

# CRITICAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

*EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA CRÍTICA EM PERSPECTIVA DEMOCRÁTICA E  
REPUBLICANA*

*EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA CRÍTICA EN PERSPECTIVA DEMOCRÁTICA Y  
REPUBLICANA*

 Paulo Evaldo Fensterseifer\*, Fernando Jaime González\*,  
Sidinei Pithan da Silva\*

**Keywords:**

Critical Theory.  
Democracy.  
Republic.  
Physical Education.

**Abstract:** The present study consists of a theoretical essay that analyzes the limits and potentialities of critical educational discourses that aspire to social change. It looks for, mainly, to think about a project of Physical Education (PE) committed to democratic and republican issues. To do so, it points out, from the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt the need to distinguish education and politics, recognizing the value of knowledge and the specificity of PE. This condition does not prevent and limit the value of the theoretical and critical contributions that allow us to interpret the relations between education and society in each historical moment, suggesting a complementary aspect between the hermeneutic, critical-dialectical and poststructuralist traditions to think about the phenomena of PE and its relationship to the theme of the republic, education and democracy.

**Palavras chave:**

Teoria Crítica.  
Democracia.  
República.  
Educação Física.

**Resumo:** O presente estudo consiste em um ensaio teórico que analisa limites e potencialidades dos discursos educacionais críticos que aspiram à mudança social. Busca, sobretudo, pensar um projeto de Educação Física (EF) comprometido com questões democráticas e republicanas. Para tanto, aponta, a partir da filosofia política de Hannah Arendt a necessidade de distinguir educação e política, reconhecendo o valor do conhecimento e da especificidade da EF. Condição que não impede e limita o valor dos aportes teóricos e críticos que permitem interpretar as relações entre educação e sociedade em cada momento histórico, o que sugere um aspecto complementar entre as tradições hermenêuticas, crítico-dialéticas e pós-estruturalistas para pensar o fenômeno da EF e sua relação com o tema da república, da educação e da democracia.

**Palabras clave:**

Teoría Crítica.  
Democracia.  
República.  
Educación Física.

**Resumen:** Este estudio consiste en un ensayo teórico que analiza los límites y las potencialidades de los discursos educativos críticos que aspiran al cambio social. Busca, sobre todo, pensar en un proyecto de Educación Física (EF) comprometido con temas democráticos y republicanos. Para este fin, señala, en base a la filosofía política de Hannah Arendt, la necesidad de distinguir educación y política, reconociendo el valor del conocimiento y la especificidad de la EF. Una condición que no impide y limita el valor de las contribuciones teóricas y críticas que permiten la interpretación de las relaciones entre educación y sociedad en cada momento histórico, sugiriendo un aspecto complementario entre las tradiciones hermenéutica, crítico-dialécticas y post-estructuralistas para reflexionar sobre el fenómeno de la EF y su relación con el tema de la república, la educación y la democracia.

\*UNIJUÍ, Ijuí, RS, Brasil.  
E-mail: sidinei.pithan@unijui.edu.br;  
fenster@unijui.edu.br;  
fjg@unijui.edu.br

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article is an effort to address the following questions: can education change society? Can education be critical? Can Physical Education (PE) be understood and developed from a critical perspective in a democratic and republican sense? What perspective of criticism do we still think possible and necessary? We will begin by thematizing the links of education with the critical tradition, indicating the risks of politicization undertaken in pedagogical thinking that, in our view, has badly dealt with the complex relations between education and politics. In a second moment, we began an effort to analyze the conditions of the possibility of critical educational discourse in the context of social change. It is important to revisit the aspects of the notion of criticism produced throughout modernity, and even those emerging in contemporary times, to think about the links between education and society. Finally, we will highlight our understanding of what a “critical PE” would be, given the issues of republicanism and democracy.

## 2 CAN EDUCATION BE CRITICAL?

The decision to “educate all” in a formal space, subsidized by this “all”, is a political decision that has its inaugural moment in modern societies that promoted a break with the aristocratic traditions of the Old Regime. This deliberation is umbilically in tune with the political regimes that have been established, that is, the modern democratic republics. They placed themselves as heirs to the legacy of the spirit of light, betting heavily on the liberating power of knowledge, therefore, on the institutions responsible for conveying this knowledge. According to Todorov, the lights promoted “the praise of knowledge that frees human beings from oppressive outer tutelage”, but, he enhances, “it is not to say that, were all determined and therefore knowable, humans will learn to control wholly, and shape it according to your desires” (TODOROV, 2008, p. 27-28). And the author goes on:

If today we want to find support in the thinking of the Enlightenments to meet our present difficulties, we cannot accept all the proposals formulated in the eighteenth century - not only because the world has changed, but also because this thinking is multiple, not one. It is first of all a refounding of the Enlightenments that we need: to preserve the heritage of the past but subject it to critical scrutiny, lucidly confronting it with its desirable and undesirable consequences. In so doing we do not risk betraying the Lights; on the contrary: the truth is that by criticizing them, we remain faithful to them, and put their teaching into practice (TODOROV, 2008, p. 28-29).

For our part, we agree with this idea, in its most generous promises, as the horizon from which we abstract the criteria for judging/criticizing its empirical manifestations in time and space. Among these configurations that assume an institutional character, is the school. Thus, the position we take on the “birth” of school education in modern societies is a marker of later critical positions.

Marxism, as heir to this critical tradition, carries not only marked differences with other theoretical positions but controversies within itself. For example, when he identifies modern societies as bourgeois societies, as a result of their institutions, among them the school, his denial does not automatically derive from it. Part of this current generally condemns the bourgeois state, and therefore its institutions, including the “bourgeois school”.

Another position, which we understand to be more faithful to the dialectical movement, recognizes in the whole of this society an enormous advance with the Old Regime. His criticism

does not encourage the liquidation of these institutions, but criticism for not fulfilling their promises. Promises that it is important to remember were forged with the scope of universality – the condition of uniting bourgeois and proletarian in the same trench - but, once instituted, did not build the conditions to achieve their promised purpose: to guarantee (quality) school education for all.

This limitation meant that to use an expression by Michel Young (2007), the “powerful knowledge” resulting from scientific advances in the different fields was appropriated exclusively by the “powerful” (hence the term “knowledge of the powerful”). Criticism of this phenomenon did not follow the linear path either. Some criticize the “package,” thus denying the whole involved (knowledge and those who appropriate it to preserve oppression). Others separate things, recognizing that knowledge, contingently in the hands of the powerful, should not be despised, but appropriated by those who have no access to it, empowering them.

Criticism must then be addressed to everything that prevents the school from fulfilling its role; teach everyone the “mighty knowledge.” We understand in this critical effort the condemnation of everything that tries to “tame the school” (MASSCHELEIN; SIMONS, 2013) detaching it from its end.

It is possible to recognize as an important contribution of critical theories in (of) education the overcoming of beliefs in “technical” and “psychologist”, drawing attention to the determinations of a political nature that shape education in a given society. With this gain, however, comes a risk: “politicism”, expressed in the mantra: everything is political. About this, states Brayner (1995, p. 85) that:

It seems to me to be frankly banal to say that ‘educating is a political act’. It is: as a civilizing act, which expresses social interests, that prolongs or denies cultural inheritance, that affects daily life, that imposes practical knowledge, that institutionalizes worldviews, that regulates life. Liberal thought, through its still recent Enlightenment heritage, already knew it. And he further advocated that entry into the properly civil and political life could not do without education. (Emphasis in original)

Paulo Freire’s statement above, pointed, according to Brayner, to a “liberating teleology of education”, on the one hand, and its “alienating” potential on the other. Anyway, a “political act”. In the wake of this “revelation” the pedagogical thinking of Marxist matrix, in Brayner’s understanding, will point to the need to “educate to form agents of transformation, to invest no politized consciousnesses of the instruments of “liberation”. And, the author concludes, “Radical imagination soon promoted education as a simple epiphenomenon of class struggle.” (1995, p. 85).

As we have already pointed out, the recognition that education has a clear relationship with the political universe has certainly become a gain, but there is no linear relationship of this with what happens in daily school life. Thus, deliberations, or simple positions in the political universe, need pedagogical mediation, and this, if we do not want to establish an instrumental relationship that reduces educators to mere “applicators,” has its vicissitudes. Therefore, if we do not want to incur “politicism”, we have to recognize the specificity of the universes involved.

The difficulties in producing effective links between the generous intentionalities of critical discourse and the effective qualification of pedagogical processes, are producing an erosion in the discourse itself, something that allowed ironic observations, such as those of Guiomar Namó de Mello (*apud* BRAYNER, 1995, p. 88): “In Brazil, it has become a revolutionary act to state that it is up to the school to teach. And teach well! It is not their role to form political militants, nor to determine the social, ideological destiny or political project of anyone”.

What we can see is that it has been an easy task to recognize the link between politics and education without affirming their undifferentiation. This undifferentiation led the critique that denies bourgeois society to deny the “bourgeois school”, the task of a “revolutionary education”. Brayner recalls that “Saviani himself already recognized that those who denounce ‘bourgeois’ school and education are those who have passed through their stalls and, therefore, have acquired the equipment necessary for proper critical retreat” (1995, p. 89).

The exaggerated politicization of education feeds “the belief that once ‘conscious’ (ie. ‘politicized’) through proper education for such ends, subjects would naturally tend toward transformative actions by establishing an a priori identity that deposits a naive faith in consciousness” (BRAYNER, 1995, p. 89). This belief supports, in our view, the linear links between education and citizenship, “forgetting” that the exercise of citizenship is within the scope of action and it cannot be anticipated by formative processes mechanically. Training should provide the basis (criteria) without which the “critical” exercise of citizenship would be null or impoverished.

We can say that no one is critical for anticipation, just as no one is ethical for anticipating the context of action, so the school does not form citizens. Nevertheless, it provides important elements for criticism, ethical reflection, and citizenship demands, although without any guarantee of their effective use. We understand that this is the contribution of education to critical thinking, and it is up to each discipline, including PE, to list that knowledge that can empower new generations to establish a reflective insertion with the world that lived them. This effort must be foreshadowed in the educational processes themselves and this seems to us to be one of the difficulties of the (critical) renewal process of PE.

Finally, it is not enough to incorporate a new vocabulary (“critical”) that acts as a “varnish” for practices that routinely persist in persisting. This seems the message addressed since Brayner’s (1995) critique, supported by Hannah Arendt, Paulo Freire and critical discourse in general. Brayner’s Republican approach seems to set the idea that comes from the Marxian critical theory against the wall, which presupposes that the place of education is to transform society. For Arendt (2013), education is a conservative instance of the world, as it deals with knowledge about how the world is. The change of the world lies with this hermeneutic perspective of Arendt, assumed here by Brayner, to the sphere of politics.

This initial inflection on republican and liberal thinking challenges us to seek a counterpoint in social critical discourse, which leads us to think that while the former points to the value of school and education as a form of conservation of traditions, and by that of socializing a common good, and building a civilization, the second shows us the inconclusive and contradictory character of social life, and therefore of democracy in the course of Western life, which makes the place of criticism, umbilically linked to the idea. of education and even of politics.

### 3 CAN EDUCATION CHANGE SOCIETY?

In one of his last books, American theorist Michael Apple (2017) faces the question about the relationship between education and society: can education change society? At stake for him is a place and role for educators in their responsibility for the world. Above all, the ethical question, or even the moral appeal, functions as an imperative that challenges critical theorists,

committed to critical pedagogy, to think of the place of education in confronting contemporary social issues and to assume a place of agency in the world. The background of the author, although rooted in the United States of America, is not very different from what we live in Brazil. Even his reference brings his hope to what happens or what happened in Porto Alegre - RS in the late twentieth century, in Brazil, or even the theoretical legacy of Paulo Freire.

This brief consideration enables us to think about the nature of the questions we raise about the meanings of education in contemporary times. A certain legacy of critical theory has unfolded into a legacy of critical educational theory, which, not innocently and naively, seeks to build a mode of agency around critical pedagogy into the 21st century. On the other hand, it allows us to analyze the conditions of the possibility of critical discourse, trying to advance some neoliberal perspectives and the impoverishment of politics. This aspect does not corroborate Brayner's (1995) idea that the pedagogical discourse about the possibility of social transformation may necessarily become a form of politicism.

The question about the relationship between education and society, of course, demonstrates, on the one hand, a certain bet that education has a meaning in the constitution of the world, and on the other that it is constituted in relations with the social and historical world, as well stated. Cornelius Castoriadis (1992). The critical theorist, perceiving himself as part of what moves, wonders if there is any way to participate in the constitution of the world in any other way rather than just being dragged by it. Perhaps there is a strong sense of the significance of critical theory in general, or even of critical thinking, that the world is always in the process of constitution, and never presents itself in a given and finished form as Karl Marx pointed out in the nineteenth century.

It is noteworthy that even though Marx (2005) did not give a satisfactory or sufficient answer to the question of politics, his way of interrogating society within the nineteenth century makes it possible to understand part of what later became known as a form of rationalist humanism implicated with denunciation of all forms of exploitation, domination and oppression (SÁNCHEZ VÁSQUEZ, 2002). In this sense, the debt of critical social theory today, and even of critical educational theory, with Karl Marx's theoretical legacy, is undeniable, as he wonders about how the modern social world is constituted (MILOVIC, 2004). The presence or absence of the value of Marxian theory, or even of those who rewrote and re-updated its categories and meanings, merging this legacy with other versions of philosophy, anthropology and modern sociology throughout the twentieth century, is a testament to the fact that This theoretical tradition, in part, deserves radical questioning, but also deserves to have its questions and purposes recognized. In the words of Berman (2001) it is possible to understand this dialogue between Arendt's critique and Marx's perspective on the modern world, understanding that:

Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, understands something that liberal critics of Marx generally do not realize: the real problem of Marx's thinking is not draconian authoritarianism, but the exact opposite, the lack of basis for all kinds of authority. "Marx correctly predicted, albeit with unjustified enthusiasm, the atrophy of the public sphere under the conditions of unbridled development of the productive forces of society." Arendt perceives the extent of the individualism behind Marx's communism and also perceives the nihilistic dimensions to which this individualism can lead. [...] This criticism of Marx raises an authentic and urgent human question, but Arendt comes no closer to solving the problem than Marx does. [...] She is right when she says that Marx never developed a theory of the political community and also when he says that it is a serious problem. But the point is that, given the



nihilistic impetus for modern personal and social development, it is not at all clear what kind of political links modern men can create. The problem that strikes Marx's thought, then, becomes a problem that runs through the whole structure of modern life itself. (BERMAN, 2001, p.17).

In this context, Apple's (2017) question, whether education can change the world, in a new version of critical theory, obviously following today, but the ways and how to change the world, changed radically after the events of the twentieth century and Arendt's radical critique of totalitarianism. Perhaps it is also important to highlight a certain pessimism fueled by critical theory in general (produced in the twentieth century), or even what came after it, as a form of post-critical theory, either as a way of attempting its demolition and deconstruction, or as form of its reconstruction (Habermas, 1990). In both cases, what emerges as a result of the social events taking place in Brazil and the world, and from theorists and intellectuals at the beginning of the 21st century, is a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of the weakening of society. politics and agency power (SILVA, 2016). It is worth noting, and so does Russell Jacoby (2001) that the end of egalitarian utopias, which came after the critique of totalitarianism in the 1950s, and even after the advent of postmodernism, with its defense of multiculturalism, in the 1990s. from the 80's onwards, it gave rise to certain conformity from a political point of view, which eventually fed a certain idea that society could not be changed.

This testimony, although quite radical, coincides with a certain kind of political culture that feeds the contemporary. A culture marked by the resumption of conservative ideals associated with modernizing ideals. On the one hand, this culture comes packed with a radical critique of the Enlightenment ideals and all the democratic and republican meanings embedded in them, and on the other, it is marked by the pursuit of innovation and even precarious participation in the new globalized movements of capital. A paradox, which feeds on premodern, religious ideas, to promote and intensify the strongest and most significant in the modern - profit, or rather, the reproduction of capital, or even the religion of money and power. "Liberals tell us, 'You have to trust the market.' But what these neoliberals say today was refuted by academic economists themselves in the 1930s" (CASTORIADIS, 2001, p. 35).

In Apple's interpretation (2017, p.18) "[...] in neoliberalist status, choice, competition, markets will lead us to the promised land of efficient and effective schools. And such schools will play a key role in transforming the public into private". A condition that means that the education in course in the contemporary is in some way implicated with the social transformation, but this does not represent that it intends to benefit the majority, nor that it will necessarily extend the democratization process. In the case of this advance of the market and economic powers over education, the transformation seems to have gone backward, and we are living a time of return. In the words of Castoriadis (2001, p.38) "today what dominates is resignation", even among liberals, and they say: "maybe it's bad, but the other alternative term is worse", or even: "If we move too much we will move towards a new gulag".<sup>1</sup>

In this sense, even if a certain notion of politics, knowledge, and awareness can be assumed or dogmatically assumed in school education, which is denounced by Brayner (1995) we should be aware that the educational project, emancipatory, as formulated by Kant (2013), and reconceptualized by Paulo Freire (2000), Cornelius Castoriadis (1992), and even by Zygmunt Bauman (2009), considering Marx's (2005) critiques of modernity, and the criticisms

<sup>1</sup> "This is what is behind this ideological exhaustion of our time, and I believe we will only emerge from it through the resurgence of a powerful critique of the system and a revival of people's activity, their participation in the common thing." (CASTORIADIS, 2001, p.38).

of Marx himself (CASTORIADIS, 2001) contain the idea that a society to be autonomous or democratic needs to be supported by the idea of criticism, which can also be promoted by education, especially with regard to criteria. A condition that moves us to think about a PE project not only in a republican perspective but also fundamentally democratic. A project that seems to require a permanent instituting capacity of the subjects concerning the instituted, as stated by Castoriadis (1982; 1992). This means recognizing the merit of representative democracies but moving towards the construction of participatory democracies, or even autonomous societies.

#### 4 WHAT WOULD BE A CRITICAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION ON A DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE?

The history of Brazilian Physical Education is not in favor of a link between its expectations within the school and the commitments of a critically oriented republican and democratic education. Distancing that makes explicit the debt of this curricular component with the authoritarian regimes that opposed the short democratic periods. It is not unreasonable, therefore, that when we enter into a longer democratic experience, its legitimacy is put on hold as well as its legal basis, the object of hitherto decrees that did not require a legitimating effort of republican character.

Faced with this “threat” to its presence inside the school, the Brazilian Physical Education reacted politically and corporately to guarantee this place now under new arguments. We will not extend here around this “renewing movement” in its various nuances, but emphasize the fact that EF fundamentally seeks to break with its tradition, which circumscribed it only as “activity”, to constitute itself into a “subject”. Finally, this movement configures PE as a curriculum field that needs to fulfill an educational function, as expected from the school as a whole, based on specific objectives and contents that do not dissolve their task in general and that is able to systematize throughout from school years, a set of knowledge that allows us to understand, from their themes, the world we inhabit, as well as the human dimension that is linked to body practices.

In the formulated perspective,<sup>2</sup> Physical Education is a curricular component that should answer for the republican character of the institution to which it is linked, in the way of treating the contents that concern it. This implies not merely reproducing the senses/meanings present in the different manifestations of the body culture of movement, trying to thematize them, denaturalizing them, highlighting the plurality of senses/meanings that the subjects can give them. Plurality that only institutions of this character can preserve and which are not necessarily compatible with the frameworks of other human ways of organizing life in society.

The possibility of thinking in these terms and assuming this position is because today we do not have to choose Manichean for one of the poles that were presented as an alternative in the early twentieth century. Unconditional adherence to the bourgeois status quo or taking the banner of a “revolutionary break”. Any position other than these was explicitly “pushed” to either end, on the one hand, accused of “playing the system” or, on the other, of “innocent useful”.

We know that this way of facing social challenges persists in contemporary times and they have a social reality that demands blunt propositions, which are in an emergency that was incompatible with the prudence of democracy and republican institutions. However, at this point,

2 Search for González; Fensterseifer (2009; 2010), Fensterseifer; González, (2011), Fensterseifer, González, Silva; Schwengber (2013).

with the lessons of the twentieth century, our delusions with the miraculous exits also seem worn out.

In this perspective, we assume that the main characteristic of modern societies based on a republican and democratic idea is their constitutive fragility. They have no metaphysical basis of epistemological or ontological character. There is no “science”, “race” or “class” that embodies the foundation of its existence. It coexists with the power struggle that involves the interests of the individuals, groups and social classes that compose it. However, they build their legitimacy by actually or allegedly embodying the “interests of the majority” from which their legitimacy comes.

From this idea, the teacher’s performance can be based on different dimensions and, in some way, all are crossed by the ethical-political beacon on what is needed to account for a particular educational project. However, given the limits of the article and the stage of idea development, we highlight three dimensions.

#### *4.1 EDUCATION-POLICY’S RELATIONSHIP*

When we witnessed a graduation ceremony in Brazil we heard from the dean’s representative something like: “[...] in the name of the laws of the republic I grant them the title of [...]” that is, at that moment he represents the republic and it is for her and her, not for the current government, that grants a professional license. This license is based on the laws and presupposes its obedience and improvement.

In a republic, however, this relationship to institutional norms does not mean “blind obedience” and “unconditional subordination,” as we anticipated in the preceding paragraph, but also means contributing to their “improvement.” It is this plasticity that always allows us to update our understanding of the “common good” and enable us to realize it.

In this respect the school must remain faithful to the plurality compatible with the democratic-republican spirit, making clear the diversity of positions that make up our society. We should never forget that the academic freedom we enjoy is a prerogative of democratic-republican societies and that its constitution has the possibility of constant criticism of that society itself. Something unthinkable in societies where the state is not secular, or where there is an “official ideology.” In the first, this would be heresy, in the second, misconduct.

#### *4.2 A RELATIONSHIP WITH KNOWLEDGE*

We may consider that in the broad sense of “everyone learns from all” education, that every human relationship educates, but if we think about the specificity of school education, we must recognize that knowledge is not evenly distributed among teachers and students, teachers and the community, and between teachers from different areas. Therefore, the license we have from the republic is to deal with specific themes/contents, which were objects of our formation, not to “teach anything” or “develop socio-emotional skills” devoid of any content.

We know of the importance that the professional, when appropriating a specialized knowledge of disciplinary character should not mean disregard for general aspects related to the human, social and historical world. If this knowledge is necessary, it does not follow from



this that it is sufficient, because to participate in a “practical discourse” (ethical-political action), either in the general plan of society or in the spaces of professional action, it is necessary to enrich education. our perception of the environment in which our specialty lies.

Taking this perspective means understanding the relationship of knowledge with which we work with the whole that makes up the human world (social and historical) and that the real is always richer than what is seen through the “disciplinary window”. From a critical republican perspective, this translates into the teacher’s effort to understand and make his students understand the historical-cultural dimension of the phenomena with which the subject deals, in addition to its more technical dimension.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, to dealing with knowledge, it is important to keep alive a reflection of an epistemic character that recognizes the propositional character of the knowledge we produce and teach. It is not for the teacher (or scientist) to put himself in the place of an oracle announcer of finished truths. The demystification of science “enhances the role of the teacher (who is no longer a simple repeater), also enhances the student, transforming the class into a time-space of knowledge production, in which the meanings embedded in the concepts are validated or not. contents” (FENSTERSEIFER, 2009, p. 207-208).

#### 4.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

But what does this mean for our idea of thinking about the link between society, education, democracy, and social change? Or even wondering if PE can be critical and under what conditions? In a sense, education, since the project of Enlightenment modernity, has been conceived as a way of changing or conserving the social world through concept, knowledge or idea. The critical spirit seems to feed us the idea that nothing is natural or even falls from the heavens or spontaneously springs from the earth, but that it is permanently being made and redone and in dispute within the framework of social, cultural and political relations. Everyday events insist that everything is already or should be linked with the growth of the economy (with modernization) and that everyone must accept the inexorable fate that is being projected by the current globalization.

The daily discourse does not allow questions, radical doubts, that help to think and understand the mechanisms that structure social life, as well as the historical character of social and productive relations that underlie political life. In this sense, he is the bearer of blindness, which aims to obliterate the thought that seeks to understand the powers and imaginary that organize social life and which manifest themselves in the context of school education.

In this respect, critical and post-critical traditions allow PE, both at school and university, to understand the unfinished or even deformed character of the stakes of democratic and republican societies, allowing or challenging a permanent critique of ideologies and their succinct modes of producing domination effects on bodies, cultures, and societies. In this sense, it does not change society directly, but creates social and cultural (formative) conditions so that subjects perceive the inconclusive and contradictory character of the social and historical world, so that they can act in such a way to problematize, judge and intervene towards other horizons of freedom, equality and social justice.

<sup>3</sup> For the characteristics of these dimensions search for González and Fraga (2012) and González and Bracht (2012).

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have seen throughout the study that the negation of a certain avant-garde critical discourse in politics in no way signifies the negation and value of critical theories and discourse in education. It is also a matter of maintaining a self-criticism about the forms of appropriation of certain forms of criticism, to control their excesses and risks, to resume it, in another sense of counterpoint, as a relevant and even constitutive aspect. of the agenda of modernity, or human emancipation. Obviously, this new form of criticism in PE does not feed on many of the illusions of modernity, such as a) building a social paradise on earth; b) imagine yourself without edges, gaps and errors; c) be independent of the subjective, intersubjective, and even social and historical dimensions involved in democratic and republican issues.

This allowed us throughout the study to show that the critical traditions maintain the discussion on the social and democratic question, around the search for social equality, in the ambit of capitalism, while the republican and liberal traditions discuss the question of the centrality of politics. , institutions, legal norms, defending the freedom of debate, or even configuring the place of the public sphere, as a stage protected by a constitution, which helps us think, discuss and deliberate on the direction of social change. In this sense, we imagine that social criticism, such as that produced by Paulo Freire in his pedagogy, among others, continues to have its value in contemporary times, mainly because it highlights the contradictions and deficits of the modern project and its proclaimed discourse around emancipation, or even the presence of public spheres, and the subjectivities involved in the construction of democratic societies in the 21st century. This aspect does not remove us from the commitment to critically read Paulo Freire and to control a certain politicism that may come from his work.

With this kind of ambivalent, contradictory and complex analysis, we consider and assume the values and contributions that: a) emerge from the hermeneutic approach, which supported by Arendt (2013) points to the value of education as a social practice related to knowledge. and the conservation of memories and traditions in PE, distinguishing education and politics; b) they spring from the critical social approach, supported by Marx, and the reconstruction of the possibilities and forms of critical theory, as Adorno (2003), Horkheimer (1980), Habermas (1990; 2000), Freire (2000) did. , Castoriadis (2001) and Bauman (2009), among others, make it possible to point to the value of education and PE as a social practice related not only to the conservation of the traditions of the past, but also to the radical questioning of the ideologies that constitute the present world, which allows us to think about social change towards more radical forms of democracy in contemporary times.

In this sense, we consider that the discussion about the links between education, republic, and democracy in the context of PE can draw on both the contributions of hermeneutic traditions, as well as critical-dialectic and poststructuralist traditions. The movement that has been carried forward by those who, in the footsteps of Zygmunt Bauman (2009; 2010) for example, articulate both Arendt's critique and hermeneutics in general, as well as Adorno's, and critical theory in general as well as Foucault, and the poststructuralist approach in general. A condition that allows plural hermeneutics around the meaning and scope of critical theories in the struggles for democratic and republican societies. Education and school PE, in this sense, seem to be responsible both for preserving a common good, powerful knowledge (YOUNG, 2007) and for allowing social criticism (APPLE, 2017), which years help to understand the present and redesign our social future.

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