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The production of social school democratic spaces for agency transformation

A produção de espaços sociais democráticos escolares para agência transformadora

ABSTRACT / RESUMO

This article discusses the production of social school democratic spaces for teachers' and students' agency transformation in a Latin American globalized context – Brazil, through their participation in an engaged multiliteracy project (Digitmed Program/Brazil), where some social, political, economic, and cultural issues are at the basis. In this program, there are all types of social exclusion such as age, gender, class, race, hearing differences; oppressions lived by educators and students; children and teenagers who work on streets as opposed by others who have a very limited perception of the surrounding reality; students in-

Keywords:

Democratic space production; agency; globalized context; critical collaboration; engaged multiliteracy

involved with drugs, both as users and as dealers, students who consider suicide as an option, and other similar dramatic circumstances. The project involves a critical-collaborative intervention research (Magalhães, 2011) with private and public (municipal and state) schools, focusing on a university-school-community partnership for the joint construction of a school democratic social space for agency transformation. In this project, the concept of agency offers us basis to investigate the development of individuals in the critical transformation process of their social realities through engaged multiliteracy.

Este artigo discute a produção de espaços democráticos sociais escolares para a transformação da agência de professores e alunos em um contexto globalizado latino-americano - Brasil, por meio de sua participação em um projeto educacional de multiletramento engajado (Programa Digitmed / Brasil), onde alguns aspectos sociais, políticos, econômicos, e as questões culturais estão na base. Neste programa, existem todos os tipos de exclusão social como idade, sexo, classe, raça, diferenças auditivas; opressão vivida por educadores e alunos; crianças e adolescentes que trabalham na rua em oposição a outros que têm uma percepção muito limitada da realidade circundante;

Palavras-chave:

Produção de espaços democráticos; agência; contexto globalizado; multiletramento engajado; colaboração crítica.

alunos envolvidos com drogas, tanto usuários quanto traficantes, alunos que consideram o suicídio uma opção e outras circunstâncias dramáticas semelhantes. O projeto envolve a pesquisa de intervenção crítico-colaborativa (Magalhães, 2011) com escolas públicas e privadas (municipais e estaduais), com foco em uma parceria universidade-escola-comunidade para a construção conjunta de um espaço social democrático de transformação da agência. Neste projeto, o conceito de agência nos oferece uma base para investigar o desenvolvimento dos indivíduos no processo de transformação crítica de suas realidades sociais por meio do multiletramento engajado.

1. Introduction

The devastating impact of COVID-19 that intensifies the production and maintenance of social inequality and oppression in mechanisms by which social systems produce and normalize exclusion and marginalization. Adding to that, the structural unemployment; the erosion of hand labor; social exclusion; the increase in the gap between rich and poor; the increase in urban insecurity due to progressive violence; the serious threats to security, peace, stability and development cause systematic attacks on human beings, their dignity and self-esteem.

In Latin America and specially in Brazil, globalization implies social abandonment (Santos, 2003), being away from social demands and geared to the needs of large potential. In this scenario our claim is to move from this kind of globalization to use it as a locus place for possibilities (Santos, 2003) for another speech and a new world view, leading to relearning how to see and read the world, as proposed by Freire (1970/1987).

On this perspective, this article discusses the production of school democratic social spaces for teachers' and students' agency transformation in a Latin American globalized context – Brazil, through their participation in an engaged multiliteracy project (Digitmed Program / Brazil) where some social, political, economic and cultural issues are at the basis. In this program, there are all types of social exclusion such as age, gender, class, race, hearing differences; oppression lived by educators and students; children and teenagers who work on streets as opposed by others who have a very limited perception of the surrounding reality; students involved with drugs, both as users and as dealers, students who consider suicide as an option, and other similar dramatic circumstances. Considering these conditions that permeate realities of the schools, participants of Language in Activities in School Contexts Research Group (Linguagem em Atividades do Contexto Escolar - LACE) developed school communities' formative proposals in a critical-collaborative way.

This project involves private and public (municipal and state) schools, focusing on a university-school-community partnership for the joint construction of a school democratic social space for agency transformation. The project joins (deaf and hearing) students, researchers, sign language interpreters, principals, coordinators, teachers and any other participants in the school community. In this project, the concept of agency offers us basis to investigate the development of individuals in the transformation process of their social realities.

Agency can be understood as the expansion of engagement of skills in the world and the rupture of pre-established patterns of action in subjects' roles, from taking initiatives to transform them (Engeström, 2006, 2011; Virkkunen, 2006). It centrally refers to the development of authority and authorship of each individual on their

own lives (Engeström, 2009). In this way, it enables participants' development of their transformative activist stance (Stetsenko, 2017) because it implies their taking positions and acting in their realities to find new grounds to deal with oppressive day by day circumstances.

In this article, teachers' and students' agencies are understood by observing the increase in their repertoire/ social mobility in the various activities of the school context, aimed at the transformation of current social practices. To do that, the article presents the theoretical background for understanding the production of school democratic social spaces and the main characteristics of the project, discussing how it creates basis for the construction of transformative agencies.

2. The production of a democratic social space

To Bengtsson (2011), one of the ways we define contemporary western society is from the fact that, in its daily practices, the school is a mandatory and even valued social space. In this way, we can say that great efforts are made to offer "school for all", with the objective that citizens go through the teaching-learning process of different skills and knowledge, in order to offer everyone forms of knowledge for their young people apprentices, so that, in the future, they can participate influencing their societies (Bengtsson, 2011). In many countries, as well as in Brazil, much is known about cognitive issues and the teaching-learning processes in different school contexts, but still little is reflected on the influences of this social space (Tanzi Neto, 2017; 2020) on those involved, how they are produced and how their social positions, agencies and practices are pre-defined and developed.

The concept of production starts from the principles of Marx and Engels, when postulating that humans are social beings that produce their own life, consciousness and world: "there is nothing, in history or in society, that does not need to be achieved or produced" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.68). Thus, we produce political, legal, religious, artistic and philosophical forms. Production, in its broadest sense, comprises a multiplicity of works and forms of production (Tanzi Neto, 2017). However, Lefebvre (1991) considers that Marx and Engels reduce this concept only to the question of "products": who produces, how does it produce, why, for whom, leaving aside issues such as imagination, creativity or inventiveness, and taking the discussion about the concept of production only from the perspective of work.

For Lefebvre (1991) humanity, through its social practice, creates, works and produces things. In the Marxist conception, production organizes the sequence of actions for an object to be produced, imposing a temporal and spatial order on operations, in which its results coexist. To Stetsenko (2017) people actively engage, contribute and transform collaboratively their social practices this is

part of human capabilities and capacities that is constituted in the process of human development.

However, we are concerned with issues of social transformation, since our young people are increasingly inserted in different superdiverse social contexts of the globalized world and we wonder to what extent they transform/reconfigure (produce) these spaces for social mobility, social justice or just replicate voices, speeches, pre-established repertoires and agencies shaped by situated socio-historical-cultural contexts, already defined by class, ethnic, cultural, race structures etc. In the words of Stetsenko (2016), how can we understand our active role in choosing “our path”, but, at the same time, understanding the constitution of our being and the existence of forces and social structures that go beyond ourselves (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 4).

The concept of agency offers us bases to investigate human development, in the process of transforming human activities that is related to intentions and intentional actions (Liberali, 2020). For the author, based on Engeström (2006; 2011) and Virkkunen (2006), agency can be understood as “ruptures of pre-established patterns of action in the roles of subjects to take initiatives to transform them” (Liberali, 2020).

Vygotsky (1978) brings to light the study of the mediating role of specific cultural tools and their impact on the development and access to specific tools, based on the assumption that activities are socially rooted and historically developed; however, we ask how we should understand the activities in a given space in relation to the social, cultural and historical contexts of production.

In discussing this theoretical background with the purpose of producing a more school democratic social space for teaching-learning based on the integration of participants’ own agency, we reflect upon a possibility of which the production of psychological tools, of interactions between subjects, has formative effects on the production of the social space and on the psychological level (Tanzi Neto, 2017; 2020).

In the pursue for a more democratic social space for teaching-learning, we firstly consider what Bernstein (2003 [1990]; 2000 [1996]) proposes that not only the discourse, but also the internal and external symbols, such as the community and its surroundings, the pedagogical practice - and we also believe that the verbal-visual statements - can help us understand the formative/productions effects of consciousness in a school social space. Bernstein (2003 [1990]; 2000 [1996]), starting from a sociological perspective, highlights that, in the school space, the relations of power and control regulate the forms of communication or open spaces for different forms of communication to emerge, giving, thus originating different social positions and discursive artifacts.

Bernstein (2003 [1990]) starts from the principle of class relations to refer to inequalities in the distribution of power. For the author, the principles of control between social groups are given by the creation, distribution, reproduction and legitimization of physical and symbolic values, which are at the heart of the social division of labor. Thus, Bern-

stein (2003 [1990]) develops the thesis of how the “[...] class regulation of the distribution of power and of principles of control generates, distributes, reproduces, and legitimates dominant e dominated principles regulating the relationship within and between social groups and so forms of consciousness” (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.13).

For Bernstein (2000 [1996]), different forms of communication shape the formation of the consciousness of members in their groups or classes. This is due to the relations of power and control, which can be translated into forms of communication by their interlocutors, transmitting dominant or dominated codes, through which subjects are differently positioned.

On Shotter’s semiotic positioning (1993), mental processes do not act only systematically or mechanically, since they are reflected and influenced by ethical and rhetorical issues among people. In Bernstein’s work (2003 [1990]), there is a similar statement since positioning refers to the issue of establishing specific relationships with other subjects. However, from a more sociological perspective, Bernstein delves into the more specific issue of semiotic positioning when he considers that class regulation generates codes, which are culturally determined positioning devices, and which position us ideologically. In Bernstein’s words “class-regulated codes position subjects with respect to dominant and dominated forms of communication and to the relationships between them. Ideology is constituted through and in such positioning. From this perspective, ideology inheres in and regulates modes of relation” (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.13).

It is in the verbal-visual utterances that we find specialized interactional practices: in addition to the alphabetical text, the image, the semioses, the utterances given in a space are the result of “an explicit, palpable, material social relationship” (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.17) insofar as, by their selection, creation, production and change, the “subjects’ positions are revealed, reproduced and changed” (Bernstein (2003, [1990], p.17). It is the “sub-understood” statement / text, consisting of different signs (Grillo, 2009), because “they are thoughts about thoughts, experiences of life, words about words, texts about texts” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 307).

To Daniels (2015, p.10-11) “different social structures give rise to different modalities of language which have specialized mediational properties. They have arisen, have been shaped by, the social, cultural and historical circumstances in which interpersonal exchanges arise and they in turn shape the thoughts and feelings, the identities and aspirations for action, of those engaged in interpersonal exchange in those contexts. Hence the relations of power and control, which regulate social interchange, give rise to specialized principles of communication. These mediate social relations”.

However, we believe that few studies in our area seek to understand which semiotic positions are morally permitted or authorized in school social contexts. Even knowing that, from the perspective of Blommaert (2015), in semiotic events there is a stable exchange of signs, mediated by an ideological culture of interest for human use, and that we clearly

perceive that we are not morally sensitive to the social being of the other people involved, but imbued with power and control arising from a particular social position (Tanzi Neto, 2017; 2020). To Bakhtin (1986, p. 9) "Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterance of the given sphere. Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account".

In this sense, we believe that the Critical Collaboration Research (Magalhães, 2004; 2007; 2011 and Liberali, 2008; 2009), which seeks to provide spaces for dialectical confrontation and participants act to co-produce knowledge, reflect and develop, is of extreme value for this discussion. For the authors, the Critical Collaboration Research (hereinafter, PCCol) is based on the dialectical organization of language to propose the intentional transformation of contexts, through a movement of collaboration and criticism among the participants, of a collective involvement in search of shared solutions.

Magalhães (2011) postulates that, in a PCCol perspective, spaces for collaboration and critical thinking seek to understand and transform values that "organize social, cultural, ethical and political conditions regarding thinking and action-discourse" (Magalhães, 2011, p. 13), this theoretical-methodological approach allows researchers to build contexts for collaborative negotiations that transform the senses and meanings that permeate our daily choices.

Schapper, Liberali and Lemos (2012) argue that the idea of critical in PCCol starts from the transformation of a reality, through reflections that are intertwined between theory and practice (in the methodological research structure, in the needs and reflections of the participants) in search of new reflections, new social positionings, new knowledge of what is already pre-established. The idea of collaboration, on the other hand, is in the reflection on different modes of action, fugitives from simplistic acceptations of power and knowledge relations, the core is in the search to create bases (theoretical and practical) for a democratic social space of horizontal interactions, not guided by power and control, but by acceptance, dialogical interactions and human development.

In this critical-collaborative context of research, therefore, agency, involved in a collaborative, relational and transformative perspective, pressures students to develop means to face contradictions and engage in transformation, through the mastery of diverse repertoires that perform practical and intentional performance, in conquering power over even, the understanding of the role and importance of the other, participation with the other, engagement with the demands of others and the possibility and recognition of the other as support for themselves. The subjects, as collaborative agents, relationships and transformers, get involved in the transformation of the living conditions of their community.

The Digitmed Program, inspired and created within this background, can exemplify the attempts of LACE research group

to achieve transformative agency through critical collaborative activities in school democratic social spaces.

3. The Digitmed Program

The Digitmed Program begun as an international Research Project, funded by the Interchange Project Marie Curie International Research Teams - European Union FP7 (IRSES) (2012-2014). It was initially thought to discuss how digital media could enhance teaching-learning conditions in public and rather impoverished schools in the city of São Paulo. After the initial moment, two aspects were revised, although not undersized: the focus on media and the emphasis on public schools. The project was involved with concepts such as superdiversity and multiculturalism and having developed Engaged Multiliteracy (Liberali, in press) tasks and school project based on Vygotskian ideas linked to perspectives of literacies (Freire, 1970) and the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996). For that, the Brazilian research group 'Language in Activities in School Contexts' (Linguagem em Atividades do Contexto Escolar - LACE) expanded the objective of the Digitmed Program to a critical-collaborative intervention research (Magalhães, 2011) perspective for the joint construction of de-encapsulated curricular proposals (Liberali, 2019a).

The research group has worked for years on the idea the schools are primarily involved with practices to reproduce preconceived ideas as if they hold the truth that should simply be grasped by students in a banking process, as criticized by Freire (1970). Moving away from this perspective, the group devised this extramural and research project which puts together (deaf and hearing) students (at age 9 onwards), researchers, sign language interpreters, principals, coordinators, teachers and any other participants in the school community to rethink the school curriculum. The participants, in monthly meetings at the university and in periodical meetings at their own schools, study problems of their realities, having the 2030 agenda for sustainable development as the basis for understanding, criticizing, and planning forms of intervening in their school contexts. School contents programed by the Brazilian "Common Core" Curriculum Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC) are recovered to make it clear that the planned activities which emphasize the Engaged Multiliteracy (Liberali, in press). The tasks put together multiculturalism, multimedia, and multimodality, through immersion in reality, critical construction of generalizations and production of social change in play-performance activities, that are appropriated to be developed at school and to achieve the goals established for academic proficiency (a very clear concern of both private and public schools).

Apart from the academic consideration, however, topics such as those included in the Sustainable Development Goals take precedence in the discussions and choices made by the researchers, educators and students. In order to plan the tasks and the projects, students preliminarily study their realities

and the main issues to be addressed in it, focusing on the different goals of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). After that, researchers and educators (and, many times, students as well) study the BNCC to find in the different subject areas which aspect/objectives could be tackled as part of the tasks to be planned for the school curriculum.

Together participants engage in play-performance activities intending to dive into reality, discuss the theoretical possibilities for understanding and for criticizing it. They also study different opportunities to deal with the issues under consideration by diverse perspectives in different contexts. In order to do that, participants use different media both as resource and as means of putting forward ideas in multimodal formats they learn to use.

The emphasis on a critical-collaborative perspective has long influenced the research group. The idea that researchers should, together with the practitioners, take charge of and transform realities has been the main concern of the group ever since Magalhães concluded her doctoral dissertation in 1991. The means to achieve that have been expanded through contact with different theories and researchers from all over the world and have made it possible to create a context in which all participants' voice is essential in all the different levels of the extramural and research project.

Some of its main characteristics can be seen in following aspects. The researchers have weekly meetings in which all must plan, evaluate, reformulate, discuss about the objectives, actions, results of each of the workshops. During these meetings, everyone holds the voice and expresses in argumentative ways their differing ideas, complementing, criticizing, expanding, exemplifying and suggesting possibilities as way of producing a more democratic social space for students' interaction.

The monthly workshops with the schools are planned based on the main issues suggested by the participants, in previous years. Besides, this is connected to ideas and topics that rise from the social contexts all the schools are involved with, such as political upheavals, strikes, demonstrations, teenagers' issues (such as the blue whale's game) and other topics that become part of the everyday life of Sao Paulo citizens (such as the Crackland or Carnival on Praça Roosevelt). These topics create the basis for the critical argumentative procedures developed during the meetings.

As stated in Liberali (2019b), the researchers and other participants get engaged with a type of discourse which emphasizes collaborative argumentation. That is a type of argumentation that aims at creating a contract of participation in which all must have the opportunity and the disposition to express, to listen to and to react in relation to the ideas presented. Producing a space pervaded by a

social relationship (Bernstein, 2003) with mediational specialized properties (Daniels, 2015) that give rise to thoughts and feelings, identities and aspirations for action, of those engaged in these interpersonal exchanges.

It is part of the organization of the participation to get everyone to check their answers and reflect about how they react to the positions presented both by accepting, agreeing, disagreeing, supporting with examples, data, theoretical/conceptual explanations. Everyone is expected to support their positions and to ask questions to lead the others to do the same. Although research (Liberali, 2019b) has shown the difficulties in doing so, it has also proven that, according to participants, they recognize that, at the Digitmed Program, their ideas are taken into consideration and expanded. In this

process of supporting, accepting, disagreeing and exchanging, "subjects' positions are revealed, reproduced and changed" (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.17).

During the meetings the scenario constructed builds on the idea that voices should be expressed through circle conversation, trios, peers' exchanges and big group discussions and presentations. Besides, performatic presentations and a lot of games create the chance for people to become less formal in their ways of addressing one another. Therefore, it does not matter if the participant is a researcher, a student, a principal, a coordinator, a teacher or a parent, they will all have the same opportunities to speak and to be questioned. The main idea is to promote participants' social positioning that ideologically opposes against culturally pre-determined

codes of dominant and dominated forms of communication (Bernstein, 2003 [1990]).

A lot of jokes and playful language also take place during all the different moments of exchange so that people learn to relax with one another. Moreover, the rules for the organization of the meetings are shared and constructed with the constant help of everyone. In 2019, for instance, schools were called to create mediatic presentations of the rules they thought necessary to the organization of the meetings, having in mind the collaborative construction of the coffee break, the movement in the rooms, regarding the interpreter-deaf participants interactions, the use of the non-dischargeable cups, among others.

Most topics addressed in the workshops are chosen because of and leading to heated discussions as the ones we have observed in everyday social media. Therefore, in a collaborative perspective, some strategies are suggested as a means for everyone to listen to opposing or differing views. When there are conflicts in the group, they become object of discussion among researchers and general participants, both in the workshops and through the

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WhatsApp list which gathers all participants.

Every month, as part of the homework assigned to the schools, there are presentations of the results and ideas of each school. These presentations are not simply observed by the other participants, but there is normally some kind of task that makes it important to engage with the presentation of the others. Many times, different people are invited to join the activities of the project and become important collaborators for the discussions on the topics under study. For example, some deaf and hearing slammers, documentary director, graffiti artists, politicians, researchers from different institutions, historians, musicians, engineers, architects, psychologists among other professionals and activists have been incremental to the expansion of the ideas of all participants.

This critical-collaborative standpoint of producing a social democratic space helps participants assume a more transformative perspective for their roles. As explained in Liberali (2019), since its first occurrence in 2013, the project has discussed relevant Brazilian topics such as: 2013: participating in demonstrations; 2014: creating films about school realities; taking care of trash; 2015: going to parties and establishing non misogynist attitudes; moving around the city; 2016: understanding public and private issues in making and keeping friends ; 2017: occupying the city; 2018: designing transformations in the neighborhood or city; 2019: reducing inequalities, in the search to overcome social inequality, through the development of artistic and cultural manifestations.

4. Theory x Practice: producing school social democratic spaces

As an example, the 2018 activities of the project included researchers from the School of Architecture and Urbanism from The University of São Paulo (USP), besides LACE research Group. This contribution was essential to heighten the focus in the promotion of critical collaborative projects to create opportunities for experiencing and fostering responsible and responsive engagement with transformative activist positions. Seven schools were involved in the project in 2018: two public ones and four private ones; summing a varying number of 50 to 80 participants in each workshop. The Engaged Multiliteracy activities which took place in the meetings in 2018 were organized as follows.

In workshop 1, the focus was on the discussion of artifacts that described their neighborhoods, the creation of posters, the analyses of different cities around the world and the interpretation of the types of activities and characteristics of these places (see Fig. 1 and 2). For homework, at the schools, participants were supposed to prepare artistic stations, describing their neighborhoods and showing qualities and difficulties they faced there. Agency was initially thought as collectively created by the engagement of teachers, principals, coordinators, students in the context

of their school neighborhood as the basis for transforming their contexts. In this sense, with the involvement of the school community, parents/guardians, teachers and other external agents, we sought for a more democratic and horizontal social positions of participation once the project is created/produced by all. In other words, a social space that promotes flexibility of interaction and freedom in social relations among those involved.

For Bernstein (2000 [1996]), power establishes the control relationship, which is legitimized by different forms of communication for different groups. In this case, in DIGITMED project, it is where argumentation plays a key role once all participants can make their own decisions in relation to the project, the organization of the groups, the preparation of the activities or any other decision making that has to be a common-shared and discussed decision made by all participants involved (see fig. 1 and 2).

During workshop 2, there were presentations and visits to the neighborhood stations of each school, creating possibility for the development of a mutual understanding of various realities. Besides, the new possibilities of participation in their environment were expanded by analysis and creation of infographics of these neighborhoods, based on categories such as mobility, social interaction, training and social development, participation and uses and infrastructure - all characteristics were based on the BNNC (see Fig 3). For homework, participants learned how to create a data wall to involve all school participants (not only those who participated in the monthly workshops at PUCSP) in the evaluation of their neighborhood with the categories studied with the infographics (see Fig. 4).

In this section, in the search for mutual understandings of different realities, once participants with very different social backgrounds were working together, we consider as Blommaert (2015) postulates that, in semiotic events there is a stable exchange of signs, mediated by an ideological culture of interest for human use (public "privileges" of my rich neighborhood x poor neighborhood basic sanitation, for example), and in that we clearly perceive that some people are not morally sensitive to the social being of the other (Tanzi Neto, 2017; 2020). At this particular moment of the project students had to face very different social realities and engage with different social positions to work as a unit for an activist agency for realities transformations, what once may be common ground for some people may be seen as "privileges" to others (see Fig 3 and 4).

In workshop 3, based on the results presented on the datawall, organized with ideas from different members of the school community (see Fig. 5), participants designed the desired changes they would like to implement in their neighborhoods. After dreams were burned (see Fig. 6) by the researchers as part of a performance, there was a discussion of shattered dreams and of housing issues based on a recent event – the burning down of a building occupied by homeless people. There were also performances of different housing issues concerning the difference between invasion



Figure 1

Workshop 1 – Describing my neighborhood

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 2

Workshop 1 – Analysis of different cities around the world

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 3

Workshop 2 – Neighborhood infographics

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 4

Workshop 2 – School participants – Datawall

Source: DIGITMED data

and occupation through the discussion of the concept of ownership and property. The homework involved the development of a list of demands to present and question politicians about. Participants agentively had to move beyond their immediate reality, using this reality, in order to address issues of social importance. The production of this social space offered reflections on the social relations of different fields of human activity, once participants discussed the role of a mayor, city planning secretary and citizens in a society.

During workshop 4, participants presented the main demands for their neighborhood to two politicians from two opposing political parties (see Fig. 7) who had been invited to participate in the monthly meeting. They used performances and questioned the politician as part of the discussions. For homework, the idea was to watch movies and documentaries about the issues discussed during the winter vacations. Inserted in a globalized Latin American context pre-established repertoires and agencies shaped by situated socio-historical-cultural contexts could be observed, once Brazil was very aligned with other countries in the growth of the extreme

“The production of this social space offered reflections on the social relations of different fields of human activity, once participants discussed the role of a mayor, city planning secretary and citizens in a society”

right wing, permeated by homophobic, xenophobic, misogynist superdiverse repertoires. However, the social democratic spaces created in the project enabled participants to demand and discuss with politicians in ways not common in everyday situations. This expanded their repertoire so they could view new possible ways to engage with more transformative attitudes (see Fig. 7).

Workshop 5 initiated an important semester as preparations for the presidential election were occurring nationally. Students planned ways to present their demands/ intentions as part of a campaign for a political position (see Fig. 8). As for Homework, they had to

create candidates with platforms in tune with the demands they wished for their own realities.

In workshop 6, the focus was on the analysis of the proposals of all the candidates for presidency using the categories studied since the first meeting. Besides, in small groups, they had to devise a political proposal to be used as basis for a collaborative candidate debate. For this debate, “candidates” were invited to devise together a better perspective for the country. The homework was a discussion and planning of



Figure 5

Workshop 3 – Desired changes

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 6

Workshop 3 – Dreams on fire

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 7

Workshop 4 – Political Parties

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 8

Workshop 5 – Presidential Elections

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 9

Workshop 6 – Candidates' proposals

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 10

Workshop 7 – In my neighborhood

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 11

Workshop 8 – Housing Intervention

Source: DIGITMED data



Figure 12

Workshop 8 – Constructing a Manifest

Source: DIGITMED data

THE MANIFEST

WE REJECT

- Lack of housing;
- Absence of schools' involvement and engagement in own and community projects;
- Geographically manifested socioeconomic segregation;
- Abandoning of the suburbs by the public power;
- Forced occupation of at-risk regions.

WE SUPPORT

- Community organized actions that encourage participation of all people;
- Ample research and publishing of data about housing;
- Intensification of social movements in the community;
- More school involvement in the community;
- Public policies regarding prevention of violence, drugs and risks.

WE PROPOSE

- Collective effort to build homes;
- Construction of apartment buildings with stores on the ground floor, in order to attract immigrants and migrants;
- The reorganization of neighborhoods with adequate distribution of public health care, schools, commerce etc.;
- Greater involvement of the community with residents and shop owners, informing and announcing possible problems that can be resolved through joint collaboration;
- Signs and adequate communication of means to preserve public spaces.
- Communication of proposals and social actions in different media;

Figure 13

Workshop 8 – Our Manifest

Source: DIGITMED data

effective projects to housing problems they studied and which they considered possible to be tackled as part of their school activities. Through these activities, participants could expand their reflection about and performance with the political proposals in a more critical way (see Fig. 9).

The idea was to make participants transit in different social structures, which as to Daniels (2015) give rise to different modalities of language. Participants had to appropriate themselves of the politicians (left or right) super-diverse repertoires shaped by social, cultural and historical circumstances to perform their roles and propose their candidatures. This interpersonal/social performances exchanges give rise to thoughts and feelings, identities and aspiration for agency action and transformation.

For Workshop 7, based on the main topics addressed in the debate and on the projects initially thought of for the homework, participants analyzed and constructed ideas for housing problems in their own neighborhoods. The homework aimed at the implementation of these projects and the organization of a presentation of the results of their projects for the whole group of schools (see Fig. 10).

As mentioned before, it is in the verbal-visual utterances that we find specialized interactional practices. The production of this social space, in addition to the alphabetical text, the image, artifacts, the semiosis and the utterances given, make this space as "an explicit, palpable, material of social relationship" (Bernstein, 2003, [1990], p.17), which the "subjects' positions are revealed, reproduced and changed" (Bernstein, 2003, [1990], p.17).

In the last Workshop (8), there was the presentation of the housing intervention proposals that each school organized in their own neighborhoods (see,

Fig 11). Besides, the whole group elaborated (see Fig. 12) a Manifest (see Fig. 13) on Housing issues which was spread on all types of social media.

5. Concluding Remarks

The Project seems to create democratic social spaces through the situations that are enacted with diverse verbal-visual utterances, modes of representations and different perspectives. These different forms of internal and external symbols, as stated by Bernstein (2000 [1996]), create a repertoire for participants to reflect about the present and past and to deliberate critically about new possibilities (Liberali, 2019). Besides, participants' mobility is transformed through the critical collaborative activities they engage in.

In Brazil, Faria (2012) points to the fact that the school institution, which has existed for more than 200 years, has undergone major transformations in pedagogical proposals, curriculum content, ways of teaching and learning, but its social spaces remain unchanged and rooted with its essence and with the concept of "taming bodies, modeling subjectivities, homogenizing behaviors, fragmenting perception and controlling production" (Faria, 2012, p.103).

The workshops in the project sought to promote in a school democratic social space, as postulated by Bakhtin (2003a [1952-53 / 1979]), forms of moral and physical values, forms of the private, social and historical aspects of life (Bakhtin, 2010), that are configured in socio-historical schemes of a situated activity (Blommaert, 2015), so that participants could transit, feel, act, perform and transform different realities.

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