What do Argentinean Education Laws Say about the Relationship between School and Society?

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Abstract

This investigation arises from a comprehensive concept of the relationship between society and school aimed at sustaining and supporting the democratization of school and the reinforcement of social ties. To this end, Argentinean education laws, regulations, circulars and rules from 1890 until the present day were analyzed. The historical review throughout the different Argentinean education laws has shown that the relation between school and society has gone through different conceptualizations.

Keywords: education, laws, school and society, Argentina

1. Introduction

The originality of this investigation lies in that the contributions discuss with those views that defend the difference between society and school, education and schooling, students and young people. On the contrary, this investigation arises from a comprehensive concept of the relationship between society and school (Duschatzky, Farrán y Aguirre, 2010; Duschatzky y Aguirre, 2013; Baquero, Diker y Frigerio, 2007; Jacinto, 2009; Puiggrós, 2006) which in the education system is known as "educational community", aimed at sustaining and supporting the democratization of school and the reinforcement of social ties. In this respect, this investigation aims at identifying continuities and changes established throughout the last years regarding the relation between school and society, by means of investigating Argentinean education laws, regulations, circulars and rules (currently in force, amended or repealed)

2. Methodology

The methodology is developed within the framework of socio educational studies. Secondary sources were used and data was built by documentary analysis technique. The methodological work involved three stages. In the first stage, institutional, legislative and curricular documentation with content directly associated with the category "educational community" was collected and selected. The empirical body which was used in this investigation was the product of the first stage.

Type of document	Quantity
Law	3
Recommendation	5
Circular	2
Resolution	9
Curriculum Development	5
Project	1

In the second stage, analysis was developed by recognition of the different conceptualizations of the relationship between society and school for each of the decades 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's. Finally, in the third stage, conclusions were organized and evaluated.

3. Results

"Educational community" is a notion strongly resumed in the last decades with three different senses since the recovery of democracy in our country: a) as an environment of vital experience, b) as a recipient object of service and c) as subject of action and decision, differentiated from other social subjects person and group and with different scopes local, national, Latin American and worldwide[1].

The reference to educational community in the discourses of various official documents alludes to a place of belonging which pre exists the subjects, maintains certain independence of their will, and possesses collective identity. It is made up of socio cultural groups and members with the capacity of providing with initiatives that allow planning educational projects according to the needs of each region. Frequently, this concept is associated with an opportunity of social participation and lifelong education community as subject of education, learners and teachers closely tied to the development and progress of the peoples. At the beginning of the 80's, with the return to democracy, the idea of educational community was approached from two coexisting meanings: one of a restrictive kind that limits the educational community to the actors who have a direct link with the schooling processes; that is to say, the group of people that participate in each educational institution. The other meaning is attributed from a socio political approach that refers to a collective group that transcends the limits of each school. Here, the educational community is an area of intervention of the public policies, a social space where inequalities exist. These inequalities demand specific actions towards dispossessed and marginalized sectors, which become object of assistance (Res. Min. 3021/85). Moreover, the educational community refers to a scenario under construction, presented as desirable and hence, strategies and concrete medium are proposed recognizing the political character of the individuals involved, such as Student Associations (Res. SCE 78/84) and school for parents (CPN/88).

In the 90's, under the neoliberal hegemony which provoked a social, economical, political and cultural devastation, the most forceful expression in the educational field was decentralization[2]. In this context, the concept of community refers to a group of people who relate or are in each school in particular and have the rights and obligations established in the currently in force regulation. Here, the subjects are just the learners, parents and teachers (LFE/94). In this regard, the educational community assumes the function of participation according to its own option and to the specific institutional project in the organization and management of the school unit and everything that contributes to the support and improvement of the quality of education; committing itself to the teaching of the contents in the area of Ethic and Citizenship Education. It is worth mentioning that it is also important to make an issue of the notions of ethics and citizenship as well as of the idea of participation that, under the neoliberal ideology, has certain "colonialist" bias since it presupposes participation of subjects as long as the distribution and exercise of power are not at stake. In other words, as long as those who make up the educational community carry forward the imposed reforms and work "each in their school" generating a great disruption of the integrationist social imaginary and of the construction of collective experiences that hinder the possibility of questioning the process of social fragmentation and exclusion.

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[1] These records are based in the following documents: Recommendation of the Federal Council of Culture and Education No. 7/1984: Cultural Politics; Law No. 23.114/1984: National Pedagogical Congress; Ministerial Resolution No. 562/1984: Tertiary Level Student Union; Resolution of Under secretariat of Educational Management No. 3/1984: Secondary School Student Associations; Resolution of Under secretariat of Educational Management No. 78/1984: Secondary School Student Associations; Circular of Directorate for Secondary and Higher Education No. 76/1984: Teacher Participation Workshops; Ministerial Resolution No. 3021/1985: Basic assistance to community; National Pedagogical Congress. Final Report of the National Assembly.1988. Project of Creation of School Councils of the Province of Buenos Aires. (1988)

[2] These records are based in the following documents: Federal Education Law No. 24.195/1994; Recommendation CFCyE No. 13/90: Secondary School; Recommendation CFCyE No. 19/92: Secondary Level; Recommendation CFCyE No. 18/92: Primary Education; Resolution CFCyE No. 23/92: Objectives by Levels; Resolution CFCyE No. 192/95: Agreement Link to the World of Work Framework; Resolution CFCyE No. 172/02: Federal Plan of Education; Common Basic Content: EGB (1995); Initial (1995); Polimodal (1997); Teacher Training (1996)

In the 2000´s, in a scenario where processes of democratization of education and social inclusion[3] take place, the concept of community refers to the environment of experience or belonging. It is referred to as a social space where individuals belong, differentiated from others such as family or school. The educational community is reclaimed as the guarantor of the access to common knowledge and as a place of belonging for young people who have been out of school and are called to assume themselves as students. The concept also appears with the sense of object or environment of intervention from the provincial jurisdictions which have to promote solidarity projects and networks for its development and cohesion. The National Education Law establishes that the actors that constitute the educational community are the school authorities, teachers, fathers, mothers and/or guardians, students, alumni, administrative and auxiliary personnel, professionals of the learning support team who ensure the comprehensive character of education, school cooperatives and other organizations associated with the institution.

It should be noted that the concept used in this case is that of actors, and it implies an idea of action, intervention and/or participation of the individuals that make up the educational community, and at the same time, it makes it possible to place the political dimension of the school. Furthermore, importance is given to the teaching and learning processes and to the education institution as a pedagogical unit which, in order to achieve the objectives, favors and articulates the participation of the members of the educational community. Finally, the educational community is recognized not as the idea of a harmonious space but as an environment that contains diversity of symbolic and socio territorial anchoring: the closer or immediate local community; or in other cases it refers to the jurisdictional or provincial community.

4. Conclusions

The historical review throughout the different Argentinean education laws has shown that the relationship between school and society has gone through different conceptualizations. There has been a change from conceiving the relationship as a link pre existing the subjects in the 80´s to a dynamic link that the subjects build in each situation and institution in particular in the 2000´s. There has also been a change from conceiving the educational community (term used in the regulations to name the relationship between society and school) composed just by authorities, teachers and students in the 90´s to conceiving the educational community in its highest social expression that includes teachers, parents and or guardians, students, alumni, administrative and auxiliary personnel, professionals of the learning support team who ensure the comprehensive character of education, school cooperatives and other organizations associated with the institution. In this regard, the relationship between society and school has been conceived from an inclusion perspective in the last decade. The definition of educational community in terms of inclusion reinforces the joint actions in recognition of key dimensions which, interrelated, contribute to sustaining it with inclusive objectives: recognition of diversity, overcoming of the mismatch between "school culture" and youth cultures, incorporation of multiple knowledge and practices developed by students in out of school spaces, and strengthening of the relationship between the State and the education system.

Assuming diversity implies a deep change in the conventional ways of thinking and making education, politics and education reform both at national and international level, inside and outside the school system. If the ultimate goal of education and school system is learning, and if in order to achieve that learning should adjust contents, methods, approaches, spaces and timing to the needs and possibilities of those that are learning, diversity becomes the norm and not the exception. Thus, the issue is not resolved by compensatory assistance programs focused on attending the needs of impoverished groups, migrant populations, working children, street children, repeater or overage pupils; assuming an only pattern as a norm which defines what is standard and expected and what is supposed to adapt to that norm. It is not about constructing uniform, unique systems but about encouraging modalities and systems as differentiated as populations, groups and concrete contexts demand.

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[3] These records are based in the following documents: National Education Law No.26.206/06; Resolution CFCyE No. 17/07: Caring Student Day; MECyT (2006) Contributions to learning follow-up in the teaching process; CFE (2004) Core Learning Priorities for Initial Level, General Basic Education and Polimodal Education; CFE (2006) Guidelines for pedagogical and institutional organization for compulsory education; Resolution CFE No. 116/10: Guidelines for evaluation of components of education quality de 2010 – 2020.

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