

POSITIONS OF THE SOCIO-CRITICAL PARADIGM AS CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA

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RESUMEN

This research essay is presented as a contribution of the authors in the framework of the philosophy of science, with the purpose of reflecting on the call of multiple Colombian educational communities to a genuine and decisive scientific revolution in education. The authors describe the approaches and tendencies of research, philosophy and science, of great representatives who made significant theoretical contributions through the socio-critical paradigm in general and then in Latin America. Next, specific contributions to education and educational management are characterized, ending with the positions of an influential proponent in Colombia. The socio-critical paradigm aims from the critical theory, the liberation in terms of thinking and emancipation of the educational actors in the contexts they experience, through the communicative reason and argumentation of the positions that lead to the social transformation of their environment through the exchange of intersubjectivities that result in the restructuring of the educational system. From the positions of the socio-critical paradigm exposed, the authors conclude the article with the chapter that presents these contributions to guide 34 (Guide for institutional improvement from self-evaluation to the improvement plan, established by the Colombian Ministry of Education) as an input to implement continuous improvement processes, adjusted to the institutional reality of educational management in Colombia.

Keywords: Philosophy of science, education, knowledge, socio-critical paradigm, educational management.

INTRODUCTION

It was with the formation of the Vienna circle at the beginning of the 20th century that philosophy of science was defined as the branch of philosophy that investigates scientific knowledge and practice, and only in 1962, with Thomas Kuhn and his work *“The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”*, was it internationally established. For Kuhn, new scientific theories were born by substituting an explanatory model which he called *“paradigm”* (Serrano, 1990).

The socio-critical paradigm emerged from the Frankfurt School and was oriented by the social sciences and education, as a response to the need for social transformation. With the passage of time, it has had various aspects and exponents, but *“all with the commitment of the researcher as an agent of change and social liberation”* (Loza, 2020).

The socio-critical paradigm aims to promote social transformations, providing solutions to specific problems with the active intervention of its members (Orozco, 2016, p. 6).

This is how the communicative action becomes relevant with respect to the dialogic reason in any educational environment and from the different areas of management in educational institutions, with the purpose of tracing a new path for the emancipation of education and knowledge that are promoted from within the curriculum thus contributing to the reconfiguration of the system.

In Latin America there are many thinkers who, framed in the Frankfurt School, have made significant contributions to education and pedagogy, reaching a common point: the purpose of education should be to transform subjects and consequently to transform realities and contexts.

I. SOCIO-CRITICAL POSITIONS IN EDUCATION FROM THE SCHOOL OF FRANKFURT

At present, in order to discuss the critical-reflective thinking and social transformation in education that characterizes some thinkers, it is necessary to cite the Frankfurt School as precursors of this paradigm, where a student or human being is observed liberated in his or her way of thinking and acting. For such reasons, from the socio-critical paradigm different positions related to education are evidenced, which unquestionably result in the emancipation of the human being as a thinking and social being, thus *“...nature and education are similar, since education transforms man and thus creates a second nature”* (Horkheimer, 2003, p. 68); thus we understand that education in man resignifies his holistic being, guiding him to a more structured and autonomous level, while: *“the new freedoms mean a strong responsibility of each individual for himself and for his family, a responsibility that must be awakened in him*

through education” (Horkheimer, 2003, p. 165).

According to Horkheimer (2003), education liberates people’s thinking in such a way that any traditional educational model is left behind in the emancipatory context, where *“the intellectual education of the masses, especially in the period of the rise of the bourgeoisie, is part of the liberation of society from outmoded feudal forms”* (p.167).

In consideration of the liberation of education and the reconfiguration that decontextualized and everyday educational systems deserve, Marcuse (1969) expresses that: *“the struggle for a free and critical education becomes a vital part of the broader struggle for change”* (p. 65). In addition, it contemplates the fact of modifying the educational system from its very juncture in order to provide tools to students so that they tend to develop skills related to their autonomy and self-management, due to the fact that:

The demands for a structural reform of the educational system (urgent enough by themselves...) intend to counteract the deceptive neutrality and the often simply apologetic teaching, and to provide the student with the conceptual tools to make a solid and in-depth critique of the material and intellectual culture. (Marcuse, 1969, p. 65).

This is how education is framed within the concept of liberation or emancipation of the educator and the learner, as a being enabled to express his critical and reflective point of view of reality in the context in which he lives, to thus contribute to the social transformation of his environment, as a consequence to this Adorno (1963), expresses that: *“the figure in which today emancipation is concretized...consists...in that people who believe it necessary to walk in that direction influence in the most energetic way so that education is an education for contradiction and resistance”* (p. 125).

Walter Benjamin (quoted in Ballester, L. & Colom, A. 2015), makes it clear that: *“social transformation must be one of the objectives of culture, of education”* (p. 56), thus contributing to the reconfiguration of the educational system seen from another perspective as a liberating system. In addition, he highlights the fundamental role played by students in the process of educational restructuring by clarifying that:

If we believe in the articulating role that youth plays between school reform and school, it will be the youth themselves who will bring the future to it...That is, there can be no true education (reformist education) without freedom: modern pedagogy must create space for the emerging culture. (Walter Benjamin cited in Ballester, L. & Colom, A., 2015, p. 96).

Jürgen Habermas (1963), highlights the fundamental role of educational actors in social reformulation focused from the sciences, elucidating that: “...*only if they learn to reflect from historical presuppositions, they will be able to recover the energy necessary for academic training in a sense in accordance with social transformation.*” (p. 350); furthermore, with the help of this intersubjectivity, new horizons can be found in the teaching-learning process where an emancipatory revolution in education is promoted.

Following this reasoning we can understand the beginning of a new path, through communicative reason, which will lead general-traditional education to a contextualized emancipatory education, where: “...*the formalization of education means not only a professional treatment, but also a reflexive refraction of the symbolic reproduction of the world of life*”. (Habermas, 1987, p. 208).

At this point Jürgen Habermas (1963), clarifies that:

The concept of communicative action emphasizes in this dealing with situations especially two aspects; the teleological aspect of realization of ends (or of execution of a plan of action) and the communicative aspect of interpretation of the situation and of obtaining an agreement. (p. 180).

With this caveat, the theory of communicative action is alive and effective as long as it is carried out in each of the educational actors through dialogic consensus and argumentation, to reach agreements where a curriculum that covers the needs of the educational community is built collectively, and that tends to its growth in relation to reason and not to coercion. The thinking human being must understand and immerse himself in his reality if he wants to transform it in any way, that is why Jürgen Habermas (1963), states that as a social being: “*I have to understand my world of life to the degree necessary to act in it and act on it*” (p. 181). (p. 181).

II. SOCIO-CRITICAL POSITIONS IN EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

These paradigms in Latin America begin with the contributions of the Brazilian philosopher and pedagogue Paulo Freire, who is considered the founder of critical pedagogy, which he began to promote with his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1968. His idea of education, according to Jardilino & Soto (2020), is based on the assertion that any educational act is a political act, so that in education lies the potential needed to transform society through a true critical awareness of reality, a task that must be assumed from education, both by the educator and the educated. Therefore, for Freire “*education is a dynamic process of construction, appropriation, criticism and self-criticism of knowledge by the subjects involved to generate new knowledge and not be reduced to repeating or copying existing*

knowledge” (Gadotti, 2008, p. 86). This implies that educational practice must go beyond a simple act of exchange of knowledge and static, finished theories.

This requires an educator who takes into account the interests of his or her students, who uses dialogue and questioning as a means to direct the construction of knowledge, an educator who also wants to be educated. Likewise, the educational act is based on the exchange of ideas, cultures, realities, knowledge in context, which help to understand current conditions, to think about them, to reflect, but, above all, to transform. For this, it is necessary to form free, autonomous people; this is where the true task of education lies.

On the other hand, there are the ideas of the Colombian researcher and sociologist Orlando Fals Borda, who dedicated a large part of his life and work to the study of the relationship between sociological inquiry and political commitment. In the field of education, he is one of the promoters in Latin America of Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is a qualitative research methodology based not only on identifying the social needs of a community, but also on gathering the will of the social actors themselves in order to transform reality based on collective organization. For Imen et al. (n.d.), PAR was born as a methodology based on sociology; however, it became almost immediately an educational action, since it rescued the dialectic unity between theory, which was distant from the social actors and practice. Consequently, for Fals-Borda, education in context is the basis for the elaboration of knowledge:

Pedagogues, graduates, professionals, social scientists, educators, among others, must erect their interest to experience with certain communities and subjects part of their culture, go to the context in which they are rooted and ask them why of their local ways of life, let themselves be taught from them and think about building with them new concepts of education (Diaz, 2015, p. 196). (Diaz, 2015, p. 196).

In this sense, *“PAR transforms the subjects and at the same time transforms their own reality, in such a way that it is a pedagogy of transformation”* (Imen et al. n.d. p. 3).

Likewise, there are the ideas and contributions of the Chilean philosopher and sociologist Juan Casassus Gutierrez, founder of the International School of Emotional Education, who created the method Emotional Awareness Emotional Understanding CECE and which is based on proposing a set of strategies, processes and applied instruments that serve as support in the management, climate and coexistence of different groups, including educational ones. To this end, it calls for a change in the thinking that prevailed for many centuries and in which human beings are characterized only by their mental, rational and linguistic capacity.

Therefore, Casassus (2007), urges to recognize the importance of seeing the subject as an integral being in which the mind, body and emotions are also vital, and, consequently, its emotional dimension should also have a priority place in the world of education. In addition to the above, based on several investigations she has conducted throughout her life on education and coexistence, she has concluded that the central axis in the learning processes are the emotional bonds that exist within the classroom, therefore, socioemotional competencies should be developed, which are mainly based on: *“accepting, naming, interpreting, linking, regulating and modulating emotions, in addition to generating empathy”*. (Entrepreneurs for Education, 2017, 4:59). In summary, the main contribution of emotional education is that it allows having a more comprehensive view of the subject, which has a great impact on society because it improves cognitive learning, the existing gap between education with reality is reduced, the cooperation of teachers is achieved which changes the existing pedagogy so far and finally, by improving the climate and coexistence in the classroom and outside it, it becomes an education for peace.

There are also the ideas of the philosopher, writer and sociologist Estanislao Zuleta, who dedicated a large part of his life to teaching, research and intellectual production. In the field of education he manifests the need for an education that does not cohesionize thought, on the contrary, that teaches to think in such a way that it resolves the conflicts that arise in the day to day, in this regard he states: *“education, as it exists today, represses thought, transmits data, knowledge, wisdom and results of processes that others thought, but does not teach or allow thinking”* (Zuleta, 1995, p. 1). (Zuleta, 1995, p. 4). Likewise, based on Parada (2007), Zuleta does not agree that the student is a passive receiver of a knowledge that is given to him to learn and then repeat before its issuer, but stimulates the formation of minds with the ability to raise questions and find answers to them.

In the same way, he questions the fact that education from primary school onwards emphasizes preparing students for state tests and in adult life to respond to the needs of the system, leaving aside their interests, their expectations, their aspirations. In addition to the above, he also questions that the effectiveness of education is measured by the skills that the individual acquires to perform tasks, functions or trades within a productive or bureaucratic apparatus, where it matters little that the tasks performed at the productive level are in accordance with the expectations of those who perform them. In opposition, he proposes a humanistic education: one that allows and fosters the development of the person, that is, that the possibilities of development of the individual are not determined by the market. Now, based on Parada (2007), this humanistic education requires a teacher who questions, reflects, dialogues, is modest with knowledge, confronts with arguments and is able to understand that: in the educational process, there is not one who teaches and another who learns, but

teacher and student are formed together.

III. SOCIO-CRITICAL POSITIONS IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

“Education is related to the social task, where one of the purposes of educational management should be aimed at transforming individuals and society”. (Botero, 2009, p. 2)

The contributions of the socio-critical paradigm to educational management presented below begin with those of Benno Sander, university professor, administrator and international consultant in education and social sciences of Brazilian origin, whose legacy was the formulation of the field of educational administration with great contributions for Latin America. From an interdisciplinary approach, in his essay entitled *New Trends in Educational Management: Democracy and Quality*, he explains the level of cultural, pedagogical, political and economic influence on educational management in the West, selecting five movements that have influenced the destiny of Latin American education over the last centuries, and then establishes the challenges facing educational management in a new century marked by globalization and a daily anxiety for governance.

Sander establishes that today the colonizing process continues as globalization and with it, a new interest in the study of administration, framed in the concept of governance for which, this is just a part of the global strategy that, subject to vigorous economic and political impulses, result in relations of power and material provision, whose tactics are fundamentally competitive with pragmatic purposes and immediate results in the name of efficiency and productivity, regardless of the ethical and cultural cost. From the above, Sander brings to educational management the imperative need to take advantage of the capacity of the teaching collective to critically inspect theoretical conceptions in educational policy and administration, before they are adopted, in order to build knowledge and develop educational practices that are politically effective for our communities, that are culturally relevant and that are socially meaningful and ethically valid for the citizenship in general.

For the Spanish philosopher Francisco Altarejos, it is important to understand what the person represents in the institution and what the institution represents for the person; from an anthropological point of view, Altarejos proposes that what characterizes the institution is the consideration of the values, principles and purposes that move it, and incorporates criteria for the satisfaction of real needs in order to achieve the perfection of the human good. It assumes profit and service as the main activity of the institution and the manager, oriented to the satisfaction of human needs. Within this perspective, educational management tries to focus the objectives of the institution with the values and principles that sustain it; ethics is present in a natural way and the repercussions that decisions have on those who make them

are considered; because, when the manager decides, he/she is involved in the consequences of the judgment he/she has made.

It emphasizes transcendent motivation as a motive for action to overcome the individualistic tinge and considers values to be all those that contribute to the development of staff and others. He states that the norms acquire the sense of principles that govern and guide human action, favoring with their presence the freedom of the individual and that the true principles are already naturally established, for which the function of the director is to discover them, make them explicit and put them into effect.

The researcher and writer of ten modules aimed at those responsible for educational transformation processes, Pilar Pozner, establishes in module 2 (Strategic educational management, 2015) that educational management makes it possible to link knowledge and action, ethics and effectiveness, policy and administration, in processes that ensure the continuous improvement of educational practices. It states that, in strategic educational management, the essential components are reflection, decision and leadership that focuses on pedagogy, promotes teamwork and is open to learning and innovation, thus providing an organizational culture with a vision of the future. Reflection to understand what is essential in the long term, gives rise to systemic and strategic thinking; pedagogical leadership in the medium term, makes it possible to coordinate, accompany, communicate, motivate and educate in educational transformation and decision in the immediate future, determines the constitution of a team that observes and self-observes to ensure organizational learning.

Within this approach, a systemic and strategic intervention is required to enable the transformation of the way of working in education in order to position the educational system in terms of quality, equity and relevance of the curriculum. Within this paradigm, it is expected that the practices of educational managers are able to ensure the following functions: Analyze-Synthesize Anticipate-Project Agree-Associate Decide-Develop Communicate-Coordinate Lead-Encourage Evaluate-Refocus.

Finally, the Colombian economist, educator and columnist Julian de Zubiria Samper, (in his article Towards a national agreement to improve the quality of basic and secondary education in Colombia, 2015) argues that it is necessary to rethink the purposes of education in Colombia and that in educational management it is essential to monitor processes; he warns of the worrying trend that has been increasing in Colombia, of turning rectors and directors into administrators. He emphasizes that the quality of education is not a natural consequence of education and that, to achieve it, deliberate efforts of the entire educational community are required in order to agree on institutional goals. From Merani and Vigotsky, he adopts

the need for “*the humanization of the human being*” with which he charges educational management to ensure higher levels of thought, affection and action, since the purpose of education is development and not learning.

It calls for making education a task for all, pointing out the progress made by some countries such as Finland, Brazil and Israel in the field of education, since they have made it a national priority. It provides the unit that articulates the pedagogical work by cycles so that teachers can collectively establish development priorities in the cycle, strategies and follow-up. It concludes that:

“Just as the central variable in education is that of teachers, that of an educational change aimed at improving quality is in the training of teachers and managers in the development of new competencies to teach and in new competencies to think, interpret, love, live and argue” (De Zubiria, 2015, p. 54).

IV. SOCIO-CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA

Table # 1. Contribution of socio-critical thinkers to educational management in Colombia.

Management areas	Authors	Contributions
	Herbert Marcuse	"The demands for a structural reform of the educational system (urgent enough in themselves...) are intended to counteract the misleading neutrality and the often simply apologetic teaching, and to equip the student with the conceptual tools for a sound and in-depth critique of material and intellectual culture" (Marcuse, 1969, p. 65).
Directive	Juan Casassus Gutiérrez	"In this particular paradigmatic shift, there is a shift away from models that focus on the cognitive [...] towards models that give primacy to the emotional [...]." (Casassus, 2017, p. 123).
	Pilar Pozner	"In a simple way it can be stated that all activities of educational management can be integrated into these three keys: reflection, decision and leadership" (Pozner, 2015, p. 28).

Management areas	Authors	Contributions
	Walter Benjamín.	"If we believe in the articulating role that youth plays between school reform and school, it will be the youth themselves who will bring the future to it...That is, there can be no true education (reformist education) without freedom: modern pedagogy must create space for the emerging culture" (Walter Benjamin quoted in Ballester, L. & Colom, A., 2015, p. 96).
Academic	Estanislao Zuleta	"Education is a combat, in the sense that the more one seeks the possibility of a human realization of the people one wants to educate, the more one hinders the system [...]. ... Educators have an open space there and it is necessary that they become aware of its importance and the possibilities it offers". (Zuleta, 1995, p. 23).
	Julián De Zubiría	"The central role that teachers play in the quality of education must be emphasized [...]. The quality of an educational institution ultimately depends on their role in the development of the IEP, on the quality of their participation in the institution [...] and on their monitoring of the curriculum" (De Zubiria, 2015, p. 10).
	Jürgen Habermas	"The concept of communicative action emphasizes in this dealing with situations especially two aspects; the teleological aspect of realizing ends (or executing a plan of action) and the communicative aspect of interpreting the situation and obtaining an agreement." (Habermas, 1963, p. 180)
Administrative	Paulo Freire	"The role of democratic authority is not to point out the lessons of life for freedoms and to transform human existence into a traditional school calendar, but to make it clear with its testimony that, even if it has a programmatic content to propose, what is fundamental in learning the content is the construction of the responsibility of the freedom that is assumed" (Freire, 1997, p. 90).
	Francisco Altarejos	"The development in the conception of organizations could be synthesized in a growing attention to people, and to contemplate them as a function of them, and not the other way around" (Altarejos, 2007, p. 106)

Management areas	Authors	Contributions
	Max Horkheimer.	"The new freedoms mean a strong responsibility of each individual for himself and for his family, a responsibility that must be awakened in him through education" (Horkheimer, 2003, p. 165).
Community	Orlando Fals Borda	"...humanistic education [...] recognizes intuitive, extra-academic and even esoteric capacities. These are those that come from often spontaneous experiences and experiences, originating in the history of peoples and common sense [...]." (Fals-Borda, 2013, cited in Rincon, 2015).
	Benno Sander	"I think of an innovative educational administration. An administration built and exercised collectively. An administration capable of promoting an education with identity." (Sander, 2016. p. 9)

Source: own elaboration.

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