

EDUCATION AS A HELP TO THE GROWTH CONSIDERING RELATIONAL APPROACH¹

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ABSTRACT

The Welfare State's typical modern society has been based since its' earliest times on the structural-functionalist theory according to functional/non-functional dichotomy, while using the lib/lab code through which the Market and the State have set themselves as the only producers and distributors of wellness eliminating the solidarity and reciprocity flows. All these has led to an individualist, ethically neutral culture based on the performance, efficiency, productivity and utility in which the person is brought up acquiring different skills and competences through both, theoretical and practical knowledge, willing to obtain a more appropriate and efficient adaptation to the social structures, such as the State, the Market, different firms, social organizations...carrying out a specific role that defines each member as the person they are. However, considering Donati's Relational Theory we recognize the critical need of a new "societal" citizenship that introduces a solidarity principle and an exchange and reciprocity code as the new emerging values that demand the concurrence of all social systems (State, Market, Family and Third Sector) in the well-being achievement process. This is how a new sense of relational, associative culture is introduced, claiming for a new perspective when conceiving education as a whole, intellectually, professionally, socially and relationally.

KEYWORDS: Welfare State, functionalism, lib/lab, solidarity, growth.

RESUMEN

La sociedad moderna propia de los Welfare States se ha basado desde sus inicios en la teoría estructural-funcionalista según la dicotomía funcional/no-funcional, al tiempo que ha empleado el código lib/lab mediante el cual el Estado y el Mercado se han erigido como únicos productores y distribuidores de bienestar eliminando los flujos de solidaridad y reciprocidad. Todo ello ha dado lugar a una cultura individualista y éticamente neutra basada en el rendimiento, la eficacia, la productividad y la utilidad en la que la persona es formada e instruida a través de la adquisición y puesta en práctica de conocimientos, destrezas y competencias con el fin de lograr una mayor y más eficaz adaptación a las estructuras sociales objetivas (Estado, mercado, empresa, organización social, etc.) a través del desempeño de un rol social concreto que lo define como persona. Sin embargo, desde la Teoría Relacional de Donati se reconoce la emergencia de una nueva ciudadanía "societaria" que introduce el principio de solidaridad y el código de intercambio y reciprocidad como nuevos valores emergentes y que exigen la concurrencia de todos los subsistemas sociales (Estado, Mercado,

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familia y Tercer Sector) en la producción de bienestar en su más amplio sentido. Así se introduce un nuevo concepto de cultura de tipo relacional, asociativa, que reclama a su vez un nuevo enfoque a la hora de concebir la educación como ayuda al crecimiento integral de la persona en su dimensión intelectual, profesional, humana, social y relacional.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Welfare State*, funcionalismo, *lib/lab*, solidaridad, crecimiento.

1. MODERN WELFARE STATES' FUNCTIONALIST CULTURE

Modern societies are born with the creation of the Welfare States, mainly after World War Two. With them comes a structural-functionalist culture that advocates social values related to the effectiveness, efficiency, production, performance and activity. Following the functionalist theory, the individual occupies a status-role within the system of status-roles which is what ultimately defines its identity as a citizen and a person. Thus, the individual is considered useful and productive for society as he plays a certain role that proves to be valuable while he produces certain goods and therefore is considered functional.

The functionalist modern culture is guided by the traditional dichotomy of structuralism under the terms functional/non-functional and based on the idea of constant progress: all that proves to be effective, persists over time, while what is considered ineffective or non-functional because it does not meet the criteria determined by the system, eventually disappearing from the social reality on the ground that does not conform to social structures (Donati, 2006).

Thus, what you get is that the individual is identified in relation to the role he plays and how effectively and efficiently he manages to adapt to one or more specific social structures: State, Market, business, social organization, etc. To the extent that demonstrates achieve optimal levels of performance and productivity marked by the system, is valued as a functional individual and therefore useful to society. And from there how to build his own personal identity associated with the status-role long occupied in the system (Donati & Colozzi, et al., 1997). This culture and functionalist logic are the basis for the configuration of Welfare States and their idea of wealth and progress creation, always understood in the material key according to the *lib/lab* code typical of modern societies (Donati, 1999).

2. LIB/LAB CODE AND THE REDUCCIONIST CONCEPT OF WELFARE

Welfare States assume from the beginning the *lib/lab* code typical of modern western societies. This means, on one hand, freedom of the Market to create the maximum possible resources and provisions to ensure the economic or material welfare provided to citizens (*lib*), and secondly, on social equality intended by the State through redistribution to citizens to ensure the same level of welfare (*lab*). Thus, the political system is made only by political and economic elites responsible for producing,

managing and redistributing goods to the citizens included in the nation-State, that act as a mere recipient under the umbrella of centralized and protectionist system (Donati, 2002, 1985).

The use of this typically modern code leads to the elimination of the flows of solidarity and reciprocity existing in earlier societies (Donati, 1996), since it is each individual person who works and struggles for the attainment of new and more extensive rights that allow access to more and better goods. Thus, the protectionist State leads to an exacerbated individualism and the neutralization of ethics (Donati, 2004), since all social realities are seen, judged and valued in terms of progress and functionality.

Therefore, society appreciates and rewards the individual who is able to adapt himself to the social structure and develop the role that has been allocated in the most efficient and functional as possible, according to the levels of performance, efficiency, productivity and utility set. Solidarity, non-commercial symbolic exchange and mutual assistance are relegated to a residual own private spheres or life worlds (Donati, Maccarini & Stanzani, 1997). At the same time, the neighbor is seen as another individual competing against me for same property rights, accepted and valued for what he is but not recognized as who he is. In the field of education and training that is reflected in the emphasis currently given to instruction in knowledge, skills and the acquisition of certain personal and professional skills, underestimating or even ignoring other dimensions of the person which also need to be educated : human, social, spiritual, ethical, moral and relational.

This lib/lab configuration of modern society causes the elimination of the social fabric founded on the basis of reciprocity and solidarity for two reasons: because wealth production and distribution are State (lab) and Market's (lib) monopoly and primary and secondary networks are relegated to a residual level; and because welfare is understood only in the functional key, material, financial and commercial welfare. The implications in the field of education are clear: the child or young person is educated and trained in a range of knowledge, skills and competencies that enable him better and more responsibly to existing social structures (State, Market, company, organization, etc.) and facilitate his effective performance and functional role that is assigned to him. At the same time, diminish the importance of ethics and social morality, solidarity between equals, exchange and reciprocity with neighbors and the creation of true human, social and relational welfare. Therefore, personal growth is reduced to individual's functional development, the *who* (person) is reduced to the *what* (thing) (Spaemann, 2000).

3. RELATIONAL APPROACH AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SOLIDARITY AS NEW SYMBOLIC CODE

According to sociological relational theory examines how the Welfare State's crisis brings up a new corporate type of citizenship which is characterized by the emergence of new forms of social organization characteristic of "social private" or Third Sector (Donati, 1999, 2011). These intermediary organizations are built around common needs, objectives and goals that lead to collective identities and new social subjects. They aim to identify social pathologies, identify new needs and demand citizenship

rights for excluded social groups. Therefore play a mediating role between citizens and the State or administrative apparatus.

In this new corporate configuration occurs a phenomenon of social associations' explosion leading to the appreciation of the Third Sector as a social subsystem which together with the family produces a type of goods that neither the State nor the Market are capable of producing: relational goods (Donati & Colozzi, et al., 1994). In the family are private and relational goods in the Third Sector collective relational goods. Both primary networks (family, friends and neighborhood) and secondary networks (Third Sector's organizations) are based on the symbolic code of solidarity and mutual aid that uses symbolic exchange and trust as a means of creation and distribution of human and relational welfare. Therefore there is a discontinuity of modern society for two reasons (Donati & Lucas, 1987): on the one hand, welfare's production and distribution is no longer the sole task of political and economic elites and calls for the integration and collaboration of the four social subsystems: the State with public goods, the Market with private goods, the family with private relational goods and Third Sector groups with collective relational goods. On the other hand, leave the reductionist view of what welfare is understood only in the material, economic or commercial key and begins to contemplate the need to produce any other kind of human being that responds to human, social, spiritual and relational needs that people show.

This leads to the emergence of solidarity and reciprocity flows own private spheres or life-worlds through which people are recognized for who they are and what they are above functional / non-functional citizen (Donati & Lucas, 1987). This principle of solidarity leads people to identify common needs and goals and to associate around shared goals with the aim of creating the common good (Donati, Maccarini & Stanzani, 1997). Then, recover a social or moral ethics based on human, social and relational exchange, on trust and mutual aid, on reciprocity. In this way, arises a new active citizenship who doesn't remain oblivious to the new social pathologies, but cares for others, for the true common good (Donati, 2004). A citizenship that is not limited to claim new individual rights to the protectionist State, but it is associated and grouped around common needs and demands new collective rights, taking an active role in solving social problems and demanding the cooperation of the four social subsystems.

The introduction of this principle of solidarity in postmodern society allows us to speak about rights but also about duties (Donati & Colozzi, et al., 1994; Mead, 1986). Citizens' duties for themselves and for those individual or collective subjects or social subsystems that give them new rights which open new avenues of access to welfare in all its dimensions. In this way, the recovery of solidarity and reciprocity flows introduces a new notion of identity that accepts and recognizes the other in the common and in the differences (Donati, 2006). At the same time, it eliminates individualism and allows the creation of new organization and association's forms for the creation and distribution of welfare in all its aspects. This results in greater social cohesion and the creation of true associative based on solidarity and mutual aid.

4. POSTMODERN RELATIONAL CULTURE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT EDUCATION

The concurrence of new social factors (Third Sector and primary networks) and the integration of the four social subsystems in the creation and distribution of welfare produce a change in the culture's concept. The functionalist lib/lab culture gives way to a corporate culture from a relational approach. This postmodern or corporate societies' relational culture introduces new interpretive approaches and new perspectives that lead us to rethink the purpose of education.

Education has been understood so far as instruction and training in knowledge, skills and competencies that support professional development of the individual to achieve greater and better adaptation to the system and social structures. The main purpose of education has been to train individual workers performing the role assigned to them by society in the most efficient and functional. However, the new corporate citizenship by introducing the principle of solidarity underscores the need to educate people in other dimensions beyond the purely functional. It requires civic, ethical, moral, social, human, spiritual and relational education. Training and education that go beyond merely individual development and intellectual competence and keep the perspective of community, solidarity and mutual assistance, the common good. An education that trains responsible and socially committed citizens.

Therefore, society demands a new comprehensive education that addresses all individual's dimensions: individual, social (or relational) and spiritual. We are speaking about education understood as a help to the person's growth in his whole being and extension (Rodríguez y Altarejos, 2009). The growth of not only intellectual, procedural or professional skills and competencies, but also human, spiritual and relational. Because the new relational society calls for education and training of people to be able to play very diverse nature roles, producing, holding and working effectively and efficiently but also coexist with others making commitments and responsibilities to the common good of all people, accepting and recognizing them in their personal being above the functional role they play.

According to this new approach the teacher establishes a guidance and direction relationship with the student through which favors his growth in a comprehensive and integrated manner, lighting of all the personal dimensions (Polo, 1999). Through it, the teacher suggests, but does not impose, instructs, but also trains and educates. Encourages and facilitates the development of intellectual skills, but also encourages the development and acquisition of habits and virtues, the assimilation of a range of values, ethics and a human and civic morality and awakens in the student a real social sensitivity. A sense of solidarity that cares for others and their personal welfare.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This new relational approach introduces a new perspective that sees education as a help to the growth. Through the relationship established between teachers and learners, the learning process affects the development and empowerment of all those

person's dimensions that are capable of growth and that are essential for the authentic development and deployment of person's being (Polo, 2006). The new corporate citizenship demands that citizens are persons primarily supportive, responsible and committed to the true common good. Individuals concerned about their own personal growth in all its dimensions, but also attentive to the social needs, the welfare of the people coexist with. Willing to contribute and help to the growth of others, who although different, share a common human condition. Only since the creation of real human relationships and not just functional or professional, can address the issue of the creation and distribution of human welfare.

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