

Living in a connected world: education beyond “productivist contentism”^{1 2 3 4}

Viver no mundo conectado: formação para além do “conteudismo produtivista”

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to discuss, from the perspective of Foucauldian studies, the implications of transferring formal education to the space and time of family sociability. Such reality arises from the need to adapt routines, imposed by social isolation, which is vital in the pandemic context that struck worldwide in the 2020. The emphasis in productivist contentism usually strengthens the investments in the machinic subjection and weakens the formation of individuals capable of opposing this form of behavioral conduction and the current economic logic, which is based on consumption and competition. It is exactly the possibility of conviviality with the Other in spaces and times separated from the family that allows learning with the differences and facing the unexpected.

Keywords: algorithmic governmentality, school, online education

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Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é problematizar, a partir da perspectiva dos Estudos Foucaultianos, as implicações da transferência da educação escolarizada para o espaço e o tempo do convívio familiar. Tal realidade surge da necessidade de readequação das rotinas, imposta pelo isolamento social fundamental no contexto pandêmico que atingiu a todos no ano de 2020. A ênfase no produtivismo contendista, via de regra, fortalece os investimentos na sujeição maquínica e enfraquece a formação de sujeitos capazes de se contraporem a essa forma de condução das condutas e à lógica econômica vigente, pautada no consumo e na competição. É justamente a possibilidade de convívio com o outro em espaços e tempos apartados da família que favorece aprender com as diferenças e enfrentar o imprevisível.

Palavras-chave: governamentalidade algorítmica, escola, ensino on-line

It is actually not just the multinationals, or the trade partnerships, or the internet or the tour operators that globalise the planet. Every entity on this same planet has its very own way of hooking up with each other and all the other elements that compose the collective at a given moment. This is true for the CO2 that is warming the atmosphere globally by spreading through the air and migrating birds carrying new kinds of flu; but it is also true for — we learn at our peril once again — the coronavirus that has the capacity to link ‘all humans’ by passing by way of our apparently inoffensive droplets from coughing.

(Latour, 2020, s/p.)

The first lesson coronavirus has taught us is also the most astounding one: we have actually proven that it is possible, in a few weeks, to put an economic system on hold. In a matter of weeks, a virus put in suspension “everywhere in the world and at the same time, a system that we were told was impossible to slow down or redirect” (Latour, 2020, n.p). This interruption in our routine that, suddenly, isolated us within our houses also made us rethink our habitual activities. If before the space and the time of the home could still impose some limits between our professional and domestic lives, now the social isolation needed to combat coronavirus compromises such separation. The house, a space for family sociability, leisure, and idleness, from that moment on and for many people, became officially a space and time of productiveness too.

While some advocate in favor of using the quarantine to rethink how our routines captured us before the pandemic, a significant number of people do not have the time – nor even the space – to (re)think about the competitive neoliberal rationality that guides our way of life. In the name of the economy, of our jobs, and school content, the domestic space and time acquire a productivity dimension. Maybe what impresses us the most is that not even children and teenagers have escaped this rationality, as, already in the first weeks of social isolation, schools, pressured by many families, used online activities – or remote ones, as some have called them – for K-12 students. It is a business-shape, productive and competitive, typical of neoliberalism, imposing the rules. There is no time to lose. As stated by Theodore Schultz (1977) the investment in children, from an early age is the human capital⁵ key for the future self-management of these subjects.

We must highlight that it is not our intention to judge or evaluate online practices developed, nor indicate the best procedures to be adopted in this context. Distressed by the possibility that this moment of exception can be used as an argument for future demands and that remote learning might become a recurrent practice in elementary, middle, and high school, our objective is to question the implications of transferred school education for the spaces and times of family sociability. Similarly, as the domestic dimension has its particularities that deserve and need to be preserved, school also has a singular space and time that cannot be reproduced – much less, cultivated – through online activities.

Besides this, the studies we have developed (Loureiro & Lopes, 2019; Loureiro et al., 2019) have shown that, in a digitally connected world, it is key that school establishes itself as a privileged time and space to educate and shape students to be in the world, in which the ways of being are conditioned to the responsible use of digital information technology. This perception does not ignore the possibilities of digital information technology. On the contrary,

⁵ To understand yourself as a company is one of the main teachings of Human Capital Theory that, as explained by Foucault (2008), represents American neoliberal rationality and grounds its interest in two aspects: undertake an economic analysis in an unexplored field up to that moment – in the case, work, as said in the beginning of this section– and, from that analysis, “reinterpret in economic terms [...] a whole field that, until then, could be considered, and was in fact considered, not economic” (Foucault, 2008, p. 302). The expression *human capital* was first used in 1971 in an article written by Theodore Schultz, entitled *Investment in Human Capital*. However, it was Gary Becker who started to develop the concept of human capital, in a work entitled *Human capital: a theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*, in 1964 (Castro-Gómez, 2010).

they are understood as part of school education process and not only as tools to teach and learn content.

Thus, to problematize this issue, this article is divided in three sections. In the first, we discuss the importance of school as an institution responsible for the formation of subjects able to understand the guidance held by “the rise of algorithms of individualized recommendation, of predictive models” leading to automation (Lipovetsky, 2019, p. 359). Algorithmic governmentality ⁶ (Rouvrey, 2015), through recommendation algorithms, creates a type of immunization, which avoids certain types of information to reach us. The pandemic reinforces the importance of being able to look beyond what is directly connected to us.

The second section argues against the idea that “digital technologies can establish the base for a complete reinvention on the ways of learning and teaching” (Lipovetsky, 2019, p. 351). We defend the importance of school as a *locus* to form subjects able to burst the algorithm bubble of immunization, that can look beyond themselves, and have the repertoire to think the common⁷. This type of education is inseparable from the pedagogical guidance held by the teacher. Such guidance, at least with the technological devices we have today, is only possible in in-person space.

We present our consideration on the problematization developed throughout the article in the last section. We also draw some possibilities to think about the connection between digital communication technologies and school education.

⁶ The notion of algorithm governmentality is developed from Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality. Foucault develops this concept more deeply in the courses *The Birth of Biopolitics* and *Security, Territory, Population*. The discussion proposed in this article has as a problematization grid the Foucauldian theories and, more emphatically, authors who continue the studies of this philosopher.

⁷ ‘Common’, according to Dardot and Laval (2017), is a political principle that works as an axis that connects all those who are contrary to the ways of being typical of neoliberalism and in favor of radical democracy. “The politics of common is always transversal to instituted separations, it enacts a democratic demand at the same time generalized and coherent: it is literally ‘everywhere’, in all the domains men act together and should have the possibility to participate in the rules that affect them, the governing of the institutions in which they act, live, and work...It should permeate all levels of social space, from local to universal, going through the national” (Dardot & Laval, 2017, p. 486).

Informational Immunization

In this section, our intention is to problematize some implications when we incorporate, all of a sudden, pedagogical practices mobilized through digital communication tools, especially in K-12 school.

To reach our purpose, we start from the understanding that K-12 Education has a key role to establish subjectivities (Varela, 1996). And, in agreement with Lazzarato (2017), we understand that neoliberal capitalism organizes the control and production of subjectivities through two different devices: *social subjection* and the *de-subjectification* (or *machinic enslavement*).

The first *device* refers to the creation of a type of subject that is exterior to the object and which finds its “fulfillment in human capital that makes each of us responsible and guilty for our own actions and behaviors” (Lazzarato, 2017, p. 172), your self-management. In this issue, productivism, competition, and lifelong learning are key. We should take every learning opportunity so that, as a company, we can become more profitable to ourselves. Such investments, theoretically, strengthen our capital, making us more productive and, consequently, more competitive. When we cannot stand the idea that our children, K-12 students, can be some weeks, months, or even a semester, out of school without using this time to learn something we believe useful, we assume that the investments on human capital should overlap all other issues we go through in pandemic times.

The dissemination policies of digital technology (DT) in school education committed to the establishment of a digitalized society is not recent. The discourses mobilized by such policies, since the last decade of the 20th century, create conditions to allow the establishment of *Homo aconomicus accessibilis* (Loureiro & Lopes, 2015). It is a “type” of subject that is the manager of oneself, available to access and be accessed anywhere, anytime. Even if, in Brazil, internet access is still restricted to the school space for a considerable number of people, there is also a significant number that uses digital connection independently from public policies. This would be enough to justify the need to form students to inhabit the digitalized society in a responsible way.

In this point, we want to highlight that our objective here is not to evaluate the merit nor the effectiveness – in terms of effectiveness or efficiency- of public policies to disseminate digital technologies. However, we understand that this ratifies the importance of the

discussion proposed here, because all of us, connected or not, are inhabitants of a digital society. Understanding how algorithm governmentality is, therefore, key to contrapose a machinic enslavement, so school education has the fundamental role to form subjects that can think and reflect about themselves.

Still using Lazzarato's (2017) terms, the *second device* is in the school of the pair *de-subjectification – subjection*, in what he calls *machinic enslavement*⁸. Deleuze and Guattari (2012) distinguish machinic enslavement and social subjection. Man is subjected to the machine when he is a worker that uses it as an object exterior to him. He does not compose the machine. He is a worker, a user “subjected to the machine” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 168). In the other hand, there is enslavement when more than users, men are “constitutive pieces” of the machines (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012 p. 167). In the words of the authors,

The cybernetic and computer machines [...] establish a regime of generalized servitude ‘men-machine systems’, reversible and recurrent, substitute the former relations of non-reversible and non-recurrent subjection between the two elements; the relation of men and machine is established in terms of inner mutual communication and no longer by use or action”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 169)

In other terms, machinic enslavement, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2012), changes and exchange of information are sometimes human, other times mechanical. Though it is possible to distinguish between subjection and enslavement, we are simultaneously subjected to both operations, “through the same things and the same events” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 171).

To Lazzarato (2010, 2017), though there is also no substitution of the social subjection to machinic enslavement, there is an addition of the second to the first. According to Lazzarato (2010), social subjection produces an individuated subject and this production “adds a whole other treatment that, contrary to social subjection, acts by de-subjectification, the ‘machinic enslavement’” (p. 168). In this line, neoliberal capitalism produces a type of subjectivity in which men work as “ ‘human’ components and elements of machinery and,

⁸ Lazzarato (2010, 2017) takes forward the notion of machinic enslavement developed by Deleuze and Guattari (2012). According to Lazzarato (2010, p. 168), “in machinic enslavement, the individual is no longer established as a piece, a gear, a component of the “company” agency, of the “financial system” agency, the media agency, the “welfare State” agency, and its “collective equipment of subjectivation” (school, hospital, museum, theater, television, internet, etc.). The individual “works” and is submitted to the agency, the same way as the pieces of technical machines, as organizational procedures, as sign systems, etc.”.

through this gear between men and machine, called machinic enslavement” (Lazzarato, 2017, p.172) in which algorithm governability acts. It does not act directly on the subjects, but on the relations they establish in the digital communication networks.

Algorithm governability is a certain type of (ab)normal or (a)political rationality that lies on the automatic gathering, assembling, and analysis of massive amounts of data, to model, anticipate, and affect, in advance, possible behaviors” (Rouvrey & Berns, 2015, p. 42). To algorithm governability what matters is the data produced about the subjects, based on the actions of subjects themselves in digital communication networks, because it is based on these data that we conduct our perceptions and actions in the digital world. Thus, subjects interact in and through digital communication networks “are limited to make the machine work and guarantee its raw material— information” (Lazzarato, 2017, p. 173).

As Levy (1996) has been arguing for more than two decades, the computer connected to the internet— the great tool of telematics — is much more than a simple instrument of communication. Human activity established through a computer connected to the internet transforms it into a complex machine that crosses and reconfigures the “modalities of perception, of attention, of sensation, of view, and of thought” (Lazzarato, 2017, p. 177). As data (a number), we are “a sign purged of any meaning” (Rouvroy & Berns, 2015, p. 39), constantly analyzed, treated and seduced by what makes us closer to what we believe are our preferences.

The own evolution of technological capabilities reinforces this type of objectivity of the data that escapes all subjectivity: our programs are now able to recognize emotions, transform them into data, translate facial movements and skin hues into statistical data, to measure, for example, the attractiveness of a product, the (sub)ideal character of goods arrangement in a display window, as well as the suspicious appearance of a passenger (Rouvrey & Berns, 2015, p. 39)

The knowledge produced in this way, though seemingly emerged from a mass of data, is not the result of a pre-existing hypothesis, because they are created from data itself.

From an immense accumulation of infinitesimal data, it is possible, through statistical analysis, to have a predictive approach of diseases, to give personalized recommendations, to evaluate risks, to suggest itineraries based on the traffic. (Lipovetsky, 2016, p. 132)⁹

The treatment of information exercised by this type of algorithmic strategy creates individual statistics and, without noticing, our concepts and behaviors ended up being guided, for example, “by great online selling platforms, seducing consumers, presenting automatically and instantaneously what better corresponds the idiosyncratic wishes of each person” (Lipovetsky, 2019, p. 419). Therefore, the “individual’s action is no longer influenced by a direct confrontation with an external rule...but the possibilities are organized in the environment itself” (Rouvrey & Berns, 2015, p. 47). Little by little, individual perceptions are guided in the digital connection to what is closer to our individual averages and, thus, the different, the diverse, the unlike is increasingly distant from our perceptions.

Therefore, algorithm governmentality

does not produce any subjectification, it avoids and bypasses reflexive subjects, it feeds on small data, insignificant in themselves, to create behavioral models, the supra-individual profiles, without ever questioning the subjects, without ever calling on them to realize for themselves what they are, nor what they could become. The moment of reflexivity, of criticism, of recalcitrance, needed for subjectification seems to become, incessantly, more complicate and postponed. (Rouvrey & Berns, 2015, p. 42)

Faced by this, it does not seem possible to think of school education separated by the need to prepare students to live the conditions imposed by digitalized society. This does not mean investments in productivism nor to idolize the business model and the self-entrepreneurship. Faced by this, the school provides the knowledge and allows the necessary space and time to understand the bubble that, easily, involves us and leads to “ways of informational immunization favorable to a radicalization of opinions and the disappearance of a common experience” (Rouvrey, 2015). And more: understanding how algorithm governmentality works becomes a necessary condition to form children and young people not only to be connected to digital communication networks, but also to be responsibly present in

⁹ To Lipovetsky (2016, p. 132) the revolution of lightness, marked by the correlation between the smallest possible data, produced by individual actions in the connected network, and the infinitely big, “contributes to increase the correlations and no more of the explanation. It is no longer the experience of light reverie, but the power of predictions and of “algorithm governmentality”.

this world. To this end, school, as a space and time separated from the family sphere, is the place in which it is possible to invest in base knowledge, but also the opening to possibilities to think about the differences.

Thus, educating for awareness, to the capacity to overcome the perspective beyond the informational bubble around us, implies “proposing new horizons to future generations, a higher ambition, a model of life beyond business, beyond the endless consumption, and perpetual entertainment” (Lipovestky, 2019, p. 429). Therefore, video classes, apps, web conferences, and the endless activities done under family supervision, can work as an alternative to compensate for the “lost school days”, if our concern was productivism-contentism. However, it is only in school, as a space and time separated from the family dimension and its conviction, that the subject will find elements to elevate his/her intellectual capabilities and open up to the analysis and reflections of the information accessed and that reach him/her.

This does not mean that school education should not appropriate and incorporate the power of digital information and communication technologies to pedagogical practices¹⁰. “Many pedagogical studies show that digital technologies have positive effects regarding students’ mobilization, motivation to work...the opening of school to the world” (Lipovetsky, 2019, p. 353). Nevertheless, we ratify that a reflective and critical use of the internet requires a formation based on intellectual rigor, which will give the conditions to establish argumentative repertoires.

¹⁰ Castells (2018) explains that “our extraordinary technological development contradicts our political and ethical underdevelopment, placing our lives in the hands of our machines; however, the use of the capacity of communication, deliberation, and co-decision we have through the internet can contrapose this situation when our actions are backed by knowledge and the capacity to act on connected networks”.

School: space and time of thought, reflection, and unpredictability

In the beginning of this section, we want to clarify: our discussion does not evaluate online pedagogical practices, nor distance learning (DL) practices¹¹. The later establishes itself as an educational model in expansion, thanks to the support of studies (Silva & Behar, 2019; Vendruscolo & Behar, 2016; Martins & Mill, 2018) that present impressive contributions to education. We also know that, to teach online classes, there is the need to invest in teacher training, regarding the ways of teaching, as well as in the technologies that better adapt to each level and format of DL. Therefore, it is not up to us, especially in this adverse moment, to position ourselves against or for DL strategies, nor remote activities used as alternatives to the canceling of in-person activities. We are interested in problematizing productivism that, in our opinion, justifies school investments when trying to “with all its power do its job, the best possible way, to fulfill the scheduled content” (Beltramin, 2020, n.p).

The way digital technologies have been used, in this abrupt transition from in-person to online education, marks the prevalence of “contentism”. The innumerable video classes, exercises, web conferences — in which, to avoid noises, students’ microphones should be kept off —, leaves no space to think the unpredictability imposed by the moment. On one hand, the offer of online classes shows the commitment and agility of innumerable schools to answer students and families. Though such offer does not guarantee learning. On the other, it reinforces social difference between those who have internet access and those who do not. It also shows that the theory of human capital is the predominant doctrine in education (Laval, 2003). More important than the possibility to turn the experience of pandemic in an opportunity to learn about the world and human relations, it is the reformulation of the objectives of school education that should not only focus on useful knowledge that, maybe, will provide better conditions of employability. “The individual is named a learner (throughout life), learning is an investment in the individual’s own human capital” (Masschelein & Simons,

¹¹ Mistakenly, activities developed online and through distance methods have been called *Educação a Distância* (EAD- Distance Learning- DL). EAD/DL is a teaching modality, with specific characteristics that require appropriate teacher training and investments in resources for this format. The transposition of activities held in-person before the pandemic to virtual communication platforms is not EAD/DL. One of the main characteristics of EAD/DL is to prioritize asynchronous activities— that is, those in which teacher and students do not need to be connected at the same time. Contrary to what is currently taking place in online education, in which the teacher and the students are simultaneously connected.

2013, pp. 111-112). Such investments, more than a way of learning, are guidelines aligned to a certain worldview, typical of neoliberalism, that have competition as a model of behavior and individual accountability as justification for subject's success or failure.

The idea of learning subjects as the ideal of a neoliberal rationality is not new. In this case, especially the potential of digital technologies, is associated with the possibility of learning anywhere anytime. The *Homo aeconomicus accessibilis*, which we previously mentioned, reconfigures itself into the *Homo aeconomicus discentes accessibilis*. That self-entrepreneur, self-manager, available to access and be accessed, now needs also be a lifelong learner. The mobility allowed by digital connection cannot be wasted according to this “new paradigm” that holds citizens responsible “for their duty to learn” (Laval, 2003, p. 51). Such conception reinforces the idea that education should be turned towards the “economic categories that allow thinking human beings as a ‘human resource’ and a consumer to satisfy” (Laval, 2003, p. 25). More than that, this type of school education ratifies the notion of “entrepreneurship as self-governing” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 144) and, thus, strengthen the idea that we should be competitive, intensifying individualism and weakening the possibilities to see the other as someone that is connected to me through a relation of interdependence.

In this sense, it seems that we are not able to move forward and take advantage of the current sanitary crisis to break away from an educational model — disciplinary, hierarchical — considered outdated by some. The way a great part of the online activities have been implemented during social isolation, besides focusing on “contentism”, which, as rule, was already reproduced in the in-person model, reinforces the investments in the production of machinic subjection, limiting and controlling the possible space to different perspectives on the same theme. “Freedom ... to see what was not seen nor predicted” (Larrosa; 2017, p. 181) is quite limited by meetings in online platforms, which greatly regulates students' participation.

Contrary to the focus on productivism- contentism, we understand that “the aim of education is never to make children and young people learn” (Biesta, 2018, p. 23); but to” learn *something*, to learn this *for a reason* and to learn this *from someone*” (Biesta, 2018, p. 23). The aim of school education, regardless if in-person or online, should be involved with the education beyond its usefulness required by the business-shape and materialized in the self-entrepreneur. An education committed, among other things, with the “acquisition of knowledge that, free from any utilitarian connection, makes us grow and become more

autonomous” (Ordine, 2016, p. 108), with the conditions to confront information. Thereby, we do not defend that the purpose of education is disconnected with the issues related to school content, to practical life, to work, etc., but that is also engaged and, mainly, forming subjects able to act on themselves and on collectivity.

This is related to the possibility that children and young people do not adopt only one particular identity, are not only part of specific communities and traditions, simply objects of intentions and actions of other people, but exist as subjects in their own rights, capable of their own actions, and willing to assume the responsibility for these actions (Biesta, 2018, p. 24).

Such conception implies understanding that school education goes way beyond teaching and learning contents; it is composed by

Experiences and meetings that challenge the starting point, that are not verbal but also affective, corporeal, visual. To be part of this space, see each other face to face, communicate, get angry and listen again, actions that set up other political positions and also the relation with knowledge and language (Dussel et al., 2016, p. 154).

This “goes way beyond” also evokes the extremely important contributions of Julia Varela and Fernando Álvarez Uría (1991, 1992) to understand school, in the Western world, as a machinery — i.e., a set of machines — responsible for creating modern subjectivities or, if we wish, modern subjects. As both have shown, such machines worked and still work in an intricate articulation involving disciplinary and control practices, didactic material and procedures, curriculum programs, explicit and implicit rules, architectural dispositions (internal and external¹²), coded rituals, etc. Because of this intricate articulation, associated with some other few institutions, the school was responsible for establishing what we normally call “the *ethos* of Modernity¹³”, in the sense given by Michel Foucault. Few years after this first contribution, Julia Varela herself detailed the ways through which school has socially imprinted new social-temporal practices and categories. These new categories broke with the

¹² To a more detailed approach on the relations among several elements of school architecture, school curriculum, and the processes of subjectivation process, see also Viñao-Frago; Escolano (1998) and Rocha (2000).

¹³ By “*ethos* of Modernity”, Foucault refers to an attitude, a “way to relate with the present...a way of thinking and feeling, and also a way of acting and behaving that, at the same time, establishes a belonging and presents itself as a task” (Castro, 2009, p. 302).

perceptions, representations, and uses of medieval space and time, establishing the space and time we currently understand (Varela, 1996).

If we pay attention to the social role of subjects — that is: to establish certain codes for common use, peaceful, and in cooperation with social times and spaces —, then it is clear the many and even radical displacements operated by this state of things. Online education and, mainly, the transfer of school education to the family space immediately raised three questions: *where*, *how* and *when* will children learn these social codes that, in the end, are possible conditions for the common and for a life based on cooperation, tolerance, and empathy?

Conclusion

When positioning ourselves contrary to the way productivism- contentism, especially in K-12, has been privileged in online education, we sought to question how this practice weakens the possibilities to go against the competitive logic and favors individualism. When reinforcing the importance of school space and time, as a space far from the vigilance and beliefs of families, we wanted to make it clear that the transposition of in-person classes to digital communication platforms — under the shared guidance of teachers and families — does not encompass the dimension of the event and the unpredictability. This does not mean that online activities should be avoided or discarded. No doubt, there are many possibilities in virtual communication devices and denying them in school education would make no sense. Therefore, we do not defend a school secluded from technologies, nor a separation between on and offline, these are two worlds so entangled that we cannot identify where one ends and the other begins. For these reasons, we also understand that it is no longer possible to ignore the algorithm governmentality. However, we understand it is urgent to think about the formation of subjects to inhabit the digital world and that requires investment in an education with intellectual rigor and not only committed with productivism-contentism.

Our intention was also to point out the need to (re)think about human relations, from the circumstances established to all of us by the pandemic. Though neoliberal rationality has no answers for a biological phenomenon, and not economical as the 2008 economic crisis that mainly affected European countries and the United States, it is key to problematize how we

reached here and the impacts of our choices in the current context. The economic, social, and political losses — the latter, especially in Brazil — are undeniable. The ways of being based on neoliberal rationality, which has competition and market regulation as its main characteristics, led a great part of the population towards precarious jobs as a way to overcome poverty and the lack of opportunities. Under the title of self-entrepreneur, we romanticize the substitution of formal jobs with working rights for the informal job that, often, cannot even provide the necessary minimum for survival. In Brazil, today, around 38 million Brazilians, according to the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostras de Domicílios Contínua* (PNAD)¹⁴, see in informal work the only way to survive. The struggle to survive, blended with the competition logic increasingly fomented by neoliberal capitalist practices, made the individual increasingly superimpose the collective.

At the same time, school education, in many cases and supported by families, seems to have surrendered to the business-shape and, therefore, are increasingly more committed to the productivism- contentism. Such practice, instead of forming subjects able to understand that algorithm governmentality — which, besides guiding a good part of choices, also produces an informational immunization — establishes subjects more and more obstinate in favor of self-entrepreneurship and , *ipso facto*, of competition. Solidarity, empathy, and respect to the differences become punctual and rarer behaviors and exercises. Such a situation will hardly be reversed if the formation and the knowledge— mainly in the field of Humanities — does not take a central space in the educational process. Changes of this type, however, imply the need to rethink what we understand as one of the pillars of K-12 education: form free individuals, able of self-governing, and understanding their condition as a part of a set of interconnected subjects. It is key to understand that everyone matters and all actions, isolated or collected, produce effects.

We continue to the end of this text, with no intention to end the problematization developed here, highlighting that DL, as a teaching modality, is not simply a transposition of in-person classes to online platforms. The distance learning is inserted in different pedagogical approaches and involved with the type and objectives of the course and knowledge area. However, in this very specific moment, as a rule of thumb, the classes taught through web

¹⁴ Available in <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/economia/noticia/2020-03/informalidade-cai-mas-atinge-38-milhoes-de-trabalhadores>. Accessed May 8, 2020.

platforms follow the emphasis of productivism- contentism. By not allowing “waste of time”, as everything needs to be converted into capital, human or financial, productivism demands quick answers. Thus, the format applied in in-person education is transposed to different conference online platforms accessible to institutions and students. In this case, we do not only waste the opportunity to rethink the content, pedagogical practices, and the utilitarianism that has been grounding K-12 education, but also reduce the technological potential and do not create possibilities of shared space and times in which we can think other ways of thinking and of (co)exist with unpredictability. In other words, we do not take advantage of the moment as an opportunity to oppose the focus on productivism- contentism that compromises the possibility to think current life conditions, to develop the necessary formation to avoid informational immunization and to understand the enactment of algorithm governmentality.

As we positioned ourselves during this article, we understand that the moment imposed a certain immediacy when seeking for solutions to the suspension of school in-person activities. However, we call attention to the importance of taking advantage of the opportunity created by this situation, never experienced by any of us, to think together, especially, the recrudescence of inequalities produced by the pandemic period, mainly in a country such as Brazil, in which human development is so unequal.

Thus, we pose some questions — with no prescriptive intention — to unleash an exercise of collective thought: how do precarious work conditions, which prevent a significant part of the population to socially isolate, increase the curve of fatal Covid-19 victims? How does productivism-contentism affect students from different Brazilian schools, considering the gigantic discrepancies of possibilities made available in public and private institutions, besides the different family and material conditions of each child and young person in K-12? Which are the State obligations towards the population, in the context of the pandemic and the worsening of the unemployment crisis? As a citizen, what commitments do we have with ourselves and with others?

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