of the text on screen, eventual ideological debates about the contents of the media products did not matter, but the descriptions and stories about the concrete conditions of the operationalization of the right to education in public schools did. For the optimization of the proposal, all products that turned on the same topic or that limited the notes or comments on specific facts were eliminated. Based on the criteria established above (temporal timeline and content pre-categorization), a number of 143 media products on the subject was reached.

Therefore, in this database, news and reports that impacted on the concrete conditions of the operationalization of the right to education in public schools were analyzed, bases on the formulation of three the analysis categories divided into: a) material conditions, represented by discussions of infrastructure, salaries and career plans, among other elements; b) symbolic conditions, such as violence and abandonment; and c) pedagogical conditions, or the concrete results of the school, materialized in external evaluations and specific learning processes.

Based on the consignment of these categories, a framework of situations and incidents was devised, in order to measure the impact of concrete conditions of achieving the right to education, from which some reports stand out, listed hereafter in an illustrative manner on each of the aforementioned categories.

As an illustrative contribution it could be present the report “Poor teaching quality slows the students”⁴, produced and published in 2009. In the report, situations of abandonment that corroborate in disbelief regarding the qualitative potential of the public school are reported.

⁴ Available at: <<http://g1.globo.com/jornaldaglobo/o,,MUL1049128-16021,00-ma+qualidade+do+ensino+atrada+os+alunos+brasileiros.html>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

The following year a breath of fresh air is noticed: the Brazilian education “ascends” from a disastrous condition to a very bad condition! The report “‘Economist’: education in Brazil shifts from disastrous to very bad”⁵ presents data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), showing that teaching has improved. Now it just is ‘very bad’ (and here a pinch of irony can be seen).

Still affected by a slight improvement, education in Brazil seems still far short of ideas for quality, for on February 21, 2011, an important television daily news program aired in a large Brazilian Broadcasting Corporation, presented a news story entitled “The abandonment of public schools by Brazil is impressive”⁶. This report was also posted on the varieties website of the broadcaster. The situation of abandonment of public schools in four Brazilian States was unveiled in the report. The diagnosis presented schools with ceiling without coverage; classrooms improvised in garages; broken furniture stacked, among other situations, that could be considered at least peculiar, were included.

However and despite any improvements, a great number of media products are dedicated to addressing the precarious conditions of public education establishments, as well as the omission of public authorities in relation to working conditions in public schools. This scenario makes concerns and condemns in relation to the quality of basic education recurrent, as in reports “High school quality worries the Government”⁷; “Municipalities face the challenge of school illiteracy”, October 1, 2008⁸,

⁵ Available at: <<http://noticias.terra.com.br/educacao/noticias/0,,014836943-E18266,00-Economist+ensino+no+Brasil+passa+de+desastroso+a+muito+ruim.html>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

⁶ Available at: <<http://g1.globo.com/videos/jornal-hoje/v/abandono-das-escolas-publicas-pelo-brasil-impressiona/1441502>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

⁷ Available at: <<http://noticias.terra.com.br/brasil/noticias/0,,01316918-E1194,00-Qualidade+do+ensino+medio+preocupa+o+governo.html>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

⁸ Available at: <<http://noticias.terra.com.br/educacao/noticias/0,,013225581-E18266,00-Municipios+enfrentam+desafio+do+analfabetismo+escolar.html>>. accessed on: March 30, 2012.

or “It’s hard to teach and learn without knowing what the value of education is”, from July 8, 2010⁹.

Situations such as the lack of teachers, repeated strikes, academic achievement shorter than expected, alarming levels of school failure, deficit of placement offers in basic education, cuts in ‘expenses’ for education, situations of violence, compromised buildings, precarious conditions of hygiene, bathrooms without doors etc. compose the agenda of a set of media products where a routine of abandonment and the constant registration/complaint is revealed.

The facts are impressive! However, they only add up to an increasing number of situations that are featured in media products and public debates, filling more and more room. Taking advantage of the repercussions of the facts involving the education, media products present, mostly, a character of complaint before the scenario in which the basic education in public institutions develops.

If these media products of denunciative character cause a certain initial impact, the idea that these might not be isolated cases regarding the public school is certainly scary. Likewise, are scary the acute situation of the quality of education offered in public establishments and the dichotomy between the access and success in public school, which composes an equation that deserves the attention of researchers involved in the field of education; because “the first deadlock in public elementary school in Brazil concerns the necessity to create a new reference model of ‘school quality’, in which quality education for all might mean, genuinely, ‘quality education for all’” (ARELARO, 2005, p. 1047-1048).

In Brazil, for example, if the education emerges as a constitutional right; this is why it is possible to understand that the subtraction of this right is unconstitutional. Now, one can wonder with propriety if the lack of investment, the abandonment, the carelessness, the negligence, and the omission regarding the public education could also be classified

⁹ Available at: <<http://g1.globo.com/educacao/noticia/2010/07/opiniao-e-dificil-ensinar-e-aprender-sem-saber-qual-e-o-valor-da-educacao.html>>. Accessed on: March 30, 2012.

as an unconstitutional act. This is due to the fact that “the importance of education to the process of building democracy in the country has always been greatly emphasized, but not necessarily made effective” (CURY, 2000, p. 583).

Compete for such a situation, to a large extent, the ideas and social representations linked to political culture, which is why in Brazil — and in other countries with colonial legacies — the right to education

lived and live with huge social inequalities. In them, with inequality, the inheritance of prejudice and ethnic and gender discrimination incompatible with civil rights is added. In many of these countries, the formalization of social gains in law and in law not enough to commit because of these constraints inherited from the past that are still present in societies (CURY, 2002b, p. 256-257).

Imagine a student who has been enrolled in a school whose building presents an inadequate infrastructure and even dangerous. The right to education is guaranteed. However, the right to health, well-being and learning is seriously threatened. A student with a guaranteed placement offer at a school whose floor presents poor conditions has the right to education guaranteed. But what about the dignity of the human person as a constitutional basement (Article 1^o, item III, Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988), would it not be associated with a minimum of safety conditions at school? Besides, is it not the safety at school an intrinsic condition to quality learning?

In this direction, the Brazilian legislation urges that education be offered with some quality for, within the Art. 4 of 96 in/9.394 NEBGL, education is quoted as a citizen’s right to education and a duty of the State to address it through *qualified offer*

Art. 4^o the duty of the State with public school education will be made effective by ensuring [...] IX – minimum standards of educational quality, defined as the minimum quantity and variety, per pupil, of essential inputs to the development of the teaching-learning process.

The words of Bobbio inferred that the existence of a right relationally alludes to the existence of a regulatory system comprising “both the mere exterior factor of a historic or current right, and the recognition of a set of rules as a guide of action itself. The figure of law has as its correlative the figure of obligation” (1992, p. 79-80) and to the State it is appealed, constantly, the guarantee of both the universalization, and the quality of education.

Since a great amount of public schools are located in peripheral areas and, often, serving highly vulnerable communities and at social risk, to discuss the right to education beyond the right to placement offers, but how the right to quality education becomes a discussion that transcends the school space and is inserted in a broader social sphere. Obtaining a placement offer, in public school, is part of the right to education, which will only flow if this placement offer comes contemplated with quality benchmarks.

And the issue of quality goes through a school experience that meets, in fact, an ontological training perspective of the human being. Therefore, the epigraph of the text is brought up once more: it is not an opposition between quantity and quality, but of a quality concept disjointed from the full attainment of a right. It is not a philosophical, but a political question, of human rights.

In addition, over the years, the schools have been compelled by the context to take on the role of cultural centers of neighborhoods, where the different cultural possible manifestations in local realities flock, such as theatrical performances, festivals, community events, training courses, mother clubs etc.

Within this perspective, the school legitimizes the community, references, agglutinates. The school also collaborates in family and community organization, deepening the principles that allow the achievement of citizenship. Therefore, the higher the school integration in community life is, the higher the possibilities of citizenship.

In the absence of social policies that meet the needs such as health and leisure in the districts and neighborhoods of the city, the school becomes the space provided for filling such gaps. Not that the

school has to take social care tasks, but a school could receive communities that are on the edge of poverty line and that find in it an aid structure. It is the presence of the State, the legitimacy of public space.

On the one hand, the access to the public school is, in extent, guaranteed through the extension of the offer, considering policies such as the construction of new schools and classrooms; purchase of furniture; establishment of covenants and public-private partnerships; establishment and adjustment of the system of collaboration between the educational systems. On the other hand, still the same cannot be said of the permanence and the success in public school.

Whereas the triad access/permanence/success can be characterized as one of the indicators of the degree of quality of education, to face what separates us from the permanence and massive success in school is a challenge that is established beyond the (important) theoretical debate.

The success in public school benches is still a goal to be pursued and that requires a commitment around policies such as: democratic management of education; investment in teacher training, both initial and recurrent; study and adoption of differentiated teaching methodologies etc. In fact, the access to school is the first face of the right, being complemented, obligatorily, by educational success (flow correction, assessment policies and curriculum etc.).

Our educational citizenship is far from being an example. We live with millions of children out of school or in school, but not in the appropriate age. We have advanced a lot in this field, but as long as there is a child without school or not in the appropriate age, the right of all and the duty of the State will not have been embodied. We have millions of young people and adults who have not had the opportunity to enter the school or that had to leave earlier, due to survival conditions or repetition. Preschool and high school are still a privilege (CURY, 2000, p. 569).

If a statement is, etymologically what we declare, what we affirm, what we confess, to declare education as a human right and treat it with lower

importance is, at the very least, counterproductive, since what is in discussion when the right to education is vilified is not only the right to school benches, but a benchmark of citizenship that goes far beyond the same benches.

Final considerations

Education is the point at which we decide if we love the world enough to take responsibility for it and, with such a gesture, save it from the ruin that would be inevitable if not for the renovation and the advent of new and young people. Education is, also, where we decide if we love our children enough to not expel them from our world and abandon them to their own resources, and neither take from their hands the opportunity to embark on something new and unexpected to us, preparing them instead in advance for the task of renewing a common world (ARENDRT, 1979, p. 247).

What touches the most in the vilified epigraph of the text, is the surgical precision with which Hanna Arendt stresses that education is the moment when we show, materially (and in the already worn propagandist speeches) how much we believe in the future. Materially, the academic perspective and scientific production can collaborate with bets — here understood as metaphors for projects — established in political dimensions and, therefore, practices.

The theme of education as a right still figures in the order of the speech, but, from what we can infer from the analysis of the empirical material collected, with a large gap in relation to the practical issues, which allows to insist on the grounds that it is not enough to simply put everyone in school to achieve the guarantee of this right.

There are, by examination of the empirical material collected, possibilities to allocate the right to education at levels that go beyond the mere conquest of placement in public school: ensure the permanence, school success and a minimum (decent) quality standard so that, finally, the right to education is guaranteed.

The achievement of a right is not detached from contextual conditions, that can ensure this right effectively, apart from statements. For the right to be made effective, it is necessary to temporize the rhetoric and consolidate in action, ensuring the right to quality education in addition beyond the plan of intent.

In this line of reasoning, the public administration, if discursively prioritizes the education, it deserves to be subsidized and encouraged to move actions and effective policies to ensure a surely qualitative education, seriously conjecturing possibilities for education as a complete right. After all, education and quality can be regarded as two sides of the same coin.

It becomes, at this point, legitimate the initial use of the epigraph of this final considerations, for there would not be possible to have a contrast between quantity and quality, or between the quantitative offer of education and the qualitative pedagogical actions launched in the formal spaces where the placement offers were made available. However, there seems to be in our country – in some contexts – a gap between intention and the action of shaping these two concepts. The existence of such a gap, of course, is not a problem of philosophical order, but political.

It remains to engage efforts to make, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the pledge of concrete actions which materialize public policies that consider education as a right, but not any education. Buildings with proper conditions of hygiene, safety and furniture; well prepared and properly remunerated teachers; the democratization of the school management; and the guarantee of adequate standards of learning for all students are, finally, minimum quality indicators in education. Without they, the noised right becomes just a numeric data and of a proselytizing speech.

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