

# Basic human and social rights and the democratic school on the European (semi)periphery\*

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This article<sup>1</sup> is part of a recently published case study of a school (with youth from 10 to 16 years of age) located in the Northern Coastal region of Portugal. The title of this case study is *Escola e Aprendizagem para o Trabalho num Pais da (Semi)periferia Europeia* (Stoer & Araújo, 1992). On the basis of 4 years of participative school-based research, carrying out what one author has termed «critical ethnography» (Anderson, 1989), it is argued in this study that mass schooling in Portugal is simultaneously in the process of consolidation and crisis. In this article one defends the idea that this fact (by promoting within the school other attitudes, values and beliefs than those normally identified with mass schooling) may provide the basis for promoting educational change in Portugal.

In raising the question of basic human rights and the democratic school in Portugal, we also want to raise the question: how to think the social materiality of the semiperiphery with regard to education? In a previous work (Stoer & Araújo, 1990a), we referred to this materiality in a number of ways. Firstly we reemphasized Sousa Santos's statement (1985: 872/38) that «the strength of the state (in the semiperiphery) does not easily convert itself into the legitimation of the state (as occurs, generally, in centre countries)», a fact which, we argued, has reinforced a certain dependency on international organizations for the justification of education policy formulation (the imposition of an educational model considered «appropriate» for Portugal by, particularly, the OECD and the World Bank has been referred to in a number of works – see, for example, Stoer, 1986; Stoer & Dale, 1987; and also, Stoer, Stoleroff, & Correia, 1990). Secondly, we focused on the concept of the *semiproletariat* (Wallerstein, 1983) which in semiperipheral Portugal has been referred to as the mutation of peasant groups into a group which works part-time in agriculture (Pinto, 1985, 1988; Santos, 1990), and which has been accompanied by the

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expansion of mass schooling (both related to, in Offe's words [1984], the increasing penetration of capitalist social relations into the countryside and the guarantee that labour is available for entry onto the labour market).

In addition, there exist conditioning factors which define and frame the development of the democratic school in Portugal: for example, the specific development of mass schooling in small European nation states in the 19th century (see Ramirez & Boli, 1987) may have interest for understanding better the Portuguese case (where, indeed, like other States such as Austria, the principle of compulsory schooling was precociously established in relation to the major economically dominant states of the era (on this question see, for example, Sampaio, 1978; and Araújo, 1990). Today's context of educational reform in Portugal also needs to be considered<sup>2</sup>. Popkewitz (1988: 77) has referred to the educational reform process in the USA as functional and normative: «The rituals and rhetoric of reform serve to make schooling credible in the face of unanticipated and unwilled circumstances. Images of institutions are produced that are progressive and benevolent». Thus the reform process acts as «part of a technology of change where our hopes and desires come up against the social realities of inequalities and injustices» (1988: 77). In this way, educational reform is a process of the construction of public consensus where the «reform functions to legitimate the ongoing power relations of school in a manner that makes those relations seem to benefit all rather than a few» (p. 82). In the context of educational reform in the United States, Popkewitz asks: «how does official public discourse define the crisis of the school?» The question in semiperipheral Portugal, however, becomes (and this we want to explore below): how does official public discourse define, simultaneously, the crisis and the consolidation of mass schooling?<sup>3</sup>

### **The context of the crisis and the consolidation of mass schooling in Portugal**

The crisis of mass schooling, referred to by Popkewitz, is clearly related to the crisis of Fordism and the so-called youth crisis (youth unemployment)<sup>4</sup>. In Portugal this has been expressed,

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to a «paradigm shift», not unsimilar to that developed by Ball with regard to the English context (Ball, 1990), Portuguese education has been undergoing a major Reform process since 1986. The implementation stage has continued into the 1990s.

<sup>3</sup> This idea has been expressed in a very creative way by Sousa Santos (1988) as the existence of both modernism and post-modernism in the same social formation. Thus, the consolidation of mass schooling fulfills a promise of the project of modernity, while the crisis of this same schooling refers to the post-modernist condition.

<sup>4</sup> Historians and pedagogues, like Jacky Beillerot in France (1982) and António Nóvoa in Portugal (1987), have referred to the end of what they call the «pedagogic century». The crisis of mass schooling has to do with its incapacity, up to

with reference to work carried out in England (see, for example, Bates et al., 1984), as the «new vocationalism» and the effects of «productive» education policy in a context of modernization ideology (see, for example, Stoer, Stoleroff, & Correia, 1990; Correia, Stoleroff, & Stoer, 1992). In fact, as one would expect, it is the discourse associated with this latter ideology which has promoted the consolidation of mass schooling in the country. Indeed, only very recently, with the approval of the General Education Law (Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo, 1986), did compulsory schooling become applicable until 15 years of age. Thus, only in this present decade of the 1990s will Portugal finally be able to claim mass schooling, in spite of having been in the vanguard, in the 19th century, with respect to the establishment of the principle of compulsory schooling<sup>5</sup>. The simultaneous crisis and consolidation of mass schooling in Portugal, in all its semiperipheral specificity, brings together in time and space a number of social struggles that in centre countries occurred separately. Below we shall return to consider the possible effects of this phenomenon.

In the case study of a school<sup>6</sup> located in a semirural zone in the northern coastal region of Portugal, interviews were carried out with teachers (Stoer & Araújo, 1992). These interviews accentuate the importance of the role which the school is perceived as having (or, rather, having but not achieving), by teachers, with regard to the world of productive work, particularly in terms of the «development and modernization of local agriculture». Specifically, many of the teachers believe that the contemporary Portuguese school does not prepare children and youth for «active life», which appears generally to mean preparation for a place in the manual labour market or in low-placed jobs in the tertiary sector. For a few others, however, there is a genuine preoccupation to assure that youth can, via the school, and after leaving it, live meaningful lives in accordance with more diversified perspectives which depend on the integral development of their potential. In general, expectations by teachers with respect to the future working lives of

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now, to resolve the question of social and cultural inequality. Even further, it has to do with the actual promotion of inequality within the school. Interesting in this respect are Wallerstein's comments on the subject (1984: 154-55): «The major social mechanism created presumably to allocate individuals to occupations by virtue of talent rather than descent – the educational system – in fact functions only among the «free» laborers, and even for them primarily as a way of maintaining descent lines by making exceptions for the very few (co-optation of bright individuals from the working classes) and thereby justifying the caste-allocation for the remaining vast majority. The justification is now more subtle and effective than that of redistributive systems: instead of the inevitability of fate or the will of God, caste-allocation is claimed to be the consequence of the application of human reason. Each individual is said to have a status he has achieved, rather than one ascribed to him». On Fordism and the youth crisis in Portugal, see Stoer and Stoleroff (1988).

<sup>5</sup> Soysal and Strang's characterization of the «rhetorical construction of education» appears to fit the Portuguese case like a glove: «(some) states were precocious in the formulation of the principle of compulsory schooling but incapable of carrying it out» (1989: 285).

<sup>6</sup> The school is a «C+S», meaning that it has from the 5th to the 9th years.

their pupils are low and there exists, at least in part as a consequence of this fact, an absence of intellectual stimulation and the absence of an overall atmosphere of academic excellence in the school while at the same its expressive side is highly developed (Stoer & Araújo, 1992).

As far as the parents of the youth of the school are concerned, they too, in the eyes of the teachers, have low expectations with respect to their children's success in the school. Parents's strategies with regard to the school appear to be more instrumental and include guaranteeing that their children receive the diploma of minimum compulsory education (above all to assure that their children may obtain a driving licence) and forms of control and custody of their children while they themselves are away from the home working. Seeing that their children continue their studies beyond the compulsory level, or a vision of schooling as a means for upward social mobility, do not appear to be concerns, particularly for those families working only in agriculture («monoactive» families). Even for other families more «pluriactive» in nature (the semiproletariat), the school exists mainly as a means for legitimating compulsory schooling as a way of gaining access to the wage relation and as a means of providing a break with agricultural work.

The social «realities» of youth in the area surrounding the school do not appear to be very much different from that image presented by the teachers in the interviews. On the one hand, there are a significant number of youth still attending school who are involved in work activities, often for a considerable number of hours, during the school week. These youth may be seen as making up part of the agricultural, small family shop and domestic reserve armies of labour referred to by authors such as Almeida (1986) and Madureira Pinto (1985). On the other hand, there are many youth who have left school «prematurely» and are caught up in the clandestine, unofficial, labour market with its precarious, routine, intense and poorly paid work. Both worlds make up the subterranean world of work that, in large part, engulfs these semirural youth. Both worlds also constitute enormous constraints on the way mass schooling and its expansion are perceived by these youth and their families and also constraints on the way the institutional reality of the local school is lived by them.

In a previous work (Stoer and Araújo, 1990b), we were able to roughly calculate agricultural, shop and domestic work loads for the aforementioned youth of the school under study. This was accomplished through the use of diaries filled out by youth (of the 6th and 8th years of schooling) during one full week: thus it was noted that a significant number of pupils had high agricultural, and other, work loads. The following passages testify to the long hours spent before and after school, and during the weekend, in chores that, in some cases, are equivalent to the hours making up the adult working week:

I hauled the hay; I fed the cows; I spread hay on the ground; I lit the wood stove; I started getting lunch ready.  
(girl, 14 years of age, 6th year)

I went to help my Dad. We cut the hay, loaded up the tractor. We arrived home and unloaded the tractor and made the animals's beds; I fed the cattle and then cleaned out the stable. We went to prune; I went again to feed the cattle; I gave some food to the rabbits; we went to milk the cows and carry crops to the silo; I cleaned out the stable again and bottle-fed the calves. (boy, 14 years of age, 6th year)

I dressed my brother and my sister and fed them; I started to fix lunch (light the wood stove); I put some things in the pot and washed the dishes; I finished with lunch and began to clean the house. I went to the seamstress to collect the clothes. When I got home, I went to fetch the milk. Then I started to make dinner. (girl, 11 years of age, 6th year)

I went out into the field with the cows; I cut hay for the cows; I went with the cows; I separated the bad potatoes from the good ones; I poured wine from the barrel into bottles for a man to buy; I took the cows to graze; I fed the cows fodder; I was cleaning the kitchen with my brother. (boy, 11 years of age, 6th year)

### **Education policy, Portuguese specificity and the principle of educational opportunity**

How does education policy in Portugal contribute to consolidate mass schooling among social groups whose children are, in fact, either part of a reserve army of labour or caught up in the clandestine labour market? There does not appear to exist either reflection or debate at this level such that education policy might respond to the challenges resulting from this semiperipheral reality. Schools and their teachers claim to guide themselves according to the principle that all are treated in the same manner, on the basis of a citizenship that is equal for all<sup>7</sup>. However, in this school, as in other similar ones, the sons and daughters of peasants and peasant-workers are those most negatively affected by school selection, including high rates of school failure and, above all, high rates of school dropout which lead to precocious entry onto the (normally) clandestine, informal, labour market.

Thus, the relevance of the school for the lives of the youth of the area is far from evident. A fact which is even more apparent for the parents of these youth. In this sense, mass schooling, as a legitimating agency for the democratic state, finds its very existence either directly challenged – resulting in a devaluation of representative democracy («they gave us schools which are no use to us at all») – or manipulated by the strategies of parents and pupils which have objectives having very little to do with those defined by the school, or by the education system in general (such objectives might include, for example, simply obtaining a «credential», the control of children, a means of escaping from work in the fields, etc.). One might say that parents

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<sup>7</sup> State policy here is mainly financial limited to providing milk in school and partially subsidized school lunches, to providing some free transport for children at compulsory school age and some subsidies for the acquisition of school supplies.

and pupils do not necessarily reject the school, but that they make the best possible use of it, given that it is compulsory, to serve their own ends. The «premature» exit by many youth from the school in order to start work locally (or abroad through emigration<sup>8</sup>) illustrates precisely this aspect, while at the same time it reveals the defeat of the meritocracy and the forms of socialization (and reproduction) associated with it. The school itself, its teachers and its remaining staff, appear to adapt themselves to such strategies to the extent that they do not demand much of their pupils from a cognitive point of view. As a result, the principle of educational opportunity, central to the modernization project and to meritocratic ideology, and fundamental for the well-balanced functioning of the democratic state, assumes an inferior status, finding itself to some extent «sacrificed».

In light of what has been said so far, it is of central importance to ask to what extent the Portuguese education system may be termed democratic. Carnoy and Levin (1985) state that the orienting principle of the American education system is, in fact, equality of educational opportunity (a principle which has, indeed, suffered considerable evolution throughout the 20th century). The application of this principle depends, however, not only on the internalization of the principles defended by the modern democratic state with regard to basic social and human rights, but also a relative equilibrium with regard to overall economic development. Thus, unequal development, typical of a semiperipheral country, and the fact that there exist «indicators which lead us to conclude that public administrators in Portugal have still not internalized basic social rights and, as a result, have not transformed (such rights) into practice and into a service ideology» (Santos, 1987: 58), obliges us to raise questions with regard to the efficacy of the application of the principle of equality of opportunity in the Portuguese school.

Our work demands, therefore, that we pose several questions. What are the effects of the meritocratic school on a semirural community? What do these in turn mean for the school-community link in the semirural context? To what extent, and in what manner, does the semirural community act on a school which aims to orient itself according to the principle of equality of educational opportunity? There appear to exist few doubts that, as a result of the relaxed hierarchical relations present in the school under study, the more rigid and hierarchical structure of the monoactive family is to a certain extent challenged by the school. And the teachers, inevitably, and in spite of the great emphasis placed on the expressive side of schooling in this particular school (which is only efficient to a certain extent with regard to the school's credentializing function), contribute to raising the expectations of their pupils both with regard to entry onto the labour market and with regard to the standards of living and consumption

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<sup>8</sup> There are approximately one million (in a population of ten million) Portuguese working in other counties of the European Community.

in their communities. This also has to do with the learning process inherent to mass schooling (even though it may be limited), which includes the use and development of language, of sciences and of all that makes up modern learning in the school. In their interviews, some teachers showed themselves aware of this question and afraid that their pedagogical action could exacerbate the «cultural gap» existing between the «urban» school and the semirural context. Finally, the ethos of this particular school encourages the promotion, particularly among non-curricular activities, of local culture within the school. This fact provides for a space, within the school, where national culture, in its educational form, may be «challenged» in an interesting and positive way. We wonder if this challenge is sufficiently taken advantage of by the school's educational agents and by its pupils.

In light of the quite complex context presented above, it may be revealing to ask (while remembering that the democratic management of schools – the election by teachers of their directing administrative and pedagogical bodies – was introduced into Portuguese schools during the revolutionary period of 1974-75): what operational conceptualizations of the «democratic school» are present in the school under study? Each conceptualization constitutes an educational philosophy which then provides a vehicle for the concretisation of the principle of equality of educational opportunity in terms of educational practices. On the basis of observation and interviews the following heuristic definitions were constructed: a) for the Parents' Association: the democratic school is one that develops individual capacities on the basis of merit and talent – schooling is seen as a means of obtaining desired social and occupational positions; b) for many teachers: the democratic school should develop in pupils those capacities/skills needed by the country and the region to promote the modernization process thus assuring that the youth of the school are, in general, functionally adequate, cognitively, for the local labour market; c) for some «militant» teachers: the democratic school implies a conception of the school that is based on elements of what we have above termed the expressive order of the school, i.e., a communicative space where pupil identities are allowed to develop on the basis of participation in activities related mainly to their cultural origins – thus providing them with an opportunity to make their voices heard (one may argue that this definition is more a condition for the democratic school than a concretization of it); d) for economists/sociologists: the preoccupation is above all one of preparing youth for regional and national needs in terms of the modernization process while at the same time promoting school and work relations that emphasize the local integration of youth, thus protecting them with regard to the local labour market (in this way youth develop their own local culture while at the same time they assume their humanity through work, a notion which implies a strong emphasis on the democratization of the work process); e) for some educators: the main aim is to avoid the precocious channelling of youth into jobs – equality of opportunity means not only turning ascriptive status into

achieved status, but also equality of results, of school success, which depends on a form of cultural production that involves the confrontation of different cultures in the school (the promotion of cultural pluralism, or perhaps, better, promotion of the notion of *culture as a social practice*<sup>9</sup>) and the internalization of human and social rights by teachers; f) for the State, and in official education policy: the democratic school refers to equality of access plus some promotion of school success (see *Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*, 1986) and making sure that the school is in tune with the identity and fundamental values of the Nation and with the demands of the modernization process in Portugal (the latter being nicely captured in the following phrase by Roberto Carneiro, former Minister of Education: «[the process of] the enterprising of the school and the schooling of the enterprise» – see Carneiro, 1988: 18).

These different conceptualizations of the democratic school in the semiperiphery (in the European context) suggest that it is necessary to consider *simultaneously* the complexity of the crisis and the consolidation of mass schooling in Portugal. This is due to the fact that the contradiction existing between the *process* (the logic of accumulation) and the *context* (the promotion of equality of educational opportunity) of the expansion of mass schooling in Portugal assumes a dimension and a specificity only explicable in light of the country's position in the world system. The nature of the process as well as of the context, and of the different solutions rehearsed to resolve the contradiction between both, will also take on their own peculiar identity.

### **The expansion of mass schooling and the principle of equality of educational opportunity**

Rubinson has recently argued (1986: 519) that «(...) what is distinctive about the structure of U.S. schooling is its limited degree of stratification. The role of class forces on U.S. schooling has been very limited when compared with Europe». Defining equality of educational opportunity in the United States, Coleman writes (1972: 217):

In the United States, nearly from the beginning, the concept of educational opportunity had a special meaning which focused on equality. This meaning included the following elements: 1) Providing a free education up to a given level which constituted the principal entry point to the labor force; 2) Providing a common curriculum for all children, regardless of background; 3) Partly by design and partly because of low population density, providing that children from diverse backgrounds attend the same school; 4) Providing equality within a given locality, since local taxes provided the source of support for schools.

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<sup>9</sup> As defined by Mohanty (1989), who, in recognizing historical agency, attempts to overcome both a naive position with respect to power (ethnocentrism) and cultural determinism (the relativist position).



Equality of educational opportunity in Europe, however, developed differently. From the beginning «restrictive policies were implemented because the dominant elites could bypass electoral politics and impose a stratified structure through the state bureaucracies» (Rubinson, 1986: 541). Thus, «business elites used the state as an ally, and educators were forced to support vocationalism» (*ibidem*). In England this tension produced what Finn et al. (1977: 184) have termed «the dual repertoire of social-democratic ideology», i.e., the split between «Egalitarians» (where education has been seen largely as a «right» co-extensive with citizenship or «humanity») and the «Fabians» (where education has been ultimately seen as a matter of utility through the distribution of skills)<sup>10</sup>.

In the current discourse of educational reform in Portugal, the principle of equality of educational opportunity appears clearly equated with «flexibilization» – in opposition to 'bureaucratic «rigidity»<sup>11</sup> – and a call for «diversification», not only of what the education system offers but also in the way it assesses what it offers. Correia, Stoleroff and Stoer (1992) argue that official educational discourse expresses, in the 1980s, a subordination of education policy to the conjunctural concerns of economic and industrial policy exemplified by constant references such as the following: «the reinforcement and diversification of the supply of training schemes, better linkages between the school system and professional training and the channeling of resources into longer lasting programmes, these are some of the strategic aims outlined by Bagão Félix<sup>12</sup> for the next year». The doubt which occurs here is that equality of educational opportunity and the democratic school may not be compatible with an education policy based on a Portuguese version the «new vocationalism».

Nevertheless, it might perhaps be possible to argue that the Portuguese case, in the light of the example of the United States and given the specificity of the conjuncture and the particular social realities in cause, could involve linking the school «more profoundly to the social and cultural tissue of local realities, which is different from subordinating them to business enterprises» (Director-General of GETAP<sup>13</sup> in interview). Portuguese specificity may mean, in this con-

<sup>10</sup> Finn et al. (1977: 184) produced the following typology to characterize the two positions:

Egalitarians	Fabians
«equality»	«equality of opportunity»
social/cultural goals	economic goals
class as division	class as inhibition
education as attitudes, rights, social order or «community»	education as skill, utility, market or «efficiency»

<sup>11</sup> 10 For an analysis of the change in education policy as it moves from a base in the allocation of resources (bureaucratic model) to a base in the productive use of resources (technocratic model), see Dale, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Secretary of State for Employment and Professional Training in *Diário de Notícias*, December, 1989.

<sup>13</sup> GETAP is the (state) Bureau of Technical, Artistic and Professional Schooling.

text, the hypothesis of a form of mass schooling that is less class-based than that which developed in core European countries – thus taking advantage of the specificity of the Portuguese process. However the immediate effect of this policy may be negative, due in large part to the non-existence of alliances (or, at very best, weak alliances) between agents of reproduction (teachers) and agents of production (working parents). Thus the specificity of the Portuguese context confirms, through the elaboration of national education policy, an attempt at adapting education and Portuguese work processes to the demands of «the world of business» anxious to consolidate its reinsertion in the international division of labour (see, among others, Santos, 1990). Bowles and Gintis (1986) defend, as do Dale and Ozga (1991), that the education system lives a contradictory linkage between the liberal democratic state and the capitalist labour market. The former bases itself on persons' rights and democratic accountability, while the latter depends on property rights, contract and unaccountable power. The family is also hierarchized and «authoritarian» in nature and does not base itself on democratic conviviality. In a similar vein, Sousa Santos (1985: 312) refers to the education system as a

cluster of social relations occupying an intermediate position (which lacks structural autonomy) (...) heterogeneous in (its) internal texture, for (it) combines elements of all or some of the structural places» (namely, the i) *householdplace*, ii) the *workplace*, iii) the *citizenplace* and iv) the *worldplace*.

Thus the education system reflects the effects of contradictory developments in the form of «structural places», and its location with regard to the structural places changes over time (for example, with the advent and development of mass schooling the school's location changed from proximity to the *workplace* – learning to labour via the rural family unit and/or the factory school identified with urban industrialism – to a location more clearly identifiable with the *citizenplace* – state (secular, compulsory and free) schooling. Sousa Santos further argues that «heterogeneous clusters enjoy, paradoxically, considerable autonomy from the *workplace*, *citizenplace* and *householdplace* structures due to the influence of the *worldplace* upon them» (1985). Finally, Sousa Santos argues, once again in harmony with Bowles and Gintis, that there exists a hidden base to capitalist development «in a socially constructed suppression of the political and legal character of the social relations inside all institutions (family, national and multinational enterprises) except the state», which means that «capitalism (...) is less than democratic, not because the law of the *citizenplace* is less than democratic, but rather because this form of law, no matter how democratic, must coexist with the more despotic law of production» (1985: 315).

This latter insight on the part of the above authors points to the negative effects which the *unreflected (uncritical)* articulation of the *workplace* and the *householdplace* with the school are having on the operationalization of the principle of equality of opportunity in the semirural school under study. That is, the democratic space provided by the *citizenplace* is not adequa-

tely defined and demarcated vis-a-vis the *workplace* and the *householdplace*. Which means, in other words, that this same space is not appropriated by the educational agents of the school, thus making possible the development, at the same time, of a naive attitude with respect to the relationship which the school establishes, on the one hand, with enterprises, and, on the other, with families from the area surrounding the school. To effectively appropriate the democratic space offered by the proximity of the school to the state, the promises of the project of modernity have to be fulfilled (i.e., the *consolidation* of mass schooling must occur including the internalization by educational agents of basic social and human rights). At the same time, the *crisis* of this same schooling has to be taken advantage of (i.e., there has to take place a *confrontation of cultures* within what has been up to now the monoculture of the meritocratic school – only such a confrontation will make it possible to challenge the «cultural gap» which exists between local culture and national culture<sup>14</sup>).

Also, according to Bowles and Gintis (1988), the *democratic* school (in opposition to the meritocratic school) recognizes *all its members* as rational agents, that is, it does not reduce «learners» to a residual category (i.e., in a phase of development and therefore not yet developed). In liberal philosophy both the family and the school are restricted to the sphere of «learning» in the sense that youth are «learners» who are not yet «choosers». To be a learner implies not yet being capable of choosing rationally with regard to a multiplicity of hypotheses. Therefore neither the family nor the school are required to be accountable to their participants. The key to the democratic school, argue Bowles and Gintis, is a conception of individuals as both «learners» and «choosers» thus making viable liberty, popular accountability and contribution to personal development as criteria for assessment within this institution. Inherent to this conceptualization of pupils as «choosers» is the notion of the inseparability of social rights and citizen rights. In other words, in order to guarantee the internalization of the social rights of pupils it is also necessary to guarantee pupils rights as citizens.

Indeed, to recognize its «learners» as «choosers», thus making itself accountable to personal development and to the community, the school must take full advantage of its «proximity» to the *citizenplace*. This fact will enable it to promote the internalization of basic human and social rights by its educational agents. Sousa Santos (1989) refers to «human rights [as] one of the principal promises of the project of modernity». He identifies three periods of capitalist develop-

<sup>14</sup> See Iturra (1990), who makes a distinction between «national culture and memory» in Portugal, based on «the transmission of knowledges and orientations which aim at the integration of domestic groups within the symbolic space of the nation» (pp. 54-55), and «local rural culture» which is characterized «firstly, by its intimate link to emotivity and to the hierarchical system of loyalty which presupposes the kinship system which supports it. Secondly, it is a knowledge based on action, not abstraction, a knowledge which has its origin in doing and not in hearing, in seeing and believing and not in the systematization of experimental facts» (pp. 46-47).

ment in centre countries: the period of liberal capitalism covering almost all the 19th century; the period of organized capitalism beginning at the end of the 19th century and extending to the 1960s; and the period of disorganized capitalism which began in the 1960s and continues today. During the first period civic and political rights were secured to a great extent via the struggle of the working classes. During the second period, the «second generation» of human rights occurs with the consolidation of social and economic rights. Finally, the third period, which we are living now, has seen the advent of cultural rights often related to as alternative ways of life. The crisis of modernity is reckoned to put in cause human rights previously thought secure – especially the second generation referred to above.

A post-modern conception of human rights, according to Sousa Santos (1989) involves democratizing the *workplace*, the *householdplace* and the *worldplace* (considered essential not to limit rights to the sphere of the state). The objective must also be to effectively apply human rights. Portugal, it is argued, has only recently achieved the second generation of human rights and the struggle for the third has just begun<sup>15</sup>. Thus, Portugal confronts two major problems: 1) the effective application of recently achieved rights and 2) the fact that the struggle for all three generations of human rights occurs practically at the same time (meaning, effectively, that the struggle for human rights in Portugal cannot be thought of in terms of generations). Finally, recent recognition of the growing importance of the *worldplace* – related to the phenomenon of *globalization* – also obliges the Portuguese to recognize that all human rights are precarious as long as they are not applied in all the world<sup>16</sup>.

## Conclusion

In light of Sousa Santos's considerations, referred to above, the internalization of basic human and social rights by educational agents in Portugal is *at the same time a problem of modernity and a problem of post-modernity*. We have referred to these problems, in educational terms, as the simultaneous crisis and consolidation of mass schooling in Portugal. The outcome, so far, of the crisis and consolidation of mass schooling appears to have been, effectively, in place of the internalization of basic human and social rights, a «bureaucratization» of basic social and human rights which has frequently included: 1) only *formal* loyalty to and identification with

<sup>15</sup> Essential to this process was the «April Revolution of Carnations» of 1974/75.

<sup>16</sup> At the same time that one recognizes human rights as precarious in Portugal as long as they are not applied in all the world, one can also argue that the principle of equality of educational opportunity based on school success only makes sense when thought globally, and not merely at the level of the so-called Nation-State.

the principle of equality of educational opportunity; 2) a *recognition* of different cultures which stops short of a knowledge of cultural differences; 3) empathy with different cultures (when it exists<sup>17</sup>) based on a pedagogic model which stresses the *autonomy of cultures* rather than proposing *confrontation between cultures*; and 4) a structural determination which constrains the efforts of teachers and which is materialized in their very expectations with regard to the youth of the school. This determination results from the way the school «occupies» space in the locality and from the curricula and resources which it «offers» to the youth of the region (which includes developing an agriculture suitable for the EEC with a «hoe» – see Stoer & Araújo, 1992, for comments by the teacher of horticulture).

In sum, our study suggests that human and social rights are proclaimed but, indeed, not concretized in the Portuguese school. The heterogeneous and contradictory nature of the «cluster of social relations» that is the school makes its development as mass schooling, particularly in the semiperiphery, an uneven and tension-laden process<sup>18</sup>. In fact, Sousa Santos's third generation of human rights, cultural rights, defines students as «choosers» and in doing so is more identifiable with the above-mentioned «egalitarians» than with the «Fabians». In the last analysis, culture as a social practice, which in the words of Mohanty (1989) depends on the human capacity to assess actions and intentions with the objective of elaborating a societal project, depends upon the outcome of the struggle for cultural rights, which, ultimately, are at the heart of the principle of equality of educational opportunity. In fact, the (semi)rural culture of our study can only enter the school through the concretization of this principle (*the consolidation of mass schooling*); and this principle, in turn, can only consolidate itself through a knowledge and confrontation with (semi)rural culture (*the crisis of mass schooling*)<sup>19</sup>. In other words, without cultural pluralism, translated via the principle of equality of educational opportunity, there can exist neither a mutual understanding between teachers and pupils nor a space for the confrontation of cultures, which is, in itself, a process dependent on the internalization of basic social and human rights. Cultural as a social practice is more than empathy with different cultures: it involves the production of knowledge, through the confrontation of cultures.

<sup>17</sup> The empathy expressed by some teachers in the school under study is not generalizable to other schools.

<sup>18</sup> There is a danger that mass schooling in Portugal will be constituted as a failure – by middle-class parents who send their children to schools in the private sector – before it *de facto* exists.

<sup>19</sup> Promoting (semi)rural culture in the official, state, school effectively involves a decentering of this same school, in a struggle against the cultural arrogance of mass schooling. Our study has attempted to develop research strategies (for example, the use of diaries, genealogies and life histories) which involve teachers, students and parents in pedagogical processes that attribute value to aspects of (semi)rural culture.

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