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## The Technological Turn: Policies of Innovation, Politics and Mobilisation

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## **The Technological Turn: Policies of Innovation, Politics and Mobilisation**

*Marco Pitzalis\**

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*Abstract:* Societal and political transformations perpetually cause tension in educational systems, this is the locus of a seemingly endless struggle. The debate repeatedly merges philosophical, epistemological and pedagogical issues but it has an essential political nature. The crisis of School is not about its decline; on the contrary, it is seen a “crisis of growth”, a malaise attributable to its inexorable expansion. Seen thus, today’s paradigm of life-long learning and life-long guidance requires more school, not less. Bernstein defines this evolution as the pedagogisation of everyday life. The upheaval caused by the technological revolution has precipitated this crisis. Traditional pedagogies are depicted as inadequate to deal with and adapt to present conditions of work and leisure, where ICTs are widespread. In this framework, technological education has become a powerful social device. In a political dimension, the objective is to co-opt teachers and schools into a political project of transformation of society. Moreover, the notion of “mobilisation” may help to focus more clearly on the on-going state of emergency that characterizes the prevailing attitude to the educational system. In fact, innovation and reforms demand constant commitment by social actors both in strategies of adhesion and resistance.

*Keywords:* educational technology, mobilisation, educational policy, innovation

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### **The imagined future of the knowledge society**

Technological innovation in education constitutes a major issue in public discourse on educational policies in developed countries and is part of a multi-faceted debate on innovation and change that is investing educational systems the world over. Moreover, it is a discourse type that has been consistently used to herald the transformation of the world from the post-industrial phase to that of a “knowledge society”. A sort of “intellectual mechanism” accompanying and enhancing the transformation of higher education systems at regional, national and global levels.

The concept of a knowledge society is intertwined with another significant performing concept that has increasingly accompanied our imagined future over the last 25 years: the concept of globalisation. The latter is of course the result of two other momentous changes: first of all, geopolitical changes wrought by the end of Soviet Union and the diffusion of neo-liberal policies and politics all over the world; the second is the enhancement of globalization by the ICT revolution and the creation of the network society (Castells, 1996) and a communication society which is altering previous forms of power and statehood (Castells, 2009). This paradigm is now assumed to be the fundamental point of reference in all discourses on innovation and change in the field of education as well as in the reform of labour markets.

In its World Report in 2005, “Toward Knowledge Societies”, UNESCO champions the paradigm of the “knowledge society” as the framework that must guide the global transformation towards the so called “third industrial revolution” – the ICT revolution – and it is clearly depicted as a true source of development and a positive radical transformation: “The knowledge economy is a particular ‘knowledge-driven’ stage of capitalist development, following a phase marked by the accumulation of physical capital. Knowledge thus viewed is in the process of taking the place of the workforce, as Marx had foreseen in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the wealth created is being measured less on the output of work itself, measurable and quantifiable, and more and more on the general level of science and the progress of technology.” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 46)

The other transformation advocated by the World Report was the need to advance further towards the creation of a “learning society”. UNESCO again adopts an optimistic view: “Learning societies will have to enable each individual to keep up with knowledge” and the fundamental

component of this change is the obligation of lifelong education seen as “one of the preconditions for development conceived as an ability for adaptation and autonomy”. Lifelong education is seen as providing a response to the predicted “growing job volatility” (UNESCO, 2005, pp. 77-78). In fact, job volatility is presented as an unavoidable destiny and not as a political and social project to deal with the transformation of work markets following the restructuring of economies in the aftermath of the crisis of 1973. It is a transformation that has resulted from a class conflict between employers and workers over job market regulation (Harvey, 2002/1990, pp. 185-186), and over the very nature of the state and of the welfare system. Moreover, it is a discourse type that returns to the notion of an historical dichotomy between a past definitely gone (Fordism) and a predicted future (Postfordism and job flexibility). Harvey (2002/1990) criticized this opposition between “modernist” and “post-modernist” economies – portrayed as alternative forms of capital and regulation – affirming that they coexist as cultural contradictions of capitalism.

Yet, examining this opposition is useful for the purposes of expanding any discourse on new rules of wealth creation “as the logic of Fordist mass production has been replaced by new ‘knowledge-based’ systems of flexible production” (Ball, 2006, p. 68). Welfare corporatism has been abandoned for a “market model” wherein “the prosperity of workers will depend on an ability to trade their skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial acumen in an unfettered global market place” (Brown and Lauder 1996, 3, Cfr. in Ball, 2006: 68). Documents such as UNESCO’S World Report point to the natural forces behind these historical processes and ignore their political connotations. Like other international agencies, UNESCO takes the view that this is a project to provide an education for every person in the world “from the cradle to the grave”, given that receiving an education is a fundamental human right and a necessity to prepare everyone to participate in a flexible job market. In this way “Life-Long Learning” and “Life-long Guidance” have asserted themselves as concepts that fortify the idea of a “totally pedagogised society” (Bernstein, 1996; 2001). Schools have been called upon to engage in a process of transformation of the economy and society that has altered their role and function. Pat Thompson points out that the creation of digitalized knowledge archives changes the function of cultural institutions and she highlights the consequent intrusion of schooling into family lives using the notion of “pedagogisation of everyday life” (Thomson, 2006).

### **Constructing a paradigm change**

Educational policies at national level are sustained by a growing quantity of data and documents produced by the European Commission (and other international agencies) giving policy indications and legitimation to national actors engaged in school reform. The Final Study Report – published by the European Commission in 2013 – upholds what has been called the “Digital Agenda for Europe” and EU2020 goals.

The Final Report assumes that “Information and communication technologies profoundly and irreversibly affect the ways of working, accessing knowledge, socialising, communicating, collaborating – and succeeding – in all areas of the professional, social, and personal life of European young people and all citizens”. The “knowledge society” is said to be changing “the environment, habits, and expectations of young generations” (European Commission, 2013, p. 13). “This context”, says the Report, “demands a radical challenge in the educational paradigm”. The need to provide schools with new technologies and broadband goes hand in hand with an obligation to change school practices.

“Education systems are expected to develop new competences in students and new ways of teaching them. Active, personalised and collaborative learning environments are to be designed and offered to students in order that they can engage in effective, efficient and rich learning experiences, developing the knowledge and key competences needed in 21<sup>st</sup> century societies. (European Commission, 2013, p. 13). This discourse is largely evocative of an optimistic vision of the function of schools and of their direct involvement in the process of adapting learning processes and teaching.

It is interesting to recall some of the key conditions outlined in the Report: the first is the technological infrastructure in place in schools, the second key condition regards the precise competences that teachers should have in order to make efficient use of ICT; the third is the adoption of “suitable pedagogical principles”.

One key element is to focus attention on the micro-politics of schools. The notion of a “supportive school” has been introduced to underscore the dynamic interplay between two kinds of approaches to the organizational life of schools. The existence of local “concrete support measures” sets some schools apart from others, so for this reason more principals ought to be engaged in tangible activities to improve specific support micro-policies.

Moreover, another key ingredient is having self-confident and supportive teachers, which presupposes that teacher training must constitute a central tenet of policy. The active involvement of teachers is considered fundamental, so for this reason teacher training has become the core element of national and European policies. More generally, the educational reform program has called for the central involvement of schools and their actors in the politics of social transformation. This is to be achieved through the modification of their function and role (an example of this is the new-managerialism that has brought about a redefinition of the functions which principals must assume) and their professional ‘re-socialization’ and pedagogical “conversion” with a view to adopting new pedagogical beliefs and adhering to a new educational paradigm.

The traditional educational model is described as being inadequate for today’s world and for the education of the younger “digital native” generations. The technological and pedagogical revolution needed is considered to be imperative, as is the correct response to the crisis in “institutional programs” as described by F. Dubet (2002).

This paradigmatic change is indicative of a crisis in the Kuhnian sense, and has involved a radical “theoretical” change and a revolution in the idea of the relation between state, schools and citizens (their public). The paradigmatic change brought about by the crisis concerns what “use” is made of schools, how the social reproduction process is affected, new strategic ways in which it serves families’ educational projects, evolving relations between schools and social selection mechanisms, and finally the competition in a ‘credential society’. For example, in the competitive choice model of school, degrees are considered more as a benefit to individuals than as an investment for society. Furthermore, the new paradigm also affects the functions of the state and its regulatory mechanisms. “School choice”, school competition, managerialism and autonomy are the chief constituents of this new paradigm. In short, the crisis facing schools is not to be seen as the end of a highly “cultured/educated” society. On the contrary, it signifies society’s participation in a new project where the forms of solidarity, social integration and social recognition are radically altered. In this world of “job market volatility”, new flexible workers need to develop new kinds of competencies that enable them to adjust to endlessly changing conditions of work. This modern identikit of a worker is one who is competitive and adaptable, and also needs to be “plastic” and “available” to the needs of a

continuing process of education and training (long life learning and guidance). It should be remembered that the design for a total pedagogisation of human life is the central component of European and international projects.

The paradigmatic change we are describing refers fundamentally to the model of social integration adopted in state national frameworks.

It was Bourdieu who encapsulated this integration with the concept of “Magie d’Etat”, which refers to the state’s regulatory craft in transforming (through schooling) people’s social statuses, through its power of ordination and consecration. For example, school qualifications and university degrees generate and consolidate this transformation and legitimation, by means of which every individual is “shaped” by/within the state and replicates the logic of the state (Bourdieu, 1989).

The end of state schooling (as it was in the XVIII and XIX century European school model) does not signify the demise of ‘the school’ itself. And the “Magie d’Etat” which used to be the basis of the social reproduction process in Modern States is being gradually replaced by a new sort of “magic effect” that can be attributed to the ‘credential alliance’ between school and job-markets, for example through the issuing of certification of competencies (e.g. the “student competency portfolio”) or the production of rankings for universities and schools, determined by newspapers or private agencies on the basis of the evaluation of their outputs in terms of employability. Legitimation processes have been *de facto* transferred from the state to private, external actors and agencies.

### **Policies and the politics of education**

From a Foucauldian perspective, the discourse of policy-making needs analysing. In this frame, E. Grimaldi has singled out two central components of the policy-making process:

1. The first deals with the process of objectivation: “policies, as parts of wider discourses, socially construct their objects, identifying priorities, imperatives and unavoidable issues, target populations, policy problems and effective tools and strategies to cope with them” (Grimaldi, 2012, p. 449)

2. The second refers to the process of subjectivation. The goal is to “identify the processes of empowerment that policy as discourse enact,

giving some subjects both the authority to use a specific policy language and the related status and prestige deriving from the exclusive use of this (often technical) language.” (Grimaldi, 2012, p. 451).

The two elements appear to be closely related, which is important for an analysis of the process of technological innovation. Not only can we detect the main thrust of the discourse, but also the determination of a principle of authority, which establishes a hierarchy in the sources of information.

Moreover, educational policies are implemented within political agendas and deal with specific political interests. Thus, the implementation of reforms requires, first and foremost, the construction of the political consensus. Indeed, we might say that the final goal of the incessant drive to reform and innovate schools is to induce continual societal mobilisation around objects and projects devised by experts and political actors. As Cecile Robert has shown, reliance on such expertise is the chief mode of action chosen by European Commission. Furthermore, the main means to enlarge and consolidate European governance is now to enlist external actors designated by the European Commission as experts, who are called upon to help formulate communitarian public action (Robert, 2012, p. 59). It is of course a strategy of action whose chief goal is to produce legitimation –and which has gradually been extended to all groups of actors operating in communitarian spaces (Robert, 2012). Little by little, administrators, teachers, students and parents are being coaxed into taking sides and engaging in public debates, with the result that everyone is asked to take a position or is pushed into a position. “Global educational governance” is underpinned by all the surveys and reports feeding the dominant discourse on technological innovation (Meyer & Benavot, 2013).

Clearly, technological innovation policies form an essential part of this process, and new kinds of discourse on schools are required, in order to progress with the reconfiguration of educational institutions (Selwyn, 2012). Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are therefore the means called upon to make forecasts on various and sometimes contradictory issues, such as new prospects in the digitally driven “re-schooling” process or contrariwise, on the digitally driven “de-schooling” process (Selwyn, 2012). In general, ICT is the guiding instrument employed to revolutionize teaching and learning practices and to render the production of measurable learning outcomes more reliable and efficient.

Finally, educational technology facilitates the advancement of analyses on the relationship between policies and politics at both macro and micro



levels of observation. Following Selwyn and Facer we need “a broader recognition of technology and education as a set of profoundly political processes and practices that are usefully described in terms of issues of power, control, conflict, and resistance.” (Selwyn & Facer, 2013, p. 6). In short, technological devices oblige us to rethink practices both in terms of their intrinsic logic and their mere materiality, (Pitzalis & De Feo, 2016). Nevertheless, the end result of this process remains to be seen. Selwyn and Facer recommend “disrupting the deterministic assumption that technologies possess inherent qualities and are therefore capable of having particular predetermined and predictable “impacts” or “effects” on learners, teachers, and wider society. There are two aspects to this commitment: first, it entails a critique of the logic of inevitable sociotechnical change, and second, it entails a surfacing of the politics, contradictions, and negotiations realized in technologies and technological practices.” (Selwyn & Facer, 2013, p. 8).

It is clear to all that technological innovation is challenging the professional, organisational and micro-political life of schools (Colombo & Landri, 2009). For example, the adoption of technological devices in educational activities depends on previous practices and beliefs in a specific school context, but it is also the case that cost-benefit evaluations depend on social factors such as the exchange of relevant information (Frank et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2006). Moreover, social capital seems to play an essential function in the sharing of useful information, helping to elaborate shared definitions of the school life. (Zhao & Frank, 2003).

However, technological innovation (together with other changes and organizational reforms) has an essential goal that does not merely involve the outcomes of the process, but is part of the process itself, designed to produce a redistribution of political, social, economic and organizational resources. In one sense, the drive for change, which has taken the place of social progress in contemporary capitalist societies (Donzelot, 1992), demands that social actors find new ways to engage and interact. Thus, the primary goal of reforms is to create societal mobilisation, so their implementation can be considered to be one of the new forms of contemporary governmentality, for it produces adhesion, engagement, and beliefs. As Ball notes, more than just a subject of current discourse, teachers are also actors that must look to position themselves in relation to this discourse (Ball, 1994). Reforms and innovation create a continual demand for the adhesion and engagement of social actors and they prompt

the dissemination of common language and of shared definitions and values.

A further illustration of this is that the introduction of new technologies in schools has set in motion an (auto) selection of school actors (teachers) based on their previous experiences and representations (educational, social, political, philosophical, etc.). Those that find themselves in this leading group act as flag-bearers and activists for educational change. Nevertheless, all school actors are co-opted into this process whether they wish to collaborate or not. They are co-opted into becoming part of a discourse that they may adopt or criticize, but one which everyone has to take position on whatever label might have been assigned them (innovator or traditionalist). In sum, every teacher is somehow compelled to take on board the current discourse on school activities and practices, adapting to and adopting the ‘newspeak’ that has emerged and the new practices being promoted.

Mobilisation demands adaptation, detectable for example in the renewed emphasis on teacher training, which is animating reform processes, as was anticipated by the Teaching and Learning International Survey (2008-TALIS-OECD). Moreover, the active involvement of teachers and their “conversion” is one of focal points of international recommendations on national educational policies, but has also become a crucial element of national political agendas. In point of fact, the Italian “Plan for digitising schools” – promoted in the fall of 2015 by Italian Government – emphasises two key issues: “teacher training” and the introduction of a “digital counsellor” in every school, defined by the Minister Giannini in press interviews as a “digital evangelist”, a notion echoing the idea of a path to conversion to be followed.

In this fashion, although mobilisation may be the end goal of reforms, paradoxically, some “resistance” is necessary to justify the reforming actions and the rationale behind them. Indeed, antagonist groups also have a role to play in engaging in the debate, taking on their own role as experts, in order to legitimate and reinforce the “model of expertise” (Robert, 2012, p. 68).

**Materiality and the embodied dimension of practices**

The introduction and the imposing presence of the interactive whiteboard in the classroom reinforces a specific principle of vision in and division of the school world. For example, the use or not by teachers of the various devices provided by the school administration can create symbolic and practical conflicts among teachers, who become branded as either innovators or traditionalists. In this sense, technological innovation, as well as other organizational or political elements (for example, “school autonomy”), will affect the distribution of available resources in the school itself. We refer to resources for schools as a whole, for the school institute as a social or an organizational field, as well as the school class itself as a separate category or field. In each dimension, we can see how actors renegotiate their positions within their particular field. Technological devices became the focus of negotiations and conflicts in the life of each school’s class. This is quite different from the “imagined” digital learning environment foreseen by reformers. Thus, the actual use of technological devices will vary considerably and may depend on factors such as teachers subject areas, the habits of students and teachers, and other personal or professional variables.

The physical structure of the classroom incorporates technologies into everyday school life and whose use will be defined into specific social, spatial and temporal dimensions. In point of fact, the effect of ICT’s use in education has been analysed (in the ANT perspective) and proclaimed to be one of the constitutive element of a socio-material assemblage, producing its effects both on educational policies and politics and on educational practices (Sorensen, 2009; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Fenwick & Landri, 2012; Nesper, 2012; Landri & Viteritti, 2016; Viteritti & Landriscina, 2016). This perspective highlights the processual dimension of social and organizational life, focusing on the network of human and non-human actors whose actions translate educational policies into the everyday life of the school and who are responsible for the feedback effects on policies themselves (Balzanò & Grimaldi, 2012). The study of materiality in a school class’s life shifts the focus from social actors and concrete things, separately taken, to their mutual relationship (network) to explain the production of their effects (Sorensen, 2009; Viteritti & Landriscina, 2016).

Latour’s “principle of symmetry” has a heuristic value inasmuch as it breaks down the opposition between the human and the material world

(Latour, 1994). It is a notion that conveys a processual, creative and negotiated dimension of social life; the connection between artefacts and humans shapes the socio-material life in every organizational context. Thus, technological devices (as well as institutional ones) create new connections between people and things, facilitating the emergence of new social arrangements and order. Consequently, in the context of a school class, different types of materiality produce different types of knowledge within the educational process (Sørensen, 2009).

Nevertheless, since the introduction of technological innovation in schools has given rise to a sort of euphoria and optimism for the future that steers the political mobilization of social actors and institutional and organizational agents, we need to rein in this enthusiasm and be more attentive to the redistribution of power and the question of social, economic and cultural domination.

The fact that new technological devices have conquered the classroom has a whole range of new social and technical implications. This poses specific problems to the researcher. First of all, these devices connect school actors with vast networks of external actors and worlds (such as the producers of software, of internet content, of technical assistances and commerce). Second, the transformative power of a technological device such as the IWB should be analysed in terms of its material and symbolic position in teachers' minds and in terms of how far it has altered the physical and social structure of space. What effect does it have on the physical order and arrangement of objects (chairs, school tables, windows, doors, other objects and devices) and people? Some researchers have shown how teachers exploit the IWB to reinforce their power to "control" school time and space (Pitzalis & De Feo, 2016). At the same time, students today often subvert and upset the traditional symmetries of class life, interfering with 'the legitimate distribution of knowledge and competencies' (especially ICT competencies). Essentially, technological devices have become embodied in the theatre of school life and have been naturalized and domesticated within it (Selwyn, 2015).

The question of power and domination is crucial both at the macro and at the micro level. For this reason, social scientists have to acknowledge and deal with it.

From a Bourdesian standpoint, the school class and institute should be examined as institutionalized spaces (fields) where technological changes and innovations are components of the endless struggle to define and

redefine relationships of power and domination among all categories of agents involved. The IWB connects things and people, produces a specific order, which depends on social actors' dispositions (habits) and on the specific resources they are able to mobilize. In this regard, we have observed these "field effects" in action; specifically, how they have a direct effect on social class segregation in the school choice process (Pitzalis, 2012). Materiality is the conceptual structure on which school social life is built, and will have different implications, uses and effects in different areas of the school system (such as the vocational and the generalist). Bourdieu's "theory of practice" gives us concrete concepts to embed practices in the historical and institutional frame in which they take place. In particular, the notion of 'habitus' is a tool for understanding the embodied dimension of social practices; the embodiment of norms and values is not merely a metaphor for interiorisation but refers to the concrete construction of the body in an experiential sense (Wacquant, 2005). Other elements to consider include: the link between an individual's social position and her/his stance that may throw light on whether they will adhere to or oppose the discourse on innovation produced by external agents (such as politicians and administrators); the objective distribution of symbolic and material resources – e.g. the prestige of the school subject (Mathematics, Latin and Italian are more prestigious than technical subjects) or their rank in the organisational hierarchy. All these elements essentially underpin our understanding of innovation and reforms (of the discourses constructed around them) and the dynamics of the struggles underway to redefine the legitimate criteria for the distribution of political, symbolic and material resources within the school field.

### **Conclusions: The strange non-crisis of the school**

There is something somewhat ironic in the debate about the effectiveness of traditional methods and technologies to prepare for an imminent future. In truth, the technological revolution and the so-called "knowledge society" are nothing more than the spectacular outcome of traditional pedagogical methods based on "old-fashioned" knowledge transmission.

Traditional pedagogy and its age-old competencies has been demolished by an alleged expert discourse decrying the inadequacy of the school

system and its pedagogy. Edgar Morin, indicated by Bourdieu as a myth-maker and prophecy producer (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1963), represents one of the foremost examples of “savant” discourse delegitimising traditional forms of schooling in the name of an impending new world order (Morin, 1999).

The construction of a dominant “doxa” is achieved by means of persistent discourse on the crisis of values, of educational models, of training models and on the obligatory adjustment to an evolving technological world. Since societal and political transformations perpetually cause tension in educational systems, this is the locus of a seemingly endless struggle. The debate repeatedly merges philosophical, epistemological and pedagogical issues but it has an essential political nature.

As Antonio Gramsci noted – in the “Prison Notebooks” – two elements are intertwined in the conflict on school reform. One is the crisis of the old educational system and its failure to keep pace with the transformation of society; at the same time he stresses that the structure of the school system with its vertical segregation is the result of previous class struggles and interests. The crisis that Gramsci was analysing was of course the tension wrought by the transformation caused by Fordism, “industrial machinism” and the authoritarian state.

As in previous “crises”, the current one has coincided with a change in educational paradigms and at the same time a political project regarding the evolving model of state, economy and society that we are currently facing. Nevertheless, the much-debated crisis of School is not about its decline; on the contrary, it is seen a “crisis of growth”, a malaise attributable to its inexorable expansion. Seen thus, today’s paradigm of life-long learning and life-long guidance requires more school, not less. Referring to Bernstein, I have discussed (see above) the pedagogisation of everyday life. Everyone’s fate today is to be ensnared in a continual process of evaluation, control, education, training, monitoring and classification. Adopting Foucauldian standpoint, school is no longer an apparatus of the state (as Althusser claims) but has increasingly become an ensemble of devices to govern human life.

The upheaval caused by the technological revolution has precipitated this crisis. Traditional pedagogies are depicted as inadequate to deal with and adapt to present conditions of work and leisure, where ICTs are widespread. Technological education has become a powerful social device.

Even “resistant” teachers who do not use the IWB in their school activities – acknowledge the importance of ICT in education (Pitzalis and *alii*, 2016), indicating that they are subject to the symbolic power of educational technologies and the pedagogical discourse accompanying it. In a political dimension, the objective is to co-opt teachers and schools into a political project of transformation of society.

This does not mean that agreement and consensus is automatically reached in the implementation of educational policy and technology innovation. On the contrary, structural constraints and cultural and professional beliefs and habits produce a variety of hitches and glitches in everyday school life (Pitzalis & De Feo, 2016; Pitzalis et al., 2016).

For social scientists this represent a considerable challenge.

On the one hand, sociology must avoid taking an ancillary, descriptive role, limiting itself to providing legitimation to administrators’ actions. On the other hand, sociologist should avoid serving an educational project, as do educationalists, through the evaluation of learning outcomes; or support a political project through the assessment of policies, as economists often do.

First of all, we have to question the production of data and expertise made by international and governmental agencies. As Vitteriti and Giancola (2015) show these databases are akin to black boxes that veil the methodological and theoretical choices that have been made for their construction. In addition, the political goal (of societal transformation) is naturalized and neutralized incorporating within it the “objectivity” of data production and of its putative methodological neutrality and its universal availability.

The cultural and methodological hegemony that draws it strength from this production does pose a specific problem for social scientists, especially in the field of the sociology of education and technological innovation in educational processes. As pointed out by Neil Selwyn and Keri Facer, educational technology is “dominated, at best, by an optimistic desire to understand how to make an immediate difference in classrooms and, at worst, in thrall to technicians concepts of ‘effectiveness,’ ‘best practice,’ and ‘what works.’” (Selwyn & Facer, 2013, p. 2).

A vast field of research has opened for sociologists who are not especially interested in serving an administrative project (via its evaluation) but who are preoccupied with gaining a deeper understanding of social processes operating in this particular field of study. A key part of this is the

production of scientific discourse that can serve as an instrument to transform social representations and be part of the political and cultural struggle with regard to power relations in general and in relation to the field of education in particular.

Moreover, the notion of “mobilisation” may help to focus more clearly on the on-going state of emergency that characterizes the prevailing attitude to the educational system. In fact, innovation and reforms demand constant commitment by social actors both in strategies of adhesion and resistance. Everyone needs to adopt a clear position on specific policy matters which permanently modify the focus of our collective attention and on the one hand create political consensus while on the other bring about a change of focus on collective action.

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