

Editorial

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In times when inequalities become deeper and violence increases and expresses itself in many ways, there is no better arena to reflect on the transformations that could improve the state of affairs than education. This field, heavily disputed because it entails economic and social models, cultural imaginaries, social representations and political projects no longer circumscribed to the scope of the national State but bounded by international geopolitics, is also a human right that has yet to become a fulfilled reality.

Full enjoyment of this right fully would allow us to aspire to have fairer and less unequal societies, constitute participative citizenships, and play out notions now in jeopardy such as ethics, respect, peace and democracy, to mention just a few linked as counterparts to the scenarios we now live in. Thus, making the right to education effective becomes a vital and indispensable condition to shape critical and collaborative societies where the horizon is changing that which hurts and impedes the conscious exercise of freedom as a right and organizing principle of social life. Education plays a fundamental role in making it possible to demand and enjoy other rights.

Education goes hand in hand with the right not to be discriminated against, which in Mexico took shape as a process of institutional and legal creation of a specific policy in favor of the equality of treatment only in the twenty-first century. It was in 2001 when the Mexican Constitution included for the first time a clause that forbids discrimination in any way, shape or form. The National Council to Prevent Discrimination (Conapred) was created in 2003, and a Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination was passed in the same year.¹ Inequality of treatment, a phenomenon that dates back centuries and has deep social and cultural roots – expressed in differential and degrading treatment anchored in stereotypes, prejudice and stigmas that deny equality among individuals – “is also a recently visibilized reality, seldom subjected to political debate and theoretical analysis, that still awaits the intellectual explanations it deserves.”²

For this reason, the main topic of this issue of *Diálogos sobre educación*, “Education, human rights and non-discrimination” seeks to show the results and advances of studies that, in different ways, give an account of recent academic debates on human rights and political theory, converging with education as a field of study comprised of different disciplines. Our aim is to show, together with those discussions that seek to make the phenomenon of discrimination

1 Jesús Rodríguez Zepeda, *Un marco teórico para la discriminación*. Colección Estudios, No. 2. Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, Mexico, 2006: 11.

2 *Ídem*.

more visible, how it operates in the life of people, in social organizations and institutions, and which are its everyday manifestations; i.e., how these inequalities of treatment are expressed when different social markings appear that hurt individuals and their identity affiliations due to their age, socio-economic status, sexual preference or religious belief, to mention a few.

Thus, we intend to contribute to a complex and still emerging discussion, which on the one hand allows us to examine the theoretical and methodological frameworks through which the problems are being studied, and on the other hand helps us find clues, information and arguments to design public policies and reflect on our current pedagogical practice based on the knowledge acquired – which we believe may foster new aspirations and proposals around social relationships and the links between their actors: teachers, students, administrators, parents – and institutional architectures that respond to our times.

The triad of education, rights and non-discrimination aims to analyze the interdisciplinary confluence of the studies on education through their links to the debates on democracy articulated in political science. Our goal is to foster theoretical and empirical studies that may be conducted in political theory, sociology, philosophy, anthropology or law studies, to mention some of the fields in the social sciences and humanities that have generated situated and multi-situated knowledge that helps to understand the gaps, shortfalls, opportunities and challenges to view education as a window through which it is possible to formulate new or renewed strategies that appeal to the individual and the State.

We are faced with the complexity, or rather complexities, expressed in education as a problematic spatial and temporal nexus, an ideal and a representation, a practice and an institution, where specific situations, processes and places are produced that give us a glimpse of the inequities it upholds. To give but one example, the educational offer in higher education has concentrated on certain sectors of the population: only 38.4% of people between the ages of 18 and 22 have access to it, a percentage in which an access differentiated by income level, ethnic background and regional origin can be recognized.³

Likewise, the school appears as a privileged space – if not exclusively, at least a favorable place – to observe the actual facts of inequality in treatment and, in the institutional framework, persistently limited views on human rights. This is a space where children and young adults have historically constructed their identity affiliation and representations of the world, and which nevertheless is being put into question nowadays because it is there that discrimination takes place and rights are violated. All this is linked to discussions on the permanence and quality of education, the different kinds of violence that take place in its midst, or the lack of access for the disabled.

³ Aurelio Fernández Fuentes and Alejandra López, “Existe un desconocimiento de las nuevas políticas para las IES: Concheiro Bórquez”, *Jornada de Oriente*, June 18 2019.

All of these are but a few of the many sides of a social phenomenon that may be analyzed in social research through new and multiple theoretical and methodological approaches, which makes the advances and results of empirical studies presented in this issue of our journal very timely indeed. The texts we have collected aspire to offer our readers current research on major issues that call for a larger body of literature and knowledge-based opinion, and we sincerely thank Dr. Teresa González Luna's proposal for our main topic and her work in coordinating this issue of *Diálogos sobre educación*.

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